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Flipping it Further:

A Feminist Retranslation of *Bonjour Tristesse*

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Declaration

“I declare that this dissertation has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and that it is entirely my own work.

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In what way could a feminist retranslation of *Bonjour Tristesse* by Françoise Sagan contribute to the field of feminist translation theory and practice?

By Suzanne McMahon

Abstract

The feminist translation movement grew out of a hive of feminist activity in the 1970s and 1980s in France, the US and Canada. Women writers at this time pounced on the Derridean reassessment of the stability of meaning in language, a concept that placed the emphasis on subjective interpretation. A reimagining of language from a feminine perspective began. Through playful and unashamedly ostentatious invention and intervention the absurdities and limitations of a dominant patriarchal language were exposed and undermined. Feminist translators rose to the challenge presented by women's writing that was characterised by polysemy and neologisms. Translation strategies were appropriated to accomplish the task in a highly overt style. Meanwhile Walter Benjamin and Antoine Berman's theories showcasing the immense possibilities afforded by multiple *performances* of a text were enshrined in a feminist translation practice. Judith Butler developed Simone de Beauvoir's problematising of an unequal gender duality in reconceptualising gender as a performance. A perceivable overlap emerged between theories around gender performativity and the performativity of translation. Developments in gender theory and translation have thus led to a translational exploration of Butler's theory of performativity through the regendering strategy at the core of this dissertation. A feminist interpretation of Françoise Sagan's first novel, *Bonjour Tristesse,* provides the testing ground for this playful strategy with a view to establishing it as an eye-catching style of performing feminist texts. In rewriting selected passages from Sagan's novel with regendered protagonists, the inequalities inherent in 'official' language in favour of a masculine perspective are exposed and transformed to redress the balance. Here a bisexual and unashamedly promiscuous career woman and mother figure is written into the target text with the effect of normalising sexual emancipation and non-binary parenting. Regendering can thus advance the work of feminist translation and at the same time advance the project begun by Françoise Sagan at the start of her literary career to demote the importance placed on gender by disrupting gender norms.

'Je n'arrive pas à faire des distinguos entre les hommes et les femmes.

Comme entre les jeunes et les vieux. […] Ce sont des personnes.'

[I am unable to make a distinction between men and women.

Or between young and old. […] They are people.'

(Sagan 1994 quoted in Lloyd 1995: 56)

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Abbreviations, Terminology, Treatment of Foreign Language Citations

There are no abbreviations used in this dissertation.

All gloss translations are my own.

The terminology comes from the field of feminist translation studies.

I use the French word *defaillances*, taken from Antoine Berman's essay on retranslation from 1990, to refer to discrepancies in translations and retranslations. I also use this word to refer to the discrepancies between masculine and feminine forms of words. *Defaillances* seems to me to sum up the shifts and lapses that are unearthed through translation and retranslation better than any English term as it can refer to weaknesses, lapses, failings or faults. Popping up as it does throughout my dissertation, it is also an elegant reminder of just one of the justifications, gleaned from Berman's text, for the retranslation of Françoise Sagan's debut.

For simplicity I use the English form of capitalisation when writing the title of Françoise Sagan's novel, *Bonjour Tristesse.*

Introduction

'Comme l'auteure, la traductrice produit du sens, un sens qui vient de la manipulation du texte. ['Like the author, the translator produces meaning, a meaning the comes from her manipulation of the text.']
(Barbara Godard 1994: 42)

This dissertation, centring on a retranslation of passages from *Bonjour Tristesse* by Françoise Sagan from 1954, and supported by paratextual elements in the shape of translation commentaries, prefaces and extensive footnotes, has dual objectives. Firstly the retranslation aspires to the values that Antoine Berman places on the rewriting of texts with regard to their potential to compensate for the 'défaillances' ['lapses'] of previous translations and to, in this way, get closer to the essence of the source (Berman 1990: 1-7). As such the objective of this new *performance* of *Bonjour Tristesse* is to draw out the subversive aspects of Françoise Sagan's first novel that implicitly challenged heteronormative binaries and patriarchal, bourgeois constructs prevalent in 1950s' society.[1] These aspects of Sagan's writing had in fact been omitted or toned down respectively in the earlier translation by Irene Ash from 1954, and the subsequent retranslation by Heather Lloyd in 2013.

Secondly, the dissertation draws on and is inspired by strategies from the school of feminist translation theory that originated in the 1970s with the French and Canadian women writers and translators. This translational approach is applied with a view to delivering a target text that renders Sagan's narrative relevant to an audience in the era of non-binary genders and fourth-wave feminism. The practice of 'flaunting' their work in *paratexts*, (in this case the prefaces, translation commentaries and footnotes), adopted by translators at this time, serve to make explicit this feminist reading of Sagan's first novel. These paratextual elements accompany a target text that employs strategies falling into the categories of what feminist writers at the forefront of the translation movement have termed

[1] See Heather Lloyd (1995: 40-45), Céline Hromadova (2017: 31) and Laurence Venuti (2004: 496-497) for more on the cultural and societal contexts surrounding the publication of Sagan's first novel in 1954.

supplementing and *hijacking* or *over-translation* (von Flotow 1991: 79). Within these categories a relatively untried strategy is put into play in that the genders of two of the source text's protagonists, one male and one female, are flipped. A form of hijacking the text, switching genders is experimental in the context of this dissertation in that its aim here is to reveal its potential as an addition to the feminist translation toolbox. Two of Sagan's characterisations, Raymond, the unconventional father figure, and Cyril's mother, the voiceless archetypal bourgeois wife, are regendered.

This interventionist strategy also holds the potential of serving as a stepping stone in bridging the gap between what Luise von Flotow terms the first and second paradigms that relate to feminist writing, gender identities and translation. The second paradigm that began to emerge in the 1990s is informed by Judith Butler's gender performativity theory and Keith Harvey's theoretical work around the performance of sexual identity in translation (see Harvey 1998: 305; 2000: 143). Von Flotow acknowledges what she terms 'the tentative overlap between gender and translation' in terms of the concept of performativity that relate to both (2007: 92).

Finally, regendering as an experiment in translation and a means of destabilising gender norms can be seen as a strategy that responds to von Flotow's recent online talk, *Transnational Feminist Translation: On-going Challenges.* Here she makes a call for feminist translation to encompass all genders in its quest for representational equality (20 March 2021). This translational experiment responds also to William Burton's call for 'a queer translation project […] that would materialise as a destabilising of gender, sex, and sexuality norms' (2010: 55). The destabilising translation affect takes shape in the regendering of protagonists in order to normalise non-binary parent figures and destabilise stereotypes. This last affect is achieved when Sagan's parodic characterisation of the archetypal middle-aged philandering father figure, Raymond, is recast as a mother (renamed Raquel). Ultimately, this dissertation aims to demonstrate how developments in gender and translation theory have produced the platform upon which the experimental strategy at its heart can be performed and can contribute to the field of translation studies.

One of the criteria required in order for a translation project to qualify as feminist is the selection of the source text. Luise von Flotow cites the motivation behind the translator's choice of a particular text for translation, termed 'the writing project' by Sherry Simon (1996: 2), as a fundamental element of feminist translation theory: 'Proactive and strategic text selection privileges the translation of works that may be useful, inspirational and informative for feminism' (von Flotow 2019: Abstract). Whether it be the reworking of a text in order to undermine misogynist standpoints and make visible the feminine, the translating of a feminist text where the focus is on making the ideology therein accessible to a wider audience, or any one of the many feminist motivations that guide the translators' choices of text, this has been established as an important marker of a feminist translation strategy that should be made clear by the translator. The suitability of Françoise Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse* as a test case for the proposed translation strategies at the core of this dissertation became evident partly through a comparative reading of the text's translation, by Irene Ash in 1954, and retranslation by Heather Lloyd in 2013. Discrepancies in the translators' interpretations, particularly the sizable omissions in Ash's translation, drew attention to the subversive and challenging feminist issues woven into Sagan's narrative. For example, what was it that Ash had deemed inappropriate for her 1950s Anglophone readership and what emphasis if any had Lloyd put on Sagan's feminist themes in her fully restored retranslation?

Writing about the history of translating the 'queer', José Santaemilla maintains that 'in all historical circumstances, translators tend to censor themselves – either voluntarily or involuntarily – in order to produce rewritings that are 'acceptable' from both a social and personal perspective' (2017: 16). Keeping Santaemilla's viewpoint in mind and taking a closer look at the contexts and motivations relating to each of the three texts, an interesting insight is gained regarding the significant role that the receiving culture plays in translation practise as well as the value of retranslation. Indeed, in focusing on the passages that have been left out or the rhetoric that has been toned down, the bravery of the young Sagan in portraying female subjectivity, sexual emancipation and rejecting patriarchal hetero-normative dogma, themes that were challenging to many 1950's

readers, contrasts significantly with Ash's less challenging translation. Furthermore the translators' choices highlight the weight of the historical and social contexts of the target culture in the 1950s and, in the case of Lloyd's retranslation, the role of the brief or the 'translation project' in shaping the translator's choices and strategies. This thesis, comprised of a retranslation and of both established and a relatively untried feminist translation strategy, intends to take a leap where Lloyd took a step. The retranslation aims to continue the work of the author by disrupting further the heteronormative model of the family unit and strengthening the allusions to sexual fluidity evident in the source text. To this end full expression to female sexuality, as voiced by Sagan's young protagonist, is given.

Three passages from *Bonjour Tristesse* have been selected for translation and they have been topped with introductory prefaces giving context, tailed with concluding commentaries, and accompanied by footnotes amounting to what Kim Wallmach terms the 'metatextual commentary of feminist translators' (2006: 13) or the paratexts. The chosen passages are centred on Sagan's unconventional depiction of the father/daughter and boy/girl relationships where the roles appear to be somewhat reversed. These passages also convey the author's critiques of the hypocrisy and absurdity of the conventional norms surrounding the essentialist roles of the 'patriarchal wife and mother' (von Flotow 1991: 76). The accompanying paratextual commentaries serve to justify the choice of source text and highlight areas where the performative aspects of gender roles raised by Judith Butler overlap with the performative aspect of translation and the regendering strategy. Finally the significant divergences between the new translations of these passages and the previous ones are unpacked and considered in the footnotes and commentaries.

Following this introduction my thesis is divided into four chapters followed by a conclusion. In Chapter 1 the reasons for choosing Françoise Sagan's first novel for a feminist retranslation are discussed along with a look at the two previous translations and their perceived impact. The contexts of all three texts are also considered here. In Chapter 2 I briefly outline the development of feminist translation theory from its inception in the 1970s to the shape and scope of its strategies today. In this outline I draw heavily on the work of Luise von Flotow who

has written extensively on all aspects of feminist translation. Chapter 3 continues with a look at the particular translation strategies adopted by feminist writers and how they serve this retranslation of passages from *Bonjour Tristesse.* In this chapter I also propose *regendering* as a strategy that can contribute to the field of feminist translation. Consisting of paratexts and target texts, (or commentaries and translations), Chapter 4 is the main event, so to speak. Each of the three passages that have been selected for translation is framed by paratextual commentaries where the outcomes of the strategies are assessed and the translation effect is considered. The conclusion that rounds this thesis off outlines the contributions that this feminist retranslation of Sagan's short bestseller makes to feminist translation theory and practice. And finally, the potential of regendering as a useful strategy to progress translation studies in the era of fourth-wave feminism is assessed.

Chapter 1: Source Text, Contexts and Previous Translations

The cultural context into which Françoise Sagan's first novel *Bonjour Tristesse* was launched and the reception it received are remarkably similar to those that greeted Irene Ash's translation. Post-Second World War France, Britain and the United States placed similar values on the role of the father figure as head of the family and upholder of moral standards: 'husbands, especially fathers, wore the badge of 'family man' as a sign of *virility* and patriotism' (May in Venuti 2000,2004: 496-497).[2] Surprisingly however, both Sagan's novel and Ash's translation were similarly met with a combination of 'moral panic and titillation' (Venuti 2000,2004: 496-497) even though the British translator had adopted a censorious approach and shied away from the full expression of Sagan's depiction of female sexual agency and her critique of hypocritical bourgeois morality. Ash's domesticating approach led to a text very much in tune with the Anglophone target readerships of the 1950s and like its French inspiration, it became a phenomenal bestseller.[3] Furthermore, the translator's invisibility resulted in a reaction in the critical press that appeared to be directly reviewing Sagan's writing without recognising the influence of the translator (ibid 496).

In Laurence Venuti's essay referred to above, he includes a line from a review of Ash's translation from *The Chicago Tribune*, 1955. In it the critic professes his admiration for the author's 'craftsmanship' whilst expressing his disgust for the 'carnality' (Hass,1956 in Venuti 2000/2004: 496). This reaction is almost identical to the reaction in the French press where, to give one example, acclaimed French writer François Mauriac praised Sagan's incontestable literary talent whilst chastising the young author for the immorality of her text and dismissively labelling her 'un petit monstre' [a little monster](in Guggenheim 1958: 4). The fact that the English translation, where passages deemed risqué or potentially offensive were omitted,

[2] See Nathalie Morello (1998: 16-17) for context relating to the publication of Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse* and Laurence Venuti (2000/2004: 496-7) for target culture context relating to Ash's translation.

[3] 800,000 copies of *Bonjour Tristesse* had sold in the first four years since its publication in 1954 (see Guggenheim 1958: 1). Both Sagan's first novel and Ash's translation are still in print today.

still drew the same moral outrage as the unabridged French original, suggests that Irene Ash was a good judge of the tolerance levels of her target audience. In Venuti's essay he speaks of the potential for translation to create communities across borders[4] and refers to the 'readability' and 'verisimilitude' that characterise Ash's translation, all of which ensured the introduction of Sagan's writing to a wide English-speaking audience. There is no doubt however that the translator did not reach the full community-building potential within women's emancipation movements that she might have had the translation been as brave as the source text. A further blow to the possibility of spreading the message of sexual emancipation is the fact that Ash's highly praised and highly abridged[5] translation would be the only interpretation available until Heather Lloyd's retranslation nearly sixty years later.

This assessment of Ash's translation as a missed opportunity is based on the perception of *Bonjour Tristesse* as a feminist text. The contention of this thesis is that a translation of such a text, that preserves or even enhances its multi-layered feminist undercurrents, has the potential for building communities with common concerns around gender and sexual emancipation. Just as Erica Jong claimed the avowedly anti-feminist French author Colette as a feminist role model,[6] several Sagan scholars have championed the feminist credentials of this writer, who, according to Céline Hromadova (2017: 34) publicly distanced herself from the women's movement in France, in what appears to be a determination to maintain her independence in all aspects of her life and work. Sagan herself has stated that it was no more than her depiction of a young woman happily enjoying her sexuality without consequence that so outraged the media and sectors of the public and drew so much attention to the adolescent author (Sagan 1985: 43). This emancipated

[4] This idea is developed by Alberto Mira when discussing the role of translation in the building of gay communities. Mira sees the work of translators as locating gay meanings in texts and activating them through translation. A task enthusiastically undertaken with this retranslation of Sagan's work (Mira 1999 in von Flotow 2007: 103).

[5] For details of the sizable passages omitted from Ash's translation see Heather Lloyd's translator's notes (2013: 207).

[6] See Antonioli 2018: 71 for more on Colette's reincarnation as a feminist role model.

young female protagonist was in fact a bold creation in 1950s France but it is also Sagan's expressed disregard for taboos around homosexuality,[7] for prescribed gender roles and her problematizing of existentialism as defined from a male perspective that qualify her first slim novel as perhaps more than just quietly feminist.

Nathalie Morello posits that Sagan's novels written during the 1950s should be read 'as a critical response to a male-based conception of existence', a 'feminine exploration of the existentialist ethics of freedom' and 'an implicit criticism of its andocentric standpoint' (1998: 78). Indeed the leitmotiv: 'tristesse' [melancholy], introduced in the opening lines and revisited in the last, is considered by Morello as a symptom of the difficulty for women to live by existentialist ethics espoused by Sartre and de Beauvoir (ibid 74). Sagan was very public about her admiration for Sartre and it is known that she had read de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe* in 1951 (see Hromadova 2017: 30). The young author's problematizing of existentialist philosophy from a woman's point of view is illustrated not only through the main protagonist but also through the narrative and characterisation of the central figure of Anne Larsen. An independent woman in her forties, Anne represents a strong role model for the young Cécile. As seen through the eyes of the young narrator, this accomplished woman is faced with the choice of compromising her sense of morality or growing old alone. Where the difficulty for Anne to live by her principles ultimately leads to a tragic end, such existential dilemmas do not appear to concern the male figures in *Bonjour Tristesse.*

It is insights such as these, information revealed in interviews with the author and academic texts devoted to her work, that inform the interpretation of her writing in new translations. At the time of writing the first translation Irene Ash would not have known that the feminist standpoints and the problematizing of existentialism from a woman's perspective, aspects of the text that were only partially included in her translation, would become recurring themes in Sagan's subsequent novels. Sagan has also stated more recently that for her the gender and

[7] In 1968 in France, homosexuality was still considered a mental illness requiring treatment by psychiatrists (see Hromadova 2017: 34).

age of a person is of no importance (see Abstract above for Sagan quote). Of greater interest to her are people and it is this attitude that comes through in her very first work and that is so powerful in creating a cultural normalcy around sexual emancipation, the disregard for taboos around age and the problematizing of gender roles.

The phenomenal success of both *Bonjour Tristesse* and its first translation into English fuelled what has been termed the 'mythe Sagan' (Hromadova 2017:9; Guggenheim 1958:3). The young age of the author, her gender and her hedonistic lifestyle generated a disproportionate level of interest in her personal life rather than in her literary output and her incontestable skill as a writer[8]. In *Françoise Sagan devant la critique* from 1958 Michel Guggenheim detailed the unfair, sexist treatment that the author received in both the French and Anglophone press. Indeed it is a cruel irony that so much attention was given to Sagan's age and gender when these defining attributes were dismissed as unimportant in the life and work of the author. With her recent monograph Céline Hromadova has gone a significant way to redressing the balance in focusing on Sagan's literary oeuvre. Similarly, Heather Lloyd, with her unabridged retranslation of *Bonjour Tristessse* from 2013, takes a significant first step, (a step that is at the heart of feminist translation practice,) toward restoring fully the female voice that had been partially silenced in the first translation.

Heather Lloyd's translation indeed bears a number of criteria that would classify it as feminist work. Firstly, Lloyd includes a translator's note with her translations of Sagan's first two novels. Here Lloyd states the *skopos* of the retranslation that she had been commissioned to write. The primary objective, shared by publisher and translator alike, was the production of an unabridged retranslation that would restore the sizable passages omitted by Irene Ash. Lloyd thus fulfils another feminist translation goal: that of revisiting women authors whose voices have been undermined or silenced in previous translations. Furthermore, the inclusion of the translator's note where her interventions in the text are identified

[8] *Bonjour Tristesse* was awarded the prestigious Prix de Critiques on 24 May 1954 (Morello 1998: 7).

and the translator is made visible, amounts to the use of paratextual elements in keeping with feminist translation practice. Finally, in the paratext, Lloyd underlines the importance of what is essentially an undoing of the previous translation and its censorship of female sexuality and point of view. Here the (re)translator states that her intentions were to update Ash's vocabulary, to give Sagan's writing 'a fresh new dress' and with this entirely unabridged version to hopefully 'encourage and help at least some to sample the original French for themselves' (2013: 209). So, although Lloyd employs the feminist strategy of flaunting her interventions in the text she does not identify any possibilities for a feminist interpretation of what Morello (1998), Hromadova (2017), Miller (1988) and Lloyd herself (1995) have identified as feminist aspects of Sagan's writing.[9] Updating the text at a lexicographical level without taking into consideration the social context at the time of writing in terms of sexual identity and gender issues render a retranslation that, this thesis would contend, lacks relevancy for a twenty-first century readership. For this reason a more radically feminist, interventionist retranslation is proposed as a conduit to connect Sagan's tale of sexual awakening and existential dilemmas with a modern audience.

Finally, Heather Lloyd's translation would not qualify as a significant or successful translation according to Antoine Berman's criteria (1990: 12) in that it appears to have had minimal impact on the target culture. There has been practically no critical or academic response to Lloyd's retranslation while Ash's continues to sell. In a search for academic or press reviews of Lloyd's retranslation only one piece from the Observer newspaper was found. In this article entitled *The subtle art of translating foreign fiction* the journalist, Rachel Cooke, includes her own reaction to Lloyd's new version at the top of her piece on translators' varying approaches to their work. Cooke starts with an unfavourable comparison between Ash's and Lloyd's interpretations of Sagan's elegant opening lines and goes on to say: 'however syntactically correct it might be, the prose had for me lost all of its magic' (2016). It

[9] Pertinently, an academic review of Heather Lloyd's *Critical Guide to Bonjour Tristesse*, criticizes the author for her failure 'to signal potential contemporary feminist readings of the text' (Dobson 1997: 238). An indication that a feminist reading was not a priority for Lloyd with her retranslation from 2013.

would appear that, perhaps due to the objective to translate the complete and unabridged text Lloyd prioritises a literal translational approach and disregards somewhat the musicality of Sagan's writing. (Lloyd's opinion regarding Sagan's musicality is expressed in her review of Morello's critical guide to *Bonjour Tristesse* from 1995.) As a result, this thesis is of the same opinion as Rachel Cooke in considering the retranslation to be less engaging and lacking some of the readability and the elegance of the source text and its first translation.

Chapter 2: Feminist Translation – An evolving movement

(i) *The First Paradigm*

As referred to in the introduction, feminist translation theory, a firmly established strand of theoretical translation studies, has its roots in the Canadian movement that grew out of second-wave feminist writing.[10] Objectives of this second wave that started in the late 1960s and gained momentum throughout the 1970s and 1980s included, on the one hand the rediscovery of women's voices from the past, including the 'recovery of women writers' (Antionioli 2018: 71) and the disruption of cultural, societal and historical norms relating to gender on the other. Luise von Flotow, the Canadian writer, academic and pioneer of feminist translation theory and practice has mapped the movement's development over the decades and continues to chart its progress today. Von Flotow proposes a confluence of phenomena leading to what became known as the *Canadian movement*. These included an entanglement of language and gender issues arising out of the 'era of feminism', Canadian polyglossia, and experimental feminist writing in French. Phenomena that worked in effect as catalysts 'triggering translation as well as academic work on translation' (Simon 1996: 1)**.** In *Gender and Translation,* Pilar Godayol offers the following overview of the birth of feminist translation:

> The intersection between the feminist literature of the late 1970s and early 1980s and translation studies gave rise in Quebec to a translation movement which, from a combined French and Anglo-Saxon perspective, claimed a new definition of the role of the woman literary translator. The translators who formed this group […] (among others, Luise von Flotow, Barbara Godard, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, Howard Scott) were

[10] Confirmation of feminist translation theory as an established branch of translation studies is evidenced by the publication of the Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism and Gender in 2020 and the inclusion of Luise von Flotow's essay on Feminist Translation Strategies in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies, Third Edition from 2019.

> characterised by two important traits: on the one hand, they shared possibility conditions which marked them out from the rest of the feminists who translated and, on the other, their discourses, whether social, historical, economic, or institutional, were the same as those of the authors they translated. Godayol 2013: 174

With the phrase 'shared possibility conditions' Godayol draws attention to the driving forces and the inventive, open-minded approaches to the interpretation of texts. As such the characteristics of the work of the translators echoed Walter Benjamin's idealist vision for the potential of translation articulated in *The Translator's Task* from 1923. Godayol also underlines here the importance of the choice of source text where the translator and source author give voice to common discourses. It is evident that the first translation of *Bonjour Tristesse* does not align with the criteria given by Godayol in that by censoring sections of Sagan's novel the translator, Irene Ash, as alluded to in the introduction, distanced herself from the 'discourses' of the author she translated. In contrast, *Bonjour Tristesse* was chosen as the source text for this thesis with a view to exploring the 'possibility conditions' of a retranslation in showcasing the perceived feminist discourse expressed elegantly and without fuss in Sagan's narrative.

Inspiration for the Canadian translators came from works, by French feminist writers, in particular the 'Trinity' of Luce Iragaray, Julia Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous, who, according to Marlène Bichet, gained the greatest recognition amongst their Anglo-American counterparts (see Bichet 2019: 228). During the same period sales were high in the United States of Howard Parshley's translation of *Le deuxième sexe* by Simone de Beauvoir in which the French existentialist philosopher began the work of destabilising the concept of gender.[11] Language as a manipulative tool maintaining gender inequality was a concern that was central to both the French feminists and to Canadian writers. In France, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva

[11] Howard Parshley's bestselling translation of *Le deuxième sexe* took a similar censorial approach to de Beauvoir's seminal text as Ash had with *Bonjour Tristesse.* Parshley omitted 10% of the text including references to lesbian relationships and the roles of women in History in what von Flotow terms a 'patriarchal translation' (see von Flotow 1997: 49-50).

developed what Cixous termed an 'écriture feminine', inventing polysemic words and regendering terms in order to describe uniquely feminine experiences and to heighten the feminine perspective and female presence in their texts. Cixous equates the concept of the 'feminine' to one of difference, one that can disrupt the dominance of hegemonic masculinity. A concept that connects feminism with more recent queer theories that will be discussed in the next section. In *The Laugh of the Medusa* Cixous defines the mission of the feminist writer thus: 'Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies' (1976: 875). To give an example, in Cixous's novel from 1976 entitled *La*, the masculine French words for sky and sun are re-gendered in the writer's neologisms *la cielle* and *la soleille*[12] (cited in Varino 2018: 97). Von Flotow defines the work of Canadian feminist writers as 'an elaboration of "écriture au feminine"' (1991: 79). This style of writing posed serious challenges to the translators of the work and was charged with being inaccessible. To some extent the regendering of the two parental figures in this translation of *Bonjour Tristesse* can also be seen as, if not an elaboration, at least an embodiment of the French and Canadian strategy of lexical regendering. At the same time an unconventional, sexually emancipated woman has been written into the text aligning this translation with Cixous' objectives. However, in this case the strategy works on a more accessible, readable level and the pantomimic comedy in Sagan's archetypes is hopefully rendered in the recasting of genders.[13]

Von Flotow has described the feminist translation movement as a radical one that works to 'undermine, subvert, even destroy the conventional everyday language' maintained by institutions including dictionaries (von Flotow 1997: 143).

[12] In other words, the re-gendering strategy to be tested in this dissertation, as well as 'writing women' into the text, can be seen to advance the work begun at a lexicographic level by feminist writers from the 1970s. Where words were regendered by Cixous, it is a central figure that is regendered here.

[13] Interestingly, in her comprehensive monograph devoted to the Sagan literary oeuvre, Céline Hromadova refers to the author's form of 'réécriture au féminin'. (2017: 32) Here, Hromadova posits that Sagan was engaged in a rewriting of the classics where the author revisited themes associated with Rastignac and Bel Ami and presented them through a feminine lens. One more feminist thread to justifiy the selection of *Bonjour Tristesse* for a feminist interpretation.

Feminists perceived the dominant language to be an instrument in maintaining the subjugation of women and therefore one that needed to be replaced. The procedures involved in the regendering of protagonists in this retranslation of *Bonjour Tristesse* necessitate the use of masculine coded or what Eva Nossem terms 'heteroregulated' (2018: 176) dictionary definitions when translating gendered adjectives. In keeping with the objectives outlined by von Flotow, and those by Nossem regarding the 'queering' of the official language of dictionary definitions, those definitions that privilege a male perspective are re-appropriated. The aim of this process is to redress the balance away from the dominance of masculine forms that are inadequate or demeaning when applied to the feminine form. Examples of where this occurs in the target texts are given in their accompanying paratexts, i.e. the commentaries and footnotes. This procedure can be seen as a response to what has been termed 'queering the text' in the most recent collection of essays charting developments in translation theory and practices issued by Routledge in 2018. But this is jumping too far ahead in the history of feminist translation theory. Although the movement has today reached a point where its theories and practices incorporate, and, as in the case of this dissertation, benefit from queer translation theory, von Flotow has identified a period of twelve to fifteen years when feminism became viewed as 'an out-dated, binary political idea' (von Flotow 2021 online talk). As a result developments in feminist translation theory were somewhat stalled. During this time the focus turned to discourses around non-binary gender emancipation. Issues that were not at first considered to be addressed by the feminist movement.

As Judith Butler's theory of performativity re-evaluating gender as a construct restricted by societal norms was generating much debate, Barbara Godard was exploring the idea of translation as a performance. Godard created a neologism of her own to describe the new directions of experimental feminist translation and the writer Nicole Brossard's work in particular: 'Transformance it might well be called, to emphasize the work of translation, the focus on constructing meaning in the activity of transformation, a mode of performance' (Godard 1989/1990: 90). Godard thus posits the activity of translation as an interpretive performance and

transformation of texts. The 'tentative overlap' that von Flotow acknowledges begins to emerge and Butler's theories, inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's seminal text from 1949, are seen to connect with Godard's concept of *transformance*. Butler's theory of gender performativity and its crossover with the performativity of translation will be discussed further in the next section outlining the next stage of developments in the field of feminist translation studies.

(ii) *The Second Paradigm*

The second-wave feminist movement and the work of feminist translators from the period of von Flotow's first paradigm became targets for criticism from a growing number of those who found the focus on gender duality to be limited and exclusionary. According to Martin Rosario, by the 2000s, the 'framework of the Canadian school was no longer adequate to reflect the fluidity of gender and the plurality of identities' (2005: 36). Von Flotow writes: 'ideas about gender instability have added new dimensions to the discussions, and undermined the categories 'man' and 'woman' on which earlier debates were founded (2007: 92). Von Flotow goes further in her recent talk given online and describes a stage when it was no longer 'allowed' to use the term woman in certain arenas (March 2021). Since then, with Keith Harvey's work to bring the notion of multiple genders to translation theory, the feminist strand of translation studies has grown to go beyond binary gender issues. Meanwhile, José Santaemilla describes what he terms 'a queer turn' in translation studies that builds on concepts relating to feminist problematizing of patriarchal dominance and feminist translation tools to achieve its objectives (2017: 13). This thesis will show that by regendering protagonists in a novel where archetypal gender roles are parodied there is the potential for disrupting gender binary norms.

The feminist concern with making visible the alterity of the female condition by writing women into language has very obvious crossovers with queer theory. Indeed the predominance of 'heteroregulated' dictionary definitions that was

exposed in the process of regendering Sagan's text clearly highlights the invisibility of the 'other' in heteropatriarchal official language. Having at first been criticised for its focus on a gender binary, feminist translation strategies have been adopted by translators working to make visible sexualities and genders outside the heteronormative model. Sexuality and translation are no longer considered as 'unproblematic givens' (ibid). Once again, Pilar Godayol sees the opening up of possibilities with this turn in translation: 'Gender and translation as non-dogmatic and shifting means of expression, open an infinite number of doors' (2013: 180).

In texts from 1988 and 1990, Judith Butler had introduced her 'theory of performativity' that destabilized the concept of gender and would have a profound effect on feminist translation theory (see von Flotow 2007: 100, 101) Butler rejected the concept of gender as a natural phenomenon inherent in all human beings. Instead, she posits the concept of gender as a product of enforced societal norms, a performance that, through repetition, establishes 'the illusion of two natural, essential sexes' (Butler 1990: 140). This new departure in feminist translation, that has inspired this dissertation's re-gendering strategy, finds its roots in both Butler's theory of performativity and in Godard's concept of *transformance* referred to earlier. The move away from a gender duality and towards an all -inclusive plurality of genders reflects after all the plurivocity and polysemy of feminist writing and rewriting. The rich potential of Sagan's first novel for retranslation as this thesis contends, suggests a text that is polysemous and open to multiple interpretations. Judith Butler's and Simone de Beauvoir's concepts of gender as performance create possibility conditions in the performance of translation and in particular the feminist performance of gender in translation. A shared approach that builds on the Benjaminian concept of the potential for infinite interpretations to match a multiplicity of genders.

Chapter 3 : Feminist Translation Strategies – Established and Experimental

> le traducteur a tous les droits dès lors qu'il joue franc jeu [translators have every right once they are up front about the game they play] (Antoine Berman 1995: 93 cited in Simon 1996: 36).

(i) *Supplementing*

Arising from the work produced during the first paradigm, a number of translational norms characterising feminist translation practice and creating what von Flotow terms its 'translation-effect' emerged (1997: 38). *Supplementing, hijacking* and the use of *paratextual elements* were established as the three strategies favoured by the feminist translation movement during this period. This dissertation falls into the category of feminist translation practice in that it employs each of these established strategies.

Supplementing, described by von Flotow as the most creative of strategies capable of fulfilling Benjamin's vision of the potential of retranslation, is often employed to overcome the challenge of translating feminist writing where there are differences or gaps between languages (see von Flotow 1991: 75). An early example of supplementing appears in Howard Scott's translation of *L'Euguélionne* by Louky Bersianik. In translating a line of text where an added gender marker by the author insinuates that the one to be punished is female: 'Le ou la coupable doit être puni**e.'** ['the guilty one (f) must be punished.'] Scott's translation compensates for the lack of gender agreement in English by supplementing the target text: 'The guilty one must be punished, whether **she** is a man or a woman' (in von Flotow 1991: 75). Where Scott has supplemented the text in order to make clear the gender of the subject, a form of supplementing in reverse, is put into play in this interpretation of Sagan's novel. The motive behind adopting this strategy is to build on Sagan's *quiet* allusions to sexual fluidity and her problematizing of prescribed gender roles. Moreover, this process of unravelling and making explicit the feminist aspects of

Sagan's writing aligns with the process of supplementing as Charlotte le Bervet sees it, i.e. 'a means of conveying multiple layers of a text (2019: 12).

A more recent example of supplementing can be found in Michela Baldo's essay from 2018 on the retranslation into Italian of Judith Butler's text from 2004 entitled *Undoing Gender*. Here Baldo deals specifically with the need for retranslating Butler's work in order to shift the emphasis to a more positive interpretation that is in keeping with recent developments in gender studies in Italy. She gives the example of the translation of the title where 'Undoing' had been rendered as a type of defeat. The retranslation supplemented the target text and the title became *Doing and Undoing Gender* (Baldo 2018: 190). A similar use of supplementing is at play in my retranslation in that the allusions to sexual fluidity are emphasised while misogynist terms are undermined. A new interpretation is produced that remains relevant in the current era of fourth-wave feminism centred on inclusion and gender equity (See Rampton's article on fourth wave feminism, 2008).

(ii) *Hijacking*

The interventionist strategy referred to as *hijacking* will be applied in multiple forms throughout this dissertation. Hijacking involves appropriating a text, that may not be overtly or intentionally feminist, in order to raise awareness of the translation project and to incorporate a feminist perspective (see Bozkurt 2014: 110). Von Flotow uses the work of De Lotbinière-Harwood to demonstrate this type of 'assertive, interventionist translation praxis' (1997: 28), referring specifically to De Lotbinière-Harwood's preface to her translation of *Lettres d'une autre* by Lise Gauvin. Here the translator overtly underlines her methodology and her motives for 'rewriting in the feminine': 'my signature on a translation means: this translation has used every possible feminist translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language. Because making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world' (1989: 9 in Flotow 1997: 29). Here we see a crossover of all three strategies where the actions of supplementing and hijacking

are flagged in the preface. As mentioned above the feminist interpretations of Sagan's text underscore the author's normalising of sexual fluidity and challenging of prescribed gender roles. These objectives find their full expression in a hijacking of the text where Cécile's father and Cyril's mother are regendered. Regendering will be covered in the next section as although it is a form of hijacking the text and overlaps with the strategy of supplementing, it is possibly such a radical intervention that it warrants a category of its own.

My translations of Sagan's text also take inspiration from De Lotbinière-Harwood's hijacking strategies employed to disrupt English word order and linguistic patriarchal hierarchy that favour masculine terms. In her work, terms referring to gender such as *her and his,* and *women and* men, have thus been re-ordered while her strategies draw attention to the absurdity of certain patriarchal terms such as women being referred to as *maîtres de la cuisine* [masters of the kitchen] (in Flotow 1997: 29). Rather than disrupting word order, however, this retranslation of *Bonjour Tristesse* will reappropriate English terms that would normally be used in a denigrating fashion when applied to women with a view to undermining their sexist undertones. And, in line with Barbara Johnson's call for 'experimentation, tampering with usage' in order to 'match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing it's own' (Johnson 1981 cited in Flotow 1991: 80), feminist interpretations of Sagan's text serve to weaken misogynist or overly patriarchal terms such as 'mistress'. Examples of these interventions are identified in the footnotes and unpacked in the translation commentaries.

(iii) *The Paratexts*

As Godayol describes, women translators 'defend their visibility by expressing themselves in paratextual material: notes, prologues, introductions, interviews, books and articles' (2013: 180). 'Paratextual material' in the form of commentaries that detail the feminist aspects of the source text and the interventionist aspects of the translation follow each of the passages translated in this thesis. Meanwhile,

extensive footnotes pinpoint precisely where these interventions transform the text. The footnotes also serve to provide comparisons with the two previous translations, and identify some *defaillances* that justify the production of a new rendering of Sagan's novel. This *flaunting* of the translator's approach invests the practice of feminist translation with an ethical pedigree and distances its procedures from what Flotow terms 'covertly interventionist translation'[14] (Flotow 2007: 94). Barbara Godard advocates what she terms the *flaunting* of the translator's *womanhandling* of the source text in metatexual commentaries, thus not only distancing feminist translation from 'devious' or covert intervention but also redressing the traditional practise of occulting 'women's interests, ideas and presence in texts' (ibid).

In drawing attention to their interventions, feminist translators reveal the means by which the dominance of heteropatriarchal language can be undone. This dominant language is often dismissive or silencing of that which falls outside the masculine norm. The paratexts that form the basis of this thesis identify the inequalities inherent in dictionary definitions brought to light by the need to find feminine or masculine equivalent signifiers in the process of regendering. This outcome of employing a regendering strategy is perhaps of the greatest value to the field of feminist translation and will be discussed further in the conclusion.

(iv) *Regendering as a Strategy in the Current Context*

This retranslation that neutralises gender markers and where one of the main protagonists is regendered as a woman continues the work of such translators as Carol Maier and Suzanne Jill Levinal. Maier and Levinal chose to undermine the misogynist, patriarchal aspects of the source text while strengthening the presence of female figures and diminishing the male figures (see Von Flotow 1997: 27). Regendering the father figure also fulfils Cisoux's view of feminist writing having as its objective the inclusion of women in writing and history. Meanwhile, regendering the voiceless figure of Cyril's mother as a man casts a male protagonist in a role that has been traditionally assigned to women throughout literary history. This action is

[14] An epithet that could be applied to Irene Ash's censorial translation of *Bonjour Tristesse.*

intended to subvert the tradition of the silent female figure. Cyril's mother is described as a 'cipher' by Heather Lloyd (1995: 39) as she is a voiceless figure reduced to representing the archetypal bourgeois wife and mother. The somewhat mischievous manipulation of Sagan's text in this retranslation gives a patriarchal male figure the silent treatment so to speak in that he performs the role of the traditionally voiceless female figure. As such, it is an archetypal bourgeois father figure who comes in for the harsh criticism dished out by the young protagonist, Cécile. The negative role becomes masculine and the role of the patriarchy in maintaining the inequalities in society moves centre stage.

At the same time regendering Raymond as a woman in a lesbian relationship fulfils the role of translation as seen by Santaemilla (2017: 17): to make 'gay / lesbian identity and characters visible in / through translation'. It is furthermore intended that the work of normalising homosexuality, begun in Sagan's first novel but neglected in its previous translations into English, can be further developed. This strategy also serves in rendering a new interpretation that has the potential to generate debate around gender issues and that is relevant to today's readership.

The concept of re-gendering in this context is informed by Judith Butler's concept of gender as a construct regulated by societal norms and her theory of performativity. The strategy brings together Butler's classification of gender as a parodic performance not only with Sagan's parodic performance of bourgeois archetypes but with translation as a form of parodic imitation (see Harvey 2000).

(v) *Examples of Regendering*

The regendering of literary characters has an illustrious past in the interpretations of the most canonical of texts. In contrast with the weighty examples of this form of interventionist strategy that will be discussed here, the regendering of Sagan's characters is enacted with the intention of building on the playfulness inherent in the author's parodies of archetypes and bourgeois norms. Another key objective is to assess the potential value of regendering to the field of feminist

translation. Of interest to this dissertation are the motivations behind previous regendering projects and the results that were achieved. In this context, three texts, where regendering has formed the basis of their re-interpretation, are considered.

To begin with early examples of regendering we turn to the theatre and the multiple productions over the centuries of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* where the conflicted prince was played by/as a woman. It would seem that one of the most studied and performed characters of the literary canon has in fact been shaped through regendering. In Tony Howard's book that charts the history of interpretations and performances of Hamlet by women, Sarah Siddons' portrayals in the late 18th century are credited with modernising and psychologising the character and transforming him into 'the universally human figure he has generally been considered since' (Howard in Muse 2007: 532). Ultimately, the regendering of Hamlet appears to have been motivated by the desire to convey the feminine attributes with which Shakespeare had imbued the character. Whereas the strategy of having a woman convey Hamlet's feminine side reinforces a gender binary, (in that a man as defined by societal codes is not expected to display these feminine emotions), in the re-interpretation of *Bonjour Tristesse* where a woman performs the role written for a philanderer, these codes are disrupted. The motivations behind regendering the father figure in *Bonjour Tristesse* do, in fact, run contrary to an interpretation that strives to exploit to the fullest extent the feminine side of Shakespeare's Hamlet. When Cécile's father figure becomes a mother figure it is the absurdities of prescribed gender roles that are exposed. Having a woman play the philandering parent who is devoted to a frivolous existence is a means of exploring expectations around gender as enforced by society along the lines of Butler's performativity theory.

Keeping with Shakespeare, in a recent production of Macbeth, director Diana Wyenn cites the quest to find 'the right people for the roles rather than the traditional gender of the characters' as her motivation for regendering the play (Wyenn in Sneha 2020). Wyenn posits that applying this strategy to the casting process and placing 'Shakespeare in the hands of people across the spectrum of gender and sexual orientation brings out resonances that were always possible and

that challenge our expectations of the work' (ibid). Wyenn points out that Shakespeare had already begun the subversion of genders in Macbeth and that it was just left for her to 'flip them further'. This can also be said of the father and daughter figures in *Bonjour Tristesse* where the regendering amounts to an interpretation that continues the work begun by the author. Wyenn also describes a strategy of supplementing very similar to the 'supplementing in reverse' employed in this retranslation of *Bonjour Tristesse* where gender markers are neutralised. The theatre director felt that this strategy, while undermining misogynist facets of the script, actually strengthened it as with the omission of the gender-marker in the line written as: "Why do I put up that womanly defense? To say I have done no harm" that becomes "Why do I put up that defense? To say I have done no harm" (Wyenn in Abraham, 2020). Once again this deletion opens up the text to multiple perspectives.

Finally, in Yael Kanarek's rewriting of the Hebrew Bible where all characters are regendered, an on-going project [15] designed to enable 'Divine influence to pass down a female lineage' (Kanarek 2020), the translator/artist has identified some interesting outcomes. Kanarek describes the transformations brought about by her regendering strategy where 'New matriarchs in central positions come to life, as well as patriarchs who care for their daughters' (ibid). The translator also posits that her interpretation of the Bible exposes 'the deeply patriarchal social structures we live in' (Kanarek 2021), thus validating a regendering strategy as a worthy addition to feminist translation theory. In *Bonjour Tristesse* Françoise Sagan has painted a picture of a father figure who is unconventional in the post-Second World War era in that he is demonstrably affectionate towards his daughter and treats her as an equal. Where Kanarek's interpretation suggests positive possibilities for father-daughter relationships, it is however by regendering Sagan's father figure that not only are 'patriarchal social structures' exposed but the selfish dimension of his performance as a parent is also revealed. Raymond's behaviour when regendered is unsettling as it is incongruous with our traditionally held image of the mother figure.

[15] Kanarek's project was cited by von Flotow as one of great merit in her recent online talk (2021 Online).

To what extent it is more shocking for a mother to behave this way than a father elicits a closer look at gender roles within the family unit.

To summarise, the retranslation will *perform* the translator's interpretation of Sagan's writing through a hi-jacking of the text and the re-gendering of certain protagonists. This performance will be accompanied, in a supporting role by, the feminist translation practise of a paratextual flaunting of translational interventions such as supplementing the text. The objective of these performances is to playfully magnify the perceived work of Françoise Sagan's writing, destabilising imposed gender roles and exposing the inherent absurdities therein, and to expose the inequalities in official language.

Chapter 4: Target Texts and Paratexts

The feminist translations of excerpts from *Bonjour Tristesse* are presented below, each with a short preface giving some context to the relevant source excerpt. Notable challenges for the feminist translator and the interesting issues around established gendered interpretations of words are discussed in the commentaries that follow the translated excerpts. Substantial footnotes also accompany each of the excerpts where the divergences between these translations and the previous ones are identified. The inclusion of footnotes also serves to pinpoint the moments in the text where the feminist interference occurs in what feminist translators might call a *flaunting of voluntarist interventions*.

Bonjour tristesse **by Françoise Sagan: (Re)Translations**

(i) ***Part I, Chapter 1***

Preface

The first chapter of Francoise Sagan's *Bonjour tristesse* paints a highly evocative setting in the baking hot French Riviera. We are not only introduced to the principal characters in this mise-en-scène, but also the first clues are given as to the source of Cécile's existential dilemma that ultimately leads to her *tristesse*. Sagan's unconventional alternative to bourgeois norms takes shape here in the reversals of traditional father/daughter, boy/girl roles and the unusual family 'situation' that the main protagonist/first person narrator, Cécile, feels compelled to explain and justify. Cécile is looking back on the previous summer and her holiday in the South of France with her father, Raymond, and his girlfriend at the time, Elsa. Their blissful carefree existence is abruptly disrupted by the arrival of the morally superior figure of Anne, feared and admired in equal measure.

These passages were chosen for retranslation as the writing introduces the existentialist philosophy that had captured the popular imagination in 1950s France and that, viewed from a feminine standpoint, underscores Cécile's dilemma. The

opening chapter also gives voice to female sexuality and bisexual desires, a feature of the writing that would, as mentioned above, cause consternation among many conservative readers. The regendering strategy serves to develop what Céline Hromadova (2017: 34) has identified as Sagan's mission to normalise homosexual orientations that the author achieved without fuss. In this opening passage lesbian attraction is alluded to in Cécile's 'passionate' admiration for Anne without an issue being made of it in the narrative.

In this retranslation Cécile's father is reconfigured as a bisexual mother also without fuss while the concept of same-sex parenting and the figure of a lesbian career woman, who is unapologetically promiscuous, are thus written into the target text.

***Translation 1*: Pp. 11-18**

To this lingering feeling whose gentle nature absorbs me, I hesitate to give the beautiful, sombre name of sadness. It is an emotion so complete, so selfish that I am almost ashamed to admit that I had, before now, even considered it to be worthy. Sadness had not previously been familiar to me, only boredom, regret, occasionally remorse. But today, something folds in on me like silk, enervating and soft; it separates me from others.

That summer I was seventeen years old and I was perfectly happy. The 'others' were my mother and Elsa, her lover.[16] I need to explain this situation as one could get the wrong impression. My mother was forty years old, widowed for the last fifteen; she was youthful, full of vitality, potential, and, upon my graduation from boarding school, two years earlier, I couldn't help but notice that she was living with someone.[17] It took me a little longer to accept that she had a new partner every six months! But soon her powers of seduction, my disposition, and this easy new

[16] 'Maîtresse' is translated as 'lover' rather than mistress. Lover infers the same temporary romantic relationship as mistress without conveying the suggestion of a subjugated female position. See commentary.
[17] Gender marker omitted: 'une femme' [a woman] translated as 'someone' in order to strengthen Sagan's allusions to sexual fluidity.

way of life brought me round. She was loose,[18] adept in business, always curious, quickly bored and attractive to all.[19] I had no trouble loving her tenderly, because she was good, generous, gay, and full of affection for me. I can't imagine a better, more entertaining friend. At the start of this summer, she extended her generosity as far as checking whether it would bother me if Elsa, her current girlfriend, joined us on our holiday. I could only approve, as on the one hand I was well aware of her need of lovers,[20] while on the other Elsa would not bother us. She was a tall girl with red hair, part-creature, part-socialite, who posed for photographers and in bars on the Champs-Elysées. She was sweet, uncomplicated and without any serious pretentions.[21] Anyway, we were too excited to be going away, my mother and I, to object to anything whatsoever. She had rented a large, secluded, ravishing white villa on the Mediterranean that we had been dreaming of since the first warm days of June. It was built on a promontory, overlooking the sea, hidden from the road by a pine forest; a little goat-track led down to a small golden creek bordered by rust-coloured rocks and the ebb and flow of the sea.

The first few days were dazzling. We spent hours on the beach, crushed by the heat, slowly developing a healthy glow, with the exception of Elsa who burned and peeled in painful torment. My mother executed complicated leg lifting exercises in an attempt to diminish the beginnings of a belly that did not fit in with her femme-

[18] A *strategic* translation of the French word 'léger' that has different definitions in the dictionary whether it is used to describe a man or a woman. Here the term is re-appropriated in line with current usage. See commentary.
[19] 'women' replaced by gender neutral 'all' to heighten Sagan's allusions to gender fluidity.
[20] Gender marker deleted as above: 'women' replaced by 'lovers'. An alternative interpretation where 'her need of women' is retained could serve to introduce one of the criteria that qualifiy a text as feminist, i.e. the concept of female solidarity. An interpretation that would strengthen the feminist thread running through Sagan's text.
[21] A more sympathetic interpretation of the description of Elsa than in the previous translations is given in order to remove perceived misogynist undertones: 'assez simple' [quite simple] (Sagan 1954, 2019:12), interpreted as 'uncomplicated' here, was translated as 'rather dim' by Lloyd (2013: 6) and 'rather simple' by Ash (1955, 2011: 3).

fatale persona.[22] From sunrise I was in the sea. Submerging myself completely in that fresh, clear water, tiring myself out swimming this way and that…washing away all the shadows and the dust of Paris. I stretched out in the sand, taking a fistful of it in my hand to let its soft yellowish stream slowly slip through my fingers like time. What an easy thought and how pleasant to have easy thoughts. It was summer.

On the sixth day I saw Cyril for the first time. He skirted the coast in a small sailboat and capsized in front of our creek. I helped him to gather up his belongings and, in between fits of giggling, I learnt that his name was Cyril, that he was a law student and that he was spending his holidays with his father in the neighbouring villa. He had a Latin face, very brown, very open, that somehow suggested a reliable, protective nature that I found appealing. I usually avoided this type of student in college, crude, self-absorbed and so obsessed with the idea of being young that their very youthfulness became both a source of drama and an excuse for their boredom. I was not fond of young people in general. I much preferred my mother's friends: forty year olds[23] who spoke to me courteously and affectionately, addressing me with the gentleness of a parent[24] or a lover. But I liked Cyril. He was big and sometimes beautiful, a beauty that inspired confidence. Although I did not share this aversion my mother held toward ugliness that often led to us fraternising with stupid

[22]a) The pantomimic parody in Sagan's depiction of a middle-aged man who is a victim to his vanity and vainly tries to put a halt to 'middle-aged spread' is diminished slightly when the target is regendered as a mother figure whose physique has no doubt been affected by pregnancy. As such this characterization does not have the same archetypal values when regendered and a disruption of a recognizable performance of gender occurs.
b) The search for a feminine equivalent for the proverbial 'Don Juan' exposed a lapse in European culture and in language. There does not appear to be a well-known female cultural figure who is renowned for her powers of seduction. The closest equivalent might be *a femme-fatale* [fatal woman] or a *siren* (a woman from Greek mythology who sang sweetly to lure mariners to their destruction. See Merriam Webster Online Dictionary: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/siren), both of which have negative connotations. 'Femme fatale' was selected as, although it adds a more sinister hue to the characterization than the proverbial Don Juan, the note of comedy and pantomime is preserved with Sagan's image of a self-perceived seducer (seductress) doing leg-lifts on the beach to reduce the size of his (her) belly.
[23] Gender omitted: 'hommes de quarante ans' ['forty-year old men'] translated as 'forty-year olds'.
[24] As above: 'père' ['father'] translated as 'parent'.

people, I did feel a sense of unease, an emptiness, when faced with people who lacked any physical charm. Their acceptance of not being appealing to others seemed to me an indecent affliction, for what else should we strive for if not to be appealing? To this day I am not sure if this need to feel attractive is due to an over abundance of vitality, a desire to be in control, or the secret, unacknowledged need for affirmation…for reassurance.[25]

As Cyril was taking off he offered to give me some sailing lessons. I went home lost in thought and didn't participate much in the conversation over dinner. I hardly even noticed the jittery state that my mother was in. After dinner, like every evening, we stretched out on the terrace sofas. The sky was spattered with stars. I looked at them in the vague hope that they would begin their seasonal activities prematurely and shoot across the sky leaving their trails behind them. But it was still only the beginning of July and they did not budge. In amongst the gravel of the terrace the crickets were singing. There must have been thousands to raise such a cacophony throughout the night, drunk from the heat and the moon. I had been told that it was the sound of their wings rubbing together but I preferred to think of it as a guttural cry from the throat, as instinctive as that of a cat in heat.[26] We were content; the little grains of sand caught between my skin and my blouse were all that resisted the gentle onslaught of slumber. It was at this point that my mother gave a little cough and sat up in her chaise longue.

"We have a new arrival joining us", she said.

I closed my eyes in despair. We were too peaceful; of course it couldn't last!

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[25]This line conveying the narrator's questioning of the relationship between a young woman's position in the world, the emphasis on appearing attractive that has traditionally applied mainly to women, and a sense of insecurity, was omitted in Ash's translation (1955, 2011: 5).

[26] An example of where this retranslation exploits to the full the expression of liberated female sexuality running through Sagan's writing. Both Ash and Lloyd opted for toned down translations of animal sexual desire. 'instinctif comme celui des chats en leur saison' [instinctive as those of cats in their season] (Sagan 1954, 2019: 15), translated by Ash as 'instinctive like the purr of a cat' (1955, 2011: 5) and in a more literal rendering by Lloyd as 'instinctive as the call of cats in the mating season (2013: 7). The retranslation as 'instinctive as that of a cat in heat' presages Cécile and Raymond's/Raquel's tendency to obey their instincts and pursue their passions at all costs. A way of life that contributes to Cécile's existential questioning.

"Tell us who it is!" cried Elsa, always hungry for news.

"Anne Larsen," announced my mother as she turned towards me.

I stared at her, too stunned to respond.

"I told her to come down if the preparation of her new collection had tired her out, and…well…she's coming.

I never would have expected it. Anne Larsen was an old friend of my poor father and really didn't know my mother very well. Nevertheless, when I left boarding school two years earlier my mother, who was very worried about me, sent me off to Anne. In the space of a week she had taught me how to dress stylishly and how to live. In that time I had developed a passionate admiration for her, which she deftly re-directed towards a young man in her entourage. She was thus responsible for my first dalliances with elegant style and with young love, and for this I was greatly indebted to her. At forty-two she was a very seductive woman, much sought after, with a beautiful face that was proud, world-weary...detached. She was lovable and aloof at the same time. Everything about her reflected an enduring purpose, a stillness at her heart that was intimidating. Even though she was divorced and free, I never knew her to have a lover. Besides, we didn't mix in the same circles: she mixed with distinguished, intelligent, discreet people while our crowd were raucous and insatiable. All that my mother asked of them was to be either beautiful or funny. I think Anne looked down on us a little - my mother and me - on our penchant for having fun and our superficiality, just as she looked down on all forms of excess. All that brought us together were business dinners, (she worked in fashion and my mother was in advertising), the memory of my father and my own efforts to keep in touch as, although I found her intimidating, I admired her greatly. In short, her sudden arrival smacked of terrible timing when one considered Elsa's presence and Anne's views on education.

Elsa went up to bed after a multitude of questions regarding Anne's background. I stayed with my mother and moved to sit on the steps by her feet. She leaned over and placed her two hands on my shoulders:

"Why are you so skinny, my little dote? You are like a little wildcat. I would like to have a beautiful blonde-haired daughter; strong,[27] with eyes the colour of porcelain and…"

"That is not the issue here." I said. "Why on earth did you invite Anne? And why did she agree to come?"

"Perhaps she'd like to see your old mother, you never know!"

"You are not the sort of person that interests Anne," I replied. "She is too intelligent, she has too much self-respect. And what about Elsa? Have you thought about Elsa? Can you imagine the conversations between Anne and Elsa? *I* certainly can't!"

"I hadn't thought of that," she admitted. "It's true that it really is awful. Cécile, sweetie, what if we went back to Paris?"

She laughed softly as she rubbed my neck. I turned to look at her. Her dark eyes, edged by tiny laughter lines, twinkled and the corner of her mouth was turned up slightly. She had the look of a fawn. I joined in her laughter, just like I did every time that she got herself into a complicated situation.

"My old accomplice," she said. "What would I do without you?"

And the tone of her voice was so convincing, so tender, I understood that she would indeed have been unhappy. We talked late into the night of love and its complications. In my mother's eyes, they were imaginary. She completely rejected any notions of faithfulness, seriousness, or commitment. She explained how they were arbitrary, sterile. From anyone else, this would have shocked me. But I knew that in her case, this did not exclude either tenderness or devotion; sentiments that came more easily to her than she would have wanted. Sentiments that I knew to be

[27] This interpretation of the polysemic phrase: 'un peu forte' ['a bit heavy' or 'a bit strong] (Sagan 1954,2019: 17) is in keeping with feminist translation practice. Translated here as 'strong', the possibilities of interpretation to go beyond a mere physical description and create a less superficial feminine characterization are exploited. Ash's translation strayed into what might be considered misogynist territory with 'a bit plump' (1955,2011: 6) while Lloyd uses the rather old fashioned and sexist term 'quite buxom' (2013: 8).

fleeting. This concept captivated me: fast, violent,[28] fleeting love. I was not of an age to be seduced by fidelity. All I knew of love were rendezvous, kisses, and ennui.

Commentary

The challenges for a feminist interpretation arise in the dated terms that are now deemed to be demeaning to women and therefore incompatible with the feminist approach to this translation. To give an example, contrary to the two previous translations, the French word 'maîtresse' (Sagan 1954,2019: 11) is translated as 'lover' rather than mistress (see footnote #11). The word lover has the same connotations as mistress indicating a temporary sexual rather than committed relationship without inferring the usual, secondary position of the woman identified as a man's mistress. The omission of the patriarchal term represents a move away from the inequalities inherent in 'official' language.

The definition for 'maîtresse' provided by the Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary (1994/2007: 508) in fact reveals examples of Eva Nossem's 'heteroregulated', 'fossilized' lexicography (2018: 176-177). The dictionary's definitions for 'maître'/'maîtresse' begin with: 'être maître de soi'– 'to be in control of oneself' and go on to state that maîtresse is the feminine equivalent of maître apart from when it refers to being in command or to the plural form of 'teachers'. For example 'to rule the country' is translated as 'être le maître du pays' with no feminine option given. The only semantic value attributed to maîtresse that does not have a masculine equivalent is its definition as '*amante'* ['*lover '(f)*]. This feminine definition is accompanied, interestingly, with the example: 'to have many mistresses' (ibid.).

Another interesting challenge to a feminist translation of the source text arises with the use of the word 'léger' (see footnote #13) to describe Raymond's character. Translated literally, this term means 'light' unless it is used to describe a

[28] Lloyd's translation of this line toned down somewhat the intensity of the passion expressed by Cécile replacing 'violentes' ['violent'](Sagan 1954,2019: 18) with 'intensely experienced' (2013: 9).

man or a woman. In a masculine context, the Oxford-Hachette Dictionary translates it as 'fickle' (1994/2007: 486). The definition when used in a feminine context however is given as 'loose' followed by 'mœurs' [morals] in parentheses (ibid.) thereby indicating the negative meaning of this term when used to describe women. In response to this example of the inequalities inherent in patriarchal discourse, as exposed in the dictionary definitions, a *hijacking* of the text is put into action. Just as von Flotow appropriated the concept of *hijacking* from a negative context,[29] the term 'loose' is reappropriated as a more positive descriptor in the feminine characterisation of the regendered parent. 'Un homme léger' [a fickle man] is regendered and translated as 'She was loose'. The use of the personal pronoun 'she' to replace 'homme' (man) is designed to distance the use of this term from its traditional sexist meaning when collocated with woman or women. This is not the first time that this term has been reappropriated by women. *Loose Women* is the title of an ITV daytime chat show featuring four female presenters. The title reappropriates the term in a play on the phrase 'loose talk' to refer to a women's talk show. The term was also used recently in the fifth episode of the second series of *This Way Up*, a TV comedy-drama written by and starring Aisling Bea (Channel 4, 2021). This time the female character uses the term to describe herself as easygoing. It is this last meaning that is intended for the use of 'loose' in describing our regendered mother figure and as Sagan uses it as a descriptor several times in the text there is the opportunity to firmly establish its new interpretation.

Where the expression of female sexuality has been toned down in the two previous translations it is heightened here with a view to highlighting what Heather Lloyd terms 'the daringness of the action' (1995: 45) in Sagan's brave expression of female sexuality and the sexual undercurrent running through the narrative. The amplification of this aspect of the source text facilitates the preservation of some of the *titillation* that the writer achieved with her conservative 1950s' readership and makes it relevant to the modern reader more used to expressions of female sexuality and sexual preferences that go beyond a heteronormative duality. Twice in this

[29] *Hijacking* was a term that had been used by David Homel in his critique of interventionist feminist translation practices before von Flotow appropriated it to elucidate feminist translation practices.

passage the concept of seduction is raised: with the reference to Raymond's powers of seduction, 'sa séduction' ['his powers of seduction'] (Sagan 1954, 2019:12) and Anne's sexual attraction, 'une femme très séduisante' ['a very seductive woman'](ibid. 16). Whereas in both previous translations it is translated respectively as 'charm' (Ash 1954, 2011: 3, Lloyd 2013: 17) and 'most attractive' (Ash: 6) or 'very attractive' (Lloyd: 19), in this translation the more powerful concept of seduction is preserved. The young narrator's description of Anne as 'très séduisante' ['very seductive'] comes just after she has revealed an earlier infatuation with this feminine role model and maternal figure. The young writer is thus boldly expressing young, female sexuality and emphasising the importance she places on diverse sexual attractions and sexualities.

(ii) ***Part I, Chapter IV - Excerpt***

Preface

In this chapter the disruption of conventional boy/girl and parent/child roles is progressed in the relationships depicted by Sagan. Cécile's behaviour appears like that traditionally associated with young men when she admits to forgetting by morning the 'words of love' professed in the night. The childlike nature of the parent figure is also highlighted with Raymond's delight in his victory in a race that Cyril had in fact allowed him to win. Role-playing is very much to the fore of Sagan's narrative here where the behaviour of the central figures, whilst subscribing to conventional norms, is in fact concealing their true characters.

With Cécile's outburst following the visit to Cyril's house for afternoon tea Sagan gives voice to her rejection of the patriarchal, bourgeois female figure and the essentialist roles of motherhood and marriage assigned to women. As outlined previously, the regendering of Sagan's archetypal bourgeois wife and mother who remains voiceless, transforms the silenced representative figure, so often assigned to a female character, into a male figure. It is consequently the archetypal bourgeois father figure who is blamed in Cécile's tirade for maintaining the patriarchal society and all of the hypocrisies therein.

Translation 2*: *Pp. 41-44

We went out together to nightclubs in St-Tropez, dancing to the lapses of a clarinet as we murmured words of love that, so sweet in the night, I had forgotten by morning. Our days were spent sailing along the coast. My mother came with us sometimes. She was very fond of Cyril, especially since he had let her win a swimming race doing the crawl. She called him 'my little Cyril' and Cyril called her 'madame', but I asked myself which of the two was the adult.

One afternoon, we went for tea in Cyril's father's house. He was a quiet, smiling old man who spoke to us of the difficulties he faced as a widower and as a parent. My mother sympathised with him and giving Anne knowing looks, she heaped compliments on the gentleman. I must admit, she was never one to waste any time. Anne looked on with an amiable smile. On our way home she declared the old man to be charming. I exploded with a tirade of insults against this type of old man to which they responded with indulgent and amused smiles driving me into a worse temper.

'You don't seem to realise that he is satisfied with himself,' I roared. 'That he congratulates himself on a life well led because he feels that he has done his duty and…

'But it's true,' said Anne. 'He has fulfilled his duties as father and husband, as they say…

'And what about his duty as a whoremonger?'[30] I asked.

'I don't like vulgarities,' said Anne, 'even when ironic.'

'But I'm not being ironic. He got married just as everyone gets married, either obeying a desire or because it's the done thing. He acquired a wife to produce an heir[31] - you are familiar with how babies are made?'

[30] 'putain' ['whore'](Sagan 1954/2019: 42) is translated as 'whoremonger' rather than whore using the strategy of *supplementing* the text in order to preserve the criticism of bourgeois hypocrisy communicated in the source text. See commentary.
[31] The text has been supplemented here to render Sagan's critiques of bourgeois marriage as mentioned above. Having regendered the stereotypical mother figure

'Not as familiar as you it would seem,' replied Anne with an ironic tone, 'I do, however, have some idea.'

'So he has provided for this child.[32] He has probably spared himself the troubles and the anguish of adultery. He has led the life of thousands of others and he's proud of it, you see. He settled for the roles of bourgeois father and husband and did nothing to step outside these definitions. He congratulates himself for having abided by the limitations of these roles and for having achieved nothing besides.'

'What you're saying doesn't make much sense,' said my father.

'It's a trap that lures you in.'[33] I cried. 'You say to yourself afterwards: "I have done my duty" because you have in fact achieved nothing. If, with his background, he had taken a prostitute off the street and brought her into his home, then he could say he had *done* something honest that deserves to be congratulated.[34]

'Your ideas are fashionable but without value,' said Anne.

This may have been right. I believed what I was saying but it was true that I had heard it said before.[35] Nevertheless, the alternative way of life I spoke of was a

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the concept of *acquiring* a wife replaces the source text that reads simply 'Elle s'est mariée' ['She got married'] (Sagan 1954,2019: 42). This concept of an acquisition is in keeping with Cécile's depiction of marriage as a form of prostitution, a transaction.

[32] Again, terms such as 'heir', 'acquired', 'provided for' are used in the retranslation to further emphasize the transactional nature of Sagan's view of marriage and the role of a typical bourgeois husband/father in the patriarchal society of 1950s France.

[33] This further criticism of a bourgeois existence and its concept of marriage where the young protagonist compares it to a lure, was omitted by Ash (1955, 2011: 23).

[34] Regendering necessitates supplementing the text here once again to build on Sagan's exposure of the hypocrisy of patriarchal moral codes. The suggestion that it would be more honest for a woman to walk the streets and sell her body to make a living than to marry for wealth and respectability is reconfigured to suggest that it would be worthier for a man to take a woman out of a life of prostitution than marry within his own social class.

[35] Ash is somewhat dismissive in her interpretation of this sentence, insinuating that the young protagonist is only repeating what she had heard others say rather than having formulated the point of view based on something that she had heard: 'Je pensais ce que je disais, mais il était vrais que je l'avais entendu dire' ['I believed what I was saying, but it was true that I had heard it said'] (Sagan 1954, 2019) translated by Ash as: 'I believed what I said at the time, but I must admit that I was

lot like the one that my mother and I had chosen to lead and it was hurtful to hear Anne's disdain for it. You can be just as attached to futilities as to anything. But Anne did not consider me to be a thinking person. It suddenly seemed urgent, vital, that I disabuse her of this conception. I did not think that the opportunity would arrive so soon nor that I would know how to seize it. Moreover, I would have been the first to admit that in a month I would have a totally different opinion on the matter; that my convictions would not endure. What more could be expected at this early stage of my existence?

Commentary

The work of regendering is most evident in this passage where both figures that have switched genders are *on stage* providing a strong example of how Butler's performativity theory connects with the performativity of translation. Performance notes are provided in the form of footnotes, signalling how the reinterpretation of this text has been orchestrated while the performance of an archetypal male role (the philandering middle-aged man clinging onto his youth) is re-interpreted by a female protagonist. An imagining of how gender roles would be performed in a world where sexual fluidity was the norm and gender roles were open to interpretation. Sagan has created a recognizable stereotype in the middle-aged man whose ego is easily flattered and whose childishly competitive nature is accommodated when he is let win a swimming race by the younger man. The parody in this humorous characterisation is transformed when the regendered figure is no longer archetypal in that mother figures are not traditionally portrayed as being competitive with younger men. There is a *universalising* translational effect when the target of the comical satire in fact shifts from the stereotypical middle-aged male to a less representative female figure. Human vanity and the concern with appearing young and attractive are the new targets of the satirical text.

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only repeating what I had heard.' (1955, 2011: 23) My interpretation aims to show greater respect for the viewpoints expressed by the young author.

The strategy of supplementing, effectuated with the replacement of the term 'whore' by 'whoremonger', (see footnote #30) although triggering a departure from the meaning of the source text, nonetheless preserves Sagan's criticism of society's value system. Sagan's target appears to be the hypocrisy of a bourgeois society that upholds marriage as a sacred rite. The young protagonist exposes it here as a transaction in which a man essentially buys a wife and a woman is willing to be bought. An alternative translation could describe the widower as a prostitute but for reasons of verisimilitude he would need to be described as a young man thus insinuating that he married an older, wealthy woman. I prefer to keep this character as a conduit for Sagan's critique of the hypocrisy of conventional bourgeois morality and her rejection of limiting essentialist definitions of gender roles.

(iii) ***Part II, Chapter VII - Excerpt***

Preface

In this chapter Sagan highlights further perceived hypocrisies within society. As in the previous translated excerpt, relationships and sexual gratification appear to revolve around transactions with multiple references to prostitution. The portrayal of Anne as a feminist role model is strengthened here with the description of her fabulous American car. The loving account of the drive to Saint Raphael reflects the author's own love of fast cars but also adds to the feminist aspect of the text in that, as Céline Hromadova (2017: 31) points out, it was unusual for French women to drive at this time, and even more unusual for them to own their own car. Sagan is thus normalising the concept of female emancipation and writing a strong female role model into her brief coming-of-age novel. The symbolism in Anne taking the wheel of the car as she would most likely be taking the reigns in the unconventional family unit is further evidence of the feminist objectives written into the narrative. And where Sagan flips the conventional gender roles the regendering strategy flips them further.

Sagan's parodic characterisations reach a pantomimic height in this passage, described by Lloyd as 'a comic interlude' (1995: 54), with the figures of the nasty Madame Webb and her money-obsessed husband. Given their names and their ostentatious behaviour Sagan seems to have created caricatures representing the perceived American influence in French culture at this time (see Lloyd: 44). Madame Webb plays the role of the quintessential villain portrayed by Sagan as a snob, (described condescendingly by Cécile as someone who would use the term, 'déclassé' [de-classed] as an insult) and a devotee of consumerism (a woman who pays for love [see footnote #42).

Translation 3* : *Pp. 117 - 123

So, that evening, at around six o'clock, we set off in the car. Anne brought us in hers. I loved her car: it was a heavy American convertible that suited her professional image more than her taste. It was, however, perfectly suited to mine, full of glistening dials, quiet and high off the ground as it leaned into the bends. Nowhere else but seated side-by-side in the front of a car like this did I feel that sense of human connection. Elbow-to-elbow the three of us shared the mutual thrill of speed, the wind, and the risk of death to each in equal measure. Anne took the wheel, as if to symbolise her future role in the family unit that we would become. I hadn't been in her car since the night we went to Cannes, a memory that distracted my thoughts now.

We found Charles Webb and his wife in the Bar du Soleil. He was involved in theatrical publicity, while his wife looked after spending his hard earned cash on young men at an alarming rate. He was completely obsessed with making money and slavishly strived to make ends meet. This explained his tense, impatient manner that made him appear somewhat crude. He had been a lover of Elsa's for a long

period because, despite her beauty, she was not a particularly demanding woman and her loose[36] attitude in this regard was to his liking.

His wife on the other hand was mean. Anne didn't know her and I noticed that her handsome face quickly took on that disdainful, mocking expression that was her custom in public. As usual Charles Webb was talking a lot, whilst at the same time throwing Anne inquisitive glances. He was visibly asking himself what she was doing with this player,[37] Raquel, and her daughter. My pride was tickled at the thought of him being informed of their relationship. My mother leaned towards him a little and as she caught her breath she abruptly announced:

"I have some news for you, Charlie. Anne and I are moving in together when we return to Paris."

I inwardly rejoiced as he looked from one to the other and back again, perfectly dumbfounded. His wife was disgruntled: she had always had a weakness for my mother.

"Congratulations!" Webb finally cried in a stentorian voice…"That's a magnificent idea! My dear lady, you are taking charge of a hooligan! You are positively sublime!... Waiter!...We need to celebrate."

Anne was smiling, detached and at ease. I noticed, just then, that Webb's face had lit up. I refrained from turning to see why:

"Elsa! My God, it's Elsa Mackenbourg, she didn't see me. Raquel, did you see how beautiful that girl has become?..."

"Hasn't she just," said my mother with a proprietary air. Then she remembered and her expression changed.

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[36] The repetition of the term 'loose' to translate 'nonchalance' in this context has the aim of establishing its use to refer to an easygoing nature.

[37] The translation and regendering of 'coureur' presented a challenge in that inequalities between masculine and feminine dictionary definitions were found. ' 'Player' was chosen as a gender neutral term that is normally used in a male context with a view to advancing Sagan's work in normalizing female promiscuity. For a definition of 'player' as it is employed in this context see The Merriam Webster Online Dictionary: 'f. Player or less commonly playa**,** US slang: a person and especially a man who has many lovers.' (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/player)

Anne couldn't help but notice the intonation in my mother's voice. She quickly looked away and turned to face me. As she opened her mouth and searched for something to say, I leaned over:

"Anne, your elegance is causing a sensation; there's someone[38] over there who can't stop looking at you."

I had said it confidentially, that is to say, in hushed tones just loud enough for my mother to hear. She immediately turned and saw the admirer in question.

"I don't like that," said my mother, and she took Anne's hand.

"Aren't they sweet!" Mrs Webb remarked with a strong hint of irony. "Charles, you shouldn't have disturbed these lovers. You should have just asked little Cécile to join us."

"Little Cécile wouldn't have come," I replied without hesitation.

"Why ever not? Do you have lovers amongst the fishermen?"

She had once seen me sitting on a bench in conversation with a bus conductor and had ever since treated me as though I were socially downgraded or as she called it: 'déclassé'.

"Yes" I replied chirpily in order to appear gay.

"And do you go fishing often?"

The worst of it was that she thought she was being funny. My temper was slowly rising.

"I am not a specialist in mackerel,"[39] I said, "but I do fish."

There was silence until Anne raised her voice and as composed as ever asked:

"Raquel, would you ask the waiter for a straw? They are essential when drinking freshly squeezed orange juice."

Charles Webb quickly began to pontificate on refreshing drinks. I saw that my mother had become engrossed in the contents of her glass in an attempt to conceal

[38] Gender marker omitted: 'un homme' [a man] translated as 'someone'.
[39] Apart from referring to the type of fish, 'macquereau' [mackerel] is a slang term used to refer to a pimp (Larousse/Caradec 1988: 229). Cécile is alluding to Mrs Webb's propensity for paying for sex with young men. Ash (1954, 2011: 75) omitted this remark while Lloyd opted for the less cutting, more comical alternative, 'old trout' (2013: 78) that preserved the concept of fishing for lovers but forfeited the loaded insinuation held in the French term macquereau [mackerel/pimp].

a fit of the giggles. Anne threw me a pleading look. We promptly decided to have dinner together, just as people who have narrowly avoided a row tend to do.

I drank a lot over dinner. I needed to forget Anne's worried expression when she looked at my mother or her vaguely grateful expression when her gaze rested on me. Whenever Webb's wife addressed herself to me I responded with an ingratiating smile. This tactic discomfited her and she quickly became aggressive. Anne signalled to me not to engage. She had an aversion to scenes in public and felt that Madame Webb was ready to set one off. For my part, I was used to what was a common occurrence in our milieu so that whatever she was saying did not vex me in the slightest.

After dinner, we moved on to a nightclub in Saint-Raphaël. Shortly after we arrived, Elsa and Cyril appeared. Elsa paused at the entrance to speak loudly to the coat-check lady and, trailed by poor Cyril, entered the club. It occurred to me that she was behaving more like a prostitute[40] than a sweetheart, but she was beautiful enough to get away with it.

"Who is this pretty boy?" Asked Charles Webb. "He's rather young."

"It's love," whispered his wife. "Love suits him…"

"Love indeed!" My mother said angrily. "More like a crush."

I looked at Anne. She was calmly contemplating Elsa in the same detached way that she would contemplate any very young woman or the models presenting her collections on the catwalk. Without a hint of acrimony. For a moment I admired her passionately[41] for showing no sign of spite or jealousy. In any case, I couldn't see how she could possibly feel jealous of Elsa. She was a hundred times finer and more beautiful than Elsa and as I was drunk I told her so. She looked at me curiously.

"More beautiful than Elsa? Do you really think so?"

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[40]The term 'grue' translated as 'slut', 'prostitute' in the Oxford-Hachette Dictionary (2007:414) is interpreted as 'tart' by Lloyd (2013: 79) and 'behaving badly' by Ash (1955, 2011: 76). 'Prostitute' is used here to preserve Sagan's critical view of the transactional nature of relationships whilst at the same time avoiding misogynist slurs.

[41] The hint of a lesbian sexual attraction is once again diminished in the previous translation by Lloyd where 'Je l'admirai un instant passionément..' [for a moment I admired her passionately..'] is translated as 'For a moment I admired her intensely…' (2013: 79).

"Without a doubt!"

"That's always pleasant to hear. But, once again, you are drinking too much. Give me your glass. You're not too sad to see your Cyril there? As a matter of fact he looks bored."

"He's my lover," I said gaily.

"You are completely drunk! Luckily, it's time to go home."

It was a relief for us to part company with the Webbs and I addressed Madame Webb as "dear lady" in a show of exaggerated politeness. My mother took the wheel and I rested my head on Anne's shoulder.

I thought to myself how I preferred Anne to the Webbs and to all the people that we usually saw. I thought how she was superior, more dignified, more intelligent. My mother spoke little. She was no doubt re-playing Elsa's entrance in her mind.

"Is she asleep?" She asked Anne.

"Like a baby. All in all, she behaved reasonably well. Apart from the reference to mackerel which was a tad direct…"

My mother started to laugh. There was a silence. Then I heard my mother's voice once again.

"Anne, I love you, I love only you. Do you believe me?"

"Don't tell me so often, it frightens me."

"Give me your hand."

I nearly sat up to protest: "No! Not when you're driving along the Corniche." But I was a little tipsy, Anne's perfume, the sea-wind in my hair, the little scratch on my shoulder that Cyril had given me when we were making love, so many reasons to be happy and to stay quiet. I was falling asleep. Meanwhile, Elsa and poor Cyril must have been having a difficult journey home on the motorcycle that his father had given him for his last birthday. I'm not sure why but the thought of this brought me to tears. This car that was so smooth, the suspension crafted so as to lull you to sleep…Sleep that was no doubt eluding Madame Webb at this moment! No doubt,

at her age, I too would pay young people[42] to love me because love is the sweetest and most life affirming, most reasonable[43] thing. The price is not important. What is important is not to become bitter and jealous like she was about Elsa and Anne. I started to laugh softly. Anne's shoulder dipped a little further. "Go to sleep," she ordered. I went to sleep.

Commentary

Once again the regendering from male to female reveals a number of *defaillances* in heteroregulated official language. In translating the epithet used to describe Raymond: 'ce coureur' [this womanizer], (see footnote #38), a subtle semantic difference in the dictionary definitions depending on gender is evident. While the masculine 'coureur' is defined as 'womanizer' the feminine 'coureuse' is defined as 'manhunter' which does not have quite the same status as its masculine 'equivalent' (Oxford Hachette French Dictionary 1994/2007: 205). The French language uses the masculine and feminine versions of this term to describe someone in the business of seduction, the English feminine equivalent: 'manhunter', suggests a woman who hunts for men without necessarily having any powers of seduction. The masculine equivalent, 'womanizer' evokes, on the other hand, the image of an accomplished seducer of women. For this reason 'player' the gender neutral term that is however traditionally used in a male context was chosen with a view to levelling the playing field so to speak and appropriating this term for use in a female context.

[42] 'jeunes gens' (young people) translated as 'young men' by Lloyd (2013: 80) thus deleting any possible allusion to sexual fluidity. Ash reduced it from 'young people' to 'someone', perhaps in a bid to play down the idea of female promiscuity (cf. Sagan 1954, 2011: 124, Lloyd 2013: 80, Ash 1955, 2011: 77).

[43] The previous translations omit the allusion to a transaction that the polysemic term, raisonnable [reasonable] suggests. '…l'amour est la chose la plus douce et la plus vivante, la plus raisonnable.' [love is the sweetest and most alive thing, the most reasonable] is reduced by Ash to '…love is the most wonderful thing in the world.' (1954, 2019: 77) and rewritten as 'love is the sweetest thing, it's what in life is most vivid and has the most point' by Lloyd (2013: 80).

Furthermore in choosing the term 'player', which can of course also be interpreted as referring to an actor or performer, the concepts of gender and of translation as performances, that colour this interpretation, are enhanced.

The footnotes identifying the numerous discrepancies in the comparisons between the three translations of this chapter not only serve to highlight the covert interventions by the two previous translators but also the aspects of the text that this retranslation intensifies. That is to say the sexual undercurrent that normalises and gives voice to female sexuality and sexual fluidity in addition to the biting critique of bourgeois society and its values. Indeed, the proliferation of comparisons between interpretations given in the footnotes indicate to what extent the previous translations fulfil Antoine Berman's contention that initial translations valiantly serve to open the door for multiple retranslations. Irene Ash demonstrated with her prose, that diligently worked to match the elegance of Sagan's writing, how by focussing on readability and respecting the dominant target culture norms, a wide audience for foreign fiction can be reached. Heather Lloyd opened up the potential for multiple interpretations of Sagan's work by restoring it completely.

Conclusion

The outcomes of the retranslation at the heart of this thesis, as outlined in the commentaries above, strongly suggest a positive role for feminist translations of works of fiction with feminist overtones and particularly for the practice of regendering. There are indeed a number of potential contributions to the field of feminist translation theory and practice that have become evident through the work of this writing project. Firstly, by retranslating the work of Françoise Sagan, whose literary oeuvre has been largely overlooked, one of the fundamental objectives of the feminist translation movement has been met, i.e. to resurrect women writers whose work has been undermined or neglected in the past. Added to this, the feminist retranslation addresses the lack of attention paid to Sagan's feminist perspectives expressed through her narratives and her characterisations in previous translations. The radical style of translation that makes explicit the feminist standpoints has the potential to generate a discourse around both gender issues and Françoise Sagan's brand of sexual emancipation.

Secondly, using *Bonjour Tristesse* as the source text for the premise of this thesis underscores the suitability of works of fiction critiquing patriarchal norms with the light touch of parody and satire. Indeed focusing on 'quietly' feminist works with a wide appeal and elements of comedy would appear to be a positive direction for feminist translation practice to take. The parody in Sagan's writing enhances the parody identified by Judith Butler in the performance of gender, which is in turn made explicit in the regendering of protagonists and finally in the paratextual commentaries that flaunt its effects. In *Gender and Translation*, Luise von Flotow remarks on the criticisms aimed at feminist writing and translation in terms of its inaccessibility (1997: 79-81). Von Flotow responds to this criticism with the somewhat doubtful assertion that these 'elitist' types of translations are balanced out by the many other feminist approaches. With this in mind, this thesis is posited as 'a point of departure' (Benjamin in Baldo 2017: 194) that is headed in the direction of the great literary oeuvre of Françoise Sagan as well as similar works of

fiction conveying feminist perspectives with a light touch, a high level of readability and a broad appeal.

Thirdly, taking a closer look at the regendered protagonists and how they perform Sagan's parodic archetypes the potential for a regendering strategy that goes beyond a binary transformation suggests itself. To have a woman playing an archetypal male, while drawing attention to the absurdities around gendered behaviour also creates characterisations that fall outside of any 'type' and disturb fixed ideas regarding gender roles. In his very favourable review of Angela Winkler's portrayal of a regendered Hamlet, Michael Billington (2000) posits that the absence of any attempt in the performance to deliver an imitation of maleness universalises the character. In Tony Howard's book devoted to the portrayals over the centuries of Hamlet as a woman, he also finds in Winkler's childlike portrayal that 'Hamlet became pre-gendered' (Howard 2021: Excerpt Online). A similar effect can be seen in the regendered portrayal of Raymond, a middle-aged man struggling to hold onto his boyhood. When played by a woman this character does not crystallize into any recognizable definition of male or female gender. A de-limiting rendering of gender is produced that is in keeping with the value Sagan placed on people over gender. This universalising, pre-gendering affect could be developed in future feminist translation projects centring on regendered characters. The translator's gaze could turn to Françoise Sagan's later texts that go further along the road to normalising sexual emancipation where there is no issue made of the stories of homosexual figures. Their stories simply 'enrich the social and emotional portraits drawn by the writer' (Hromadova 2017: 39, my translation).

Finally, in my opinion, the most useful contribution to emerge from this retranslation that is structured around a regendering strategy is on a lexicographical level. The overlap between feminist translation practice and those translators calling for a *queering* of texts is a little more perceptible now thanks to the discoveries that were triggered by the strategy. The flipping of two of the protagonists in these passages has in fact raised multiple challenges in terms of dealing with lexicographical inequalities and necessitated the inclusion of copious footnotes. Queering the text in order to reflect experiences for which the masculine gendered

form is not representative exposes multiple *defaillances* in everyday language. Once exposed these inequalities can be addressed as with the reappropriations of adjectives. An approach that is in line with the work of activists and academics who, for example, reappropriated the concept of 'queer' to advance a move away from heternormative binaries. Words that presented translational challenges to this feminist translator were identified in the paratextual elements and a means of identifying those sexist terms that need attention emerged. Exciting opportunities for further reappropriations along the lines of those effectuated with the term 'loose' have come to the surface. What can be done with 'mistress' for example? It is the contention of this thesis that regendering gives feminist and all gender conscious translators a new field of practice to plough.

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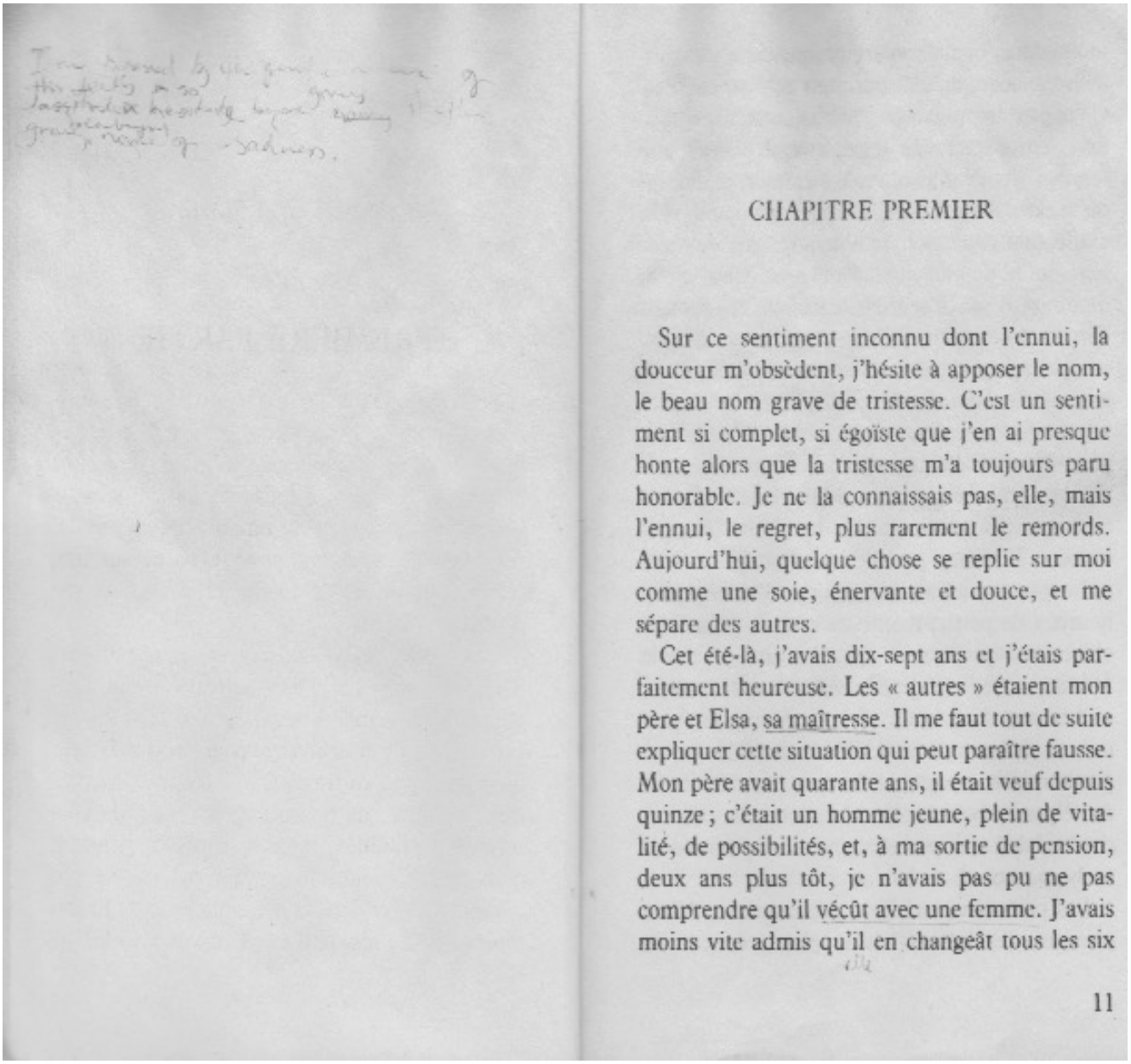
APPENDIX 1

Bonjour Tristesse

Chapter 1



CHAPITRE PREMIER

Sur ce sentiment inconnu dont l'ennui, la douceur m'obsèdent, j'hésite à apposer le nom, le beau nom grave de tristesse. C'est un sentiment si complet, si égoïste que j'en ai presque honte alors que la tristesse m'a toujours paru honorable. Je ne la connaissais pas, elle, mais l'ennui, le regret, plus rarement le remords. Aujourd'hui, quelque chose se replie sur moi comme une soie, énervante et douce, et me sépare des autres.

Cet été-là, j'avais dix-sept ans et j'étais parfaitement heureuse. Les « autres » étaient mon père et Elsa, sa maîtresse. Il me faut tout de suite expliquer cette situation qui peut paraître fausse. Mon père avait quarante ans, il était veuf depuis quinze ; c'était un homme jeune, plein de vitalité, de possibilités, et, à ma sortie de pension, deux ans plus tôt, je n'avais pas pu ne pas comprendre qu'il vécût avec une femme. J'avais moins vite admis qu'il en changeât tous les six

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mois! Mais bientôt sa séduction, cette vie nouvelle et facile, mes dispositions m'y amenèrent. C'était un homme léger, habile en affaires, toujours curieux et vite lassé, et qui plaisait aux femmes. Je n'eus aucun mal à l'aimer, et tendrement, car il était bon, généreux, gai, et plein d'affection pour moi. Je n'imagine pas de meilleur ami ni de plus distrayant. A ce début d'été, il poussa même la gentillesse jusqu'à me demander si la compagnie d'Elsa, sa maîtresse actuelle, ne m'ennuierait pas pendant les vacances. Je ne pus que l'encourager car je savais son besoin des femmes et que, d'autre part, Elsa ne nous fatiguerait pas. C'était une grande fille rousse, mi-créature, mi-mondaine, qui faisait de la figuration dans les studios et les bars des Champs-Elysées. Elle était gentille, assez simple et sans prétentions sérieuses. Nous étions d'ailleurs trop heureux de partir, mon père et moi, pour faire objection à quoi que ce soit. Il avait loué, sur la Méditerranée, une grande villa blanche, isolée, ravissante, dont nous rêvions depuis les premières chaleurs de juin. Elle était bâtie sur un promontoire, dominant la mer, cachée de la route par un bois de pins ; un chemin de chèvres descendait à une petite crique dorée, bordée de rochers roux où se balançait la mer.

Les premiers jours furent éblouissants. Nous passions des heures sur la plage, écrasés de

chaleur, prenant peu à peu une couleur saine et dorée, à l'exception d'Elsa qui rougissait et pelait dans d'affreuses souffrances. Mon père exécutait des mouvements de jambes compliqués pour faire disparaître un début d'estomac incompatible avec ses dispositions de Don Juan. Dès l'aube, j'étais dans l'eau, une eau fraîche et transparente où je m'enfouissais, où je m'épuisais en des mouvements désordonnés pour me laver de toutes les ombres, de toutes les poussières de Paris. Je m'allongeais dans le sable, en prenais une poignée dans ma main, le laissais s'enfuir de mes doigts en un jet jaunâtre et doux, je me disais qu'il s'enfuyait comme le temps, que c'était une idée facile et qu'il était agréable d'avoir des idées faciles. C'était l'été.

Le sixième jour, je vis Cyril pour la première fois. Il longeait la côte sur un petit bateau à voile et chavira devant notre crique. Je l'aidai à récupérer ses affaires et, au milieu de nos rires, j'appris qu'il s'appelait Cyril, qu'il était étudiant en droit et passait ses vacances avec sa mère, dans une villa voisine. Il avait un visage de Latin, très brun, très ouvert, avec quelque chose d'équilibré, de protecteur, qui me plut. Pourtant, je fuyais ces étudiants de l'Université, brutaux, préoccupés d'eux-mêmes, de leur jeunesse surtout, y trouvant le sujet d'un drame ou un prétexte à leur ennui. Je n'aimais pas la jeunesse.

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Je leur préférais de beaucoup les amis de mon père, des hommes de quarante ans qui me parlaient avec courtoisie et attendrissement, me témoignaient une douceur de père et d'amant. Mais Cyril me plut. Il était grand et parfois beau, d'une beauté qui donnait confiance. Sans partager avec mon père cette aversion pour la laideur qui nous faisait souvent fréquenter des gens stupides, j'éprouvais en face des gens dénués de tout charme physique une sorte de gêne, d'absence ; leur résignation à ne pas plaire me semblait une infirmité indécente. Car, que cherchions-nous, sinon plaire ? Je ne sais pas encore aujourd'hui si ce goût de conquête cache une surabondance de vitalité, un goût d'emprise ou le besoin furtif, inavoué, d'être rassuré sur soi-même, soutenu.

Quand Cyril me quitta, il m'offrit de m'apprendre la navigation à voile. Je rentrai dîner, très absorbée par sa pensée, et ne participai pas, ou peu, à la conversation ; c'est à peine si je remarquai la nervosité de mon père. Après dîner, nous nous allongeâmes dans des fauteuils, sur la terrasse, comme tous les soirs. Le ciel était éclaboussé d'étoiles. Je les regardais, espérant vaguement qu'elles seraient en avance et commenceraient à sillonner le ciel de leur chute. Mais nous n'étions qu'au début de juillet, elles ne bougeaient pas. Dans les graviers de la terrasse, les cigales chantaient. Elles devaient être des milliers, ivres de chaleur et de lune, à lancer ainsi ce drôle de cri des nuits entières. On m'avait expliqué qu'elles ne faisaient que frotter l'une contre l'autre leurs élytres, mais je préférais croire à ce chant de gorge guttural, instinctif comme celui des chats en leur saison. Nous étions bien ; des petits grains de sable entre ma peau et mon chemisier me défendaient seuls des tendres assauts du sommeil. C'est alors que mon père toussota et se redressa sur sa chaise longue.

« J'ai une arrivée à vous annoncer », dit-il.

Je fermai les yeux avec désespoir. Nous étions trop tranquilles, cela ne pouvait durer !

« Dites-nous vite qui, cria Elsa, toujours avide de mondanités.

– Anne Larsen », dit mon père, et il se tourna vers moi.

Je le regardai, trop étonnée pour réagir.

« Je lui ai dit de venir si elle était trop fatiguée par ses collections et elle... elle arrive. »

Je n'y aurais jamais pensé. Anne Larsen était une ancienne amie de ma pauvre mère et n'avait que très peu de rapports avec mon père. Néanmoins à ma sortie de pension, deux ans plus tôt, mon père, très embarrassé de moi, m'avait envoyée à elle. En une semaine, elle m'avait habillée avec goût et appris à vivre. J'en avais conçu pour elle une admiration passionnée

Pp. 16-17

qu'elle avait habilement détournée sur un jeune homme de son entourage. Je lui devais donc mes premières élégances et mes premières amours et lui en avais beaucoup de reconnaissance. A quarante-deux ans, c'était une femme très séduisante, très recherchée, avec un beau visage orgueilleux et las, indifférent. Cette indifférence était la seule chose qu'on pût lui reprocher. Elle était aimable et lointaine. Tout en elle reflétait une volonté constante, une tranquillité de cœur qui intimidait. Bien que divorcée et libre, on ne lui connaissait pas d'amant. D'ailleurs, nous n'avions pas les mêmes relations : elle fréquentait des gens fins, intelligents, discrets, et nous des gens bruyants, assoiffés, auxquels mon père demandait simplement d'être beaux ou drôles. Je crois qu'elle nous méprisait un peu, mon père et moi, pour notre parti pris d'amusements, de futilités, comme elle méprisait tout excès. Seuls nous réunissaient des dîners d'affaires – elle s'occupait de couture et mon père de publicité –, le souvenir de ma mère et mes efforts, car, si elle m'intimidait, je l'admirais beaucoup. Enfin cette arrivée subite apparaissait comme un contretemps si l'on pensait à la présence d'Elsa et aux idées d'Anne sur l'éducation.

Elsa monta se coucher après une foule de questions sur la situation d'Anne dans le monde. Je restai seule avec mon père et vins m'asseoir

sur les marches, à ses pieds. Il se pencha et posa ses deux mains sur mes épaules :

« Pourquoi es-tu si efflanquée, ma douce ? Tu as l'air d'un petit chat sauvage. J'aimerais avoir une belle fille blonde, un peu forte, avec des yeux en porcelaine et...

– La question n'est pas là, dis-je. Pourquoi as-tu invité Anne ? Et pourquoi a-t-elle accepté ?

– Pour voir ton vieux père, peut-être. On ne sait jamais.

– Tu n'es pas le genre d'hommes qui intéresse Anne, dis-je. Elle est trop intelligente, elle se respecte trop. Et Elsa ? As-tu pensé à Elsa ? Tu t'imagines les conversations entre Anne et Elsa ? Moi pas !

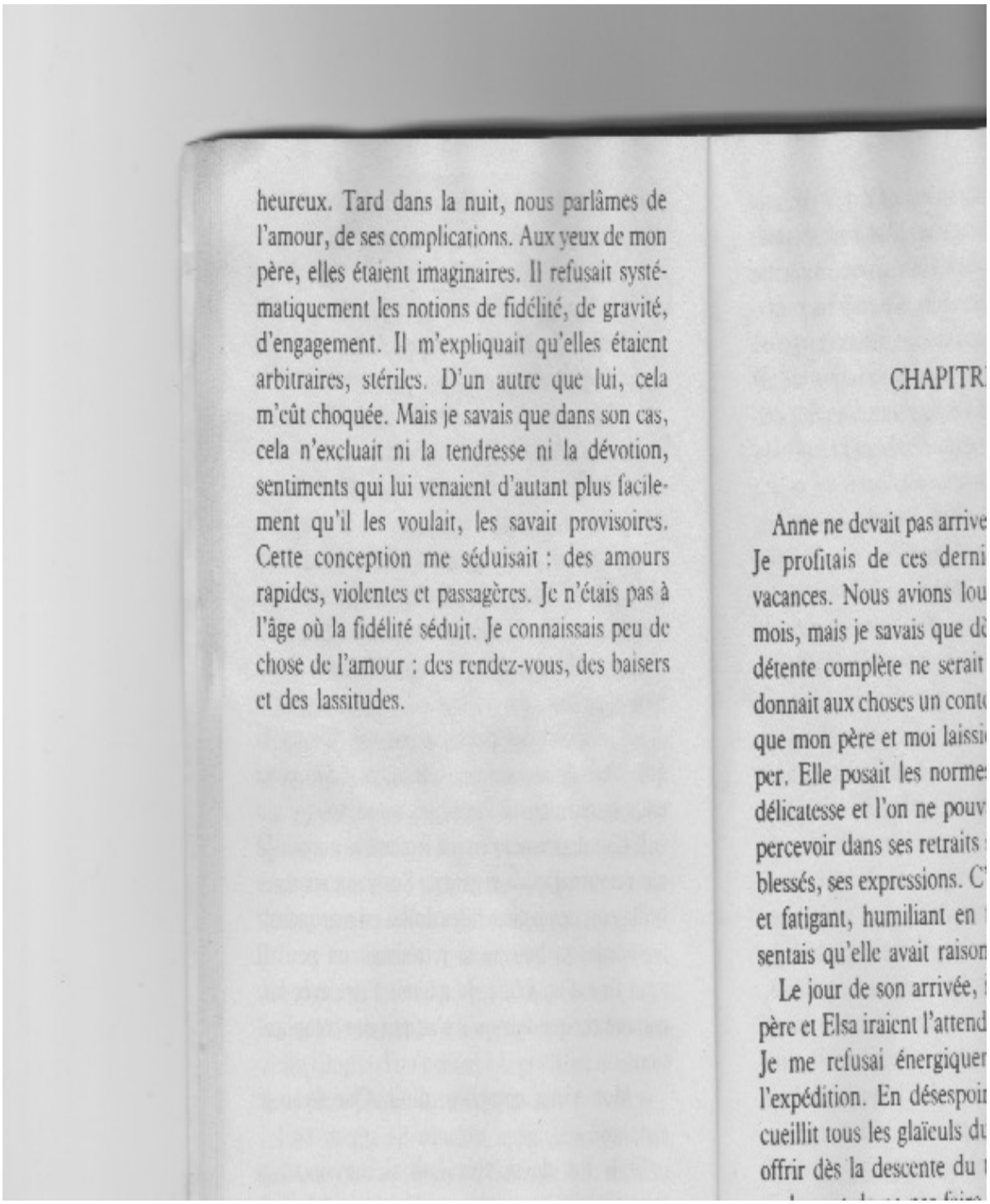
– Je n'y ai pas pensé, avoua-t-il. C'est vrai que c'est épouvantable. Cécile, ma douce, si nous retournions à Paris ? »

Il riait doucement en me frottant la nuque. Je me retournai et le regardai. Ses yeux sombres brillaient, des petites rides drôles en marquaient les bords, sa bouche se retroussait un peu. Il avait l'air d'un faune. Je me mis à rire avec lui, comme chaque fois qu'il s'attirait des complications.

« Mon vieux complice, dit-il. Que ferais-je sans toi ? »

Et le ton de sa voix était si convaincu, si tendre, que je compris qu'il aurait été mal-

P. 18



heureux. Tard dans la nuit, nous parlâmes de l'amour, de ses complications. Aux yeux de mon père, elles étaient imaginaires. Il refusait systématiquement les notions de fidélité, de gravité, d'engagement. Il m'expliquait qu'elles étaient arbitraires, stériles. D'un autre que lui, cela m'eût choquée. Mais je savais que dans son cas, cela n'excluait ni la tendresse ni la dévotion, sentiments qui lui venaient d'autant plus facilement qu'il les voulait, les savait provisoires. Cette conception me séduisait : des amours rapides, violentes et passagères. Je n'étais pas à l'âge où la fidélité séduit. Je connaissais peu de chose de l'amour : des rendez-vous, des baisers et des lassitudes.

CHAPITR

Anne ne devait pas arrive
Je profitais de ces derni
vacances. Nous avions lou
mois, mais je savais que dé
détente complète ne serait
donnait aux choses un cont
que mon père et moi laissi
per. Elle posait les norme
délicatesse et l'on ne pouv
percevoir dans ses retraits
blessés, ses expressions. C
et fatigant, humiliant en
sentais qu'elle avait raison

Le jour de son arrivée,
père et Elsa iraient l'attend
Je me refusai énergiquer
l'expédition. En désespoi
cueillit tous les glaïeuls du
offrir dès la descente du

APPENDIX 2

Chapter IV – Excerpt

P. 41

excédé. Je lui
ferma les yeux
voix basse,

ne idée un peu
de sensations
es... »
urs avaient été
un visage, un
ants épanouis,
uvenir que j'en

nne. Il y a la
, le manque...
pouvez pas

main et prit un
mît en colère,
rence résignée
ale. Je pensai
ais comme un
'étais pauvre et
n'était affreuse-
is pas habituée,
s, ni en bien ni
bre, je rêvassai.
noi, j'entendais
et autre chose,
n'avait-il jamais

Je ne me rappelle plus les incidents de ces quinze jours. Je l'ai déjà dit, je ne voulais rien voir de précis, de menaçant. De la suite de ces vacances, bien sûr, je me rappelle très exactement puisque j'y apportai toute mon attention, toutes mes possibilités. Mais ces trois semaines-là, ces trois semaines heureuses en somme... Quel est le jour où mon père regarda ostensiblement la bouche d'Anne, celui où il lui reprocha à haute voix son indifférence en faisant semblant d'en rire ? Celui où il compara sans en sourire sa subtilité avec la semi-bêtise d'Elsa ? Ma tranquillité reposait sur cette idée stupide qu'ils se connaissaient depuis quinze ans et que s'ils avaient dû s'aimer, ils auraient commencé plus tôt. « Et, me disais-je, si cela doit arriver, mon père sera amoureux trois mois et Anne en gardera quelques souvenirs passionnés et un peu d'humiliation. » Ne savais-je pas cependant qu'Anne n'était pas une femme que l'on pût abandonner ainsi ? Mais Cyril était là et suffisait à mes pensées. Nous sortions ensemble souvent le soir dans les boîtes de Saint-Tropez, nous dansions sur les défaillances d'une clarinette en nous disant des mots d'amour que j'avais oubliés le lendemain, mais si doux le soir même. Le jour, nous faisions de la voile autour de la côte. Mon père nous accompagnait parfois. Il appréciait beaucoup Cyril, surtout depuis que ce dernier

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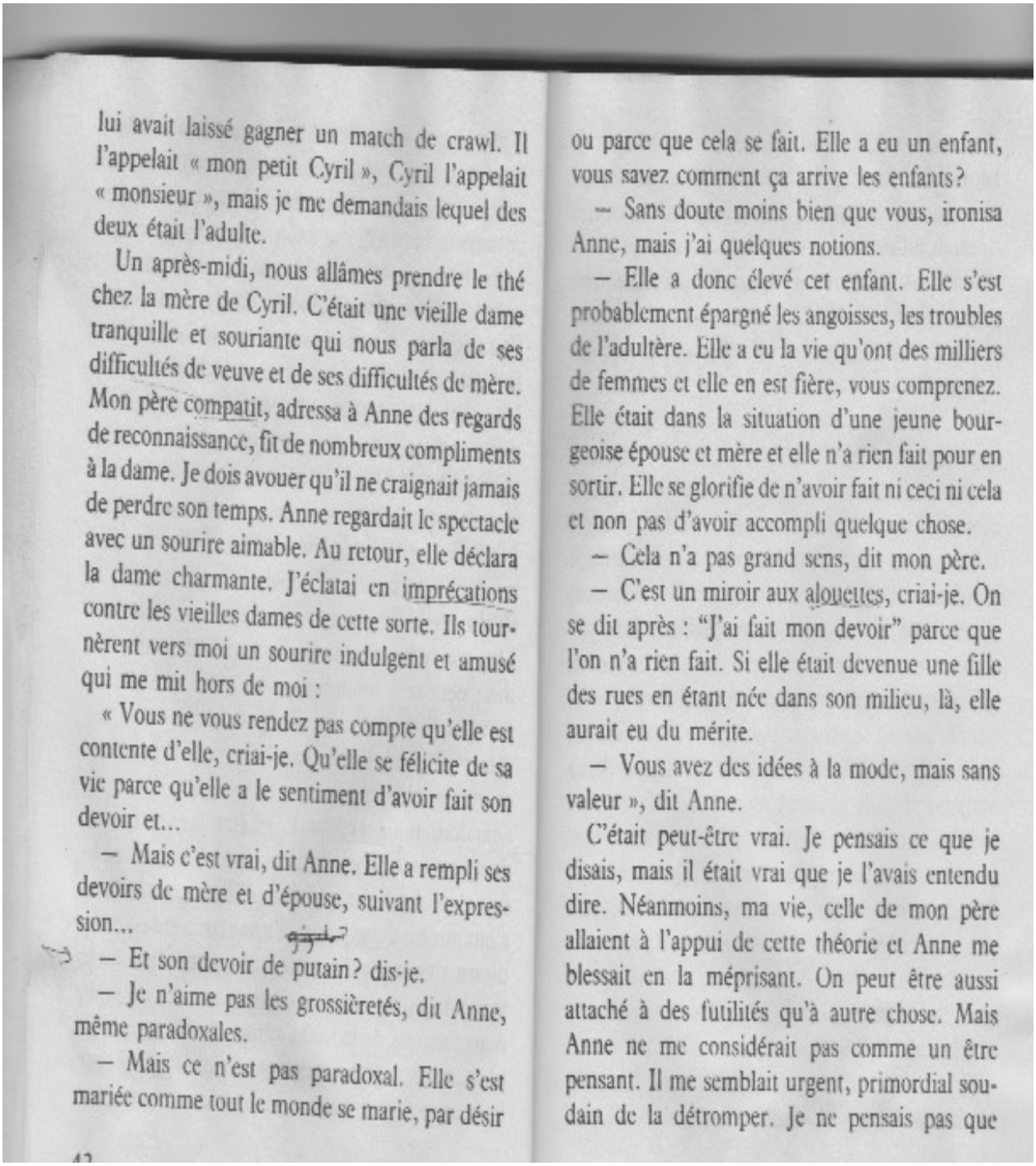
Pp. 42-43



lui avait laissé gagner un match de crawl. Il l'appelait « mon petit Cyril », Cyril l'appelait « monsieur », mais je me demandais lequel des deux était l'adulte.

Un après-midi, nous allâmes prendre le thé chez la mère de Cyril. C'était une vieille dame tranquille et souriante qui nous parla de ses difficultés de veuve et de ses difficultés de mère. Mon père compatit, adressa à Anne des regards de reconnaissance, fit de nombreux compliments à la dame. Je dois avouer qu'il ne craignait jamais de perdre son temps. Anne regardait le spectacle avec un sourire aimable. Au retour, elle déclara la dame charmante. J'éclatai en imprécations contre les vieilles dames de cette sorte. Ils tournèrent vers moi un sourire indulgent et amusé qui me mit hors de moi :

« Vous ne vous rendez pas compte qu'elle est contente d'elle, criai-je. Qu'elle se félicite de sa vie parce qu'elle a le sentiment d'avoir fait son devoir et...

— Mais c'est vrai, dit Anne. Elle a rempli ses devoirs de mère et d'épouse, suivant l'expression...

— Et son devoir de putain ? dis-je.

— Je n'aime pas les grossièretés, dit Anne, même paradoxales.

— Mais ce n'est pas paradoxal. Elle s'est mariée comme tout le monde se marie, par désir ou parce que cela se fait. Elle a eu un enfant, vous savez comment ça arrive les enfants ?

— Sans doute moins bien que vous, ironisa Anne, mais j'ai quelques notions.

— Elle a donc élevé cet enfant. Elle s'est probablement épargné les angoisses, les troubles de l'adultère. Elle a eu la vie qu'ont des milliers de femmes et elle en est fière, vous comprenez. Elle était dans la situation d'une jeune bourgeoise épouse et mère et elle n'a rien fait pour en sortir. Elle se glorifie de n'avoir fait ni ceci ni cela et non pas d'avoir accompli quelque chose.

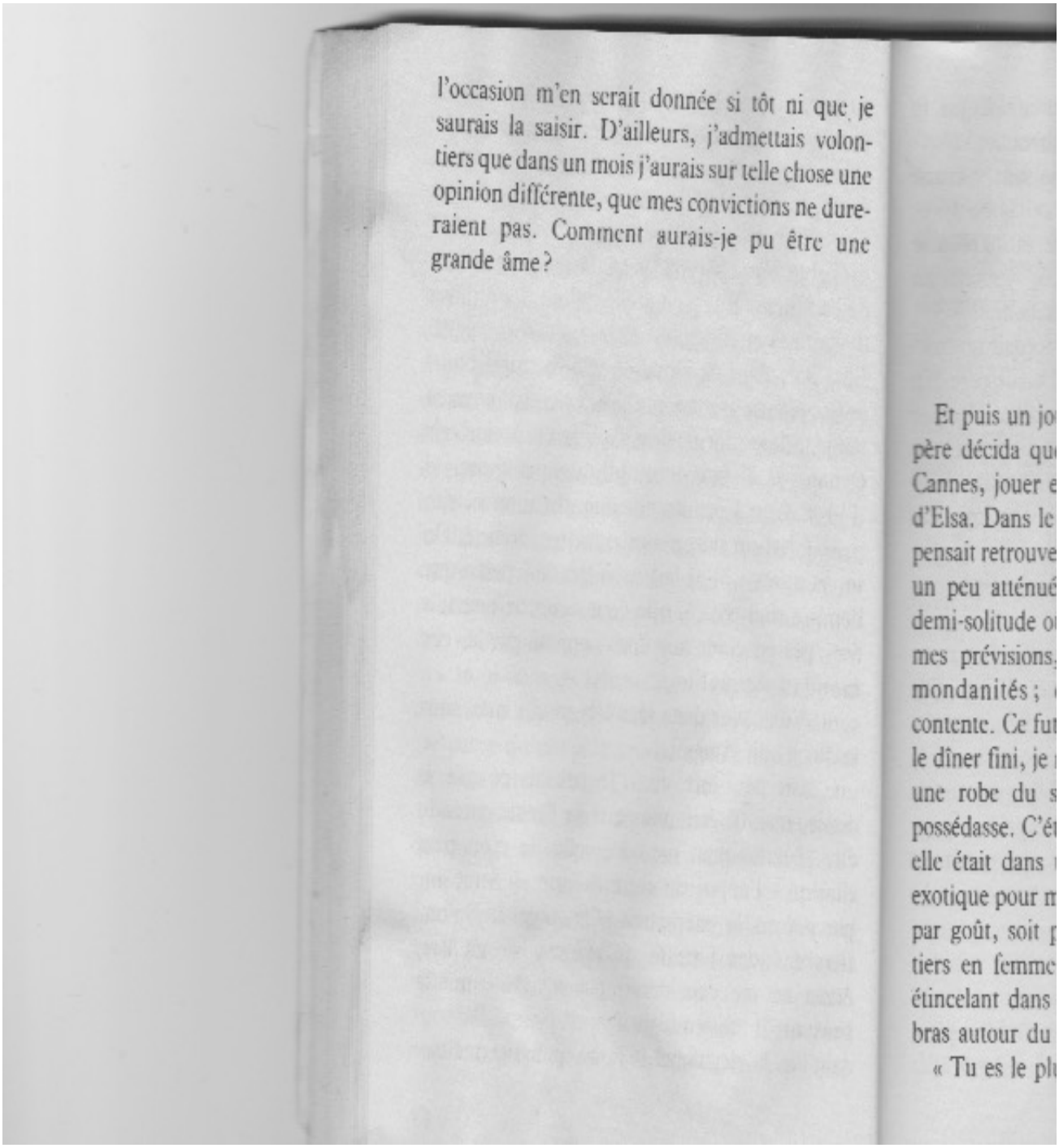
— Cela n'a pas grand sens, dit mon père.

— C'est un miroir aux alouettes, criai-je. On se dit après : "J'ai fait mon devoir" parce que l'on n'a rien fait. Si elle était devenue une fille des rues en étant née dans son milieu, là, elle aurait eu du mérite.

— Vous avez des idées à la mode, mais sans valeur », dit Anne.

C'était peut-être vrai. Je pensais ce que je disais, mais il était vrai que je l'avais entendu dire. Néanmoins, ma vie, celle de mon père allaient à l'appui de cette théorie et Anne me blessait en la méprisant. On peut être aussi attaché à des futilités qu'à autre chose. Mais Anne ne me considérait pas comme un être pensant. Il me semblait urgent, primordial soudain de la détromper. Je ne pensais pas que

P. 44



l'occasion m'en serait donnée si tôt ni que je saurais la saisir. D'ailleurs, j'admettais volontiers que dans un mois j'aurais sur telle chose une opinion différente, que mes convictions ne dureraient pas. Comment aurais-je pu être une grande âme ?

Et puis un jo
père décida qu
Cannes, jouer e
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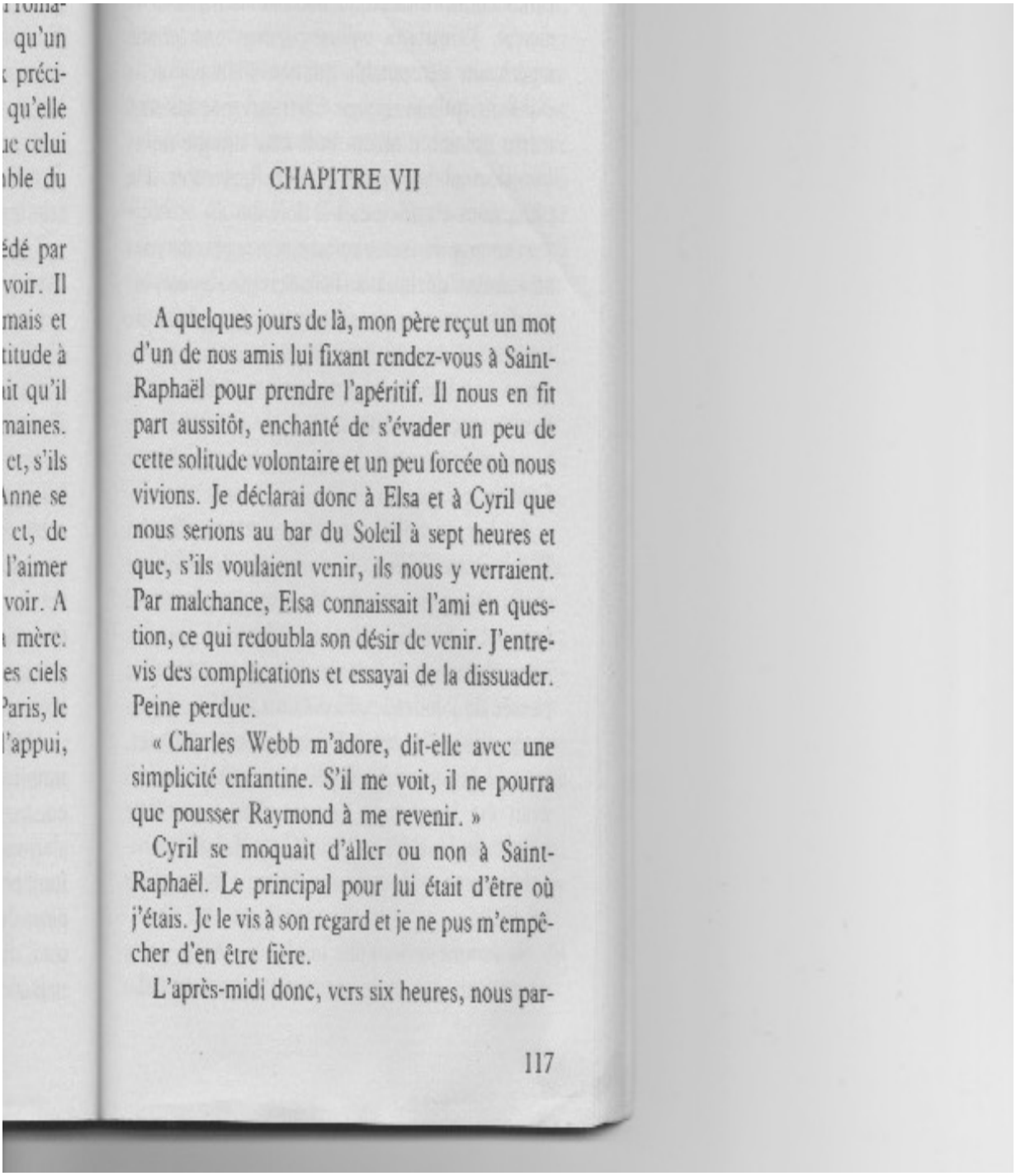
APPENDIX 3

Chapter VII - Part

P. 117



CHAPITRE VII

A quelques jours de là, mon père reçut un mot d'un de nos amis lui fixant rendez-vous à Saint-Raphaël pour prendre l'apéritif. Il nous en fit part aussitôt, enchanté de s'évader un peu de cette solitude volontaire et un peu forcée où nous vivions. Je déclarai donc à Elsa et à Cyril que nous serions au bar du Soleil à sept heures et que, s'ils voulaient venir, ils nous y verraient. Par malchance, Elsa connaissait l'ami en question, ce qui redoubla son désir de venir. J'entrevis des complications et essayai de la dissuader. Peine perdue.

« Charles Webb m'adore, dit-elle avec une simplicité enfantine. S'il me voit, il ne pourra que pousser Raymond à me revenir. »

Cyril se moquait d'aller ou non à Saint-Raphaël. Le principal pour lui était d'être où j'étais. Je le vis à son regard et je ne pus m'empêcher d'en être fière.

L'après-midi donc, vers six heures, nous par-

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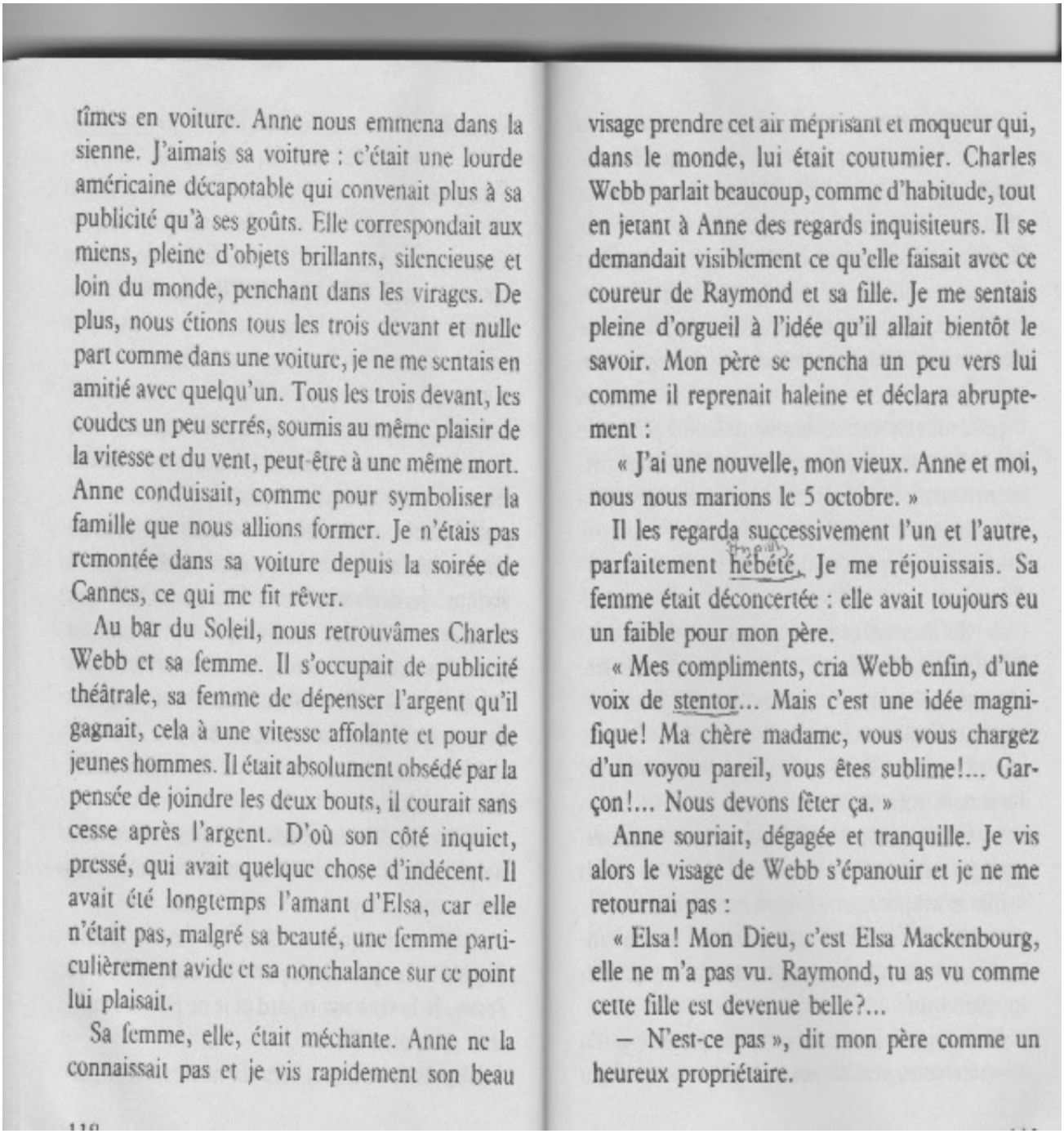
Pp. 118-119



tîmes en voiture. Anne nous emmena dans la sienne. J'aimais sa voiture : c'était une lourde américaine décapotable qui convenait plus à sa publicité qu'à ses goûts. Elle correspondait aux miens, pleine d'objets brillants, silencieuse et loin du monde, penchant dans les virages. De plus, nous étions tous les trois devant et nulle part comme dans une voiture, je ne me sentais en amitié avec quelqu'un. Tous les trois devant, les coudes un peu serrés, soumis au même plaisir de la vitesse et du vent, peut-être à une même mort. Anne conduisait, comme pour symboliser la famille que nous allions former. Je n'étais pas remontée dans sa voiture depuis la soirée de Cannes, ce qui me fit rêver.

Au bar du Soleil, nous retrouvâmes Charles Webb et sa femme. Il s'occupait de publicité théâtrale, sa femme de dépenser l'argent qu'il gagnait, cela à une vitesse affolante et pour de jeunes hommes. Il était absolument obsédé par la pensée de joindre les deux bouts, il courait sans cesse après l'argent. D'où son côté inquiet, pressé, qui avait quelque chose d'indécent. Il avait été longtemps l'amant d'Elsa, car elle n'était pas, malgré sa beauté, une femme particulièrement avide et sa nonchalance sur ce point lui plaisait.

Sa femme, elle, était méchante. Anne ne la connaissait pas et je vis rapidement son beau visage prendre cet air méprisant et moqueur qui, dans le monde, lui était coutumier. Charles Webb parlait beaucoup, comme d'habitude, tout en jetant à Anne des regards inquisiteurs. Il se demandait visiblement ce qu'elle faisait avec ce coureur de Raymond et sa fille. Je me sentais pleine d'orgueil à l'idée qu'il allait bientôt le savoir. Mon père se pencha un peu vers lui comme il reprenait haleine et déclara abruptement :

« J'ai une nouvelle, mon vieux. Anne et moi, nous nous marions le 5 octobre. »

Il les regarda successivement l'un et l'autre, parfaitement hébété. Je me réjouissais. Sa femme était déconcertée : elle avait toujours eu un faible pour mon père.

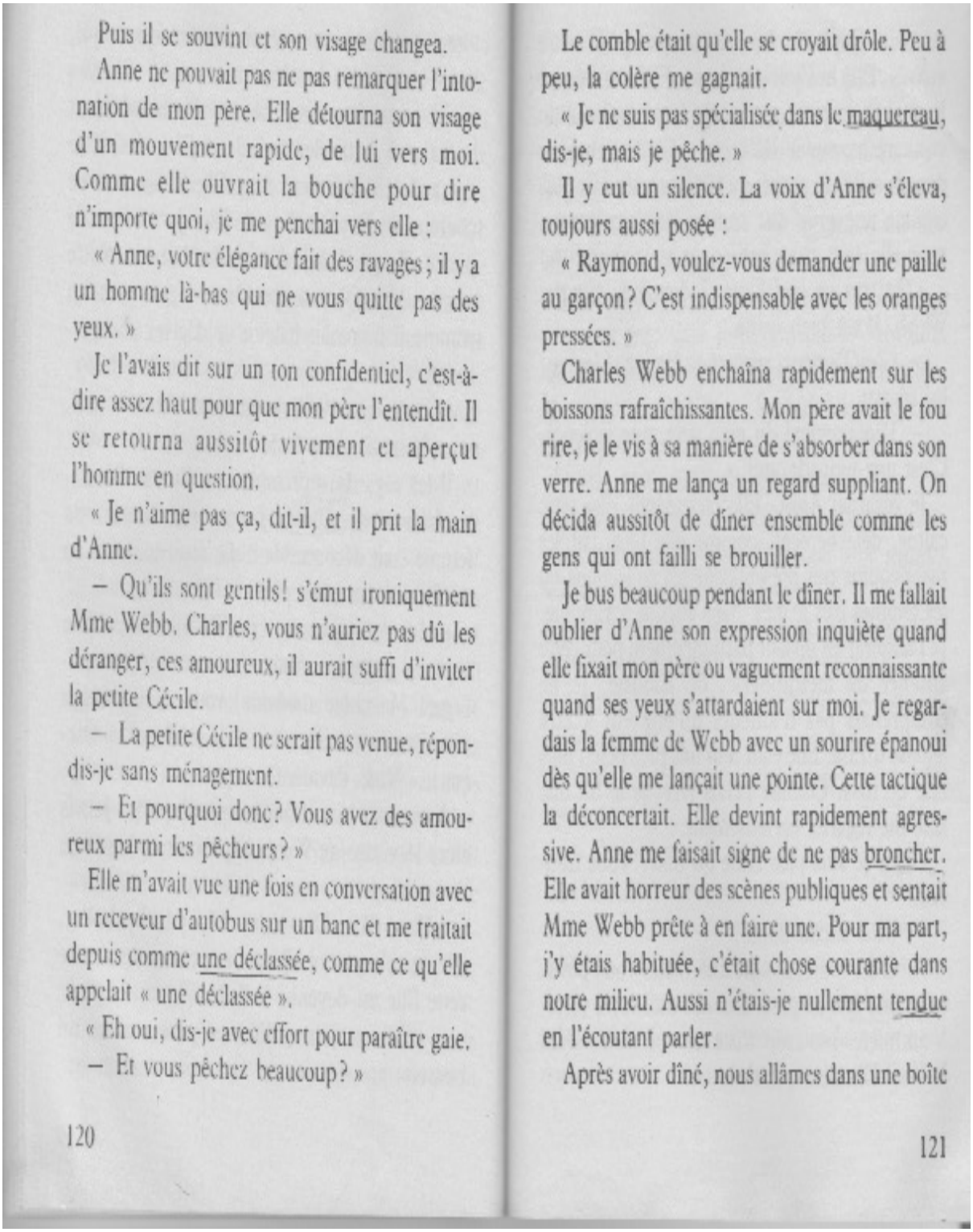
« Mes compliments, cria Webb enfin, d'une voix de stentor... Mais c'est une idée magnifique! Ma chère madame, vous vous chargez d'un voyou pareil, vous êtes sublime!... Garçon!... Nous devons fêter ça. »

Anne souriait, dégagée et tranquille. Je vis alors le visage de Webb s'épanouir et je ne me retournai pas :

« Elsa! Mon Dieu, c'est Elsa Mackenbourg, elle ne m'a pas vu. Raymond, tu as vu comme cette fille est devenue belle?...

— N'est-ce pas », dit mon père comme un heureux propriétaire.

Pp. 120-121



Puis il se souvint et son visage changea.

Anne ne pouvait pas ne pas remarquer l'intonation de mon père. Elle détourna son visage d'un mouvement rapide, de lui vers moi. Comme elle ouvrait la bouche pour dire n'importe quoi, je me penchai vers elle :

« Anne, votre élégance fait des ravages ; il y a un homme là-bas qui ne vous quitte pas des yeux. »

Je l'avais dit sur un ton confidentiel, c'est-à-dire assez haut pour que mon père l'entendît. Il se retourna aussitôt vivement et aperçut l'homme en question.

« Je n'aime pas ça, dit-il, et il prit la main d'Anne.

– Qu'ils sont gentils! s'émut ironiquement Mme Webb. Charles, vous n'auriez pas dû les déranger, ces amoureux, il aurait suffi d'inviter la petite Cécile.

– La petite Cécile ne serait pas venue, répondis-je sans ménagement.

– Et pourquoi donc? Vous avez des amoureux parmi les pêcheurs? »

Elle m'avait vue une fois en conversation avec un receveur d'autobus sur un banc et me traitait depuis comme une déclassée, comme ce qu'elle appelait « une déclassée ».

« Eh oui, dis-je avec effort pour paraître gaie.

– Et vous pêchez beaucoup? »

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Le comble était qu'elle se croyait drôle. Peu à peu, la colère me gagnait.

« Je ne suis pas spécialisée dans le maquereau, dis-je, mais je pêche. »

Il y eut un silence. La voix d'Anne s'éleva, toujours aussi posée :

« Raymond, voulez-vous demander une paille au garçon? C'est indispensable avec les oranges pressées. »

Charles Webb enchaîna rapidement sur les boissons rafraîchissantes. Mon père avait le fou rire, je le vis à sa manière de s'absorber dans son verre. Anne me lança un regard suppliant. On décida aussitôt de dîner ensemble comme les gens qui ont failli se brouiller.

Je bus beaucoup pendant le dîner. Il me fallait oublier d'Anne son expression inquiète quand elle fixait mon père ou vaguement reconnaissante quand ses yeux s'attardaient sur moi. Je regardais la femme de Webb avec un sourire épanoui dès qu'elle me lançait une pointe. Cette tactique la déconcertait. Elle devint rapidement agressive. Anne me faisait signe de ne pas broncher. Elle avait horreur des scènes publiques et sentait Mme Webb prête à en faire une. Pour ma part, j'y étais habituée, c'était chose courante dans notre milieu. Aussi n'étais-je nullement tendue en l'écoutant parler.

Après avoir dîné, nous allâmes dans une boîte

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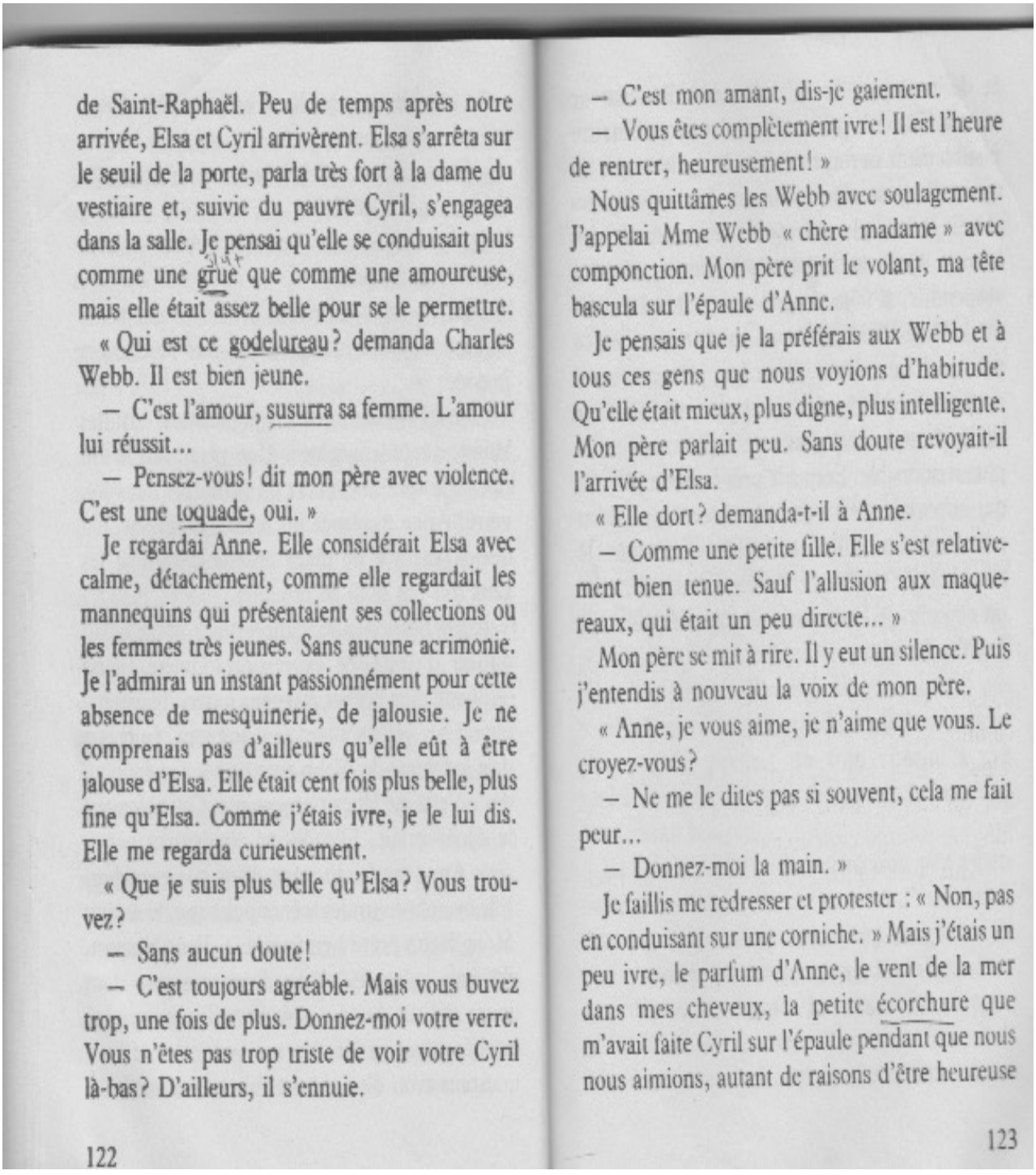
Pp. 122-123



de Saint-Raphaël. Peu de temps après notre arrivée, Elsa et Cyril arrivèrent. Elsa s'arrêta sur le seuil de la porte, parla très fort à la dame du vestiaire et, suivie du pauvre Cyril, s'engagea dans la salle. Je pensai qu'elle se conduisait plus comme une grue que comme une amoureuse, mais elle était assez belle pour se le permettre.

« Qui est ce godelureau? demanda Charles Webb. Il est bien jeune.

— C'est l'amour, susurra sa femme. L'amour lui réussit...

— Pensez-vous! dit mon père avec violence. C'est une toquade, oui. »

Je regardai Anne. Elle considérait Elsa avec calme, détachement, comme elle regardait les mannequins qui présentaient ses collections ou les femmes très jeunes. Sans aucune acrimonie. Je l'admirai un instant passionnément pour cette absence de mesquinerie, de jalousie. Je ne comprenais pas d'ailleurs qu'elle eût à être jalouse d'Elsa. Elle était cent fois plus belle, plus fine qu'Elsa. Comme j'étais ivre, je le lui dis. Elle me regarda curieusement.

« Que je suis plus belle qu'Elsa? Vous trouvez?

— Sans aucun doute!

— C'est toujours agréable. Mais vous buvez trop, une fois de plus. Donnez-moi votre verre. Vous n'êtes pas trop triste de voir votre Cyril là-bas? D'ailleurs, il s'ennuie.

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— C'est mon amant, dis-je gaiement.

— Vous êtes complètement ivre! Il est l'heure de rentrer, heureusement! »

Nous quittâmes les Webb avec soulagement. J'appelai Mme Webb « chère madame » avec componction. Mon père prit le volant, ma tête bascula sur l'épaule d'Anne.

Je pensais que je la préférais aux Webb et à tous ces gens que nous voyions d'habitude. Qu'elle était mieux, plus digne, plus intelligente. Mon père parlait peu. Sans doute revoyait-il l'arrivée d'Elsa.

« Elle dort? demanda-t-il à Anne.

— Comme une petite fille. Elle s'est relativement bien tenue. Sauf l'allusion aux maquereaux, qui était un peu directe... »

Mon père se mit à rire. Il y eut un silence. Puis j'entendis à nouveau la voix de mon père.

« Anne, je vous aime, je n'aime que vous. Le croyez-vous?

— Ne me le dites pas si souvent, cela me fait peur...

— Donnez-moi la main. »

Je faillis me redresser et protester : « Non, pas en conduisant sur une corniche. » Mais j'étais un peu ivre, le parfum d'Anne, le vent de la mer dans mes cheveux, la petite écorchure que m'avait faite Cyril sur l'épaule pendant que nous nous aimions, autant de raisons d'être heureuse

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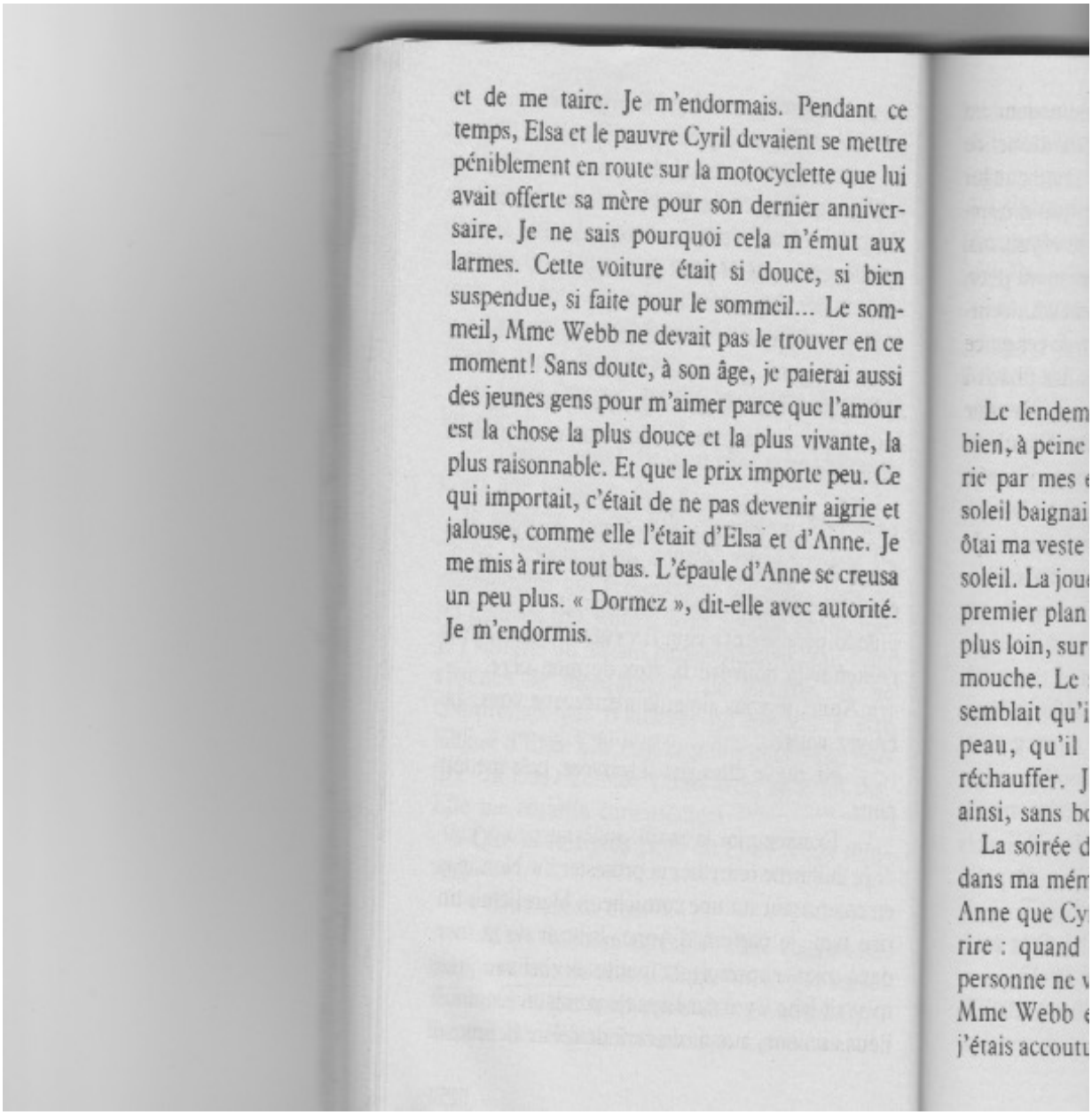
P. 124



et de me taire. Je m'endormais. Pendant ce temps, Elsa et le pauvre Cyril devaient se mettre péniblement en route sur la motocyclette que lui avait offerte sa mère pour son dernier anniversaire. Je ne sais pourquoi cela m'émut aux larmes. Cette voiture était si douce, si bien suspendue, si faite pour le sommeil... Le sommeil, Mme Webb ne devait pas le trouver en ce moment! Sans doute, à son âge, je paierai aussi des jeunes gens pour m'aimer parce que l'amour est la chose la plus douce et la plus vivante, la plus raisonnable. Et que le prix importe peu. Ce qui importait, c'était de ne pas devenir aigrie et jalouse, comme elle l'était d'Elsa et d'Anne. Je me mis à rire tout bas. L'épaule d'Anne se creusa un peu plus. « Dormez », dit-elle avec autorité. Je m'endormis.

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soleil. La jou
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