

Université de Montréal

Violette Leduc in translation: between censorship,
recognition and emancipation

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Abstract

French writer Violette Leduc's books, published between 1946 and 1973, are some of the earliest examples of autobiographical feminist writing addressing issues such as mental health, unideal motherhood and sexuality from a female perspective. Due to the controversial nature of her work, she was repeatedly censored throughout the publication process in France – from the initial manuscript production in the form of self-censorship, through her relationship with Simone de Beauvoir, by the editors at Gallimard and, ultimately, by the press. After finding critical success despite the resistance to her work, her books were translated into many languages, including English. Although Leduc's censorship has been documented and discussed from a range of perspectives, the translation of her writing and its circulation outside of France is barely mentioned. This study therefore addresses the question of how translation, specifically the English translation, as another gatekeeper in Leduc's publication process, responds to the previous censorship of her writing – does it magnify or attenuate repression, does it help emancipate or repress minority representations?

To explore these questions, we present the case of Leduc's most controversial 200 pages of writing – a passage removed from its original place at the beginning of another book to become the standalone *Thérèse et Isabelle*. This text, which recounts the brief romantic relationship between two female boarding school students, was overtly censored in French. It was translated into English in 1967 and, unlike Leduc's other books, was rereleased in its unexpurgated form in 2000 and was retranslated in 2012. For the purposes of this analysis, these two translations are considered within the wider production process, from initial writing to ongoing critical reception. In so doing, translational theories of censorship and queer and feminist studies provide a critical lens through which to understand contextual and historical significance, while translation-specific discussions of complexity theory are applied as an analytical framework through which to populate a nuanced understanding of inter-related sources of influence and emergence. From this complex perspective, patterns are identified that highlight the role of translation as an agent of censorship and/or emancipation, significantly influencing the contemporary understanding of Leduc's legacy.

Key words: Translation, Violette Leduc, censorship, Queer Studies, feminism, literary translation, complexity theory

Résumé

Les livres de l'écrivaine française Violette Leduc, publiés entre 1946 et 1973, sont de premiers exemples d'écriture féministe autobiographique abordant des questions telles que la santé mentale, la maternité imparfaite et la sexualité d'un point de vue féminin. En raison de la nature controversée de son travail, elle a été censurée à plusieurs reprises tout au long du processus de publication en France – pendant la production initiale du manuscrit sous la forme d'autocensure, par le mentorat de Simone de Beauvoir, par les éditeurs de Gallimard et par la presse. Après avoir remporté un succès critique malgré la résistance à son travail, ses livres ont été traduits dans de nombreuses langues, y compris l'anglais. Bien que la censure de Leduc ait été documentée et explorée depuis diverses perspectives, la traduction de son écriture et de sa diffusion hors de la France est à peine mentionnée. Cette étude aborde donc la question de comment la traduction, en particulier la traduction anglaise, comme agent de publication des écrits de Leduc, répond à la censure précédente de son écriture – amplifie-t-elle ou atténue-t-elle la répression, aide-t-elle à réprimer ou à émanciper les représentations minoritaires?

Pour explorer ces questions, nous présentons le cas des 200 pages d'écriture les plus controversées de Leduc – un passage retiré de sa place d'origine au début d'un autre livre pour devenir le texte autonome de *Thérèse et Isabelle*. Ce livre, qui retrace la brève relation amoureuse entre deux étudiantes pensionnaires, a été ouvertement censuré en français. Il fut traduit en anglais en 1967 et, contrairement aux autres livres de Leduc, fut réédité sous sa forme non expurgée en 2000 et fut retraduit en 2012. Ces deux traductions sont ici considérées comme continuation du plus large processus de production réception, de l'écriture initiale à la réception critique continue. Ce faisant, les théories traductionnelles de la censure et des études queer et féministes fournissent une perspective critique permettant de comprendre la signification contextuelle et historique du texte, tandis que la théorie traduction-spécifique de la complexité sert de cadre analytique pour une compréhension nuancée des sources d'influence et d'émergence interdépendantes. De cette perspective complexe, sont identifiés des modèles qui mettent en évidence le rôle de la traduction en tant qu'agent de censure et/ou d'émancipation, et leurs effets sur la compréhension contemporaine de l'héritage de Leduc.

Mots clés : Traduction, Violette Leduc, censure, études queer, féminisme, traduction littéraire, théorie de la complexité

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I Introduction

Censorship, outside of an overtly repressive regime, is a nebulous act, difficult to pinpoint and to locate the source, difficult to understand its motivations or effects. When paired with translation, an equally yet differently nebulous act, there can transpire a blurring of the concepts of authorship and creativity, as well as a sharpening of existing power dynamics. In the multi-step process of literary publication – from creative production to public reception – there are many gatekeepers, many points where censorship can occur. Translation is one such gatekeeper and is one that can recur in different forms as subsequent retranslations are produced. What role does translation play today, or in recent history, in a wider censorial publication process? Does it magnify or pacify existing repressive trends? How can translational effects evolve over time and context? Translation theory has addressed elements of these questions in recent discussions of feminist translation and censorship, but contemporary examples that seek to understand translation, censorship and femininity within a wider, complex censorial process are still relatively few. For this, the case of Violette Leduc, a French writer working during the 1950s and 60s, offers a prime opportunity. Previous research has found that Leduc's work was censored at nearly every step of the process: by herself, by her mentor, by her publisher and, ultimately, by critics, and there has been a fair amount written about her life, her writing, its repression, and its significance. Nevertheless, the translations of her books have remained unexplored, leaving an analytical base from which to work and a translational gap to fill with the aim of better understanding the role of translation in this type of context. In this analysis, I track what are perhaps her most celebrated 200 pages of writing through the last 60 years to gain insight on the dynamics

of censorship, the role of translation within the wider publication process, the role of identity in this process, and how a complex situation can be untangled to reveal patterns. In so doing, theoretical discussions of censorship, identity-based translation, and complexity theory will act as a scaffold and a lens.

As translation scholars have recently and consistently stated, it is vitally important to connect linguistic studies of translation with a joint analysis of wider cultural, political, and aesthetic discourse. Situating a text within a greater extra-textual context can help identify specific yet overlapping influences within particular systems. In this case, close analysis of censorship and identity politics as discussed by translation theorists populate a nuanced and complex view on the power dynamics and the interplay between key agents and stages of publication for Violette Leduc's text that is today known as *Thérèse et Isabelle*. The following thesis proposes an in-depth exploration of the stages of creation, production and reception that have contributed to the shaping of this important text, from a Translation Studies perspective and with the view that it is important to view things as interrelated, nuanced and complex. From this perspective, patterns are identified and connected with overarching discussions. This approach, and this under-studied example, offer the possibility to address questions pertaining to the censorial and reparative power of translation within a wider context of gender- and sexuality-based repression. Specifically, I explore whether translation perpetuated the repeated institutional and social censorship of Leduc's most enduring book, *Thérèse et Isabelle*. If yes, I will look at the how this censorship through translation detracted from or otherwise shifted the thematic significance of her writing.

To address these questions, I will begin in Chapter 2 by establishing a theoretical base of existing discussion on the topics of censorship and feminism in Translation Studies, along

with the concept of complexity theory as an organizational framework through which to contextualize and add depth to Leduc's English-language translations. Through this theoretical lens, I will then in Chapter 3 present known information and established perspectives on Leduc's writing and populate the publication process from manuscript writing to critical reception. The patterns and themes that will come from this contextual base will then, in Chapter 4, be built upon with a thorough analysis of the two translations of *Thérèse et Isabelle* and other information surrounding the translational processes. From here, it is possible to step back from this complexified situation and analyze the roles and effects of translation.

II Theoretical Framework

As discussed above, the analysis of *Thérèse et Isabelle* positions its English translation within a wider, continuous publication process. For the purposes of this paper, this process is understood through the tri-modal analytical lens of censorship theory, gender-/queer-identity theory, and complexity theory, with added background information on retranslation theories. In Section 2.1 below, I will discuss theories of censorship - its operational definition, general theoretical foundations, and recent translation-specific analytical frameworks. In Section 2.2, I will outline currents in identity-based translation theory, namely the influence of feminist and queer theory on Translation Studies as a whole, and its unique perspective on power dynamics from an advantageous outsider view. From these two perspectives, which direct the analysis, I will then, in Section 2.3, draw upon current translation-specific discussions of

complexity theory to structure the identification of patterns within a complex network of influences. Finally, in Section 2.4, I will touch briefly on ongoing discussions on retranslation by Translation Studies scholars.

II.1 Censorship

II.1.1 *Defining censorship, defining translation*

By simple definition, translation and censorship should occupy opposite ends of a spectrum – one encourages communication while the other is repressive. In practice, however, they reveal themselves as being much more complex than such a straightforward bilateral arrangement. In fact, they share many commonalities: both are productive; both are infinitely tied to immediate and wider social and ideological contexts; both are conceptually nebulous; both operate within and usually reinforce distinct power structures; both consist of agents and actors with varying roles, stati and locations that encourage or discourage a series of decisions; both – through their presence or absence – legitimize or de-legitimize individual texts in specific contexts and time frames. It can be argued that both lie somewhere in the ambiguous space between acceptance and refusal, thereby imbued with the potential to disturb identity, system and order. Finally, both are dual- or multi-textual by nature. Censorship, although sometimes overt, can come in all forms and degrees, including in translation. Translation in turn employs a paradoxical freedom that can entail varying degrees of manipulation, some of which may be considered censorship.

Despite these similarities, translation and censorship can be defined as having opposing objectives. Translation generally seeks to make a text accessible to a different or foreign reader. This involves overcoming linguistic barriers and increasing the availability of a

particular work in the wider world. Censorship, on the other hand, seeks the opposite, to restrict access and readership to a so-called original text, particularly by instating or enforcing linguistic barriers. Translation is concerned with visibility and accessibility, while censorship, through many different methods, blocks and controls the establishment of cross-cultural communication of ideological, aesthetic or political capital.

Both terms, however, are slippery with subjectivity and unverifiability, and quickly lose their critical effectiveness when too wide of a definition is used. For the purposes of this study, censorship is understood according to Francesca Billiani's delimitation, in the introduction to *Modes of Censorship and Translation*, of the two main characteristics of censorship: 1) it seeks to guide the development of cultural and ideological communication by restraining certain dominated groups in favor of dominant society, thereby acting as a filter on cross-cultural communication encouraged by translation; and 2) censorship obeys or acts in accordance to a set of principles and criteria dictated by a dominant over a dominated body. (Billiani, 2007) In sum, censorship involves the exclusion, or restriction, of a cultural product from a cultural space. In this analysis, the term censorship is not used hyperbolically, and only denotes decisions that are motivated, either consciously or unconsciously, by a need or desire to create or maintain unequal and repressive power hierarchies that dictate who can speak about what. Censorship is not only present in dictatorial regimes or violently repressive systems, it can be expressed in a number of different, nuanced ways. Although the frameworks of censorship cited in the following sub-sections are neatly organized, it is important to highlight that the physical manifestations of censorship are not so easily categorized. The difficulty of pinpointing censorial actions, the use of simple tools with great disciplinary outcomes and the use of alternating visibility and invisibility of power to

maintain control all contribute to censorship being more visible in theory than in practice. Through the example of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, we see in particular that, even in seemingly neutral contexts, translation meets censorship at several key linguistic and cultural intersections, with oblique, yet devastating, effects. Below I will outline recent discussions on censorship, beginning with French theorist Pierre Bourdieu's broader perspective then turning to translation studies-specific theorists in order to structure the analysis.

11.1.11 *Pierre Bourdieu*

Bourdieu's presentation of social conventions and censorship, though not specifically about translation, may be one of the most comprehensive analytical frameworks for understanding power structures and dynamics, and therefore censorship and translational decisions. His concepts of *habitus*, *cultural capital* and *field*, as well as his definition of structural censorship, have influenced the organizational frameworks of censorship proposed by all three translation theorists discussed further below. According to Bourdieu, power is culturally and symbolically created, and is constantly revalidated through the reciprocal relationship between agency and structure. This primarily occurs through what he terms *habitus*, the socially-accepted tendencies that guide thinking and behavior, a certain "dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72)" that blurs the separation between dualities such as subjectivism/objectivism and society/individual. Just as translation is sometimes considered a filter between a known culture and a foreign culture, *habitus* is the ever-present filter between an individual and their social environment, simultaneously structuring and being structured. This *habitus* is not individual in nature, but varies by agent across place, time and through different power

hierarchies. Bourdieu's *field* refers to the particular structures within which habitus operates. These can be social institutions or locations that function as stages for the distribution of capital based on the type of habitus within a specific field. The concept of *capital* includes types of resources valued in a particular society that can be mobilized to position themselves in a social order and, as such, can be the root of social struggles. These resources can be economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital.

From these three spheres of influence, Bourdieu proposes the notion of *structural censorship*, which has since been adapted and built-upon by translation theorists. Bourdieu describes structural censorship as the social control exerted by the habitus of certain agents in certain fields of cultural production. This is not a set of rules or explicit display of controlling oppression, but rather a set of unwritten rules that shape and are shaped by the habitus and the symbolic capital of the text in that particular situation, and which can be very implicit in nature (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 168-173). Bourdieu highlights the role of personal taste in shaping aesthetics, social practices and conventions, from which censorship originates. In *Language and Symbolic Power*, he also states that the ultimate aim of all censorship is self-censorship, or the absence of external censorship (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 138).

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, capital and agent are relevant to contemporary analysis of censorship and translation in that they offer a framework that moves beyond linguistic and norm-based analyses by highlighting the persistent variability of interactions between social structures and practices and their symbolic meanings. This results in dynamic positioning of agents and a lack of linearity in cause-effect relationships. This nonlinearity in turn leads to greater explanatory opportunity when analyzing textual manipulations through censorship or translation, since a reality of constantly-changing habitus directly challenges the

top-down, normative perspectives that were previously employed. Therefore, as it pertains to censorship, not only does Bourdieu propose a useful framework for understanding the sources of power creation, his upending of previously-assumed homogenous and unchanging groups makes it possible to consider a multitude of new and dynamic influences, including personal taste, physical context, and self-censorship.

II.1.III Chronologically-based categorizations

In addition to questioning authority and the nature of translation in general, Translation Studies' attention to censorship has resulted in several organizational delineations of what censorship in translation can look like. These frameworks can be divided between chronology-based categorizations and source-based categorizations. The former takes a linear time-based view of censorship at different stages of production and the latter focuses on the sources of censorship, regardless of production phase. We begin by addressing time-based censorship, followed by source-based, and finally the expanded concepts of ideal censorship, gatekeeping, and the productive effects of censorship, as they pertain to translation.

In her introduction to TTR's issue on Censorship and Translation in the Western World, Denise Merkle differentiates between two types of censorship: *preventative* and *punitive*. The former, also referred to as prior censorship, is intended to prevent the publication of undesirable texts, either by requiring them to be submitted for approval before publication or, even more efficiently, through cultural blockage or by encouraging self-censorship on the part of the author or translator. Punitive censorship, also known as post or repressive censorship, is punitive by definition and involves banning, burning, fines, boycotting, and arrest (Merkle, 2002). Merkle's classification of censorship in translation

draws from previous translation studies scholarship touching on censorship as well as the history of publication processes, going so far back as to the first citation of the term “censor” in 1533. Her categorization hinges primarily on the before and after of the official publication of a text, following a linear, chronological framework for assessing the different contextual factors of censorship. She also highlights historical and contextual influences affecting the nature of pre- and post-publication pressure, including the stability of a country’s political climate, and she explains relatively recent interest in censorship through historical events (ex. the making public of East German internal documents regarding censored literature) (Merkle, 2002).

II.I.IV Source-based categorizations

In her article on translation practices in the Hapsburg Monarchy, Michaela Wolf differentiates between two different censorship practices based on the source of pressure rather than on a linear timeframe of publication (Wolf, 2002). *Institutional*, or explicit, censorship represents censorship as it is commonly perceived, as pressure or control from an external governing body. As such, it is organized and premeditated, and may either be reactionary or predictive, occurring on either side of publication. Although she uses the same term as Merkle’s designation for everything pre-publication, preventative censorship here instead refers to a shift in pressure away from external sources towards the individual. In instances of preventative censorship, translators, editors, writers and other actors in text production are encouraged to conform to expectations, either consciously or unconsciously.

Another, slightly more nuanced, source-based categorization is Siobhan Brownlie’s three types of censorship, which include *public censorship*, *structural censorship* and *self-*

censorship (Brownlie, 2007). The first refers to control imposed by public authorities through explicit laws, thereby overlapping with Wolf's institutional censorship. The second is based on Bourdieu's structural censorship, in which censorship comes from society itself and from the structure of the field(s) in which the text circulates, therefore dictating how and what texts may exist. Finally, Brownlie's definition of self-censorship is consistent with previous definitions. It is the only type of censorship in her view that is restricted by time, as it only occurs during the writing or translation of the text, pre-publication.

II.I.V Ideal of no censorship, goal of internalized, self-censorship

Wolf, Merkle and Brownlie's categorizations all align with Bourdieu's concept of self-censorship as well as translational norm-based perspectives such as Gideon Toury's internalization of norms (in the case of unconscious self-censorship) (Toury, 1995). Wolf specifies that comprehensive preventative censorship can negate the need for explicit censorship (Wolf, 2002), while Merkle states that the ultimate goal of preventative and punitive censorship is for actors to internalize societal norms or expectations so that they act under an unconscious thought process, generating writing that reproduces accepted discursive habits and depriving subversion of an available discourse through which to assert itself (à la Sapir-Whorf) (Merkle, 2002). Overall, there is agreement that institutional intervention seeks to ultimately impose agents' self-censorship, which will then eliminate the need for explicit institutional intervention in general. As with Bourdieu and Toury, the ideal censorial situation is that societal expectations are fully internalized and normalized, requiring no involvement from external pressures. Critical examples of this automatic acceptance would be George Orwell's newspeak, Noam Chomsky's internalized propaganda, and Virginia Woolf's

unconscious wall of repression that hid what she felt even to herself. Brownlie additionally states that, in productive cases, self-censorship can also be a voluntary, beneficial strategy employed to enable publication where it otherwise would not have been possible (Brownlie, 2007).

Self-censorship also calls into question the concept of authorship. Michel Foucault's notion of loss of authorship posits that an author can no longer be considered the entity that produced the knowledge displayed by the text, and must therefore be replaced by an author-function (Foucault, 2010, p. 1478). The loss of authorship and of the notion of a stable original is provoked by self-censorship. The singular nature of the author-function must then be widened to include other agents involved in shaping the text, including mentors, editors, translators, critics and, indeed, much of the public in general. As this complete dissolution of authorship is purely theoretical, so too is an untouched, original authorship, since this censorship influence may be as productive (for example, the encouragement of a mentor to keep writing) as it is restrictive. Nevertheless, translation and censorship seem to be working in a parallel direction in these instances of self-censorship, since translation by nature calls authorship into question as does censorship, especially self-censorship.

II.I.VI Gatekeeping as agent of censorship

In this ideal censorship situation, actors in the production of texts become gatekeepers, enforcing either consciously (through fear of institutional involvement) or unconsciously (through the continued internalization of expectations) societal standards of speech and ideology. Holman and Boase-Beier connect the activities of translators and censors through the concept of gatekeeping: "Just as censors have to resolve how best to restrict access to

information considered detrimental to the public in whose interests they presume to act, so too do translators have to resolve what tactics to adopt when presenting to the target-language reading public new information and fresh forms coming in from the outside.” (Boase-Beier & Holman, 1999, p. 11). Translators as gatekeepers, when paired with the lasting expectation “not to burden the readers with caveats and alternative translations” (Hanson, 1989, p. xiv; as cited in Merkle, 2002, p. 21), mean that the translational act is entrenched within an invisible, trust-based system of textual circulation, both in what texts are chosen to be translated in the first place as well as the ensuing textual decisions made by individual translators. Changing expectations of what a translation looks like would have a consequential effect in delimitating a translator’s role as gatekeeper, in that it may be difficult to differentiate between contemporary translation practices and tactical negotiations, as can be exemplified by the case of the *Belles Infidèles* translators of 17th - 19th century France and England (Bachleitner, 2007). As Outi Palopski writes with regards to Finnish translator-censors, translators act as agents embedded within the censoring body activity, agents that mediate between cultural and literary systems (Palopski, 2010). From here, we can ask ourselves who these translators are, how they came to be put in such a role, and how they compare or contrast with dominant power structures. Internalized self-censorship and the primacy it places on individual perspectives and actions highlights the importance of studying individual agents in the production chain, while also – through the identification of numerous agents – addressing a multifaceted characteristic of text publication and the importance of investigating all individuals both individually and interrelatedly. The translator’s role within a wider network of gatekeepers through which a text circulates may, as in Violette Leduc’s case, say much about the process as a whole. In sum, although the translator should be considered one of

many gatekeepers within a particular publication process, they should also be considered independently for the unique competing and contrasting factors that affect their role specifically.

II.I.VII Censorship as productive force

If translational censorship is an action that can transform sociocultural factors, then it can be considered repressive *and* productive. Siobhan Brownlie exemplifies this in her case study of translations in Victorian England which were “selectively and appropriately (in)visible” (Billiani, 2007, p. 9) in order to guarantee that they would circulate despite stringent social constraints, an option not available to the classics that lacked the necessary malleability (Brownlie, 2007). In this case, translators and editors altered the text to enable, not restrict, its ability to reach a wider audience, or indeed to reach any audience at all. Foucault, in *The Will to Knowledge*, also discusses censorship in Victorian England as an example of when “the techniques of power exercised over sex have not obeyed a principle of rigorous selection, but rather one of dissemination and implantation of polymorphous sexualities” (Foucault, 1978, p. 12). Foucault further dismisses the notion of censorship as purely restrictive, citing the human desire for knowledge that makes censorship instead a constant negotiation between desire/pleasure and denial/restriction (*ibid*). Translation offers a ready-made space within which to exact this negotiation, making it better suited to encourage heterogeneity.

Homi Bhabha and Niranjana also discuss this heterogeneous space’s tendency toward hybridity, the former as an inter-permeability between cultures that generates new sites of meaning and new spaces and opportunities for representation, and the latter as a function that occurs within national textualities (Bhabha, 1994; Niranjana, 1992). Both cite the importance

of national context and creative expression, mediated simultaneously by censorship and translation, as a space for the creation of new, hybrid forms. Finally, Judith Butler sums up the hybrid relationship between a text and its censure, one that we will attempt to unravel in this analysis, as that censorship is “never fully separable from that which it seeks to censor, implicated in its own repudiated material in ways that produce paradoxical consequences” (Butler, 1997, p. 130).

Overall, the incorporation of this translational censorship perspective in translation discourse into the analysis of *Thérèse et Isabelle* provides a useful analytic framework for identifying actors/agents involved in the different stages of production and publication, as well as the power dynamics inherent to different contexts from different perspectives. Furthermore, translation, as an extension of the editorial process, is uniquely positioned to make visible the resisting or the enforcing of censorship in the process as a whole. This advantageous perspective through which to address power dynamics in text production is further nuanced by the added element of a more recent retranslation. Comparing these translations, their censorial elements and publication contexts, can offer insight into a greater sociohistorical evolution on the fault lines of gender and sexualities.

II.II Gender/Queer theory

Feminism as a term cannot boast a neat definition. In trying to bring together over 50% of the global population under one word (female), it has and continues to struggle with deep dislocations of class, ethnicity, religion, and femininity, among many others. Although

the relatively recent introduction of the term “intersectional feminism”¹ has helped bridge through dialogue and openness a wider scope of feminism, the relationship between women and linguistic representation has created long-lasting fissures. An example relevant to the subject of this paper is that of the rift between French and North American feminism, particularly during the 1970s and 80s, the so-called signal years of transatlantic feminism (Simon, 1996, p. 89). American feminists, in their valuing of plain, clear speech, told women to “know thyself”, to get in touch with one’s true self buried beneath the false images imposed by the patriarchy (Jardine, 1981a, p. 224). The French, with an arguably closer link to modernity’s epistemological crisis denouncing the difficulty of language, claimed that there is no true self to know. While the French feminists sought to challenge patriarchy as a masculine way of perceiving and organizing the world, its symbolic structure (language) so deeply ingrained that it now appears natural and inevitable and wholly dictates the way through which value and meaning are expressed, American feminists instead saw language as a mere system of labels, and focused on the linguistic consequences of oppression. Both, in their distinct ways, saw translation as an integral part of this repressive system and as resistance to it. Hélène Cixous wrote in *La Venue à l’Écriture* that definitive language does not exist, since the meaning of one language can never be fully translated into another. She repudiates man’s desire to master language, urging them to instead embrace the plurality of languages: “adorer ses différences, respecter ses dons, ses talents, ses mouvements.” (Cixous, Gagnon, &

¹ Intersectionality, as introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is defined by José Esteban Muñoz as the following: “Intersectionality insists on critical hermeneutics that register the co-presence of sexuality, race, class, gender, and other identity differentials as particular components that exist simultaneously with one another.” (Muñoz, 1999, p. 99) As such, the additive ‘and’ of identity layers becomes politicized under the umbrella of feminism (for example, issues specific to Hispanic women intersects the feminine with language and race politics, thereby making language and race feminist concerns as well).

Leclerc, 1977, p. 27) This perspective lies at the origin of the belief that women writers can be translated either in form or in content, not in both. They become either spokesperson or poet, decontextualized either way (Simon, 1996, p. 108). North-American feminists took a slightly different perspective on translation. Rather than using it to provoke the disentanglement of hegemonic language control through the fluidity of interlinguistic possibility, they used words as tools to build alternate possibilities and to change the linguistically-mediated reality from male-centric to female-centric. This led to a movement in translation of rewriting- firstly, by being open about their femaleness (not hiding), and secondly by openly altering the language of the text to better conform to an inclusive worldview. This significantly influenced translational dialogue on translator agency and invisibility.

In a practical sense, the relationship between gender and language has forced a discussion of the power dynamics inherent in speech acts. Just as the discussion of censorship serves to highlight the close ties between power, language and knowledge, feminism has questioned notions of authorship, accessibility and agency. Who it is that decides what is heard, what makes it out of the forest of obscurity, is as important as what is actually said. According to Foucault, who determines what can be said also determines what can be known. By determining what can be known, they also determine how we think, both about others and about ourselves (Foucault, 1978). This insistence that language and knowledge are always inherently political remains, as demonstrated by the often-cited phrase that “the personal is political”, extremely relevant today. A discussion of queer theory, as a contemporary extension of (intersectional) gender studies, also greatly contributes to this pushing against of established norms and rigid binaries by proposing a uniquely personal ‘queered’ space – one which does not require self-definition, preferring instead an openness to complex, changing,

and mutually-exclusive identities. An acceptance of disorder. As Judith Butler wrote in the opening to *Gender Trouble*: “Contemporary feminist debates over the meaning of gender lead time and again to a certain sense of trouble, as if the indeterminacy of gender might eventually culminate in the failure of feminism. Perhaps trouble need not carry such a negative valence.” (Butler, 1990, p. ix). Indeed, the same can be said of translation. This acceptance of borderlessness, of mobile identities, has served to increase awareness of linguistic authorship and the position of speakers in dominant codes.

By studying gender and queer theory, not only do we gain an outsider perspective on a mainstream society that too often posits an option as the only possible way, but it is a field dedicated, now more than ever through discussion of intersectional feminism, to exploring the power hierarchies – patriarchal, heterocentric, socioeconomic, racial, etc. – that form and inform our habitus, the fields within which we operate, and our relationship to capital. Indeed, since it was agreed that gender is less a social construction of sex differences than a primary way of showing power dynamics, gender has moved away from its biological ties and conception as a social construction, towards a status as a lens through which to identify power hierarchies, to contest the rigidity of binaries, and to serve as a vital interdisciplinary field through which to better understand the complexity of reality (Santaemilia, 2005, p. 7). In this way discussions of gender and sexuality run parallel to those of translation – both are concerned with bringing a personal, individual experience that may be invisible in and of itself, into focus within a greater sociopolitical and historical context to reveal patterns of power and dominance. Translation and gender occupy the same uncertain space; it has long been said that woman is “translated”. Numerous are the references to the biblical origin/translation dynamic between man/woman (Eve was created later in man’s image).

Indeed, the observation that women are defined by their not-man-ness is an important argument in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir, 1949). And who better than the translator to commiserate that separate is rarely equal?

Although translation, gender and queerness have historically had a hostile rapport, at least linguistically speaking (translation has long been described in openly sexist language – “forçage en douceur” or “les belles infidèles”, among many others) – gender and queer theory have permeated translation theory in the last 30 years with paradigm-shifting effects. Translation Studies has long held a strictly binary perspective (letter vs. spirit, production vs. reproduction, etc.), and has been preoccupied with its own uncertainty, made apparent through the list of increasingly problematic metaphors for translation (as female, as property, as a tenant, as clothing, etc.), which can itself be considered symptomatic of the anxieties involved in creating and maintaining strict definitional borders in Western society (Chamberlain, 1992). As Sherry Simon writes in the introduction to her book *Gender in Translation*, “Feminist translation theory aims to identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegate both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder. To do so, it must investigate the processes through which translation has come to be “feminized”, and attempt to trouble the structures of authority which have maintained this association.” (Simon, 1996, p. 1) In typical outsider fashion, she goes on to propose an alternative to accepted reality – that translation could have been considered the conqueror, the explorer, and the original text the timid domestic, had things been slightly otherwise (*ibid*). Gender theory has provided, among other elements, performativity (of language, of identity) and the notion that no final version (of a text, of self) is ever realizable. Queerness pushes against reductive

binaries, replaces content-based definitions with overlapping description, and promotes a general acceptance of disorder.

Discussions of gender and translation lead naturally into discussions of complexity. Carolyn Shread states, as part of her argument that translation could be framed as creative expansion or development rather than as a degenerative transformation, that the feminist project seeks to free Translation Studies and practiced translation from rigid confines that tend to exclude, divide and reduce its inherent complexity. (Shread, 2009) Furthermore, translation, gender and queerness are all relational concepts, which can be defined as follows, in an explanation by Judith Butler:

A genealogical critique refuses to search for the origins of gender, the inner truth of female desires, a genuine or authentic sexual identity that repression has kept from view; rather, genealogy investigates the potential stakes in designating as an ‘origin’ and ‘cause’ those identity categories that are in fact the ‘effects’ of institutions, practicing discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin. (Butler, 1990, p. xi)

Through this, Butler rests the crux of her observation on the relations between identities, objects, people, etc., rather than on those singular things themselves. In this way, gender, sexuality, and other facets of identity are not “true” in and of themselves, but rather emerge differently in different situations and locations (field), depending on the individual (habitus). What is important, given this extreme variability, are the interrelations between language, translation, and social values and hierarchies.

II.III Complexity Theory

Although the bulk of the research on complex systems has occurred in the last 30 years, the origins of complexity theory can be traced back to the turn of last century. Around 1900, the King of Sweden launched a mathematical competition to solve the problem of calculating the predicted paths of three celestial bodies in motion (where the second orbits around the first and the third orbits around the second). Henri Poincaré solved the problem – by proving it unsolvable. The three bodies would interact with each other’s gravitational forces in such complex and interrelated ways that it defies calculation. This null solution rocked the foundation of the scientific community at that time. That something could be so consistently complex so as to be unsolvable went against norms of organization, systems, and hierarchies that had dominated Western scientific thought up to that point. The second event that marks the foundation of complexity thinking occurred in the 1960s when meteorologist Edward Lorenz, needing to generate a huge string of numbers for a weather simulation, decided to round off the numbers generated in order to save computational time, thinking that the effect would be minimal if any. In fact, he found that the minute rounding of individual numbers greatly affected, even significantly altered, the final calculations. This realization, which opposed existing assumptions that large changes necessitated large forces, and instead opened the door for research on the change-making power of small forces, has come to be known as the Butterfly Effect (the flapping of a butterfly’s wings can cause a tornado hundreds of miles away). These early shifts in thinking have been followed by recent decades of research fueled by shifts in computing power and the development of network culture. (Marais, 2014, p. 18) Occurring first in mathematics and physics, and finding increasing

relevance in other sciences, complexity thinking seeks to resolve age-old dilemmas and reductions by stepping back and approaching problems from a different point of view.

In general, a shift towards complexity thinking has marked a shift away from a linear and deterministic Newtonian worldview that relied on order, uniformity, equilibrium and stable relationships within closed systems, towards a new paradigm that is more fitting to the dynamics of contemporary society – where instability, diversity, temporality, and non-linear relationships between open systems reflect rapid social and individual change. It moves beyond the age-old back and forth, dating back to Plato and Aristotle, of the world as either universal and unchanging or as contingent and changing, by embracing both as realities that interact in complex ways. It represents a complete break with rigid binary thinking that has permeated scholarly history and modernity thus far, from philosophy's subject/object and universalism/individualism to anthropology's self/other and sociology's individual/society. These dualities have generally sought to eliminate problems of complexity by attempting to assert human dominance over nature, arguing that complexity is only apparent and that which is real is simple. (Marais, 2014, p. 21) In addition to its far-reaching religious roots, this Newtonian perspective is decidedly un-ecological, unable to see itself as a small part of an infinitely wide and complex system. In response, an increasing number of scholars are now advocating for conceptualizations of complexity, rather than the avoidance or simplification of it. This new rationality considers fluctuations, instability, multiple choices and limited predictability and views laws as expressing possibilities or probabilities (Morin, 2008). Finally, complexity thinking views phenomena as complex because they contain elements of chance, which are nonlinear and therefore cannot be predicted, leading to order being inseparable and indistinguishable from randomness. (Morin, 2008, p. 20)

That we are now seeing a surge in the relevance of complexity thinking is not surprising given society's increasing attention to environmental, global and identity issues. The need for a new approach is apparent when thinking about such things as the evolving views on gender. As the established norm of a biologically-based male/female binary is proven on a micro level to be inaccurate for explaining the full complex individual human identity, changes on a macro level must ensue as well. Although rooted in mathematics, complexity thinking has had significant implications for the social sciences. Indeed, this perspective directly addresses longstanding issues at the heart of socially-based research, including the concept of systems, the tension between overarching theory and specific examples, and the relationships between different levels of analysis (micro vs. macro). (Manuel-Navarrete, 2003) Without relinquishing attention to analysis and causation, complexity thinking in the social sciences is able to accommodate a more open, globalized worldview, incorporating overlapping systems and rejecting equilibrium in favour of dynamic inertia. Although this represents a break from the structuralist worldview employed by theorists such as Bourdieu, it nevertheless builds on and continues their work by expanding the sources and range of influences at play in any given situation.

In more concrete terms, Edgar Morin outlines three philosophical advances derived from systems theory: (1) it conceptualizes reality as a complex unity that cannot be reduced to the sum of its constituent parts; (2) it conceives of a system as being “ambiguous, ghostly” rather than a purely formal concept; and (3) it situates itself at a transdisciplinary level. (Morin, 2008) With regards to translation studies, Arduini and Nergaard, write in the introduction to the journal *translation* that Translation Studies is facing an epistemological crisis – it is caught up in a “repetition of theories and a plethora of stagnant approaches.”

(Arduini, 2011, p. 8) A preponderance of reductionist thought, including, most recently, modernism (explains reality by reducing it to universal, unchanging principles) and postmodernism (explains reality by seeing everything as contingent and context-specific), are unable to hold paradoxical or complex views of reality. (Taylor, 2001, pp. 50-72) The series of turns in translation studies, where one view replaces the previous, is likewise reductionist. Scholars of translation are turning to complexity thinking to build on Maria Tymoczko's call for new disciplinary understanding, that: "translation as a cross-cultural concept must be reconceptualised and enlarged beyond dominant Western notions that continue to circumscribe its definition." (Tymoczko, 2007) A more complex epistemology is needed, not to replace reductionism or any of the translational turns that have come before, but to subsume and supplement. (Marais, 2014)

Complexity therefore proposes three major perspectives that are particularly relevant to translation studies: first, that elements self-organize into hierarchical levels of emergence; second, that systems are open and permeable; and third, that nonlinearity reduces predictive power and increases individual agency. From the former, we see that the structure of complex systems thinking is one of an all-encompassing hierarchy, in which levels of existence emerge from one another, and where new levels do not mean that new elements are added, but rather that new relationships between elements create new phenomena. (Marais, 2014) Paradoxes at one level can be addressed at a higher level, but higher levels cannot be reduced to any one of their constituent parts. For example, Translation Studies as a level of study is composed of (i.e. emerges from) language, literature, culture, and geography (its constituting parts), among others. These are the parts that interact to make translation what it is, but translation cannot be reduced – as many translational metaphors try to do – to any one of these parts. Furthermore,

what is of interest when studying translation is how its parts relate to one another; for example, how language relates to culture in certain geographies. We can also consider the higher levels that translation contributes to, and how translation relates to parallel elements influencing a greater whole. For example, translation is an integral component of national identity, it interacts with politics and language dynamics to create nationalistic trends. At the same time, higher levels exert downward influence on their constituting parts, meaning that national identity also influences translation practices, which occur in the form of aesthetic preferences or censorship. This perspective, although again rebuking Bourdieu's rigid structuralism, nevertheless builds upon his definitions of habitus and field. The idea here is, rather than limit discussion to a finite classification of influences, to discuss concepts in terms of the other concepts from which they are composed and to which they contribute, as well as the relationships between these higher/lower and parallel elements – a chain of multidirectional sense-making.

The other important implication of complexity theory for translation studies is the idea that systems are open. This touches on the question of why no two translators can ever produce the same translation – if a translator is a (small-scale) system, one that is open, then their choices and thoughts are constantly influenced by context, time, mood, taste, etc. In this way, with regards to the third implication of nonlinearity, translational decisions cannot be consistently predicted based on external or initial conditions. As such, the logic that a male translator will mistranslate female writing is not a prediction that can be made on an individual level, since the translator is himself vastly unpredictable (perhaps he just finished reading Judith Butler the night before). Nevertheless, one can observe and learn from patterns, since a whole does emerge from local interactions. This means that, as Tymoczko wrote,

based on Wittgenstein's work, the way to predict behavior is to watch people behave. (Tymoczko, 2007) It is not possible to understand behavior deductively, inductive reasoning and observation are uniquely able to incorporate the permeability of human agency. By definition, theories of complexity are insufficient and do not claim to explain everything, rather, they provide explanations for complexity and for patterns of self-organization. (Bak, 1996; as cited in (Marais, 2014)) This position and its inability to predict outcomes marks a break from both Bourdieu's reasoning as well as that of the concept of a theory as it is understood in Western science until this point.

This analysis of Leduc's book *Thérèse et Isabelle* from conception to most recent publication, and the role of translation within this process, draws from complexity thinking in several ways. First, it seeks to break the creation and publication process down into its constituent parts and study the interrelation of these parts, without focusing on any one single part as explanatory of the whole process. Second, it views the process as an element contributing to a greater whole, which can be Leduc's literary life, the translation of women's writing in France, or the role of translation as a tool for censorship. Third, it views the agents active in the process as open systems, whose actions cannot necessarily be predicted through previous behavior (nonlinear) and whose decisions are influenced by other active elements, both past and future (permeable). Finally, having populated the process with interrelating actors and elements, it refuses overly-simplistic (reductionist) explanations for complex events, preferring rather to accept and observe the complex nature of the situation.

II.IV Retranslation Theory

Although not the primary focus of this study, this case study is in part an instance of retranslation and so I include here a brief discussion of the dominant perspectives on retranslation by Translation Studies scholars. At the very least, these perspectives and theories provide a view of how retranslation can be perceived and, in reverse, how this example may contribute to these perspectives. Discussions of retranslation have thus far mostly been centered around a critique of chronologically-previous translations and their deficiency in some way. An early and lasting version of this lack-focused approach is the Retranslation Hypothesis (RH). Proposed by Antoine Berman in the 1990 issue of *Palimpsestes* devoted to retranslation, the RH states that first translations tend to be more target-culture oriented than subsequent translations, as these first translations determine whether or not a text will be accepted in a target culture and must thus be better adapted to the receiving norms (Berman, 1990). First translations therefore would deviate most from a text in an attempt to be well received by a new audience, while subsequent translations, that have already been introduced, so to speak, are able to stay closer to the source text. The result or evidence of this perfecting quest is, in Berman's opinion, the "grandes traductions" – translations that, through their excellence and great relevance mimic or even eclipse originals (Berman, 2000).

A similar line of thinking views retranslation as problem solving. Adapting Karl Popper's theory of knowledge positing that all knowledge proceeds by solving problems which are simply things that puzzle or raise interest and for which an answer is sought, Chesterman presented the concept of a text to be translated as a problem to be solved through 'first drafts' (tentative theory) and 'revision' (error elimination), and resulting in a second problem (Popper, 1972; Chesterman, 1997). This second problem, according to Chesterman, has a

varying relationship to the first: it can be just slightly different, a refined version of it, or a consequence of it – an open interpretation of the “result” of translation. Although further developing the relationship between translations, Chesterman remains aligned with Berman in this view of retranslation.

Much discussion on retranslation has responded (and continues to respond) to this hypothesis and this critical perspective of deficiency and progress over time, either to offer support for or to argue against it. As with most either/or scenarios, the RH has been condemned as being too narrow in scope and language by scholars such as Sebnem Susam-Saraeva or Siobhan Brownlie, among others (Susam-Saraeva, 2003; Brownlie, 2006). In fact, echoing the above discussion on complexity theory, there has been in recent years a move in the discussion of retranslation away from binaries and strict, linear conceptual frameworks towards a more holistic, elaborate and complex perspective of a web of interrelated influences. This shifting perspective seeks to open the conceptualization of retranslation as that of iterations existing in unique contexts, in which the evolution of a text does not happen simply over time but can be measured according to an infinite set of dynamic and intersecting elements. In the discussion of Violette Leduc’s *Thérèse et Isabelle*, this tension between linear progress rectifying prior deficiency versus more elaborate and holistic interconnected iterations is felt not only in the project of retranslation by Sophie Lewis, but also in reference to metaphorical retranslation/rewriting along the editorial chain, with the relevant influences and restraints embodied in the act of censorship.

In summary, censorship, gender/queer studies, complexity thinking, and, to lesser degree, retranslation serve to scaffold the analysis of *Thérèse et Isabelle*’s creation,

production and translation process. Previous discussions of censorship conceptualize the interplay of institutionalized and internalized power dynamics as they influence this process. Gender/queer theory helps to contextualize these dynamics historically, along fault lines of difference and change. It also lends analytical precedent and outsider perspective to traditional labels and boundaries, highlighting the importance and agency of the speaker, as well as the agents that enable them to be heard. As stated above, complexity theory helps structure the way these elements relate to each other and allows for the analysis of the specific without losing sight of the general.

III Methodology

The following sections comprise a brief description of the methodological perspective on textual analysis employed, followed by a review of existing writing on Violette Leduc and *Thérèse et Isabelle* and, lastly, a focused analysis on the translations of this text. The last two are organized both chronologically and by source of censorship, thereby combining the chronologically-based and source-based categorizations proposed for censorship above. The five distinct yet interrelated sources of censorship isolated for the purpose of this study are identified as the primary agents involved in the production of the text, from start to finish. It is important to note that, although they are deeply interrelated, they are analyzed separately so as to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of their complex roles within the wider network. These agents are briefly described below.

III.1 Textual analysis

Overall, this study looks at the relationship between the strategies of various agents working on a text and the procedural information that can be gleaned through close textual analysis. This entails, for the former, a macro-level approach to a text as a whole and, for the latter, a micro-level method used at a specific point in a text. In this study, the methodology of this top-down, bottom-up approach rests heavily on the textual comparison of different versions. As would be expected, this practice has been the subject of much discussion in translation studies, from the tortuous redefinitions of *equivalency* to the myriad classifications and terms including, for example, transposition, interference, and foreignization. While these positions have undoubtedly influenced the thinking behind this particular study, Hatim and Mason's work has been especially useful as a guide for how to identify and interpret the differences between the texts in question. Their proposed approach to textual analysis, which seems to expand on Juliane House's register-based, quality-assessment model (House, 1977) and Mona Baker's pragmatic and ethical elements articulated through translator's choices (Baker, 1992), focuses on the ideational function of the text and on assertions or denials of their presence in a given context (Hatim and Mason, 1990). The text is seen as a form of discourse and as such reflects ideology and power relations – functions that can be manipulated along the translational and editorial processes. The translator and other agents must therefore be keenly aware of the social contexts surrounding a text in order to preserve the rhetorical purposes of said text. In this case, the top-down implications of Leduc's writing for a number of social sub-groups meets with the "information processing" on the part of the translators and other agents on a word-by-word, bottom-up scale. This methodological approach fits well within the theoretical framework of complexity thinking, queer theory, and

copyright as it offers a more nuanced and time-sensitive view of the social factors influencing textual decisions.

III.II Sources of censorship

Original authorship/Self-censorship – Violette Leduc

Self-censorship here refers to the original writing of the text by Violette Leduc and includes her personal process, context, external influences, and decisions to include or exclude different elements in her final manuscript. This also includes her willingness to accept modifications from third-parties as well as recorded instances of her voluntarily omitting writing for social or acceptability reasons. This corresponds to Bourdieu's, Wolf's, Merkle's, and Brownlie's conceptualizations of self-censorship, which, in a state with established ideal censorship, would be a strong impulse.

Peer/mentor relationship

Although peer/mentor input would certainly influence self-censorship, the decision to separate the two stems from a desire to explore the mentor relationship, in this case between Violette Leduc and Simone de Beauvoir, as a nuanced and complex productive and restrictive influence. If there were edits suggested to the author's manuscript, what were they? What influences may have motivated these suggestions and how do they relay or resist prevailing restrictions on permissibility? Were they accepted by the writer and why? What is particularly interesting with regards to the unique mentorship between Leduc and de Beauvoir is how this relationship has perdured over the years, beyond both of their lifetimes, into translational

decisions occurring today. As will be discussed further with regards to the retranslation of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, the motivations underlying the project and its public and academic reception upon publication, de Beauvoir and Leduc continue to influence each other's legacies – not just from the former to the latter, but mutually.

Editorial process

Editorial censorship is perhaps the most recognized form of censorship, and indeed the most readily empirically discussed. The sources of editorial censorship include publishing houses and publishers and editors. Since these actors occupy positions of institutional authority, editorial censorship is directly tied to a top-down system of control, as a publisher is historically more closely tied to governing or religious bodies. This level of censorship corresponds to Brownlie's public censorship, as directly responding to established laws, but may also be more preventative in nature, taking the form of decisions made to avoid negative repercussions. In the presence of editorial censorship, it is interesting to explore who the controlling body is – government, religion, or other – and through which specific gatekeepers this control is exerted. As with other levels of censorship, it is also interesting to notice the negative space: the lack of mainstream publication and reasons behind this exclusion from cultural dialogue. In Violette Leduc's case, the editorial decision-makers were two well-known editors at the Gallimard publishing house in Paris. Accounting for their decisions, and the fears and aesthetic preferences that informed them, are essential in understanding the climate surrounding the publication of such a text as *Thérèse et Isabelle*.

Critical reception

Critical reception can make or break a new writer. As gatekeeper, the media reflects and affects public opinion regarding sensitive subjects, such as those addressed by Leduc, and can be considered as much of a source of institutional censorship as the publishers, both acting reactively and predictively. In Leduc's case, the media's decision to first ignore then flood the author with negative attention speaks volumes on what wasn't allowed to be written and why. Media attention to recent re-releases also speaks to the different effects of first and subsequent translations.

Translational activity

The translation of *Thérèse et Isabelle* and the opportunity for censorship in this case is twofold. The relevance of the translator as censor has already been addressed above, but will be further elaborated through an exploration of the similarities, differences and overall relationship between the two versions, as well as the place of each translation independently within the wider process. In addition to the translator, there are other agents involved in the translational process. Although it is more difficult to gain insight on the behind-the-scenes decisions made to influence translational projects, these nevertheless remain an integral element in this publication process within a wider publication process.

III.II Textual analysis

Overall, we are looking at the relationship between the strategy of the agents working on the text and information about the procedure that can be gleaned through textual analysis. Jeremy Munday defines these positions as, for the former, a macro-level approach to a text as

a whole and, for the latter, as a micro-level method used at a specific point in a text. In this study, the methodology of this top-down, bottom-up approach rests heavily on the textual comparison of different versions. As would be expected, this analytical practice has been the subject of much discussion in translation studies, from the tortuous redefinitions of equivalency to a lexicon of terms, laws and classifications including transposition, interference, and foreignization. While these positions have undoubtedly influenced the thinking behind this particular study, Hatim and Mason's work has been especially useful as a guide for how to identify and interpret the various differences between the texts in question. Their proposed approach to textual analysis, which builds on Juliane House's register-based quality assessment model and Mona Baker's pragmatic and ethical elements articulated through translator's choices, focuses on the ideational function of the text and assertions or denials of their presence in a given context. Text is thus seen as a form of discourse and as such reflects ideology and power relations – functions that can be manipulated along the translational and editorial processes. The translator and other agents must therefore be keenly aware of the social contexts surrounding a text in order to preserve the rhetorical purposes of said text. In this case, the top-down implications of Leduc's writing for a number of social sub-groups meets the "information processing" of the translators and other agents at a word by word, bottom-up scale.

III.III Sources of information

The first four categories above draw, for the most part, from existing information gathered from a small number of books and articles written about Violette Leduc in the last fifty years. The biographical and thematic information discussed in this section is collected

from a number of existing academic and public sources. For being so little acknowledged in mainstream society, there is a surprising amount of writing on her person and on her work. By far the most useful text for this study was Carlo Jansiti's biography, *Violette Leduc*, a 494-page tome published in 1999 that closely chronicles her life and work from birth to death. Jansiti also compiled and annotated *Correspondances, 1975-42*, a collection of Leduc's letter exchanges with Simone de Beauvoir and other acquaintances. The latter text was extremely helpful in gaining insight on the manuscript-writing phase and on Leduc's relationship with de Beauvoir, as the letters provide first-hand perspectives on these otherwise private thoughts and interactions. Although two other biographically-inclined texts informed this thesis (René de Ceccatty's *Violette Leduc, Eloge de la Bâtarde* and Colette Hall's *Violette Leduc, la mal-aimée*), Jansiti's work ultimately proved to be the most comprehensive and is therefore most cited herein.

In addition to Carlo Jansiti, three researchers have written particularly extensively about Violette Leduc from an academic perspective. Mireille Brioude – founder of the website violetteleduc.net and director of the Association des Amis de Violette Leduc, both digital and physical spaces that promote the study of Leduc's writing – has written about Leduc's autobiographical perspective and her relationship with de Beauvoir, among other themes. Another researcher, Anaïs Frantz, has written about modesty, motherhood, self-reflexivity and gender in Leduc's writing. Frantz and Brioude recently co-authored a new book on Leduc, *Lire Violette Leduc Aujourd'hui*, published in the summer of 2017, which discusses Leduc's aesthetic and thematic legacy. Lastly, Catherine Viollet wrote no less than 18 articles on Violette Leduc, primarily about the censorship of her work with a particular focus on the book *Ravages*. Accompanying the work of these three researchers is a collection

of academic writing, particularly from the field of literature, addressing a myriad of specific themes found in Leduc's life and work, including: maternity (Alison Fell), the role of objects (Ghyslaine Charles-Merrien), pain (Francesca Kutzick), autobiography (Susan Marson), lesbian imagery (Jane Rule), nature (Charlotte Urban), and the existential self (Michael Sheringham). As a testament to the depth of academic interest in Violette Leduc, twenty-five Master's and Doctoral theses have, since 1972, been dedicated to studying different aspects of Leduc's writing. Although this analysis was informed by other voices on Leduc, the background information ultimately relies most heavily on Viollet, Jansiti, and de Ceccatty's writing, which I found included most if not all the relevant information contained in the other texts. Aside from biographical and thematic information, I was able to find examples of critical responses to Leduc's writing in newspapers throughout the world through online archival databases. These sources, and the vast opportunity afforded by keyword searches, contribute enormously to understanding the more mainstream response to her writing. Lastly, there are a number of television and radio interviews conducted when Leduc was still alive in which she reflects on her own writing. Overall, although the sources cited here address numerous different aspects of Leduc's work, translation is only mentioned by Carlo Jansiti, and there only barely in one short paragraph. Even the newspaper articles, many of which are from Anglophone contexts and are presumably responding to the English version of the text, ignore the fact of translation.

This therefore leaves a gap in existing literature. From a Translation Studies perspective, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood briefly mentions the English translation of *La Bâtarde* as evidence of the masculinization of female-specific language. Indeed, this mention was what prompted me to learn more about Leduc, which resulted in a particular fascination

with the treatment of *Thérèse et Isabelle*. Otherwise, Leduc's case has thus far been absent from discussions of translation. As this translational element represents the crux of this study, the analysis herein relies on new information derived through close readings of the translated texts, complemented by an interview with the translator of the most recent translation, Sophie Lewis. This interview was conducted via email in February 2017 and was composed of open questions on the translation/publication process and on Lewis' positioning as translator. This afforded the unique opportunity to learn more about the motivations guiding the translational project. The goal for this analytical perspective is that this textual and contextual research, along with the social and historical information derived from the preceding analysis of the wider publication process, together ultimately create a multilayered view on the role of translation in a censorial context.

We begin in Section IV below with an overview of what is already known about Violette Leduc. This constitutes the basis from which the English translations of her texts are understood. In Section V, I focus on the two translations of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, first identifying patterns therein, then connecting them to the trends observed throughout the wider process. Finally, the Conclusion section offers an organizational framework, adapted from a complexity thinking perspective, through which to understand the influences on and the role of translation within this censorial publication process.

IV Violette Leduc

IV.1 Introduction

Violette Leduc- if the name was unknown to you before reading this paper then you are excused. Although she is an acknowledged literary pioneer in genre, style and content – she said it all and did it all before it all was a thing to do or say – she has nevertheless largely been ignored for the last fifty years. Why is this? And why is there a seemingly sudden renewal of interest in her as a writer and an icon? She was a woman, she was poor, she was powerless, she was not heterosexual, she was not traditionally beautiful, she occupied a decidedly marginal position in society, yet she successfully wrote and published her work and today has a voice where many have been completely lost. In this section, before turning to the role of translation and its ability to support and detract from the work of a writer in a contemporary literary context, we discuss what is already known about Violette Leduc. First, I present brief background information with the facts of her life. Second, I outline the reasons why Violette Leduc’s writing was and continues to be innovative and important, thereby justifying a close study of her work and isolating elements that can later be used to assess the effects of translational decisions. Finally, I momentarily step back from a translational focus to follow the chronology of the text of *Thérèse et Isabelle* through the first four categories described above, from manuscript writing to public reception, identifying patterns and sources of influence that recur with significant impact. This discussion of background, value and process provide a contextual base for the original analysis of the mechanisms and effects of translation, as presented in section V.

IV.II Background

Violette Leduc, born in April 1907 in Arras, Pas de Calais, France, is the illegitimate child of the son of a rich protestant family in Valenciennes and a hired maid. This fatherlessness features prominently in her heavily-autobiographical writing, inspiring titles such as *La Bâtarde* and possibly a lifelong search for recognition. Leduc is raised by a caring grandmother (herself also an illegitimate child) who dies when Leduc is 9 years old, leaving her to her severe and spiteful mother. Through her letters, interviews and writing, Leduc paints a portrait of a stressful childhood growing up in the same small town as a father and paternal family who would not recognize her, and who would even cross the street to avoid passing her on the sidewalk, paired with a home life dominated by a poor, resentful mother who marveled at her daughter's ugliness and misfortune. When Leduc is in her early teens, her mother marries a local store-owner and Violette is sent to an all-girls boarding school for the remainder of her studies. This school is the setting for Leduc's most renowned and controversial book and the subject of this thesis, *Thérèse and Isabelle*, which recounts her first romantic relationship with another student at the school. She is eventually expelled from this college for having an affair with a female supervisor, with whom she goes on to live for nine years in Paris. After ending this relationship, she works for Éditions Plon, a publishing company, and writes scripts for Synops, where she meets Maurice Sachs, the gay writer and future author of *Sabbat*, in 1938. In 1939, she briefly marries an old friend and wedding photographer, Jacques Mercier, with whom but without his knowledge she has an abortion at 5 and a half months of pregnancy and nearly dies. This period is recounted in the original manuscript for *Ravages*, yet was later excised from the published version. Mercier and Leduc divorce after one year, just as the war reaches Paris. Leduc and Maurice Sachs then rent a

house in Anceins, in Normandy, where they set up a successful black-market operation transporting goods between rural farms and wealthy Parisian households. It is only then that Leduc begins to write, at the age of 35, following Sachs' suggestion, who had become tired of hearing her constant complaints about her life. This writing quickly becomes an urgent source of expression and a central aspect of her life.

Leduc meets Simone de Beauvoir in February 1945 and makes the transition from wealthy trafficker (for whom business was slowing anyway) to poor writer under de Beauvoir's guidance. Albert Camus, himself raised by a single, domestic-worker mother, publishes her first short book, *L'Asphyxie*, in 1946 as part of Gallimard's "Espoir" collection. Excerpts are also published by Sartre in *Les Temps Modernes*. Violette Leduc is 39 years old. This title has no public success, but garners the attention, and even enthusiastic support, of other writers, including Jean Cocteau, Jean Genet and Nathalie Sarraute (Jansiti, 1999). Detailing her unhappy childhood and the first part of her life, *L'Asphyxie* begins with the line "Ma mère ne m'a jamais donné la main" (Leduc, 1946, p. 1). The narrative originally ends with her impossible love for a gay man (Maurice Sachs), but is changed before publication following de Beauvoir's suggestion that the last part be cut, one of many instances of such suggestions. As de Beauvoir recounted in an interview late in her life, "Je reçois beaucoup de manuscrits de femmes qui écrivent dans l'espoir d'être publiées. (...) Généralement un récit autobiographique, avec presque toujours une enfance malheureuse. Et elles croient que c'est intéressant..." (Beauvoir, 1984, pp. 123-124). Despite her perhaps less-than-unusual topic choice, this grand introduction to the literary world under the wings of three great writers is a testimony to Leduc's unique and profound writing style, a certain "voix inimitable" that

would be ignored, even damned, more than it would be praised, especially in English translation.

In 1946, Leduc meets and befriends Jean Genet. They mirror each other, both recently introduced to the literary scene, mentored by the “Sartres”, as well as homosexual, fatherless, criminal, poor, and marginal. Their closeness in experience and style (extreme honesty and shameless autobiography, same output, same focus on questioning social norms and beatifying abject, celebrating that which is rejected) and similar status within society make him an interesting comparison, in male form, of the different standards and opportunities offered to men and women at that time. Furthermore, Genet and Leduc both stand out among their contemporaries and the literary movement of the 1950s as being the only baroque writers in an era where deliberately poor language triumphed, exemplified in the bare-bones style of the Nouveau Roman, where new stylistic techniques were being tried out. With de Beauvoir’s continued support and heavy involvement, Leduc finishes *L’Affamée* in 1948, an intense description in the form of a prose poem of unrequited love (barely veiled as being directed towards de Beauvoir, who is simply referred to as ‘elle’ in the narrative). The text is published by Gallimard, again with little effect. In 1955, she finishes her first full-length novel, *Ravages*, on which she works nonstop for 6 years. Gallimard agrees to publish it, but, to Leduc’s extreme distress, heavily censors the text, including but not limited to the complete truncation of the first 150 pages detailing the college romance between two female students. These first pages, which would later be published separately as *Thérèse et Isabelle*, have remained extremely relevant and enjoy continued, even growing, success in recent years. This censored excerpt turned standalone text is the focus of this analysis. It is thematically

representative of Leduc's corpus as a whole and, as such, its editorial and translational process speak volumes to the complex roles of translation in early innovative female writing.

L'Asphyxie, *L'Affamée*, and *Ravages*, as well as several short stories published in *Les Temps Modernes*, garner Leduc limited recognition, she remains a writer's writer and, since her books don't sell, she has no income (she was financially supported by Sartre and de Beauvoir for nearly 20 years) (Jansiti, 1999). It isn't until her 4th book, *La Bâtarde*, a longer yet still autobiographical exploration of her life published by Gallimard in 1964 with a crucial preface by de Beauvoir explaining the importance of the text, that Leduc experiences mainstream and immediate success. The book is considered for both the Prix Goncourt and the Prix Fémina. Leduc is 57 years old. *Thérèse et Isabelle* is subsequently published by Gallimard in 1966, eleven years after it was removed from *Ravages*, to great commercial success. Leduc goes on to write three other short texts, *La Folie en Tête*, *Le Taxi*, and *La Chasse à L'Amour* (the last is published posthumously by de Beauvoir), all with varying degrees of success, outrage and censorship. She dies from breast cancer in 1972, at the age of 65.

IV.III Relevance of Leduc's writing

IV.III.1 Lived feminism

From her letters and autobiographical fiction, we see that Leduc is a prime example of circumstantial lived feminism. As a child and young adult, she was surrounded by hard-working women who had to hustle to survive without the financial support of men, and who were systematically excluded from society for being unmarried, uneducated and illegitimate. As an adult herself, she disposed of neither wealth, mainstream physical beauty, nor

masculinity and was therefore forced into self-sufficiency by necessity. In her writing, she expresses outrage at her situation and anger at men who were given opportunities she did not have access to. This authenticity was perhaps what drew Simone de Beauvoir to Leduc, as tangible proof of her theoretical and intellectual philosophy. While de Beauvoir thought about and wrote about the plight of women, the so-called second sex, she remained removed through financial situation and power position from the lives of most of her female counterparts. Leduc on the other hand had no protections from her female-ness, and she wrote not theoretically nor from above, but directly and without filter about her lived experiences. She did not consider herself a feminist, and may not have been considered one by identifying feminists around that time (and later). Although she rejected patriarchal power structures in practice, she simultaneously expressed ambivalence about women in her writing. For example, close to the end of her life she said that women cannot possess genius because they lack sperm (d'Eaubonne, 1987). This messy, contradictory, lived feminism, one which includes internalized self-loathing, has often been absent from feminist and literary narrative, replaced and explained away by an academic and analytical perspective working from within patriarchal institutions. Lived feminism has historically not been deemed worthy of inclusion into cultural narrative, into canon and classroom. Current trends towards feminist intersectionality, which intersects identity with systems of social oppression and domination, are more inclusive to complex experiences, but it remains that on-the-ground feminist perspectives can really only be accurately conveyed by women writing their own narratives, of which there have been far too few, both in original publication and in translation. Leduc's writing is an important example of such a first-person female account, not only because she

presents a distinct autobiographical position but also because she addresses extremely openly themes that were and still are considered controversial.

IV.III.II The myth of ideal motherhood

The first of these controversial themes is the idea of motherhood as being less-than-ideal. Until the publication of Leduc's *L'Asphyxie*, where she describes an angry, emotionally-distant and occasionally physically-abusive mother, depictions of unwanted and resented motherhood were rarely presented, and when so were often relegated to the easy trope of the evil stepmother. Leduc's mothers are angry at the seductive men that have abandoned them and at a world and life that have humiliated them. They take revenge upon these unwanted children through aggression, while also being caught in a complex net of emotions, love, and responsibility. Leduc writes openly about her own abortion that she had while, ironically, married to a man. She does so in a straightforward and honest way, without judgement of herself and without morality or grandiose pronouncements of ethical merit. Rather, she writes from her own perspective of a decision based on rational practicalities where, despite liking children, she did not want one of her own within a doomed marriage. Before Leduc, no woman writer had likewise dared break the stereotype of the "perfect mother", happy, grateful and in love. Along with, to a lesser degree, Marguerite Duras, Leduc risked her career and status to write honestly and openly about realities of womanhood that even now are not mainstream, thereby directly contesting a fabricated myth of feminine duty and fulfillment way before her time.

IV.III.III Female hysteria

Violette Leduc as a writer also addresses a historic ball and chain for women, especially creative women; that of female hysteria and its associated mental-health iterations that have evolved over time (a current incarnation of this catch-all female-focused psychological diagnosis is Conversion Disorder). This notion of the inferior and hysterical woman dates back to the Ancient Greek belief that the uterus was the “origin of all disease”. Plato and Hippocrates both thought that the womb lurched around the body, upsetting women and causing erratic and unreliable behavior. One proposed, and applied, solution was for women to be pregnant all the time. This idea of the wandering womb persisted for centuries in the Western world. (Gilman, 1993) In 1883, just 25 years before Leduc was born, French physician Augustin Fabre wrote that “En règle générale, toutes les femmes sont hystériques et que chaque femme porte en elle un germe d’hystérie.” (Fabre, 1883, p. 3) Indeed, in the late 1800s, it seemed that anything could mark a woman as hysteric, although one symptom was particularly common – that of identifying with the burgeoning feminist movement. As Elaine Showalter wrote, “During an era when patriarchal culture felt itself to be under attack by its rebellious daughters, one obvious defense was to label women campaigning for access to the university, the professions, and the vote as mentally disturbed.” (Showalter, 1993, p. 305) From examples in literature, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, or, even within the last ten years, Elena Ferrante’s *The Days of Abandonment*, we see that the restriction of creative expression – or indeed even basic expression – is closely correlated with external diagnoses of hysteria and mental disorder. We see a recurring cycle of repression, frustration and erratic behavior, which leads to “rest cures” and further repression, continuing the cycle and upholding a general illegitimacy of a

strictly feminine nature. Leduc was a perfect example of the contemporary continuation of this detrimental power dynamic. She suffered from increasingly serious mental breakdowns and crippling anxiety and paranoia as her work was ignored and pared down in publication for reasons of social mores and propriety. The language that was used when critics write about her work or in her correspondence with editors shockingly echoes rhetoric of hysteria and of patronizing delegitimization of women's creative expression. Leduc indeed writes her story in order to survive, to stay sane, and when this purpose of writing – to explain and have cathartic recognition – is continually pulled out from under her while male colleagues or more acceptable female colleagues of no greater skill are promoted, it is for her and for those who study her a clear form of continued repression.

IV.III.IV Female sexuality

Closely tied to mental health diagnoses for women has been sexuality, and Violette Leduc was once again a pioneer in this domain as well. Not only was she before her time in openly discussing her relations with women, and in doing so in detail and without the requisite shame that “should” have accompanied such scandalous discussion, but she would still be considered ahead of the times for today's mainstream society's views on sexuality by refusing to label her sexual identity and her relationships as anything other than fluid and dynamic. She is often referred to as a lesbian writer, but she herself did not seem interested in using this vocabulary, preferring rather to articulate in more nuanced terms the exact characteristics of individual relationships, be them with men or women, platonic or sexual. The expression of women's sexuality by women has always been restricted and controlled by gatekeepers along the way to publication and dissemination, and we still see today many instances of this

simplification and quick labeling (i.e. as a slut, virgin, prude, etc.). By avoiding labels such as lesbian or bisexual, and therefore not subscribing her experiences to prefabricated classifications of gender and sexuality norms, Leduc retains power over her own narrative and offers complexity and nuance where others are quick to label or dismiss. As de Beauvoir writes in *Le Deuxième Sexe* regarding the conditions of the woman writer in the middle of the 20th century:

La femme est encore étonnée et flattée d'être admise dans le monde de la pensée, de l'art, qui est un monde masculin : elle s'y tient bien sage ; elle n'ose pas déranger, explorer, exploser ; il lui semble qu'elle doit se faire pardonner ses prétentions littéraires par sa modestie, son bon goût ; elle mise sur les valeurs sûres du conformisme. (...) Ce n'est pas que les femmes dans leurs conduits, leurs sentiments, manquent d'originalité : il en est de si singulières qu'il faut les enfermer ; dans l'ensemble, beaucoup d'entre elles sont plus baroques, plus excentriques que les hommes dont elles refusent les disciplines. Mais c'est dans leur vie, leur conversation, leur correspondance qu'elles font passer leur bizarre génie ; si elles essaient d'écrire, elles se sentent écrasées par l'univers de la culture parce que c'est un univers d'hommes : elles ne font que balbutier. (Beauvoir, 1949, pp. 632-633)

De Beauvoir herself was arguably never able to relinquish her bourgeois, Catholic upbringing and bare herself entirely in her work, choosing instead theoretical essays and memoirs that, although extremely important, maintained a certain distance and never risked complete exposure. She was never able to throw herself “toute crue” into her writing, as Leduc did compulsively and repetitively. By telling her story without shame or judgement, and with extreme attention to detail and emotional honesty, Leduc goes further than any woman writer had gone until then. Depictions of female sexuality, especially lesbian sexuality, had been either written by men with a distinct male gaze or by more timid women. Those who touched on the subject did so only allusively. *Claudine* by Colette, *Poussière* by Rosamond Lehman

or, later, *Rempart des Béquines* by Françoise Mallet-Jory all restricted themselves to sentimental hints at female eroticism (Jansiti, 1999, p. 218). Of these books and others, Leduc wrote in a letter to de Beauvoir: “Quelle misère, quelle pacotille ces lesbiennes dans les livres. Elles sont toujours malheureuses ou bien fadasses (...) mais si mon travail me désespère je ne la trouve pas dérisoire.” (Leduc, 1952) Indeed, Leduc’s writing was not coy or shadowed, and for this she would feel the consequences.

IV.IV Thérèse et Isabelle

The major themes detailed above, and their depiction by Leduc free from sentimentalism, feelings of guilt or shame represent a resounding exception to the acceptable subject matter of her time. Female sexuality that is neither dramatized nor claimed, but simply staged by vibrant and precise writing. Abortion and unideal motherhood told honestly by a woman, in her own words and without shame. These are subjects that were impossible in her time, and even remain underexplored in ours. Although *La Bâtarde* was her greatest success in economic terms, *Thérèse et Isabelle* addresses all these themes in depth and in one text and, as such, is representative of Leduc’s full corpus of writing. Furthermore, as will be discussed in Section V, it is the only translated text by Leduc that was both republished in uncensored form and retranslated in its integrality. In the following sections, I will momentarily step away from translation to untangle the text’s publication process, presented chronologically by source of censorship.

IV.IV.I Self-censorship

Due to its private nature, it is extremely difficult to pinpoint exact instances of self-censorship in the process of a writer working over 50 years ago. Indeed, self-censorship in a wider sense may be considered an integral part of any writing or creative endeavor. Nevertheless, through her letters and changes in different manuscript versions, we can glean several things that Leduc considered while writing, which, through external pressures in line with our definition of self-censorship, directly influenced what made it into the first manuscript and what was left out.

Even though she has come to represent an early pioneer in social-media-style, tell-all autobiographical narrative and openness to sex and sexuality, Leduc was not impervious to the societal norms of her time. If she wrote in great detail of her private affairs, it was not without doubt and second-guessing. In a letter to Simone de Beauvoir during the initial writing of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, she writes that: “Je suis découragée en ce qui concerne mon travail actuel. Je pensais que c’était un livre inutile avec des égarements de pensionnaires. (...) Je doutais du livre que j’écris, je me disais que c’était du narcissisme sexuel, du figinage.” (Leduc, 1950). Not only does she doubt her own work, but she very much doubts the public’s ability to accept this work as anything other than indecent writing. She even becomes so down on her writing, and on the public’s potential to value her work, that she considers accentuating the indecency of the content and publishing it solely for the money. In another letter to de Beauvoir, she writes: “Ne pourrais-je pas faire de l’argent avec, exploiter l’indécence qu’on trouvera dedans, que je n’ai pas voulu? (...) Je veux gagner de l’argent, je veux vivre comme les autres” (Leduc, 1951). This shows that she was aware and did consider the risk that was writing in detail about sex from a woman’s perspective at that time, and how

this would likely be met with an inadequate reception. If anything, this testifies to an extreme level of persistence and determination, as she still took three years to write *Thérèse et Isabelle*, and believed in its value even when she was alone in doing so and even when she “knew better” than to do so. The simple fact that her writing exists testifies to a lack of self-censorship when discussing female sexuality and the intimate details of her life. This was unique among women writers at that time and this is a large part of what makes her work so remarkable today.

Still, the original manuscript of *Ravages*, including the first section which would 11 years later become *Thérèse et Isabelle*, differs extensively from the final version given to Simone de Beauvoir to read in its entirety before delivering it to Gallimard (Viollet, 2001). It is impossible to know in detail how Leduc self-edited her initial writing, but we know that de Beauvoir was already involved from an early stage, to the point where it is difficult to differentiate between Leduc and her mentor’s comments and notes in the margins of the eleven school notebooks that constitute the manuscript for *Ravages* (including the *Thérèse et Isabelle* section). There are extensive notes (such as, “à revoir, plus de précision, trop long”) on all pages by both Leduc and de Beauvoir, and it is nearly impossible to separate whose word is whose (Jansiti, 1999, p. 259). Indeed, the only specific instance of true self-censorship that can definitely be traced to Leduc herself is regarding her relationship with de Beauvoir in *La Folie en Tête*. Despite spending much time analyzing her relationship with her mentor, Leduc excludes any indication of turbulence between the two, despite it being largely documented in correspondence, theirs’ and others’, that they often argued and violently disagreed on fundamental issues (Jansiti, 1999, p. 412).

Catherine Viollet, a specialist in autobiographical writing, gender and the process of literary creation, focused on Leduc's writing process and the self-censorship therein, particularly in the writing of *Ravages*. In fact, when Viollet passed away in 2012, she had been working on publishing an uncensored and reinstated version of *Ravages*, which would include *Thérèse et Isabelle* as Leduc had initially intended. According to Viollet, the final manuscript version is much longer than the printed version, particularly in erotic scenes. Specifically, there are two important scenes that are present in the original manuscript versions yet are absent in early edited versions of *Ravages*. (Viollet, 2001) The first is of Thérèse at age 14, touching a teacher's leather handbag. This scene of about 50 pages evokes Thérèse's early sensuality and sexual awakening. Viollet sees this censored scene as essential to Thérèse's character development, let alone to its contribution to the accurate portrayal of budding female sexuality, and maps its dislocation through various versions of rewritings, and finally to its eventual representation in only one line in *La Bâtarde*: "Je respirais un fruit défendu." (*ibid*) A second scene removed from early manuscripts is one in which a teenage Thérèse waxes lyrically on the nocturnal wind, as she overlooks the village houses at 3 am on a sleepless night. This scene, according to Viollet, is essential for aerating, alleviating, the heaviness of Thérèse's otherwise intense self-discovery. (*ibid*) These two scenes, which according to manuscript notes were largely removed by Leduc herself with some input from de Beauvoir (still, it is difficult to tell the two apart) and decisively chopped by Gallimard, point to Leduc's early tendency toward self-censorship. Taken within the general context of the rest of the novel, these scenes are essential to Thérèse's developmental arc and the story without them is impoverished. Nevertheless, even in the earliest stages of writing, Leduc's self-censorship is in line with the overall censorship of *Ravages*: minimizing sexualized

language whenever possible, yet trending toward the effacement of character complexity, thereby resulting in a bare-bones oversexualization (due to their having no defining characteristic other than sex) of one-dimensional characters.

Thérèse et Isabelle is ultimately censored from *Ravages* by actors in the editorial process and, although Leduc's options become limited at that point to either truncated readership or unknown abyss, Leduc is never forced to publish. In that way, we can cite her most significant self-censorship as one ongoing self-annulment wherein she chooses to accept the changes proposed or mandated by Simone de Beauvoir and the Gallimard editors. This is, of course, an impossible decision to have to make; between maintaining her authentic voice and the possibility of publication, she chose the latter. How else could she exist to anyone other than herself? On this subject, she wrote, "J'ai dit oui à tout ce qu'il m'a demandé. J'étais brisée" (Leduc, 1954). *Brisée* is an understatement here, as the censorship of *Ravages* provoked in Leduc a total mental breakdown, requiring electroshock treatment and a long sleep cure (coordinated and paid for by de Beauvoir). In the end, we see that Leduc resisted self-censorship to an unprecedented degree, yet, painfully aware of the price of admission, she chose to compromise with external forces in exchange for a seat at the table.

IV.IV.II Peer/mentor censorship

Would Leduc's writing have existed without the involvement of Simone de Beauvoir? Leduc herself is the first to admit that it would not. Indeed, it seems that de Beauvoir gave to and took much from Leduc's books, leaving proof of one of the, if not *the*, most intense literary mentorship between women in history at least in terms of constancy and longevity

(Jansiti, 1999, p. 263). Regardless of its effects, their relationship is in and of itself remarkable.

Although she had known about her for several years before becoming officially acquainted, Leduc describes her first meeting with Simone de Beauvoir in the first line of *La Folie en tête*: “Février 1945. Il est le mois le plus extraordinaire de mon existence. (...) Il est détaché des autres. Il a vingt ans, il est une feuille de laurier arrachée au temps” (Leduc, *La Folie en Tête*, 1970). So important was this relationship to Leduc, that she would refer to their first meeting as “l’évènement” and bring de Beauvoir flowers or cake every February to celebrate their anniversary. Soon after this first meeting, Leduc gives de Beauvoir the manuscript for her first story, *L’Asphyxie*, an interaction about which Leduc wrote in 1970, “Elle l’a lu en une nuit, ce qui m’a paru une féerie, une deuxième féerie elle m’a fait demander de venir la retrouver au Flore, et une troisième féerie, la principale, elle m’a annoncé que des extraits paraîtraient dans *Les Temps Modernes*.” (Jansiti, 1999, p. 142) De Beauvoir immediately suggests changes to the text, which Leduc agrees to enthusiastically and seemingly without regret, thereby setting the tone for the dynamic of nearly the entirety of their relationship.

Much of de Beauvoir’s visible intervention lies in suggestions for shortening or condensing the text (Jansiti, 1999, p. 260). In their first collaboration, for *L’Asphyxie*, which tells the story of Leduc’s childhood until she meets Maurice Sachs, de Beauvoir tells Leduc to cut the part about Sachs (the last 40 pages) because she finds it “décousu” and off-topic (Jansiti, 1999, p. 97). Leduc cuts this last part and replaces it with new chapters. As she wrote in *La Folie en Tête*, she was in complete agreement with this decision: “Elle (Simone de Beauvoir) ne se trompait pas: c’était décousu.” (Leduc, 1970, p. 71). Other opinions have

since raised issue with this, and other, interventions on the part of de Beauvoir. As Carlo Jansiti writes:

Dans le cas de *L'Asphyxie*, en plaçant à la fin du récit sa passion « impossible » pour un homosexuel, elle livrait la clé même de son enfance. Ces pages possèdent leur valeur littéraire et ne sont pas un « remplissage ». *L'Asphyxie* n'est pas seulement un récit de souvenirs d'enfance; c'est la représentation d'une vision du monde où la violence, la domination sur les plus faibles se réalisent à travers un « perversissement » de la sexualité. Tous les chapitres sont empreints d'une sensualité morbide, tantôt explicite tantôt métaphorique. Mutilé de sa fin, et limité à des épisodes de l'enfance, le texte perdait sa fonction cathartique. Tout en gardant l'originalité du style, sa structure fragmentaire, le récit se place alors dans une lignée plus banale, plus conventionnelle, en quelque sorte plus proche de la conception existentialiste de la littérature. (Jansiti, 1999, pp. 142-143)

Leduc later acknowledges this influence, and others' notice of it, stating in an interview: "On me dit : « Elle vous influence trop. Elle vous fait couper ceci, cela. » Mais elle avait raison." (Leduc, 1965) But this *raison* that Leduc entrusts to her mentor should not be presumed so today. In studying Leduc's manuscripts and correspondence, the extent of de Beauvoir's textual "nettoyage" is apparent, and its scale is extremely significant (Jansiti, 1999, p. 260). Here, Carlo Jansiti details her influence on *La Folie en tête*: "Les copies dactylographiées du manuscrit de *La Folie en tête* témoignent des révisions pratiquées par sa protectrice: "Il faut presque tout supprimer", "non", "beaucoup trop long", note Simone de Beauvoir en haut des pages après avoir biffé à grands traits, raturé des phrases, remplacé un mot, modifié la ponctuation (...) Simone de Beauvoir sollicite même la rédaction de nouveaux passages dont on ignore la teneur: "Je voulais laisser tomber, Simone de Beauvoir s'est révoltée, confie-t-elle à Odette Laigle. (...) Je travaille, premier jet de ce qu'elle m'a demandé d'ajouter." "

(Jansiti, 1999, p. 418) This demonstrates the complex working relationship between Leduc and de Beauvoir – entailing both creation and repression.

Not only did she dissect the texts themselves at a micro level, in so doing de Beauvoir also manages to mold, book by book, the shape of Leduc's entire corpus of writing on a macro level. From the beginning, with *L'Asphyxie*, by truncating the last part about Sachs, she directs Leduc towards a text dedicated to memories of childhood rather than one of personal growth and emerging self-awareness. As is made evident in Jansiti's biography and in reading the letters exchanged between Leduc and de Beauvoir, de Beauvoir is integral for each subsequent book in shaping the initial project and in making sure that the books follow one another in chronological and linear order. For *La Bâtarde*, she suggests the topic as a new project on which Leduc should focus (Jansiti, 1999, p. 319). In studying manuscripts and correspondence, a pattern arises where Leduc pursues and proposes theme-based writing, focusing on patterns in her own life through writing that is extremely passionate and innovative. Then, de Beauvoir steps in between last manuscript versions and before publication to normalize, even suppress, style and focus, to redraw boundaries around the work that are more in line with what was being written at that time. Although de Beauvoir was then not as famous as Sartre, she still benefited from enough notoriety and social standing that she was able to push the boundaries of what was acceptable in her own writing. Similarly to Leduc's intention, though to a much lesser degree, the erotic scenes in *Les Mandarins*, which received the Prix Goncourt in 1954, are carefully described in a realistic style close to spoken language (Jansiti, 1999, p. 267). Nevertheless, she remained much closer to what was acceptable, and indeed perhaps better understood the mechanisms at play, than Leduc. In that way, she was seemingly able to understand where Leduc was coming from in writing so

precisely about female sexuality, while at the same time, either consciously or subconsciously, suppressing and erasing important elements that arguably made Leduc, in hindsight, such an original and powerful writer. In this way, she exerted a considerable normalizing influence on Leduc's writing, to debatable literary worth.

De Beauvoir also marked Leduc's work extra-textually, with effects that are indisputably linked to Leduc's being read today at all. For much of her life, Leduc was essentially destitute and could not write and work a job at the same time. De Beauvoir (with Sartre's help initially) financially supported her, telling Leduc that the money was coming from Gallimard in order to build her confidence in her writing. For over 16 years, this monthly income from the de Beauvoir-Sartre household was Leduc's only lifeline to keeping her two feet under her, not just financially but emotionally as well. After her success with *La Bâtarde*, de Beauvoir asked Leduc to pay the sum back in full so that Leduc would not feel indebted to anyone. De Beauvoir also played the role of therapist, mediating conflicts between Leduc and acquaintances, consoling her when she threatened suicide, encouraging her to keep writing despite apparent disinterest in her work, and even checking her into mental hospitals when necessary and paying for and planning vacations for Leduc to get out of Paris. In addition to regularly meeting with and encouraging Leduc to always keep writing, de Beauvoir was Leduc's primary publicist since the beginning, not an easy task considering Leduc's apparently difficult character. Upon completion of a text, it was de Beauvoir who communicated with Gallimard and other editors, and who spoke of Leduc's writing to her extensive literary network. As such, it was through her that excerpts of Leduc's work was published in *Temps Modernes* and other literary journals of that time. Perhaps the most public display of this mentorship is de Beauvoir's extensive preface for *La Bâtarde*, where she

employed her popularity at that time to introduce Leduc to French readership (Jansiti, 1999, pp. 365-366). In addition to highlighting the merits of the text, she also situates Leduc's work within a series of Beauvoirien philosophical perspectives, including Leduc's recourse to writing as a method of expressing anguish and literature as a personal freedom. This preface plays an undoubtedly major role in Leduc's success.

Although Leduc's writing would likely not exist, or at least would not have been accepted, without de Beauvoir's influence, the relationship is not strictly positive. Michèle Causse, a close friend of Leduc's and a fellow writer, summarizes this mentorship as follows:

À l'époque j'étais très en colère contre Simone de Beauvoir, malgré l'admiration que je lui portais parce qu'il arrivait à Violette de me lire des textes que Beauvoir avait expurgés. Je pestais, je m'énervais et Violette semblait trouver que j'avais raison. Mais en définitive, elle écoutait "SdeB" comme elle l'appelait familièrement. Sans doute parce que "SdeB" mesurait mieux jusqu'où on peut aller trop loin avec ces messieurs de l'édition, qui en dernier ressort décident de la publication et ont des estomacs fragiles. Tout compte fait, maintenant, je me dis de Beauvoir a eu beaucoup de mérite. Si Violette Leduc n'avait pas eu les conseils de Beauvoir et l'assurance de son amitié, nous ne parlerions peut-être pas d'elle en ce moment. (Armangaud, 1996)

De Beauvoir's role in the production of *Thérèse et Isabelle* is no exception to this trend. The writing, which took Leduc 6 years, was fully financially supported and, one could argue, emotionally supported de Beauvoir as well. Although quite acceptable by today's literary standards, the text, which presents realistic descriptions of sexual intimacy between women, was Leduc's most contested piece of writing during her lifetime. After reading the manuscript for *Ravages*, in which *Thérèse et Isabelle* was then included, de Beauvoir wrote to Nelson Algren that, "Il y a des pages excellentes, mais quand à publier ça, impossible. C'est une histoire de sexualité lesbienne aussi crue que du Genet. Elle décrit par le menu comment une

filles dépucelle une autre, et ce qu'elle fait avec ses doigts, et ce qui en découle dans le sexe de l'autre, un tas de tripatouillages atroces qu'ensemble elles inventent avec du sang, de l'urine et ainsi de suite, qui même moi m'ont légèrement dégoûtée, alors comment le lecteur moyen réagirait-il ?" (Beauvoir, 1949) Throughout the initial writing of the text, de Beauvoir consistently advises Leduc to normalize her writing and approach. Indeed, the initial manuscript versions are much more vivid and intense than the final version submitted to Gallimard. News of Gallimard's decision to truncate the text was delivered through de Beauvoir, who took it upon herself to break the news to Leduc. De Beauvoir, convinced of the merit of the text despite her own initial reaction to it, brings the manuscript to other publishers in Paris, including Éditions de la Table Ronde and Julliard, all of which required even more edits than Gallimard. The text, which had already been extensively filtered by de Beauvoir, was still too daring for the top publishing houses, despite its important successes. Sartre found it "obsessionnel et sensationnel", while Jacques Guerin, Yvon Belaval and other readers of the manuscript in the literary world were passionately supportive (Jansiti, 1999, p. 262). De Beauvoir made the text possible, then made it more acceptable, and, despite her own doubts regarding its public suitability, she fought for its publication. Nevertheless, her influence was not enough to make the editors or the public accept it.

Overall, de Beauvoir's interest in and mentorship of Leduc resulted in a complicated yet productive relationship. De Beauvoir made Leduc's writing possible, emotionally, financially and publicly, while Leduc was a living example of so much of what de Beauvoir studied and believed in. She cited Leduc's work (six different times in *Le Deuxième Sexe* alone) to illustrate her theoretical arguments regarding motherhood and the "amoureuse". (Fell, 2011) Her preface to *La Bâtarde* openly connects Leduc – her writing and her person as

a case to be analyzed – to her theories on femininity. As we will see further below in the discussion of the second translation project, this bi-directional influence does not end when they stopped writing, it continues to inform publication decisions and literary discussion today.

IV.IV.III Editorial censorship

In the editorial process, we see two sources of censorship: the first is top-down official repression, or fear thereof, while the second is strictly personal, coming from the tastes or tolerances of individual decision-makers. Regarding the former, in France, the overtness of official censure has varied over the last several hundred years, going back and forth between degrees of stated censorship and stated freedom since it was first addressed in the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen de 1789*, which included a provision for freedom of expression². Recent instances of overt official censure have been discussed in terms of being an extreme measure, reserved for extenuating circumstances that pose a threat to the French people. In 1955, the year Violette Leduc finished *Ravages*, including the chapter on *Thérèse and Isabelle*, the first *état d'urgence* had just been instated in France in reaction to events tied to the war in Algeria (1954-1962). Seeking to re-establish order in the French metropolis, this temporary measure allowed the government to openly censor the content and circulation of texts, persons, or anything else that was deemed “participant à la commission d’actes portant une atteinte grave à l’ordre public.”³ Although the focus was on controlling media and news

² Article 11. Retrieved from <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/Droit-francais/Constitution/Declaration-des-Droits-de-l-Homme-et-du-Citoyen-de-1789>

³ From the *Prorogation de l'état d'urgence, April 3, 1955*: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/dossiers/prorogation_loi_55-385.asp

output, and not directly targeting literary expressions of otherness, this was surely a time of extreme caution and suspicion. The political and editorial climate at the time of *Ravages*' publication may therefore likely have been less than hospitable to anything even potentially socially disturbing. Indeed, recorded acts of censorship around that time testify to a strong effort to pre-emptively censor the media. In 1945, a commission to control cinematic films was created, implementing complete prohibition or partial publication of nearly 3,000 films until 1975, when it was decentralized and replaced by a system of economic censorship which placing a 20% tax on X-rated films, a tax which is then paid to "quality" films. Also in 1945, a commission was created to control publications destined for children and adolescents, aiming primarily anything that would demoralize youth.

The literary world was no exception to this censoring climate. The control, however, seems to have been somewhat more covert than for the press. Bernard Joubert describes the particular censorial context in his book *Anthologie érotique de la censure*:

Il n'y a pas d'ouvrage interdit, il n'y a que des éditions condamnées, disait très hypocritement la censure française. Bien sûr Sade était condamné, pour « outrage aux bonnes mœurs par la voie du livre », mais encore Boris Vian pour le caractère pornographique de *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes* (interdit en 1949), Isidore Isou (condamné en 1950), Henri Miller (poursuivi en 1950), Maurice Raphaël pour *Ainsi soit-il !* (condamné en 1951), Violette Leduc pour son roman lesbien *Thérèse et Isabelle* (refusé par Gallimard en 1955), Vladimir Nabokov pour *Lolita* (interdit de 1956 à 1959), Pauline Réage pour *Histoire d'O* (interdit en 1955 et 1968 !), Alfonse Boudard pour *Les Grandes ardeurs* (condamné en 1960), Georges Bataille pour *Les larmes d'Eros* (interdit en 1961), Cécile Saint-Laurent pour *Les Amours enragées* (interdit en 1961), mais aussi, et là on reste aujourd'hui encore consterné, Henry Havelock Ellis pour ses *Études de psychologie sexuelle* (interdit de 1964 à 1965) et *l'Encyclopédie de la vie sexuelle*, publiée chez Hachette et dont les rédacteurs étaient des cliniciens comme le Dr Christiane

Verdoux, Jean Cohen, Jacqueline Kahn-Nathan, et qui fut poursuivi en 1974! (Joubert, 2001, p. 14)

It is important to note that these writers are almost all men. The climate for women was even more repressive, if they were considered for publication at all. Carlo Jansiti writes that, “La pudibonderie à l’égard des romancières frôle le ridicule en cette année 1954: qu’il s’agisse d’un bref roman nullement érotique, *Bonjour tristesse* ou d’*Histoire d’O*, qui fit l’objet d’interminables poursuites judiciaires. La pruderie n’est d’ailleurs pas l’apanage des Français. *The Price of Salt*, le roman homosexuel de Patricia Highsmith publié en France pour la première fois en 1985 sous le titre de *Carol*, est refusé en 1951 à cause de “la hardiesse du sujet” ” (Jansiti, 1999, p. 266). There was, however, no commission overseeing literary publications and the official source of censure is diffuse from this perspective. Judicial action came from a publically-mandated court, so the source of restrictive power lay in the hands of the French people rather than in that of a monarch or religious figure. Who exactly was it that decided what was morally correct and safe? This indistinct source corresponds to Bourdieu’s and Brownlie’s concept of structural censorship, where restriction comes from society itself and from the structure of the field in which the text circulates. It is more covert than public/institutional censorship, yet more overt than self-censorship, therefore blurring the boundaries of external and internal judgement. In this way, when editors feared legal repercussions, they were not only facing the imposition of concrete fines but they were also considering the socially imposed norms of behaviour, which they themselves had internalized to, as we will see, a significant degree. Entering the publishing world in such a climate of heightened control and great anxiety about public morale, and directly challenging these social mores, of youth no less, make it unsurprising that *Ravages* and later *Thérèse et Isabelle*

would have been so thoroughly censored from its first contact with the system of publication and its agents. Nevertheless, we are able to isolate particular patterns by delving deeper into the process.

Editing of Ravages

Violette Leduc completed, with de Beauvoir's assistance and reading, the manuscript for *Ravages* in 1954, six years after she had begun working on it, three of which were solely dedicated to writing the section for *Thérèse et Isabelle*. It was delivered by de Beauvoir to Gallimard in April. A response from Gallimard arrived three months later, requiring the cutting of hundreds of pages (in comparison, Gallimard answered Leduc in just one week following her submission of the manuscript for *La Bâtarde* ten years later, asking only that two descriptive sections be cut due to overall length (Jansiti, 1999, p. 362)). The editors at Gallimard charged with reading *Ravages* were Jacques Lemarchand, part of Gallimard's reading committee and close friend of Albert Camus, and, of all people, Raymond Queneau – the founder of Oulipo, eventual writer of *Zazie dans le metro*, accomplished translator and, incidentally, good friend of Georges Bataille. Speaking for both editors, Lemarchand asserted that, although they liked *Ravages*, some passages would be impossible to publish openly as they were then. In the *rapport de lecture* in Gallimard's archives, he wrote: "C'est un livre dont un bon tiers est d'une obscénité énorme et précise – et qui attirerait les foudres de la justice. Et les cent cinquante pages de l'avortement sont du mauvais Sartre. C'est aussi un livre qui contient des réussites ponctuelles. L'histoire des collégiennes pourrait, à elle seule, consister un récit assez envoutant – si l'auteur consentait à entourer d'un peu d'ombre ses techniques opératoires (...) Publié tel quel, ce serait un livre à scandale et les qualités du livre

– qui en seraient, en outre, étouffées – ne justifient pas ce scandale.” (Ceccatty, 1994, pp. 17-18) Here, Simone de Beauvoir suggests softening these and other passages so that the book be able to be published. Gallimard issues their edits, Leduc accepts them as a condition for publication. Even after all the edits are made, however, Gallimard still hesitates and requests that their legal advisor read over the text. (Jansiti, 1999, p. 271) The advisor mandates that another 15 pages be removed that he finds to be “apologie de l’avortement” which was then illegal under the law.

The beginning of *Ravages* and its evocation of homosexual relations between high school girls, destined to later become a best-seller, particularly motivates Gallimard’s refusal of the text in its integrality. This is nevertheless somewhat surprising, given that they published Genet’s comparable subject matter with only minimal edits. Raymond Queneau even signed the petition in support of Genet when he was facing life in prison for repeated offenses of homosexuality (although Albert Camus refused to sign). (Plunka, 1992, p. 27) As discussed above, Leduc and Genet are extremely similar in their writing styles, social positions and choice of subjects. Nevertheless, they differ in ultimately decisive ways. Genet, a sex-worker, criminal, vagabond, and Sartre’s protégé, was a man and, in that social context, benefited from an aura of exoticism that was accepted by a public still seeking the “poètes maudits” that had been popular in the preceding century. Leduc, also a sexual criminal vagabond, also taken on by the Sartre-Beauvoir household, is nevertheless still a woman and her femininity serves to cripple her, if she is even noticed at all. Regarding the censorship of her writing, Françoise d’Eaubonne writes, “Parmi les motifs de cette mise à l’écart du tel ouvrage se trouve une réaction que l’on n’a jamais signalée: l’audace érotique de ces pages n’est pas uniquement anticonformiste, gênante, susceptible de recrû moral: elle est

insignifiante. L'homosexuel est haï, et peut donc plaire ; la lesbienne est dédaignée, ridiculisée.” (d'Eaubonne, 2000, p. 43) Not only that, but Genet's writing belongs to a genealogy of gay themes in French literature, joining the ranks of Marquis to Rabelais and Villon. Leduc stands alone, a fact that she recognizes as she urges other women to be more daring and honest in their writing of sex.

What exactly was cut and what was published from Leduc's original *Ravages*? In addition to the first 150 pages constituting the relationship between high school girls, the eventual *Thérèse et Isabelle*, two other full scenes are removed from the book and replaced in large part by ellipses, indicating the censored text, in the published version. The first of these scenes is an exchange between Leduc and her husband-to-be Jacques Mercier (Marc in the text) in a taxi, where she encounters a penis for the first time. In the original, Leduc treats the penis like an object and is somewhat disdainful of it, referring to its “peau fripée, fragile comme une paupière”. (Jansiti, 1999, p. 253) She eventually refuses him, after making fun of it. The edited version is shorter but she does not disdain and ends up giving him oral sex in the taxi. (Leduc, *Ravages*, 1955, p. 46). About the response from Gallimard, de Beauvoir writes to Sartre that, “La scène du taxi scandalise littéralement les gens: Queneau, Lemarchand, Y. Levy, j'ai l'impression que ça les blesse directement en tant que males,” (Beauvoir, *Lettres à Sartre*, 1990, p. 424) and later in her book *La Force des choses, tome II*, “l'objet érotique (dans *Ravages*), c'était l'homme et non la femme, et ils (les lecteurs de la maison Gallimard) se sentirent outragés.” (Beauvoir, 1988, p. 67). According to Carlo Jansitti, Leduc's writing is “la première fois qu'une femme, en décrivant son rapport à la sexualité masculine, traite le pénis en tant qu'objet, de manière humoristique et désacralisant.” (Jansiti, 1999, p. 253) A hotel scene that is also removed shows in the original a Leduc that is both

attracted and afraid of Marc and who repeatedly refuses him. (*ibid*) The description of Leduc's abortion, which closes the book, was also largely cut. Lemarchand found it too long and too technical, while, as mentioned above, Gallimard's legal advisor recommended it be removed for legal reasons. Still other elements of the original text are edited out, including contextual information surrounding Leduc's relationship with Cecile (her former teacher and long-time partner), a near rape, and anecdotes and dialogue of their cohabitation in the village. Evidence of Cecile's strong personality is generally excluded from the published version. (Jansiti, 1999, p. 254) Information about other female characters and their sexuality is also largely removed.

What effect do these edits have on the final text? One of the most significant aspects of Leduc's writing, which still permeates through into the final versions, is that she does not put anything in the shadows nor hide her operational techniques, she does not adopt the socially-acceptable false modesty when discussing erotic or bodily experiences. Her writing is important for this reason, because it openly discusses experiences and perspectives unique to women, without imposing shame or judgement. This is particularly important in her discussion of political issues, including abortion, marriage, and female sexuality in general. As we can and will still see, societal expectations of modesty and silence surrounding these topics are imposed throughout the editorial trajectory, with the first official gatekeeper being Gallimard. Leduc on the published version of *Ravages* said that, mutilated from the first part, it lost its coherence and force (Jansiti, 1999, p. 268). The exactitude of the sexual scenes, which had been a main focus, were also greatly diminished. Although resulting from public and individual mores, a vital aspect of female expression is lost in these truncations, as is expressed by Leduc during a radio interview: "J'essaye de rendre le plus exactement possible,

le plus minutieusement possible les sensations éprouvées dans l'amour physique. Il y a là sans doute quelque chose que toute femme peut comprendre. Je ne cherche pas le scandale mais seulement à décrire avec précision ce qu'une femme éprouve alors. (...) Toute analyse psychologique mérite, je pense, d'être entendue." (Chomez, 1949) Indeed, as is gleaned from Viollet, Jansiti and other perspectives on the process, what is lost when going from *Ravages* the manuscript to *Ravages* the published book is the richness of women's experiences, their strength and humanity in absurdly normal situations. What is painfully clear when comparing these two versions is the acute loss of the female "I", one who is drawn to mocking while fearing masculinity, one who can describe in piercing detail the intense mundanity of an abortion... This privileged and vital position is held back, kept behind the shadows that made publication possible.

Editing of Thérèse et Isabelle

Thérèse et Isabelle was eventually published as a standalone book in 1966, following the success of *La Bâtarde*, in which certain passages of *Thérèse et Isabelle* were in fact included. Although we do not have access to Leduc's original manuscript (if there even ever could be considered to have been one), we can see that significant cuts were made by Gallimard to the 1966 version by comparing it with the second, unexpurgated version of *Thérèse et Isabelle* published in 2000. The motivations for the 2000 republication will be discussed further below. Here, we will examine, based on my close comparative reading of the two versions, the ways in which the 1966 version was censored.

The effects of editorial truncation are evident before the story even begins. A dedication, present in the 2000 version, is missing in the 1966 version. Although the story was apparently initially meant to be dedicated to Isabelle P., the 2000 version reinstated a dedication to Jacques Guérin, “avec ma fidèle affection”. Guérin was Leduc’s long-time friend and benefactor, who published a limited run of *Thérèse et Isabelle* for fervent supporters of her writing after it was cut out of *Ravages* in 1954. Why this would be omitted from the 1966 version is unknown, yet it was definitely in Leduc’s original conception of the text and was cut by the editors at Gallimard, for some reason.

The first 26 pages of the original manuscript for *Thérèse et Isabelle* are missing in the 1966 version. Although they were for the most part incorporated into *La Bâtarde* when they were not included in *Ravages*, their separation from the rest of Thérèse and Isabelle’s story is quite significant. This first part includes nearly all the descriptive and contextual information Leduc provides about Thérèse and Isabelle, including their ages, their family backgrounds, and their general positions in the school community. In addition to this contextualizing information which adds depth to the characters, the loss of two other elements cripple the relatability of the story for an audience of mainstream women. The first is the feeling of deep loneliness that Thérèse experiences at school, before she becomes close with Isabelle. Her mother, with whom she had always lived, had remarried and shipped her off to a boarding school as she started a new family with her husband, leaving Thérèse heartbroken and abandoned. The story begins with the students, who had returned home for the weekend, shining their shoes on Sunday evening, in preparation for the school week ahead. “Nous étions là, ce soir-là, dix rentrantes blêmes dans une lumière de sale d’attente, dix rentrantes qui ne se parlaient pas, dix boudeuses qui se ressemblaient, qui se fuyaient.” (Leduc, 2000, p.

12) The school is grey and sad, and the girls are each utterly alone in their respective worlds. Not only does, within this context, the love story of Thérèse and Isabelle shine even brighter as an oasis of companionship, but this loneliness of adolescence – before becoming fully autonomous yet still acutely aware of the gradual disconnection with one’s environment – is deeply relatable. Instead of being thrown directly into Isabelle’s bed, without any insight into her mind and emotions, as she is in the 1966 version, Thérèse is rather written by Leduc as being a thinking, questioning individual, trying to make sense of the turbulent emotions of emerging adulthood.

The second major loss resulting from the cutting of the first 26 pages is the description of Isabelle and Thérèse’s interactions before they become romantically involved. Isabelle, a popular and good student, constantly picks on Thérèse, kicking away her shoe shine brush when it falls to the floor and sneaking up behind Thérèse and untying her apron straps. Thérèse is perpetually aware of Isabelle’s whereabouts, both out of hatred and obsession. “Je la déteste, je veux la détester. Je serais soulagée si je la détestais davantage. Demain je l’aurai encore à ma table au réfectoire. Elle préside. Elle préside la table où je mange au réfectoire. Je ne pourrais pas changer de table. Son petit sourire en biais quand j’arrive en retard. Je lui aplatis son petit sourire en biais. Ce cran naturel... Ce cran naturel je lui aplatisrai aussi.” (Leduc, 2000, p. 15) This type of friend/enemy relationship would be familiar to female readers, as the simultaneous cruelty and closeness in adolescent teenage friendships is a quintessential female experience. This element of the story, which is solely described in the first excised section, explains much about the dynamic between Thérèse and Isabelle. The context of their (typical adolescent girl) friendship and the loneliness of boarding school are essential to connecting with a mainstream readership, particularly with a female-centric

experience. At the end of this omitted section, Thérèse and Isabelle are intimate for the first time. Here, Isabelle is forceful and intimidating to Thérèse, who is both attracted to and afraid of her. This adds to the complexity of their relationship, and paints a vastly different beginning than the simple, rosy portrait the reader is introduced to in the 1966 version.

Another section is also removed from the middle of the book in which Thérèse talks with a fellow student and has sex with Isabelle while she is menstruating. In the former, additional contextual information is introduced about the other students and the school environment. In the latter, there is (sexualized) blood and Thérèse and Isabelle address menstruation in a straightforward and shame-less way. These 18 pages are replaced by just two short lines in the published text: “Au dortoir, le soir. Au dortoir, la nuit, dans la cellule d’Isabelle.” As with the first 26 pages, the omission of this section contributed to the loss of the only concrete contextualization and character development in the book, as well as a frank depiction of a bodily facet of female sexuality.

In addition to these longer passages and the background contextual information lost therein, many shorter sections are also missing from the 1966 version. A number of these exclusions seem stylistic in nature, as they do not obviously affect Leduc’s distinct style or intention. Two examples from the 1966 version are as follow (omissions are barred, replacements or additions are underlined): “Je sais où je l’aimerais si je l’avais encore: ~~je l’aimerais dans une bergerie~~, sous le ventre des brebis (Leduc, 1966, p. 94),” and “Le vent, manège de ~~mouettes~~ éperviers (Leduc, 1966, p. 103).” What *éperviers* has over *mouettes* is unknown, and why the editors found “je l’aimerais dans une bergerie” unnecessary is hard to guess, but edits of this type are numerous, occurring multiple times on every page. Although

the cutting of short lines may be an attempt at brevity for purely economic or editorial reasons, the addition of lines for no obvious reason (they do not appear later in the 2000 version) is even more difficult to understand. In one strife conversation in the hotel room that they rent for one afternoon, for example, an extra line added into the 1966 version makes it seem as though Thérèse loses her focus halfway through confronting Isabelle: “Isabelle limait ses ongles. – Empêche-moi d’entendre ! dis-je. Tiens, tu as une nouvelle lime...” (Leduc, 1966, p. 1966) Even the last line in the book receives an addition, in a seeming attempt to temper Leduc’s brevity, “Le mois suivant ma mère me reprit. Je ne revis jamais Isabelle.” (Leduc, 1966, p. 120) Although a number of these changes, such as the examples above, seem innocuous, or at most slightly dulling of Leduc’s staccato rhythm, others are outright reactionary to her raw language and subject matter, and significantly affect the tone of the story. Some are obvious censorship of sexual language, such as “J’ai caressé les lèvres et la toison d’Isabelle avec mon doigt. J’avais le poids du plaisir ~~entre mes cuisses~~ sur ma nuque.” (Leduc, 1966, p. 76) or “Le sexe nous montait à la tête. ~~Isabelle s’est fendue de la tête aux pieds.~~” (Leduc, 1966, p. 50) Other excluded passages refer to the intensity of their relationship, as in the following passage: “Isabelle joignit les mains: elle créait un reposoir pour mon menton. – ~~Ma femme~~ Thérèse... Je me séparai d’elle pour la perspective. – Oui, lui répondit mon cœur de rose.”, or more obliquely, in reference to female aging, “Je suis partie vers eux et, comme des fruits, ils ont mûri ~~sans se gâcher.~~” (Leduc, 1966, p. 94) Although these exclusions or additions may seem small in individual examples, just one cluster of words here and there, when taken together, they drastically alter the intensity and weight of the text. The following paragraph shows a rather standard amount of changes and, when read together, demonstrates the degree of difference.

Isabelle protégeait son cou ~~que j'avais enflammé partout~~. Elle recula ~~mais elle me regarda très près~~. Le trouble grandissait, le ciel en un seul nuage demeurait en moi ; ~~le cordon du désir sortait entre mes jambes~~. Nous nous ~~envoquions~~ appelions dans le blanc des yeux.
(Leduc, 1966, p. 94)

These decisions to remove or add parts of the original manuscript have the effect of, through the short omissions, reducing Leduc's sexual straightforwardness, reducing contextual non-erotic information, and simplifying Thérèse and Isabelle's more nuanced relationship. Taken together, they have the paradoxical effect of, on the one hand, trying to reduce sexuality, while, on the other hand, removing external contextual information and thereby hypersexualizing the characters by restricting them solely to sexual activities. This trend absolutely echoes Foucault's findings on Victorian censorship, which sought to separate individual and sex, except that instead of minimizing the sex, they maximized the sex and minimized the individual. Although elements of sexuality are indeed tempered in Leduc's case, the unbalanced omission of contextual information nevertheless results in a hypersexualized love story. Unlike Foucault's censorship, with its creative potential in the margins of acceptability, the expurgated 1966 *Thérèse et Isabelle* does not result in a positive creative alternative in response to repression, as it effectively erases much of what Leduc was aiming to do and rather aligns itself with dominant perceptions of female sexuality.

Following the 1966 publication, Leduc said, "Je suis, bien sûr, ravie de voir paraître *Thérèse et Isabelle*, mais je reste déchirée que ces pages n'aient pas paru comme je les avais écrites, au début de *Ravages*. Dans le roman, on voyait Thérèse devenir une adulte, avec son passé d'adolescente qui pesait sur ses épaules et qui lui donnait du poids. (...) Avec *Thérèse et Isabelle* je n'ai pas essayé de faire quelque chose de poétique, mais enfin je n'ai pas fait non plus quelque chose de malsain, loin de là. Je veux simplement que les femmes qui

écrivent fassent un bond en avant, parlent librement, comme des hommes, de l'érotisme. Qu'elles puissent s'en dégager, même, avec simplicité, avec sincérité, avec force..." (Leduc, 1966 (interview)). Here, we see Leduc's attention to the whole woman that was Thérèse, to her growth and her many layers of being. We also see that her attention to detail and openness in writing about sexuality were an integral part of the writing project – to bring women on par with men in their opportunity for honest self-representation. Michele Causse, a friend and writer, wrote of the situation from an external perspective:

Violette était jusqu'alors la seule femme qui avait répondu aux soupçons de Virginia Woolf : *si une femme écrivait ses sentiments, sensations, tels qu'elle les éprouve, aucun homme ne les éditerait*. C'est exactement ce qui se passait pour elle. Elle a vécu cette violence viriocratique cette faute éditorial inexpiable : on l'a contrainte à avorter de *Thérèse et Isabelle*. On l'a obligé à renoncer à ce qu'elle avait exprimé de plus vrai, de plus intrépide et sincère. Les éditeurs ont également coupé les passages où Violette traitait le pénis avec une espèce de jubilation démystificatrice, comme Louise Bourgeois, sans relation aucune avec le mépris dont les Norman Mailer, Henry Miller et Cie accablent les organes féminins. Bref, Violette Leduc avait un "franc parler" qui a poussé les éditeurs à lui "couper la langue". (Causse, as quoted in Jansiti, 1999, p. 266)

Through Gallimard's response to *Ravages*, and later their editorial decisions when publishing *Thérèse et Isabelle* as a standalone text, we see that they were strongly influenced by public norms and expectations, by the fear of legal repercussions, and by their own personal feelings of discomfort. We also see that, to navigate that atmosphere, Leduc – and other writers like her – had to repeatedly compromise honest self for the opportunity to be heard. She could either be invisible and true, or a visible echo of herself.

IV.IV.IV Critical Censorship

Leduc's first book barely received any critical attention, setting the tone for her first 20 years of writing. For *L'Asphyxie* published in 1946, all but one mention are adamantly negative (Jansiti, 1999, pp. 175-176). The sole positive mention focuses on her distinct writing style. Written by Yves Lévy, a literary critic who would be one of her few public supporters throughout her career (Jansiti, 1999, p. 211). *L'Affamée* also received scant notice, with those reviews that did refer to it offering mixed, yet still mostly negative, responses (Jansiti, 1999, pp. 212-213). This time, there is a mention in *Le Figaro Littéraire* and several radio interviews organized by fellow writers. Indeed, Leduc is known as a writer's writer, her style and subject matter having captured the attention of a number of fellow writers who praised her innovative writing style, including Marcel Jouhandeau, Jean Cocteau, Albert Camus, Sartre, and Jean Genet. Nevertheless, the text is quickly forgotten by the mainstream media. It is in 1956, while Simone de Beauvoir is at the apex of her career and as other female writers of her generation – Nathalie Sarraute, Colette Audry, Marguerite Duras – connect with their public, that Leduc, unknown, undertakes the harrowing process of censorship with Gallimard for *Ravages*. After ten years of writing, despite the undeniable value of her work, she still has not received external recognition, other than a growing admiration among the literary elite of the time. Why was the general public not interested in Leduc's work, despite its unparalleled style and choice of subject? Françoise d'Eaubonne offers the following explanation:

Si les lecteurs se détournèrent des livres de Violette jusqu'à *La Bâtarde*, il s'agit du porte-à-faux que comptait cette œuvre avec une époque d'après-guerre assoiffée de compensations et d'ambitions après le long tunnel des années noires. [...] Le ressassement infini d'un "océan de larmes" – comme elle se surnommait elle-même –

irritait et décontenançait les Français de ce temps-là, débouchant d'un long passage obscure et avide de lumière.” (d'Eaubonne, 2000, p. 35)

Nevertheless, as Carlo Jansitti points out, although the public may not have been interested in her work because she was not “of the times” style-wise, neither was Genet and he was very well received. They both stood in opposition of the typical popular writers of that time such as Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute or Claude Simon. They were however similar to each other in all ways but one.

When the truncated *Ravages* is finally published, it receives more attention than Leduc's previous books. This nevertheless means only 3 laudatory articles and several less-than-enthusiastic summaries (Jansitti, 1999, p. 273). Positive response is best exemplified through an article by Claude Lanzmann in *France-Dimanche* titled “Violette Leduc parle de l'amour comme un homme,” wherein he writes that “*Ravages* reste un des livres les plus forts et les plus violents qui aient été jamais écrit par une femme.” (*ibid*) Dominique Aury with the *NRF*, reviewing that season's novels, also writes:

Qui veut savoir ce que c'est que d'être sans répit conscient de chaque instant, de chaque soufflé, de chaque mouvement du corps et du cœur, qu'il lise *Ravages*. (...) Une farouche résolution de tout dire, un ton de vérité sans compromission, une langue cruelle et Claire, font de *Ravages* une œuvre qui peut apparaître indécente et intolérable, mais dont la valeur et l'importance sont évidentes.” (*ibid*).

Nevertheless, the negative reviews are more numerous. *Dimanche matin* writes “Il y a une horrible illustration avec Thérèse débraillée regardant Marc dormir (...) C'est signé René Chabbert. C'est sûrement un pseudonyme.” César Santelli writes, “*Ravages*, c'est le titre d'un roman de Violette Leduc. Je l'appliquerai plus volontiers (...) aux “ravages” que sont en train de faire dans la littérature les jeunes auteurs qui se croient obligés, parce que tel ou tel

ouvrage a connu un gros succès commercial, de se surpasser mutuellement dans les histoires de coucheries.” The *Mercure de France*, “On a envie de s’écrier comme Marc (...): « Ce que ça peut être femelle une femme. » (...) Ces pages sordides tirent (...) leur valeur de secrètes aspirations métaphysiques (sous les draps et devant le réchaud à gaz) très proches du gout de l’absolu qui règne (...) dans l’*Histoire d’O*.” (Jansiti, 1999, p. 275) André Berry wrote, “La pauvreté, la veulerie, la vulgarité sordide des personnages, la prolixité grimaceuse d’une élocution (...) hachée en phrases brèves, innombrables, insignifiantes, les conclusions aussi banales que les données, les péripéties d’un inintérêt absolu (...) comment il s’est pu trouver pour un pareil livre, non seulement un auteur mais un éditeur.” (*ibid*). As fervent and colourful as these responses are, general readership of *Ravages* remained slim and the book did not sell. Jean Malrieu, poet and collaborator at the Cahiers du Sud, expressing an opinion shared by others in the literary world, published an excerpt of the excised *Thérèse et Isabelle* in the revue *Parler* in 1958, accompanied by the following accusation: “Connaissez-vous Violette Leduc? Violette Leduc semble être victime d’une conspiration du silence (...) Ne parlons pas de son style. Il est déjà admirable. Mais Violette Leduc est allée plus loin que Colette. Elle a écrit ce que Colette n’a pas osé.” (Malrieu, 1958, p. 58) Indeed, she dared to write that which had until then been kept hidden beneath an understanding of silence.

The publication of *La Bâtarde* in 1964 propelled Leduc into the public eye and into mainstream consideration. The book was an immediate success, selling 170,000 books in a few short months, a number that was rarely reached in France except by established writers and winners of important literary prizes, as noted by Robert Kantners in his 1965 article on Violette Leduc for The New York Times (Kantners, 1965). The book is rapidly translated into several languages and is fought over by U.S. publishers. Patterns emerge from the widespread

media response in France. Literary reviews and critics acclaim it, while vulgarized and popular magazines call it degrading or focus instead on Leduc's personal life, her physical looks and her unusual character (Jansiti, 1999, p. 373). Although the former have their say in newspapers and literary journals, the overwhelming presence of the latter, the noise and attention to her person, and the scandal therein, overshadow any mainstream conversation about her actual writing, a fact that she addresses in an interview with Démeron in *Le Nouveau Candide*.

Après cette vaine agitation, tous les passages dits scabreux de mon livre prendront leur vraie place et dans trois ans, on verra moins les passages érotiques de *La Bâtarde* et plus le reste. Évidemment j'espérais que mon livre serait pris plus au sérieux et mieux lu. (...) C'est vrai que le succès de *La Bâtarde* est un peu un succès « vulgaire ». Je ne suis pas assez sotté pour l'ignorer. Mais je m'en console. Moi je n'y ai mis aucune vulgarité et, à cause de *La Bâtarde*, bientôt les femmes écriront des livres peut-être bien meilleurs que le mien et oseront en dire davantage." (Leduc, 1966 (interview))

Indeed, the book, which spoke frankly of Leduc's relationships with both men and women (not in as much detail as in *Ravages*, however), did not fail to inspire other female writers. Anais Nin wrote in her book *Ce que je voulais dire* of the effect of *La Bâtarde* on her work, saying that "Ce livre est une confession extraordinaire, une révélation honnête, dépouillée, de soi-même. (...) La critique n'a jamais considéré ses talents d'écrivain : elle s'est borné à l'aspect moral de l'œuvre. Les articles ne parlèrent que du comportement de Violette Leduc et de la nature de ses mœurs." (Nin, 1980, p. 140) This influence was even felt in the United States, where the book was read in Derek Coltman's translation. Kate Millet, who cited Leduc as a major influence in her book *Sita*, reportedly stated in an interview that: "Il aurait été beaucoup plus difficile pour moi d'écrire *En vol* s'il n'y avait pas eu avant moi Violette Leduc. (...) De telles descriptions lesbiennes ne peuvent se faire que graduellement et en

prenant beaucoup de risques. Je n'aurais pas pu le faire sans Violette Leduc.” (Jansiti, 1999, p. 374)

La Bâtarde is considered for the Prix Goncourt, but the jury is split between supporting and reviling the book. One judge, Dorgelès, deems it “pas à poser sur le coin de cheminée d'une famille française” (Jansiti, 1999, p. 376). The prize slips away from Leduc on a technicality – it is meant for novels and *La Bâtarde*, an autobiography, does not qualify. The Prix Fémina raises the same polarizing contest. Half of the jury find the book “malpropre” and are “étonnée qu'on pût défendre, dans un jury composé de femmes, un ouvrage comportant autant de pages érotiques.” (*ibid*). The 1964 prize contest gains attention abroad, with The New York Times writing a short article reporting on the French literary awards titled, “Women had led the French awards season until now”. The article, which bemoaned that year's high representation of women to men (3 :1), ended with, “Both Mr. Maurois and Miss McCarthy said the high score for the women this year might simply be a coincidence. ‘Women's work is different from men's,’ Mr. Maurois said, ‘but it can be very good.’ The Académie Française had never elected a woman member, however, and Mr. Maurois said it would not do so this Thursday when it is to fill a vacancy. ‘It would be embarrassing,’ he explained, ‘for a woman among 39 men.’” (Hess, 1966) Despite his doubtlessly well-intentioned thoughtfulness on the plight of a sole woman among so many men, this perspective hailing from the United States is highly illuminating on the social context within which women were being read.

That same year, after Leduc threatened to have it published elsewhere, Gallimard finally published *Thérèse et Isabelle*, albeit still in truncated form, 11 years after it was

removed from *Ravages*. It was embraced by the public as soon as it was published, selling 32,000 copies immediately and reaching 90,000 within a few years- Leduc's greatest commercial success after *La Bâtarde*. Although it was met with no legal issue, as had been feared, it did - as with her other books - inspire a polarized critical response. Numerous warm reviews in *Lettres francaises*, *Tribune de Genève-Magazine*, *Candide*, *Combat*, among others, are counterbalanced by, for example, its winning of the "Prix Jules" for the "l'auteur féminine du roman le plus consternant de l'année". Upon announcing the latter, the jury dubbed it "laid, bête et sale" (Jansiti, 1999, p. 407).

After the success of *La Bâtarde* and the publication of *Thérèse et Isabelle* thereafter, also met with acclaim, Violette Leduc is projected out of oblivion into the limelight. Her later publications, including *La Folie en tête*, *Le taxi*, and a slew of short stories and articles for magazines such as *Vogue* are all met with critical attention, though none reach the pinnacle of *La Bâtarde*. Jean Cocteau, in his speech during his reception to the Académie royale de Belgique, said that "Ces livres de nos dames, ces stylo-pointes américaines qui tachent les poches, ces flammes qui jaillissent du briquet comme des diables, loin de pousser Colette dans l'ombre, lui envoient cet éclairage dont Violette Leduc nous dirait que du 'cru tombe dans la chambre'." (Cocteau, 1955) Cocteau would even go on to pen an elegy for Leduc, which appeared on the 4th page of the English translation of *Les boutons dorés* (*Golden Buttons*):

Violette Leduc me représente le noyau amer et acide d'une époque où nombre de romanciers triomphent dans un domaine plus accessible et, dirai-je, plus amiable. Mais si vous cherchez ce qui singularise le Lettres modernes et leur donne leurs titres de nobles, vous le trouverez dans l'œuvre d'une femme inapte aux concessions et d'une poigne

robuste. Violette Leduc ne fait pas ce qui se fait mais ce qui se fera. C'est le secret et le martyrologue des vrais artistes. (Cocteau, 1961, p. iv)

The critical response to Violette Leduc's early work (i.e. literary attention and public silence) and following her success with *La Bâtarde* (laudatory literary praise and outraged public response), raises interesting patterns in the reception of her work in general. Madeleine Chapsal, in an article in the New York Times on women writers and their relatively recent arrival into acceptability, wrote that, despite many awards that year going to women, this was not a sign that France was actually making progress. She cites Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf and Violette Leduc as models of successful female writing:

In *La Bâtarde*, an autobiographical novel that appeared three years ago, Miss Leduc openly recounts her lesbian love affairs. 'Thérèse et Isabelle', a short work that met with great success this past summer, describes in detail erotic acts between women. (...) It is a source of amazement that in trying to deal with the subject of women and literature we immediately find ourselves talking about sexual freedom. But if there can be no writing without freedom, there can be no freedom, for the writer, without freedom of speech. For centuries, and especially in the 19th century, the one thing forbidden to girls above all, just as it was to married women, was freedom of speech, which was suspected of leading – and we see how right they were – to freedom of thought, then of action. (...) That these taboos are still to be lifted is obvious, but it is likely that the effort required of women writers in combatting the shyness and modesty that have traditionally been instilled in them hinders full creative flight. (...) Women will have to stop being embarrassed by their sex in order for them to stop thinking about it and to stop trying to prove a point. Violette Leduc understands this. (Chapsal, 1967)

In this way, Leduc was a sacrifice for the benefit of future generations of women writer. Although her literary merit was undeniable, she was censured by the public, critics and the media – first through silence, then through a slandering of her person – for daring to speak openly and descriptively about women's issues.

IV.IV.V Unexpurgated *Thérèse et Isabelle*

After having been read and discussed in its truncated form for 34 years, *Thérèse et Isabelle* was republished by Gallimard in its unexpurgated form in 2000. In addition to reinstating the omitted sections described above, the 2000 version also contains a postface by Carlo Jansiti, the Italian researcher and Leduc specialist who was behind the republication project (and who is much cited herein), as well as a number of footnotes calling attention to interesting facts about the text and to differences between the 2000 and 1966 versions. Jansiti's postface, which is titled "Histoire d'une censure", briefly describes the publication process and heavy censure of *Ravages* and, later, *Thérèse et Isabelle*. Jansiti closes his postface by stating that "Aujourd'hui, enfin, paraît *Thérèse et Isabelle* comme une œuvre en soi, dans sa cohérence initiale et sa continuité." Although the 2000 version is openly considered Leduc's definitive original, this fact seems much less solid given the many instances of self- and external censure that occurred before Gallimard made their official changes to the text, in addition to its remaining fully excised from its original place in *Ravages*. Nevertheless, this text is hailed as a full rectification of previous censure and was reviewed positively, though scantily, with none of the negative reviews that had accompanied her prior publications. Indeed, there seems to have been a recent renewal of interest in Violette Leduc in the last decade. Although her writing has maintained literary and academic attention through a steady stream of dedicated journal editions, conferences, and inclusion in course syllabi, two films about her life released in 2013 testify to growing mainstream interest. The first, *Violette*, is directed by Martin Provost and stars Emmanuelle Devos as Leduc, the second, *Violette Leduc, In Pursuit of Love*, by Esther Hoffenberg, uses archival

footage of Leduc to discuss her role in lesbian literature. Media interest has also swelled in recent years, with long articles dedicated to the reedited *Thérèse et Isabelle* and to Provost's film in most major French newspapers and magazines, as well as in numerous Anglophone sources. The Guardian has written several articles about Leduc, as has the New York Times, the LA Times, and the Washington Post. Even the National Public Radio (U.S.) released a radio segment titled "'Violette' Evokes Exasperating Self-Pity, A Trait the French Like."⁴

Nevertheless, the original translations remained the sole English language option for interested Anglophone readers. When news sources in the United States and the United Kingdom pointed readers towards Leduc's writing, they all unquestioningly cited Coltman's translations. It wasn't until 2012 that any of these original translations were revisited, namely through Sophie Lewis' retranslation of *Thérèse and Isabelle*.

V Violette Leduc in English (translation)

Building on the themes and patterns observed above, we now turn to the English translations of Leduc's writing and try to discern the relationship of the translations with the publication process preceding it. We have established that Leduc, in particular the 200 pages of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, was met with many instances and sources of censorship – from a number of agents and motivated by a number of reasons. Overall, *Thérèse et Isabelle* was removed from its wider narrative, decontextualizing the characters therein and consequently – despite a minimization of overtly sexual language – hypersexualized and rendered one-

⁴ Accessed at: <http://www.npr.org/2014/07/08/329864065/violette-evokes-exasperating-self-pity-a-trait-the-french-like>

dimensional due to the loss of external contextual information. This was motivated first by a fear of editorial censorship and inability to publish (from Leduc and de Beauvoir), then by personal aesthetic preference and an overt fear of state censorship from the part of the editors. After its publication, critics and the media tended to focus on the sexual nature of the text, although some informed readers recognized Leduc's unique writing style despite its repeated normalization. Given this established history, how does Coltman's translation respond to this precedent? How is the text carried into the Anglophone world and how does this compare to or is influenced by its treatment in France? We address these questions below.

V.I 1967 Translation

As has been mentioned above, *La Bâtarde*'s success in 1964 prompted the rapid translation into English of Leduc's publications up to that point and those following shortly thereafter. *La Bâtarde* was translated in 1965, followed by *The Woman with the Little Fox* (*La femme au petit renard*) in 1966, *Thérèse and Isabelle* in 1967, *Ravages* in 1968, *In the Prison of her Skin* (*L'Asphyxie*) in 1970, *Mad in Pursuit* in 1971, and *The Taxi* in 1972. In the span of just seven years, all but one of Leduc's texts were translated into English. *La Bâtarde* was translated one year after its French publication, with English versions published in London by Peter Owen and in New York by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. *Ravages* and *In the Prison of her Skin* were only published in London, *The Woman with the Little Fox* and *Thérèse and Isabelle* were only published in NY, and *Mad In Pursuit* was published, like *La Bâtarde*, in both. Nearly all these texts were translated by one same translator, Derek Coltman, the exception

being the 1972 translation of *Le Taxi* by Helen Weaver⁵. There had also been a previous 1961 translation of the short story *Les boutons dorées* by Dorothy Williams⁶ (with Cocteau's dedication). It is, at this point, seemingly impossible to glean information on the editorial decision to have one translator have such a monolithic influence on the English voice of the author. We do not know who the actors involved in this decision were, and whether they operated on the NY, London or France side of the process. We can, however, try to answer the question of who this translator was, and how his background may have influenced his approach to Leduc's writing. We begin by discussing what little is known about Derek Coltman and the other actors in the translation project. Then, four groups of observed issues are described: grammar, style, perspective and character depth. Finally, an overview of the effects of Coltman's translation, how they influence the important themes in Leduc's writing as described above, and how this first translation was received by the public.

V.1.1 Derek Coltman

La Bâtarde was Derek Coltman's first published translation, marking the beginning of a prolific translation career which spanned from 1965 to the late 1980s. During the six years that he translated Leduc's writing, from 1965 to 1971, he also translated 15 other books. If, as literary translators attest, a book translation takes on average three to four months, and Coltman translated around 21 books in six years, then he was translating at an average rate.

⁵ Helen Weaver is an award-winning American translator of over 50 books, including those of Robert Merle, Jean-Francois Steiner and Monique Wittig.

⁶ Dorothy Williams' bibliography includes translations of Marc Chagall, Jean Cocteau, and computing textbooks, as well as original writing on the "history of blacks in Montreal", a progressive pedagogical manual on the Methodist Church's view on homosexuality, and one adult picture book, along with several original fiction books.

The titles he has translated are diverse, ranging from essays by Serge Doubrovsky and Jean Piaget to books about French cooking and yoga, including one science fiction book by Robert Merle. Although he primarily worked for British and American literary publishers, he translated a series of titles on French literary icons which were published by the University of Chicago Press. The bulk of his translations are nonfiction accounts of French literature or history by male authors. Violette Leduc's books stand out as a bold exception, joined by two works by Marie-Claire Blais, a queer, French-Canadian writer, the first being *A Season in the Life of Emmanuel*, a novel set in rural Quebec which has been classified as part of the anti-terroir tradition in Quebec literature for its themes of moral and sexual transgression,⁷ the second a pair of early-career short stories. In her article in *Palimpsestes*, Agnès Whitfield analyses Derek Coltman's translation of *A Season in the Life of Emmanuel*, within the context of Blais' French voice being widely recognized while her English voice remains widely unknown. She finds that Coltman demonstrates distinct trends towards homogenizing Blais' lyrical style, yet also finds the same effect in the celebrated translator Sheila Fischman's two translations of Blais' writing. (Whitfield, 2013) As little information as there is regarding Derek Coltman's professional life (no interviews, translator's notes, etc.), there is even less regarding his personal life. We know simply that he lived at some point in Charente, France with his lifelong partner, British actor and director Michael Meacham, and that he died in 2012. Despite his being queer to some degree (per today's definition in reference to individuals who are not strictly heterosexual) since he had a male partner, there is no obvious reason why he should have been chosen to translate nearly the entirety of Leduc's work. He went on to specialize in nonfiction writing and any feminist writing he translated, other than

⁷ According to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Season_in_the_Life_of_Emmanuel

Leduc, was scarce and seemingly random. Indeed, when he translated *La Bâtarde*, he had never published a piece of writing before and had no apparent qualifications whatsoever, neither in direct experience with most of the themes therein, nor with the practice of translation in general. Following a close read of the translated version of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, it is safe to surmise that Coltman being inexperienced and male did indeed influence the English text. This echoes a general trend in the translation of feminist texts from French to English during that time, one for which editors have been careful to avoid in contemporary French feminist writing. (Simon, 1996, p. 85) Indeed, Simone de Beauvoir's English *The Second Sex* was translated in 1952 by a male zoology professor at Smith College whose previous experience consisted of writing one book on sex and reproduction. He excised large sections of the text which, along with his numerous mistranslations and the picture of a naked woman on the paperback edition's cover, completely alter the tenor and significance of the text. (Simon, 1996, p. 84)

Although a very different type of book, we see a similar shift in tenor and significance in Coltman's translation of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, which is based on Gallimard's original 1966 publication. It doesn't take long into the first reading of this English translation to realize that it tells a differently-hued story than in French, with, at the close of the book, important shifts in connotation and perspective. Closer analysis, as described below, isolates the minute instances and patterns that, though seemingly insignificant on their own, taken together transform Leduc's message entirely.

V.I.II Grammar

A first issue with the translation that should be noted is the fact that there are a significant number of seemingly accidental omissions in the English version. I say accidental because I cannot see a plausible reason motivating their removal other than simple error. Two examples below juxtapose the French and English translations (spacing in the English added for clarity):

I.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parle. - Je ne peux pas, dit Isabelle. - Ouvre les yeux. - Je ne peux pas, dit Isabelle. - A quoi penses-tu ? - A toi. 	<p>“Speak”</p> <p>“I can’t,” Isabelle said.</p> <p>“What are you thinking?”</p> <p>“About you.”</p>
II.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Il y a quelqu’un. Je l’ai vu. - Tu me tortures ! dit Isabelle. <p>Je la couvris avec sa jaquette, je traînai la table, je sortis. Le palier se morfondait.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Il n’y a personne, dis-je. - Ne me touche plus, dit Isabelle. <p>Isabelle s’était couchée sur le ventre. Je me tenais debout à côté du lit.</p>	<p>“There’s someone there. I saw him.”</p> <p>“You’re torturing me!” Isabelle said.</p> <p>She had turned over and was lying on her stomach. I stood up beside the bed.</p>

There are over two dozen lines of omitted text in the English version with no discernable justification for their omission. These, along with a number of overt mistranslations (the

English *can* for the French *bouteille*, for example), indicate that the quality of the translation may not be ideal. The fact that there are errors in the final, published translation, errors that would not have slipped through with a rigorous editorial process, is surprising and leads to a questioning of why the translational project of Violette Leduc's writing, a near-winner of both the Prix Goncourt and the Prix Fémina, was not given more primacy. In fact, little could be found on the "normal" processes of pre-publication editing at that time, neither for female nor for male authors, and it cannot therefore be ruled out that these errors are were not simply status quo in that context and that there is therefore nothing more to interpret from them.

In addition to translational errors and omissions, there is also the treatment of elements that cannot easily be conveyed from French to English. One of these is the difference between *vous* and *tu*, which entail a cultural baggage that informs the reader of the relationship dynamic and tone in a particular interaction. Leduc relies on this tool to indicate a change in intimacy between Thérèse and Isabelle. In public and when posturing sternly in private, they address each other as *vous*. In private and in moments of intimacy, they use *tu*. For example, after spending a sleepless night together, Isabelle addresses Thérèse as *vous* as they are getting ready for the school day, thereby marking a hard break between the intimacy they had previously allowed themselves. The French is more attuned to the limitations of their intimacy, to the social pressures that they constantly maneuver. As they switch to the *vous* form around classmates, for example, it is less obvious in English (which maintains an unchanging "you" throughout) that these peers are not accomplices to their relationship. Although some translators, when faced with this dilemma, choose to compensate for the lack of specific information portrayed by suggesting that same information in another way or elsewhere, Coltman does not do so, resulting in the perhaps unavoidable loss of this layer of

nuance in the interactions between Thérèse and Isabelle. Overall, although not rare in French to English literary translation, these errors, omissions and lack of translational finesse when conveying language-specific details indicate both a lack of experience on Coltman's part and a lack of wider editorial attention to the translation project.

V.1.III Style

One of the most often cited aspects of Leduc's writing – among critics and fellow writers alike – is her distinct style. Characterized by a staccato-like rhythm and blunt metaphorical and observational phrasing, her style is highly original in its directness, repetitiveness and succinctness. The language itself is as fragmented as the book's overall structure, akin to stream of consciousness autobiographical writing. Chopped phrases in short paragraphs, it is simple in appearance yet nuanced and layered. This unique approach to language allows Leduc's writing to stand out, not only with regards to documenting the female experience, but as pushing the boundaries of literary innovation and as a solid contribution to the field. This style is systematically normalized throughout the publication process, first by de Beauvoir, then by Gallimard, to better suit the aesthetic norms of the time. As we see here, this effect is even further tamed and minimized in translation, as though Coltman were correcting what he perceived to be poor writing. First, he consistently diffuses her staccato rhythm by adding ands, buts, thens and other connective words to create long descriptive sentences from Leduc's fragments. For example, "Elle me rassurait, elle avait disparu" becomes "then, having reassured me, she vanished. (Leduc, 1967, p. 35)"; "Andréa, une demi-pensionnaire qui arrivait tôt, qui déjeunait avec nous au réfectoire, qui dinait et dormait à la campagne, vivait ses jeudis et ses dimanches devant un pré, à côté d'une étable."

becomes “Andrea, a day boarder who arrived very early and ate lunch with us in the refectory but had her dinner and slept out in the country, used to spend all her Thursdays and Sundays looking out over a meadow, beside a cowshed. (Leduc, 1967, p. 38)”;

“Isabelle me traîna au milieu du lit, elle m’enfourcha, elle me souleva, elle m’aéra aux aisselles.” becomes “Isabelle dragged me into the center of the bed, straddled across me, then pulled me up toward her so that I could feel the cold air under my arms. (Leduc, 1967, p. 100)”

These softenings of the sharp pauses in Leduc’s sentences are numerous in the translation, there is an example on nearly every other page of the book, and the effect is, as would be expected, pervasive. Instead of the brisk bouncing rhythm that survived the editorial process to make it into the French version, which pleasantly carries the reader along wave after wave of jumping prose, the narrative becomes wholly conventional in the English, with but an echo of Leduc’s sharpness and repetitive urgency.

In addition to softening the staccato, Coltman also elaborates her briefness, creating unnecessary weight to economically light sentences. In an *à propos* example, he translates the phrase, “Je vivais chichement près d’elle” as “I was eking out the moments beside her as economically as I could. (Leduc, 1967, p. 31)” A laden version of her galloping prose. Elsewhere, “Quelqu’un.” becomes “Someone coming.”; “Personne.” is “It’s all right.”; and “Une élève étudie déjà.” becomes “There’s a girl up and working already.” Finally, Coltman also minimizes Leduc’s unique style through tense change, by putting in the past tense what Leduc had written in the present, thereby replacing a sense of immediacy and directness with a sense of distance. For example, where she writes, “Je veux Isabelle.” he translates “I wanted Isabelle.” And later, “Je préfère la table du réfectoire sur laquelle nous avons le pain en commun. Nous plongeons nos mains dans la corbeille, nous ne disons pas non merci, oui

merci.” becomes “I liked it better eating off the refectory table at school with the bread in the middle. We dug our hands into the basket, we didn’t say no thank you, yes thank you. (Leduc, 1967, p. 17)” These translational decisions to extrapolate and reduce the heightened ‘now’ are nuanced, they do not shock as much as seep into the rendering of the text. They do however highlight an unwillingness to accept Leduc’s writing style as it is. Reading through the translated text, the authoritative and resoundingly clipped tone of the French writing is a mere shadow in the English.

While overriding Leduc’s distinct style, Coltman also injects his own stylistic elements into the writing. One extremely prevalent of such elements is a translational tic of multiples. Perhaps inspired by Leduc’s original repetitive rhythm, Coltman’s take on multiples is much less innovative and indeed appears in passages where there had been no hint of repetition before. Leduc’s “Je croisais les bras, j’écoutais longuement” is rendered as “I would fold my arms, listen and listen for a long while.”; “Mon abnégation grandissait” becomes “My self-abnegation grew and grew”; and “Cela monte plus haut” becomes “higher and higher”. The effect is quaint, and far from Leduc’s original rhythm. In addition to adding his own style of repetition, Coltman also adds his own style of metaphorical and imaginative language. Whereas Leduc is adept at concisely painting a colourful portrait, Coltman’s elaborations sound frivolous. As with the repetition, the added adjectives and floral descriptors in the translation appear randomly, not directly translating Leduc’s words nor replacing an existing device. Examples include (underlining added for effect): “Je l’avais près de moi” translated as “savouring her nearness”; “le ruisseau funèbre” translated as “the funereal, trickling stream”; “un éclaireur” as “a wary scout”; and “le souffle de la mer du Nord” as “the invigorating breath of the North Sea”. Often, these additions have the effect of

introducing a romanticism that was absent in Leduc's writing, as in the following sentence, in Leduc's French, "Je voyais l'œil. Il bouchait la découpe dans la porte du cabinet. « Mon Amour »", translated by Coltman as "I could see the eye. It was blocking the heart-shaped air hole cut in the lavatory door. "My love." (p.4)". The added detail of the heart-shaped air hole injects a sense of romantic meaning between the two; whereas before they were simply meeting in a dank toilet, the eye is now seen through a tell-tale heart. The metaphor is literal and plain. In some cases, Coltman adds to the writing in a seeming attempt to temper the rawness of Leduc's language. During sex, that which "giclait" now "welled out of us like a fountain". When Thérèse tells Isabelle, "Je te prendrai.", Coltman renders this as a less aggressive "I'll make love to you". As with the minimization of her rhythm and distinct style, Coltman's softening additions make of the text a faint echo of Leduc's former winning assertiveness. It is impossible to know whether Coltman's repeated decisions to embellish and minimize Leduc's cutting directness is in response to her femininity and his notions of what that ought to sound like, or correspond simply to his own floridity as a writer and personal discomfort with direct sexual language. What can be surmised, however, is that these translational decisions are prevalent and observably consequential.

V.I.IV Perspective

In addition to innovation in style and literary tone, Leduc's writing marks an advent in female-centric self-disclosure through writing. As has been mentioned above, her straightforward recounting of her life, meticulously detailed yet free from judgement or shame, has proven to be a precursor to tell-all narration and the refusal of gendered limitations. As such, her depictions of gender, especially the presence or absence of

femininity, are extremely significant. Here again, Coltman's translations remove and replace elements to deliver a shifted message. The first way in which he does this is in his generalizing of the specific. References made to women, through female-centric language or female-specific meaning, are widened to include all. Part of Leduc's strength comes from the fact that she was a woman speaking specifically to women through her writing. In the taxi scene that was ultimately cut from *Ravages*, in which Leduc's female character sees and reacts to a penis for the first time, she writes a woman objectifying male sexuality, with the effect of opening a conversation of shared experience with other women. This is exemplified in her writing through her use of a restricted "we" (*on, nous*), which openly addresses and includes only women. When Leduc writes in *Thérèse et Isabelle*, "Le petit sexe viril que nous avons," the effect is of speaking in the "we" form about a *sexe viril* shared by women. Coltman breaks this restricted conversation in his translation of "the little male organ that we all of us have," thereby opening up the "we" to include men. At other times, Coltman excludes Leduc/Thérèse from her own "we", as in her statement that "Quand on aime on est toujours sur le quai d'une gare," which he translates as, "Those in love are always standing on the platform of a railroad station." Whereas before Thérèse was speaking as someone in love, from her own experience, in translation she is instead positing from the outside. Through these two examples, we see that Coltman's translation shifts the intimacy of a woman addressing women and of a woman speaking boldly of herself, to that of a woman speaking to all and a woman speaking abstractly about a world that she may or may not belong to. He also, however, imposes female-centricity where Leduc had posited generalization. When Thérèse asks Isabelle if she (Isabelle) would go on living if she (Thérèse) died, Isabelle answers, "Ce sont des trop grandes questions." Through this response, she addresses the

limitations of romantic love, concerns that are arguably universal to all. In his translation, Coltman restricts this generalizability by writing her response as, “Problems like that are too big for us.” The question is now only difficult for school-aged girls.

Just as with the inclusion or exclusion of those being addressed and of those doing the addressing with regard to the use of “we”, Coltman shifts Leduc’s language in his translation to be more or less gender inclusive/exclusive. In two occasions (in fact in all occasions of negative idiomatic referrals in the book), Coltman turns a gendered female-centric expression into a general ungendered expression. “Peureuse” therefore becomes “little scary cat” (which is in fact spelled incorrectly: it should be *scaredy* cat, otherwise it is the cat that scares others rather than itself being afraid), while “tourte” becomes “silly goose” (while a goose is technically only female, the expression is gender-neutral in common usage). Throughout the book, he turns phrases that include female actors into those with neutral actors, as with Leduc’s “Je l’attends avec une pleureuse dans le ventre,” which becomes “waiting for her with the tears streaming inside my belly.” By neutralizing Leduc’s *pleureuse*, Coltman eliminates the connection to a long female-specific history of emotionality and hysteria, thereby also eliminating the female intimacy of Leduc’s discourse.

As he generalizes the specific, Coltman also specifies the general. For the first five pages of the truncated first French version of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, Leduc’s two main characters remain ungendered as they meet in the school’s lavatory until the moment when Thérèse’s name is spoken by Isabelle, and this as the object of female desire. This initial ungendering matches the antiseptic description of the lavatory, as well as echoing Leduc’s disinterest with gendered discussions of love (she refused to identify as a lesbian, preferring to not identify at all). In Coltman’s translation, gender is injected into this otherwise ungendered scene through

his translation of “les enfants fous” as “younger girls”. Indeed, he consistently translates “élève” as “girl” and “enfant” as “younger girl”. This unnecessary decision (*student* and *child*, among other options, would have been fine) demonstrates a desire – conscious or unconscious – of gendering that which is not originally so and of highlighting the femaleness of elements where Leduc had chosen not to. This altering of female-specific language has been addressed in other contexts as well. Kim Hassen describes a similar refusal to translate feminine expressions and gender markers in the English translations of Assia Djébar’s *Far From Madina*, about which she writes the following: “Knowing the discursive significance of the feminine gender marking in Djébar’s text, the translator has chosen not to translate gender in key feminine expressions. As a result, Djébar’s attempts to destabilize accepted notions about Muslim women are overshadowed and much of the text’s specificity is lost, not only literally and historically but also politically. These losses in meaning underline the extent to which the translator’s perception of the translated subject is influential in this question of translating gender.” (Hassen, 2009, p. 78) About this same text, Bourdieu wrote that, “Le non respect de la lettre du texte, bien qu’intervenant au niveau microstructural et à dose infinitésimale, est une véritable trahison, façon de passer sous silence la parole politique de Djébar pour qui la langue française est une langue de libération, et l’écriture un moyen de réécrire l’histoire des femmes sous “domination masculine”. (Bourdieu, 1998; as cited in the introduction to *Palimpsestes* 22, p.12)

In fact, it is interesting to follow one particular word (*ventre*) throughout the text. Coltman’s translational decisions in different contexts illuminate the general tone of the translation. The dictionary definition of the French word *ventre* is a cavity that contains the

intestines or the region of the body in which this cavity is located⁸. Figuratively, a *ventre* can be the rounded part of an object. In the 14 times Leduc uses this word, Coltman translates it by *belly* 5 times and by *stomach* 3 times, nearly all of which are when someone is lying on their *ventre*. One of Coltman's uses of *belly* refers to Thérèse saying "je l'aimerais sous le ventre de brebis", after Leduc refers to the female sex as the "toison" (sheep's wool). Coltman translates this as "I would make love to her under the bellies of a flock of sheep," thereby missing Leduc's sexual metaphor, especially after he had translated "toison" literally as a number of pubic-related words. Coltman does, however, for the other 6 instances of *ventre*, gender or sexualize the word where there was seemingly little imperative to do so. Twice, *ventre* is translated as "womb": Leduc's "nuit, ventre du silence" as "night, womb of silence" and "Je prenais Isabelle dans un ventre de ténèbres" as "I was taking Isabelle inside a womb of shadows." Other translations for *ventre* are "down there", "her sex" and "my sex". Not only are these all in places where sexualization was seemingly unnecessary, but the first (down there) represents a common euphemism used when there is discomfort in naming the female body. The most glaring example occurs when Thérèse and Isabelle rent a room for an hour from a woman who is described as having "son collier de perles qui plongeait en sautoir jusqu'au ventre." Although the description by Leduc of the scene is rich and detailed, the woman herself is not sexualized as much as described as exuding a sense of authority. Coltman, however, translates the necklace as "the long string of pearls that hung down from her neck to well below her waist," thereby introducing an erotic element into the woman's physical presentation. True to his time and to prevalent binary representations of women as only either meek virgins or assertive hoars (see: translation as only either belle/infidèle or pas-

⁸ per the Antidote French dictionary

belle/fidèle), Coltman's view of this woman, who is portrayed by Leduc as having (non-sexual) power, economic autonomy and self-assurance, must be sexualized.

Overall, we see that Coltman demonstrates a marked tendency to feminize and sexualize half of Leduc's uses of *ventre*, despite contexts that do not warrant such a connotated translation. This reiterates a pattern of injecting gendered language where there is none, and of accentuating the sexual nature of the text rather than respecting Leduc's documentary-like retelling of these intimate situations. This is highlighted in one of the last lines of the book, as Thérèse and Isabelle are sitting on Isabelle's bed in the morning. In a line that, in the French, is not sexual, Coltman translates Thérèse saying "J'aimais Isabelle sans gestes, sans élans: je lui offrais ma vie sans un signe," as "I made love to Isabelle without gestures, without violence: I offered her my life without a sign." His decision to translate *aimer* as a sexual "making love" exemplifies the direction of his translation as a whole.

V.I.V Character depth

One last pattern observed in Coltman's English translation is a tendency towards minimizing assertiveness – both that of Thérèse and Isabelle as actors in the world and of the directness with which they speak to each other. Where Leduc writes, "Elle folâtrait dans les aines," Coltman writes, "She had sent her hand to dance gaily between my thighs.;" Leduc's "... dit la surveillante que j'avais délivrée d'un malaise," becomes "... the assistant said, glad to have her mind set at rest.;" Leduc's "je l'étouffais pendant qu'elle voulait avouer," becomes "I stifled back the confession she was trying to make." While Leduc writes assertive, active characters, they are rendered passive and unknowing under Coltman's influence – their

truncated hands do the sexual acts, the assistant is independently relieved, and they stifle confessions rather than each other. Whereas Thérèse as narrator speaks confidently under Leduc, for Coltman she is unsure and feels things rather than knows them. For example, Leduc's Thérèse asserts that "les maisons s'ennuyaient," while Coltman's suggests that "the houses looked bored"; Leduc's Thérèse states that "J'assouplissais une biche en verre filé," while Coltman's wonders "How was I to soften up the limbs of this doe made of spun glass?" This diffusing of Leduc's confident protagonist is also made apparent in the dialogue between Thérèse and Isabelle. In the French, they are assertive and know what they want from each other. In Coltman's English, they are proper, polite, and indirect. In instances where they were already gently polite in Leduc's writing, they become naïvely coy in Coltman's. Below, a few examples of dialogue with very different intonations in translation:

Tu me soignes -> I feel as though you're my nurse

Ne te tais pas -> do you have to be so quiet?

S'il vous plait, attachez mon bracelet -> Strap my watch on... please.

In the first example above, the matter-of-fact "tu me soignes" is replaced by a *feeling* that the other is acting like a traditionally-female healer. Instead of a healthful strength, it is a suggestion with added subordinate femininity. The second example takes an assertive command and turns it into a reproachful question, with an almost whiny effect. The last example is initially a polite, also assertive, request, to which Coltman adds an unmistakable coyness. It would have been easier for him to retain the initial format in English by translating it as "Please, strap my watch on." but for some reason he decides to add an ellipsis for extra connotation. These three examples all share this similarity – it would have been simpler for Coltman to choose a straight-forward translation, yet he instead adds extra nuance, indicating

that he was operating from an influential perspective. These and many other examples contribute to the subtle transformation of two empowered young women into innocent, naïve girls. The effects of this transformation are huge, as it furthers the idea of Thérèse and Isabelle as unknowing and confused girls swept up in a sexual experience, rather than as confident and self-determining individuals who know what they want. It is much easier, from the former, to create a hyper-sexualized and fetishistic narrative, which is exactly what happened with the film adaptations of the book in the United States.

V.I.VI Wider corpus

These problematic translational decisions are not restricted to *Thérèse and Isabelle*, they pepper Coltman's translations of her other texts as well. Indeed, as the only existing mention of Violette Leduc in a Translation Studies context, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood raises several parallels with Coltman's translation of *La Bâtarde* in her discussion of gendered translation. Regarding the above shift of intonation in translating insults, de Lotbinière-Harwood cites Leduc's insult, thrown to a female character by a passer-by, "Va te faire foutre, mocheté". Coltman translates this as "Go and screw yourself", thereby not only mismatching the French's old-style slang, but also, as we have observed in *Thérèse et Isabelle*, by changing the female-centred "faire foutre" and "mocheté" into male-centred language (as it is men who "screw"). (De Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991) Another example is Leduc's line at the beginning of, again, *La Bâtarde*, "Je suis née brisée. Je suis le malheur d'une autre. Une bâtarde, quoi." Here she highlights the fact that unrecognized children become the responsibility of women and that she, as a female and a bastard (with the addition of the "e") is therefore doubly cursed. Coltman translates this as, "I was born broken. I am someone else's misfortune. A

bastard.” Close readings of the French and English versions for this thesis have raised the same observations of Coltman’s influence. Nevertheless, although the grammatical, stylistic and gendering issues raised here can be found throughout Coltman’s translations of Leduc’s other writing, the patterns therein are all magnified in presence and intensity in *Thérèse et Isabelle*, given its immediate and unwavering focus on sexuality, femaleness and relationships. As stated above, I restrict my analytical focus to this text, its process and translational context, as it surpasses and subsumes those of the other texts. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Coltman’s other translations contain the same patterns of influence as those found in *Thérèse et Isabelle*, though less concentrated due to generally less-risky subject matter. It is also important to note that as of today, *Thérèse et Isabelle* is the only text to have been retranslated, the others exist solely through Coltman’s problematic voice.

V.I.VII Conclusion

In summary, Coltman’s translation introduces a number of detrimental elements. Through the translational patterns described above, we see that – in addition to erasing Leduc’s innovative writing style – he adds superficial floridity to otherwise concise and rhythmic prose, he neutralizes female-specific dialogue and language, he minimizes the universality of the female characters’ experiences, and he accentuates Thérèse and Isabelle’s sexuality and naivety while minimizing their empowerment and confidence. Although this is best exemplified in *Thérèse et Isabelle*, these patterns are systematically prevalent in all Coltman’s translations of Leduc’s writing. Throughout, we see a series of translational decisions and patterns that indicate, on the one hand, a distancing from the distinctly personal female assertiveness of the text and, on the other hand, an injection of floral prose, with

heightened sensitivity and indeterminacy in language. This leads to both the dissolution of the strong feminine “I” and the addition of a traditional form of feminine expression. As will be further discussed below the result gives the impression of reading the idea of a woman, rather than reading the perspective of a woman; although the storyline remains intact, there is the distinct impression of reading a rectified telling of herself, dulled in style and amplitude.

What effect can this have on Leduc’s significance as a feminist/female writer and thematic and stylistic innovator? Returning to Chapter 4 Section 3 (IV.III), the themes in Leduc’s writing that are particularly significant are her presentation of lived feminism, her discussion of the myth of ideal motherhood, female hysteria and female sexuality. Regarding the first, lived feminism, we see that Coltman’s translation takes the most important aspect of this element – that of a narrative about life by a woman, about womanhood, for women – and dilutes both Leduc’s contextualization of the female characters within a wider self-reflexive agency as well as losing the poignancy of the narrative as directed toward other women by excluding female-specific language and expanding the inclusion to incorporate all people. Instead of hearing what she has to say of her life, Coltman’s translation, through various methods of distancing and shifts in focus as described in the analysis above, proposes a second-hand account of woman-ness, thereby losing the “lived” element of the testimony that was so prized by theorists such as de Beauvoir and which could have the powerful effect of speaking directly to a shared female experience. The second theme that makes Leduc’s writing so important is her way of addressing the myth of ideal motherhood by proposing more nuanced and complex situations and definitions of mothering. Although the language that specifically refers to her mother as her partner, as though in a married relationship, and to her mother as a reluctant parent remain in Coltman’s translation, there is so much context

removed in the translated version that a full, non-sexualized, perspective is impossible, thereby deforming Leduc's original discussion. Although the descriptions of the lover as a child, of being engaged to one's mother, and of nursing as a sexual activity, which raise the issue of incest or the then-controversial concept of imperfect motherhood, remain, their new juxtaposition in the English translation against the hypersexualized and frivolous Thérèse and Isabelle decimate their potential to be anything other than disturbed eroticization. The third and fourth themes in Leduc's writing, female hysteria and female sexuality, are both exaggerated in Coltman's translation, resulting from a minimization of non-sexual and rational contextualization that originally served to balance the text as well as from a shift from a female-focused to a male-focused gaze. Coltman's minute yet systematically prevalent interventions in perspective, context and character assertiveness accumulate to produce a hyper-sexualized and manic narrative of femininity, fully corresponding to and reinforcing dominant notions of mental health, emotionality and obsessive sexuality in women. By cataloguing the patterns in Coltman's translation and by noting their effects on the themes that make Leduc's writing so significant, we can safely say that Coltman effectively magnifies the censorial interventions observed in all stages of production up to that point, surpassing their influence on the published text, thereby neutralizing Leduc's thematic contributions and, through the normalization of her distinct style, her literary creativity.

The censorship seen in Coltman's work on Leduc's writing corresponds most directly to Michaela Wolf's definition of preventative censorship, where there is a shift in pressure away from external sources towards an individual who is encouraged to conform, either consciously or unconsciously, to expectations. As detailed above, Coltman's changes and manipulations were tiny in scale yet far-reaching in scope. Unlike the editorial censorship

Leduc experienced with Gallimard, where the cuts were planned and directly reactionary, Coltman seemed to be acting on a more sub-conscious level in tempering and traditionally-feminizing Leduc. This also points to Siobhan Brownlie's self-censorship, which occurs during the act of writing, as well as to the ideal of invisible censorship of the "free" society in which expectations are internalized to such a degree that they become intuitive. Luckily for Thérèse and Isabelle, and unlike Coltman's other translations of Leduc's work, this is not the end of the line for this text. Below, I will address the critical reception of Coltman's translation, followed by an analysis of Thérèse and Isabelle's latest incarnation through a contemporary English translation.

V.II Critical reception of the first translation

Following her success, Leduc's writing was retroactively and rapidly translated into a slew of languages, including Yugoslavian, Finnish, Danish, Spanish, and, of course, English. *La Bâtarde* became a best seller in the Netherlands, Italy and Japan; in the U.S., it is at the head of literary lists. (Jansiti, 1999, p. 416) Critical reception in Anglophone countries echoes that of France, polarized between admiring Leduc's talent and choice of subject on one side and ignoring or expressing outrage, including a wealth of moral judgements on Leduc's character, on the other. In a review that unknowingly highlights the effect of Coltman's translation, *The New Yorker* wrote that,

This account of a love affair between two very young French schoolgirls shows that sexual activity between people who are emotionally, mentally, and spiritually blank is not interesting to read about. It also shows that when all hope of communication depends on sexual activity, there is no hope of communication. This is a sadly embarrassing book for a writer of Miss Leduc's talent. (*The New Yorker*, 1967)

In Ireland, the Censorship of Publications Board prohibited the sale and distribution of *Ravages* for being indecent and obscene. (The Irish Times, 1970) Even the Times of India mentioned *La Bâtarde*, although just to say that it lacked sensitiveness and magic of style, two elements which were significantly altered by Coltman. (Fallaci, 1966) In a scandalized article in the Washington Post titled “Name-Dropper Frenchwoman Writes Squalid Moneymaker”, Paul Richard wrote:

Some 125,000 copies of *La Bâtarde* have been gobbled up by the French public. The French critics have swooned. In an effort to assure a similar reception on this side of the Atlantic, the English translation has been equipped with a breathlessly promotional introduction by Simone de Beauvoir, who promises that the book is “a work of art” created by a lady who “weeps, exults and trembles with her ovaries.” And “Miss Leduc has been teemed a female Genet. Like Genet, she tends to champion abnormal love and dabble in criminal activities. She shoplifts. She works for a while as a black marketer, peddling butter and bacon on the streets of Paris during the German occupation. Like Genet, she has elicited admiring essays from leading Existentialists. There the comparison ends. Genet is a writer of genius whose breathtaking feats of literary virtuosity constantly dazzle and astound the reader. Miss Leduc is a bore. The perversions and frustrations that controlled her life are of interest only to her. The pounding of one’s ovaries is the sort of thing one should keep to oneself. (Richard, 1966)

Unbeknownst to the author of this article and counter to his astonishing anglo-centrism, Simone de Beauvoir did not write the introduction specifically for the English translation. He is, however and to his credit, one of the only reviewers to acknowledge the fact of translation, if only to say that “it is possible that the clipped rhythms of her peculiar prose have lost something in translation.” It would have been constructive of him to further recognize that Genet was being translated into English by Edmund White, an extremely celebrated American writer whose work focuses on themes of same-sex love, and by Bernard Frechtman, Sartre’s primary translator whose bibliography also includes books by Georges Simenon, André Gide

and even Pablo Picasso. Other references to English translations are found in the Boston Globe, “Her own style, even in translation, is often striking and often aphoristic,” (Briggs, 1971) and in London’s Saturday Review, where Henry Peyre dubs *La Bâtarde*, despite its shoddy translation, a masterpiece – going so far as to find it less “prolix” than Simone de Beauvoir’s autobiography and more “artistic” than Sartre’s *Les Mots*. (Peyre, 1965) Mirroring French reviewers’ responses, the English translations seem to touch the same societal nerve as that in France. The characters are blank, the story is inane, Leduc should be embarrassed and her choice of subject is best left undiscussed. Unlike French reception, however, there is a lack of apparent support from the Anglophone literary community. This may be due to a number of contextual reasons, including a lack of visibility, their concern with primarily local-language writers, or, as is hinted at by the references to the quality of the early translations, by the loss of her unusual and striking style at the hand of a problematic translation.

Thérèse and Isabelle- the 1968 movie

Shortly after the publication of Coltman’s translation of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, an English-language film adaptation of the book was released in 1968. It remains the only film version of the book, or of any of Leduc’s books, to this day. It was adapted and directed by Radley Metzger, an American director known for pioneering popular artistic adult-oriented films. Along with Andy Warhol, he purportedly helped begin the Golden Age of Pornography in the United States and his films and audio work have been included in the Museum of Modern Art’s (NY) permanent collection. Although the film stays close to the book by telling the story through flashbacks during Thérèse’s visit back to her boarding school 20 years later,

Metzger's interests lie unabashedly in the sexual nature of the story, and the movie is essentially "elegant erotica" with little of Leduc's original substance or commentary. The sex is portrayed as fun and adventurous, there is no shame or moralizing, but Thérèse and Isabelle are entirely unburdened of their complexity and depth, leaving them seeming like any other eroticized female character and entering them into a long legacy of male gaze. This last point in particular, which is further accentuated through the format of film, demonstrates the exact opposite of what makes Leduc's writing so significant and rare: the portrayal of female sexuality and emotions by a woman for women. It is impossible to know whether Metzger would have still made the movie as such if he had been able to read the more two-dimensional French version, let alone the 2000 unexpurgated version where Thérèse and Isabelle actually have personalities and backstories. What is important to note, however, is that the lascivious reviews for the 1968 film vastly overshadow (in sheer number) those for any of the versions and translations reviewed in the United States.

V.III 2012 Translation

Derek Coltman's translation was for over forty years the only English-language version of *Thérèse et Isabelle*. Below, we detail the facts of the 2012 translation by British translator Sophie Lewis, accompanied by a textual comparison of this version with the corresponding unexpurgated republication in French from 2000 and with Coltman's translation. Again, we focus on translational shifts and effects and, this time more easily due, on the context surrounding the translational project. We begin with some information on the translator herself and on her perspective on the project.

V.III.1 Sophie Lewis

Sophie Lewis is a London-based translator who works from French and Brazilian Portuguese. She has translated books and short stories by Stendhal, Marcel Aymé, Jules Verne, Emmanuelle Pagano and João Gilberto Noll, and was recently nominated for the Scott Moncrieff Prize for her translation of Émilie de Turkheim's *Héloïse Is Bald*. She also works as a freelance editor, and has edited books both by English authors and in translation, including Deborah Levy and Juan Pablo Villalobos. Lewis works with And Other Stories, a publishing house that focuses on translated fiction. This past year, they signed on for a call issued by Kamila Shamsie, in response to her observation of a lasting systematic bias against women writers, for publishers to make 2018 a 'Year of Publishing Women', during which they will only publish female authors. In an article for the Independent, Sophie Lewis cites her own observation of the domination of men in the literary scene, later adding that this trend is only amplified in translation as women writers must pass through two distinct publishing processes. (Lewis, 2015)

Unlike Derek Coltman, Sophie Lewis is working currently and it is therefore much easier to gain insight on her translational process and on the wider editorial and publishing process in which she participated. To do so, I reached out to her by email (she is based in London) and she kindly answered my questions on the subject. I focused on the motivations surrounding the retranslation project (who proposed it, who supported it, what were some acknowledged reasons for retranslating...) and Lewis' personal approach to the translation (what was her familiarity with and opinion of Coltman's translation, how did it influence her translation, had she wanted to include a translator's note...). Lewis' answers can be split into two themes: the wider translation project and her own translation process. Regarding the former, Lewis stated

that *Thérèse and Isabelle* was chosen to be retranslated following the fair amount of noise generated after the unexpurgated French publication in 2000. The UK publishing house that initiated the translation project, Salamambo Press, is run by a Frenchman who understood the significance of the republication and its renewed contemporary relevance. Although already ten years after the French republication, the retranslation process was initiated in response to a revival of attention in Leduc, either generated by or exemplified by the republication. The fact that the retranslation was immediately followed by two films about Leduc seems to indicate that Salamambo Press was indeed on the right track. In general, it is safe to surmise that the retranslation project was strongly motivated by a combination of economic and social reasons. In addition to these, there is also a direct response to Coltman's translation. Lewis refers to the general editorial discourse around previous translations of Leduc's work as that "they were insufficient or in various ways traduced Leduc's original plans for her books." (Lewis, 2017) It is perhaps due to the degree of unacceptability of Coltman's translation that Lewis' translation was undertaken; had his version been just a bit better, as it was for Leduc's other texts, it may have survived today as the only translation. Finally, Lewis also states that the expectations of a new translation were that it would greatly bolster feminist writing, that it would "contribute to a broader understanding of the writing going on around de Beauvoir", and that Leduc's image would be improved overall. (Lewis, 2017) As such, we see that Leduc continues to orbit around and be considered in reference to de Beauvoir, and that de Beauvoir continues to influence Leduc's recognition. Nevertheless, Leduc does stand on her own and is considered important to today's feminist discourse, at least to English speakers. In isolating these motivations behind the retranslation project, we see strong parallels with Leduc's wider publication process. Translation here serves to advance the author's original discourse on

woman-ness and carries forward patterns of connection between Leduc and de Beauvoir. As a retranslation, it is motivated in part by the existence of the previous translation, thereby inscribing itself solidly in the publication trajectory up to that point. This set of motivations fits quite neatly into the current discussions of retranslation, as outlined in Chapter II, Section II. IV. There is still the discourse of deficiency, but this is not the only factor (or else, all of Coltman's translations of Leduc should have been retranslated). Also important were the changing social context and renewed meaning of the book's content, thereby pointing to a more nuanced and circular retranslation project. The relevance and importance of Leduc's writing continues to propel her work forward in history, aided by her relationship with de Beauvoir, a pattern that, judging from this retranslation project, would have led to publication despite – not thanks to – the gatekeepers along the way.

Regarding her own translational process, Lewis describes her previous knowledge of Coltman's translation as that it was "incomplete in key parts and also, following cuts in French, was also cut and spliced in odd places." (Lewis, 2017) Although she states that, upon reading it, she actually "rather admired it" in a literary sense, she tried to refer to it as little as possible during the main translation period. Only when responding to edits and searching for alternative locutions, after having submitted the full translation to the publisher, did she consult the previous translation. In discussion with fellow translator Caroline Alberoni, Lewis discusses her approach in more detail, in particular with regard to Leduc's writing style and choice of subject: "This was a very tough job. The prose was frequently both precise and purple, anatomical, highly detailed and also emotional and sensual. I had to find words for parts that are never comfortably named in English – the usual problem is the lack of middle ground between offensive slang and medical terminology. So I reluctantly employed some

euphemism, while making sure I was as precise as I could be everywhere else.” (Lewis, 2017) In another interview, this time for *Asymptote Journal*, she expands on the difficulties of translating sexual writing, “I already mentioned my major concern: keeping an eye on plain accuracy; that is, being sure not to flinch myself, knowing that Leduc was determined not to, even in passages of great delicacy or intimacy, over which the English language is much better at flinching than being honest. I researched writing on sex between women from a range of different sources, just trying to gather resources to draw on.” (Lewis, 2014) Here we see that Lewis very consciously sought to match one of Leduc’s most important accomplishments, and indeed the most common reason for her censorship in both English translation and French publication, to write openly about female sexuality. This perspective demonstrates an awareness of female sexuality and an acceptance of Leduc’s sexual positioning. Given that Lewis was not alone in choosing the text to retranslate, we see evidence of a wider contemporary context that is better able to understand and do justice to Leduc’s thematic and literary voice.

V.III.II Grammar, style, perspective, character depth

As observed above, the retranslation project was organized in response to Coltman’s previous translation and sought to valorize Leduc’s writing and her feminist legacy, perhaps responding to a renewal in interest following the unexpurgated publication in 2000. We do not yet know, however, how Lewis’ translation treats the original text on a translational level. To begin, I propose several examples juxtaposing Leduc’s French, Coltman’s English and Lewis’ retranslation. These are taken from passages where the French is the same in the 1966 and 2000 versions.

	French version (2000)	Coltman's translation	Lewis' translation
1	Ne te tais pas. (p.126)	Do you have to be so quiet? (p.108)	Don't go quiet. (p.120)
2	Je te prendrais dans la Luzerne (p.81)	I'll make love to you in the fields of lucerne (p.43)	I would take you in the lucerne fields (p.76)
3	... son collier de perles qui tombait en sautoir jusqu'au ventre. (p.97)	... the long string of pearls that hung down from her neck to well below her waist. (p.68)	... a rope of pearls that hung down to her stomach. (p.92)
4	J'aimais Isabelle sans gestes, sans élans : je lui offrais ma vie sans un signe. (p.129)	I made love to Isabelle without gestures, without violence: I offered her my life without a sign. (p.113)	I loved Isabelle without show, without raptures: I offered her my life without a word. (p.124)
5	J'assouplissais une biche en verre filé... (p.118)	How was I to soften up the limbs of this doe made of spun glass? (p.98)	I was moulding a spun-glass doe... (p.113)
6	Je l'attends entre les quatre bornes du corbillard, je respire l'odeur de son couvre-lit, je l'attends avec une pleureuse dans le ventre.	I was waiting for her on her bed, keeping vigil at all four corners of that white hearse, breathing in the smell of her counterpane, waiting for her with the tears streaming inside	I wait for her within the four corners of this hearse, I breathe the smell of her bedspread, I wait for her with mourning in my breast. (p.41)

(p.46)	my belly. (p.15)	
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Here we see, from top to bottom, instances of minimized assertiveness (1 and 2), oversexualization (3 and 4), added helplessness (5), and neutralized femininity (6) in Coltman’s translations, all of which are rectified in Lewis’. In the last example in particular, the feminine *pleureuse* which would be so difficult to render in English is translated in a way that maintains the feminine aspect of the phrase elsewhere. Nevertheless, one major minimization that remains somewhat unaddressed in Lewis’ translation is that of the words *peureuse* and *tourte*. These female-centric insults are translated gender-neutrally by Coltman as *scary cat* and *silly goose*. Lewis also translates *peureuse* as *scaredy cat* (spelled correctly, this time), however, she translates *tourte* as *fruitcake*, an interesting choice as the word is commonly used either as a derogatory term for homosexual men or to refer to someone (regardless of gender) who is insane.⁹ This, however, is the only remaining distancing from the novel as a female-inclusive conversation. These examples listed above are representative of Lewis’ translation with regards to both Leduc’s French and Coltman’s previous translation. Where Coltman adds or removes, Lewis is able to maintain the layered information communicated in Leduc’s writing. There are no grammar or translational errors, and she successfully delivers to the English reader Leduc’s assertive and complex characters.

Stylistically, Lewis matches Leduc’s style admirably. At most, there is occasionally a lingering effacement of Leduc’s staccato rhythm, when an “and” or a “then” is still added where there was none in the French. The following two examples illustrate this slight tendency: “...agrablement encombrée de géraniums bulbeux, de lierres, de vignes en pot, de

⁹ These usages are confirmed by Urban Dictionary: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=fruitcake>

fougères, d'arrosoirs, d'étagères pour les plantes.” is translated as “... pleasantly crowded with bulb geraniums, ivies, potted vines, ferns, watering-cans and shelves for the plants.”; while “Nous évitons le réfectoire jusqu’au lundi matin, nous faisons quelques tours de cour, nous allions dans la cordonnerie, deux par deux, avec l’adjutant qui s’ennuyait.” is translated as “Keeping away from the refectory until Monday morning, we would make a few rounds of the schoolyard, then go two by two into the shoe room accompanied by our bored supervisor.” These instances are far and few between and are hardly impactful when taken as a whole, especially when compared to Coltman’s translation where they seemed to be an overriding translational decision. Otherwise, tense and repetition are all conveyed in an equally connoted and impactful manner as in Leduc’s text. Lewis’ treatment of Leduc’s unique style seems to have created a translation that was able to render Leduc’s writing with its unique tempo unhampered, therefore allowing Leduc to shine, even in English, as a writer that plays with and challenges language use.

In all, Lewis’ attention to matching Leduc’s detail and transparency has produced a precise translation, reversing nearly all of Coltman’s earlier shortcomings. Lewis’ translation does not contain omissions, neither small nor large, as had Coltman’s, nor are there mistranslations. Where Coltman’s translations limited Thérèse and Isabelle’s self-assertion and autonomy, Lewis delivers Leduc’s strong and passionate personalities intact, along with Leduc’s unique writing style allowing for her literary creativity to finally be highlighted in English. In general, Lewis’ translation reads as a strong commentary on the emotional complexity of first love between two self-possessed yet repressed young women. Tone, tense and intensity are matched. Nevertheless, although the translated text is now presented in its unexpurgated form (although this label is quite arbitrary, as we have seen), it still does not

represent the original form that Leduc had envisioned – at the beginning of *Ravages* – presenting the main character over time as an evolving individual. The retranslation thus still carries existing censorship and, despite an intentionality at the onset that rectifies previous text-based repressions, it is unable to reach far back enough to redress the still-truncated French text.

V.IV Critical reception of the second translation

Media response to the new English translation is scarce, likely due to the subject material no longer being as scandalous as it once was and to Leduc no longer being as novel as she once was. In one of the only reviews to be found, a writer for the Independent proposes that Lewis' translation in fact improves upon Leduc's original writing: "I suspect that Leduc's sometimes hypermanic and metaphor-laden prose has actually been done a few favours by Sophie Lewis's clever deadpan translation. It has found language that stands up to the original, audacious French without being allusive or coy." (Levy, 2012) The other two reviews (in the Guardian and on Literary Hub), focus on the importance of Thérèse and Isabelle as a universal conversation about love and as important writing on sexuality, yet do not address the fact of retranslation.

First published in the UK by Salamambo Press, a small publishing house focusing on eclectic fiction and graphic novels, Lewis' translation of *Thérèse and Isabelle* was later picked up by The Feminist Press in the US, an established university-based publisher seeking to "advance women's rights and amplify feminist perspectives"¹⁰. Although they both

¹⁰ From their website: <http://www.feministpress.org/mission/>

published Lewis' same translation, albeit three years apart, there are some paratextual differences between the two publications. As stated above, the first UK edition by Salamambo Press contains Leduc's dedication to Jacques Guérin. A simple four lines on an otherwise empty page, dated March 20, 1955, it anchors the text in time and context and is a direct line of contact with the author. Furthermore, knowing that Leduc carefully dedicated every one of her draft notebooks and spoke seriously of these dedications in her correspondence, it is safe to say that she considered them to be an important element. This dedication is gone in the U.S. version, replaced by a table of contents. Although they abandon the footnotes added by Carlo Jansiti, thereby losing contextual commentary, both versions include, in translation, his short descriptive text following the story, which addresses the history of censure surrounding the text. The U.S. version also contains an afterword by Michael Lucey, a professor of French and Comparative Literature at Berkeley University. Lucey, who specializes in sexuality studies and 20th- and 21st-century French literature, writes about Leduc's continued contribution to expanding discussions on sexuality and the human experience, adding an interesting perspective about the sociocultural context of her writing and essentially justifying the importance of the text. This role, of explaining why a translation is necessary and valuable, has traditionally been assumed by the translator. Indeed, although Lucey can claim a certain level of academic background, Sophie Lewis is Leduc's current English translator and therefore has unique insight and a high level of specialization both in the literary field in general and in Leduc's case specifically. Here, we see a demotion of the translator as specialist, in addition to – and perhaps this is an exaggerated reading of the situation – the replacement of a woman (Lewis) speaking about a woman (Leduc) speaking to women by that of a male (specialist) gaze. In any case, Lucey's afterword is enlightening on Leduc's

literary/historical significance looking back while Lewis is uniquely positioned to explain the exact difficulties of translating Leduc and why a retranslation was deemed necessary.

In all, Lewis' retranslation of *Thérèse et Isabelle* successfully carries through Leduc's primary thematic concerns and style. It is here, with this conceptually solid text that is received without much critical notice, a sharp contrast – or rather, dulling – from the outrage that it had previously incited, that we find ourselves in the present moment of this chronologically-based analysis of the publication process. Although certain patterns that had been present in previous instances of censorship – a minimization of female involvement/voice – is still arguably perpetuated in the retranslation project with the afterword, there is little evidence of continued unconscious manipulation in the text itself and no evidence of new, externally-motivated censorship at all. Looking back, however, we can observe a number of overarching patterns that have followed the text from conception to retranslation, as well as recurring influences by certain agents and how they may have been responding to contextual and identity factors. The following conclusion addresses these patterns throughout the last 60 years, organizes them within a cohesive analytic framework, and proposes some observations on the meaning and effects of translation.

VI Conclusion

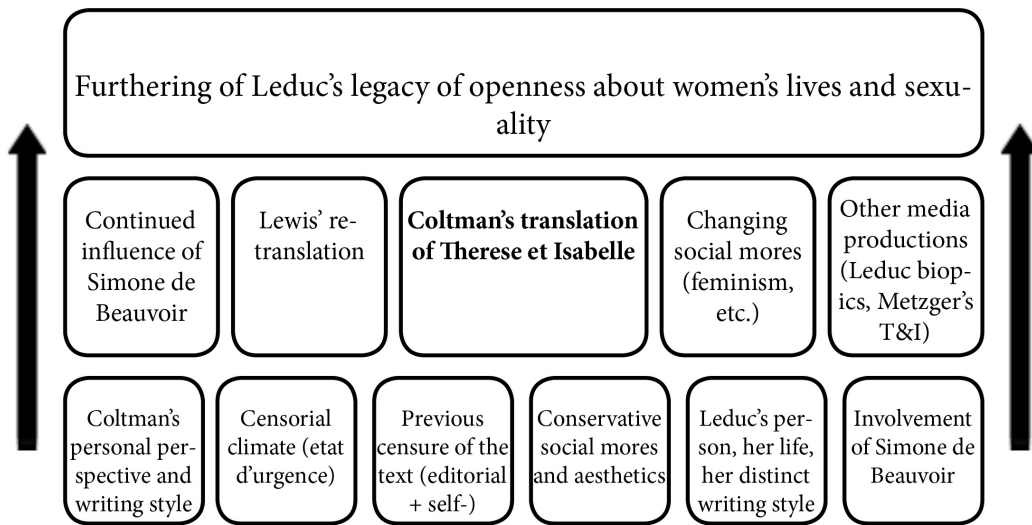
It is apparent that many interrelated elements within the wider production and publication process have influenced and continue to influence Leduc's *Thérèse et Isabelle* as we know it today. Looking back to the first chapters and the discussion of complexity theory, Coltman's translation can be considered an emerging element, constituted by a number of sub-elements that shaped it into what it was. The first of these contributing elements is

Coltman's individual perspective – on women, on writing, on translating, etc. On a stylistic level, he added floridity, minimized character assertiveness and removed sexual language, making the characters sound and act more like how a woman was expected to sound and act. Coltman was influenced and in turn influenced (by perpetuating) restrictive social mores of the time, another sub-element contributing to shaping the translation. As we can see from the blurred source of censorship (not overtly official, yet not fully social-mandated), these social mores, along with the implementation of an *état d'urgence*, were involved in shaping the censorial climate that was in force at the time of Leduc's writing. Leduc had already internalized or otherwise feared repercussion from this restrictive climate while writing, which led to self-censorship during the creative phase. Her complex relationship with de Beauvoir, who normalized her writing while simultaneously making it possible, further evolved the text towards a more acceptable version under the dominant paradigm. The editorial process represented the institutionalization of social restrictions, with its agents fearing legal response yet also acting on their personal aesthetic tastes. Media response, closely tied with social mores, served to initially silence then expose Leduc as an outsider, rendering her themes of sexuality and femininity even more lascivious in the mind of society. Leduc's own personality and life decisions influenced both media perception and text production. These elements analyzed above co-influence each other in a complex way to shape Coltman's translation as it was produced.

If we consider Leduc's legacy to be one of openness about female experiences, with honesty and without judgement, then Coltman's translation of *Thérèse et Isabelle* is itself a constituting factor of the emerging element of this legacy and its effect of promoting and maintaining a line of communication with regards to women's lives. Coltman's translation is

influenced and influences other elements that also shape this continued legacy. These include changing social mores resulting from evolving feminism and changes in how female sexuality is discussed by whom. Lewis' retranslation contrasts with Coltman's, unburdening the latter from its role as sole English translation and continuing the conversation on Leduc's portrayal in English (and in French). In Lewis' citation of furthering de Beauvoir's legacy as a reason for retranslation *Thérèse et Isabelle*, as well as the fact the Leduc is still today contextualized in relation to de Beauvoir, we see an ongoing influence of de Beauvoir's mentorship in shaping recent editorial decisions. Parallel media productions, including two biopics of Leduc's life and Metzger's erotic film, also influence how Leduc's legacy circulates, thereby highlighting the inter-mediatic influences of (on and by) translation.

The figure below shows how the factors we have identified above self-organize into a hierarchical system of emergence. They are distinct yet permeable agents/events. How they impact each other – how they pull and push each other through their gravitational forces – is vast, ever changing, and of course complex. At the top, we see the overarching level of Leduc's legacy. This is composed of Coltman's translation, along with a number of parallel influences (not all are included below). Coltman's translation in turn is composed of sub-elements. Although emergence is unidimensional, higher levels also influence their composing elements, as discussed above.



What does this tell us about the role of translation in censorship? On the one hand, Coltman's translation carried over the censorial tendencies that were evident in the editing and creation stages of production. We also see that the first translated version of *Thérèse et Isabelle* carried these restrictive mores and effects quite far into the 21st century, 12 years longer than the French version which was republished in 2000. Lewis' translation did not continue previous censoring tendencies with regard to the assertiveness and 3-dimensionality of the characters or to Leduc's unique style. This second translation was produced at a time in which there is renewed interest in feminist writing and greater valuing of a diversity of perspectives, along with an openness to sexuality and a bare-all autobiographical narrative culture. As such, the translations are concise reflections of their respective prevailing social climates and of the permissibility of a continuously censoring tendency (although what is later censored is perhaps the male gaze's take on femininity). We do however also see that later translations cannot reverse or undo the damage done by previous translations and censorship. The text does remain separated from its initial wider narrative and, with time, over 60 years

have passed of critical theory, analysis and readership based on both the truncated French version and on the truncated and 1-dimensional English version, possibly causing irreparable damage. Although Leduc's writing will presumably continue to inform discussions and identities, its initial "coming out" and the impact of newness has passed. In this way, a retranslation that is meant to rectify previous sub-par translations must be activated within a wider literary project, one that directly works with or addresses the text in other languages, the writer's legacy, and a new reception. With regard to feminist and gender-identity writing, and considering a legacy of censorship in these discussions, real action must be taken when retranslating texts to ensure that they be met with appropriate attention and do not remain overshadowed by existing and problematic versions. The first translation benefits from a blank slate, subsequent translations must undo and rebuild simultaneously.

With regard to censorship in particular, the sources of restriction in the example of *Thérèse and Isabelle* are diffuse and generally covert. There was no overt governing body or committee that passed down a ruling on the matter. Rather, the agents involved in the process acted due to fear of negative consequences (from the public and publicly sanctioned laws) and to their own perspectives on aesthetic value. Despite the lack of one specific overwhelming source of censorship, the same effect is multiplied at every stage and is ultimately extremely effective. Translation, as an additional stage in the production process, represents an additional point of reflection, magnifying in turn the intensity of restriction. Censorship can here also be considered a productive force, since it is inherent in the productive process – one which does indeed produce a text in the end. In this case, censorship produces, along with Leduc's creative impulse, a dialogue on female sexuality and female experience that has been combined, not just filtered by but also imbued with, with a male-dominated construction of

femininity. It is therefore a hybrid between a unique perspective and a dominant perspective. This is apparent in Leduc's writing style. Her impulse was one of innovation and dissolution of traditional aesthetics. It was eventually, especially through translation, normalized and turned into a hybrid of normality with occasional staccato skips of her own intention. Unless deliberate attention is paid to reversing previous patterns or to accentuating previously-minimized elements, as Lewis did when thinking about Leduc's style and subject, translation simply acts as an additional censoring force, another opportunity to enforce normalizing tendencies.

Finally, through this organizational framework and analysis, we see a recurring pattern that is replicated in every stage of production. A desire to minimize feminine assertiveness and female-centred description has led to, counterintuitively, a fore fronting of women as sexual beings. By reducing character context through self-censorship, editorial censorship, and translational censorship – all of which were influenced by the same context of social mores and internalized repressions – there is a replication of what Foucault observed in Victorian England. In an attempt to limit non-normative depictions of sexuality, there was in fact a decontextualization of it, separating it from the individuals involved, therefore finally heightening it in a unidimensional, male-centric gaze of sexualized women with little depth. Based on the timeframe in which *Thérèse et Isabelle* was produced, this impulse dictated the published and translated text. More recent translations and re-publications have tried to rectify this impulse. Although they have done so with some successes, they have so far been unable to, as stated above, fully remediate Leduc's original intention for the text. Nevertheless, retranslation offers the unique opportunity – one that is not available to rigid originals – to update, to actually change the wording, to re-release the text within a context more adapted

for its content. As such, Leduc, who wrote in a way that was thematically anachronistic, was able to re-emerge at a better time, with a second wind.

Another element that is highlighted in the framework above is the power of small forces. As a founding principle of complexity thinking and contrary to commonly held perceptions, small forces can in fact exact large change (the Butterfly Effect). At a processual level, we see in this case study the enormous weight of one individual, such as Simone de Beauvoir and, later, a precise translator such as Sophie Lewis. At a textual level, we see through Coltman's translation the enormous power of many insignificant shifts, of one word here and a phrase there, that altogether fundamentally change the significance of a text and, eventually, that of a writer's legacy of voice over time. A translation, which at once subsumes all previous individuals up to that point and addresses every single word in a text, is uniquely positioned to harness the power of these small forces. As such, the change-making ability of translation projects is, as has been shown in the case of *Thérèse et Isabelle*, extremely positive.

In sum, although numerous elements have interacted over time to shape the text of *Thérèse and Isabelle* that I have here in front of me, the creative, productive, and translational process cannot be reduced to any one element. It is censored, it is uncensored, it is both and neither. It is feminine writing, it is queer writing, it is feminine queer writing written by men. It is an evolving, unfinished original. It is Leduc's text, her legacy, despite having little left of what we imagine she would have wanted it to contain. We cannot in fact state what this text is, since to choose one aspect would be to disregard all the other aspects that it is. As such, we can look rather at what it does, how it continues to interact with other elements to contribute

to contemporary social discussions of gender and inclusion, and how translation is essential to this process.

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