

## **Introduction**

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The motivation for this book grew out of a desire to explore the individual experience of some of Canada's most eminent contemporary anglophone literary translators, to delve beneath biography in order to capture the intercultural spirit writing between the lines. The translators profiled here will be immediately recognized by readers of Canadian literature and by Canadian theatregoers. These translators have won prestigious awards in Canada and abroad. Their names appear on the covers of the books they translate, contributing in no small measure to the success of the new works. In tandem with their authors, they criss-cross Canada for public readings and literary festivals.

Despite their increasing public presence, however, we know amazingly little about these generous yet discreet advocates of communication between our francophone and anglophone solitudes. Translation remains an invisible, unfamiliar, even mysterious profession. Who are these translators? How have they learned their craft? What motivated them to become the purveyors of their cultural "other"? What kind of challenges do they face when translating a text? How do they view their role within the Canadian and Québec literary institutions, and more generally, within the Canadian cultural domain? By drawing together the individual answers to these and other questions, and by giving particular priority to what our translators say about their craft, this book offers the first comprehensive, inside view of the practice of anglophone literary translation in Canada.

## **Early Experiences**

As the portraits in this book demonstrate, the paths towards an engagement with literary translation from French into English in Canada are deeply personal. Early exposure to French is not necessarily a prerequisite. Feminist translator Susanne de Lotbinière-Hanwood grew up in a bilingual home in Montréal, learning early to separate her mother and father tongues. John Glassco and Joyce Marshall, known for their own writing as well as their translations, were also born in Montréal, and learned French in primary school. However, for the other

translators profiled here, French was far from being an obvious interest. Award-winning poet and translator D.G. Jones spent his childhood in Bancroft, Ontario, and admits to almost failing French in high school. Linda Gaboriau and John Van Burek, whose translations of Québec playwrights have travelled the world, lived a significant part (Van Burek) if not all (Gaboriau) of their youth in the United States. Patricia Claxton, whose translation of *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* by Gil Courtemanche is being read in England and Australia, was raised in northern India and spent her summers in Kashmir; nor was she particularly interested in learning French when she returned to Kingston as a high-school student. Sheila Fischman, one of Canada's best-known translators, and Philip Stratford, one of the founding figures of comparative literature in Canada, both grew up in small anglophone towns in Ontario. How could one predict that Toronto-born and -bred Barbara Godard would come to translate Québec lesbian feminist writer Nicole Brossard, or that Ray Ellenwood, schooled in south Edmonton, Alberta, would become an enthusiastic advocate of Québec surrealist writer Claude Gauvreau?

There is, nonetheless, in the early days of almost all these diverse lives, a discernible presence of otherness that cannot be unrelated to their eventual commitment to translation and its role in the facilitation of intercultural communication. Interestingly, for Gaboriau, Van Burek, Ellenwood, and Fischman, cultural difference was an experience first encountered not between two languages, but within English itself. For Gaboriau and Van Burek, living as children in the United States, it was their Canadian roots (Gaboriau's mother was from Saskatchewan, and Van Burek was born in Toronto). For Fischman, it was being raised in the only Jewish family in Elgin, Ontario. For Ellenwood, it was listening to the Geordie accent of his mother, who came to Canada from England. Otherness also surfaces through a family heritage of interlinguistic difference. Marshall's roots go back to Scotland, Norway, England, and Wales. Fischman's paternal and maternal grandfathers were born outside Canada, in Russia and Poland, respectively. De Lotbinière-Harwood's double heritage is inscribed in her very name, the result of a marriage in 1823 between the daughter of a French nobleman, Louise-Josephite de Lotbinière, and a newly arrived Yorkshire businessman, Robert Unwin Harwood.

A complex mixture of predisposition and circumstance channeled this general sensitivity to difference into a desire to learn French and to acquire a better understanding of Québec's distinct culture. For some, the passage was mediated by France. Philip Stratford's decision to study in Bordeaux may reflect his desire to render homage to his three uncles killed in France in the First World War. He was also following in the footsteps of a francophile father who himself held a doctorate from the Université de Lyon. Glassco, in contrast, confesses that Paris was his grand escape from a painful and repressive childhood. Godard was caught up as a graduate student in the May 1968 intellectual effervescence of the French capital. Ellenwood's initial attraction to European francophone culture stemmed in part from his appreciation for modern French art, but France also offered the practical possibility of a teaching assistantship. Van Burek, too, first came to learn and love French in France.

For others, Québec was the source of their inspiration from the beginning. Gaboriau came to Montréal precisely to learn French. Like Jones, Glassco, Claxton, and Marshall, she studied at McGill University. For Fischman, French came alive with a Canadian accent in a Toronto high-school classroom, thanks to a Franco-Ontarian teacher to whom she would dedicate her first translation. From the age of twelve, Blake left Toronto to spend his summers at the family's country home in Murray Bay, Charlevoix; hearing and speaking Québécois became indelibly associated for him with the natural beauty of the Laurentians and the pleasures of fishing and hiking in the region.

For some of Blake's successors, however, living the duality of Québec was not an unproblematic experience. Marshall, the first woman editor of the *McGill Daily* and winner of the English department's language and literature medal, chose to leave Québec, after graduation in 1935, for economic and political reasons. Despite her fluency in French, she did not feel that she could find a place, as a non-francophone, non-Catholic woman, in Québec under a Duplessis government. Many years later, Claxton would be struck by the physical and cultural separation of the solitudes in Montreal, the Boulevard Saint-Laurent dividing the two, francophones to the east, and anglophones to the west. Her forays with the McGill fencing team across the "border" and her discomfort with unilingual anglophone insensibility would prove strong motivators in her decision to perfect her spoken French and become a translator. For de Lotbinière-Harwood,

growing up astride the barrier would lead to many social and personal confrontations. The constant sense of having to choose one or the other of her languages and cultures would spark an intense internal revolt and incite her to formulate a radical form of translation bilingualism.

### **Translation as Social Practice**

In a country where English and French have always, as Hugh MacLennan has written, “live[d] their separate legends, side by side,”<sup>1</sup> literary translation is only beginning to be recognized as a specific activity in its own right. Translation did not present itself to any of the well-known translators whose work is analyzed in this volume as a professional choice. None of them grew up with the ambition to become a translator. Like many of their historical counterparts, most of the translators in the present volume have juggled more than one career. Blake was a lawyer. Glassco delivered the mail in the Eastern Townships, where he was also the mayor of Foster, his small community. Jones, Ellenwood, and Godard are academics, as was Stratford. Van Burek is a theatre director and co-founder of Toronto’s Tarragon Theatre. Gaboriau and Marshall began their careers in broadcasting and journalism. De Lotbinière-Harwood started as a freelance critic for the entertainment section of the now-defunct *Montreal Star*. Claxton’s first real job was as an investment analyst for an insurance company, Sun Life. After studying chemistry and anthropology at the University of Toronto, Fischman took an office job at the CBC, before writing reviews for the *Globe and Mail* and working in the promotion department of the University of Toronto Press. For only three, Claxton, Fischman, and Gaboriau, was translation to become their principal professional activity.

Rather than being extraneous to their work as translators, these other activities have served to inform and nurture the practice of those profiled here. For translation inevitably includes a variety of tasks that go beyond understanding the original text and finding the words in the target language to re-express it. Historically, translators have created alphabets, set up their own printing presses, identified (through their own travels or other professional activities) the texts that should be translated, and negotiated with secular and religious powers the right to translate and the conditions under which they have worked.

Although the precise nature of these activities has changed, the translators in this volume are no different in their exercise of what can be called the social practice of translation. Far from being passive reproducers of texts, they have often, themselves, through their other professional or personal interests, identified the texts they felt were important to bring to the attention of Canadian anglophone readers or theatre audiences, and then set about translating them. Blake's travels to Charlevoix awoke his interest in language and his desire to share his knowledge of the region with his fellow anglophones. Van Burek's first goal was to bring Québec and French theatre to Toronto. Jones saw translating Québec poetry as a way of enriching the range of poems available to anglophone readers. In their roles as professors of comparative literature, Stratford and Jones both discovered that their teaching goals were hampered by the lack of Québec literary texts accessible in English translation. Fellow academics Ellenwood and Godard wanted to bring into English the important contributions Québec writers were making to specific aesthetic and intellectual debates: surrealism for Ellenwood, feminism for Godard. As a freelance journalist, de Lotbinière-Harwood wrote an article on Québec singer/poet Lucien Francoeur for the *Montreal Star* and, lacking an English translation of his lyrics, penned the English versions herself.

The connections between translation and professional or personal interests can take other forms as well. Swept up in the politically charged Québec of the 1960s and 1970s, both Fischman and Claxton undertook their first translations as personal and political exercises to improve their French skills in order to demonstrate their openness to francophone culture. Fischman started with a short story by her neighbour, writer Roch Carrier, and went on to translate his novel *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* Claxton applied herself to a controversial political essay by a young Québec intellectual who would become prime minister of Canada, Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Their translations in hand, both undertook the arduous task of finding a publisher for the work. For Gaboriau and Marshall, their involvement in broadcasting opened the door to translation: Marshall was asked, since she knew French, to translate a short story by Gabrielle Roy for CBC radio; Gaboriau "fell into translating for the theatre,"<sup>2</sup> as she puts it, through her personal contacts with the Québec French-speaking theatre community as theatre critic at the Montreal newspaper, the *Gazette*, and as broadcaster for *Québec Now*, a CBC national network

show. Similarly, Glassco was introduced to the first text he would translate, Québec poet Saint-Denis-Garneau's *Journal*, by friend, fellow poet, and cultural *animateur* Frank Scott.

In a complementary fashion, all these translators have put their personal and professional skills to use in the service of their translation work. Fischman's knowledge of how the Canadian publishing industry operates, gained through her early experience with the University of Toronto Press, has enabled her to lobby adroitly on behalf of her authors and promote their work. Claxton has used her sense of the business and insurance world, and the importance of contractual obligations, in her efforts to obtain codified recognition of copyright for translators in Canadian law. As academics, Ellenwood, Godard, Jones, and Stratford have written numerous articles on their authors, stimulating English-Canadian reception of the translated works. Marshall was an important contributor of texts on francophone writers to the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*. Glassco published an anthology entitled *The Poetry of French Canada in Translation*. Jones founded a bilingual review of poetry, *ellipse*. De Lotbinière-Harwood has brought together her strategies for feminization in a book, both practical and theoretical, *Re-belle et infidèle / The Body Bilingual*, which can be used by other translators. Almost all have spoken out in public discussions or published texts on the process of translation, and they have contributed their personal expertise to the advancement and recognition of literary translation as a profession. In short, they have helped create the very conditions that would facilitate the publication, reading, and intercultural understanding of the Québec literary works they translate.

### **Towards a Canadian Tradition of Anglophone Literary Translation**

This book offers an overview of anglophone translation in Canada at a distinctive period in its development. With the exception of Blake, whose translations were done in the 1920s, all the translators presented here belong to the generation of dedicated individuals whose efforts, from the late 1950s to the 1970s, were instrumental in setting up the institutional structures that would establish a vital anglophone tradition of literary translation in Canada. To put their achievements in perspective, it is important to realize how few literary translations were published in Canada before the 1970s. As John O'Connor observes in the *Oxford Companion*

to *Canadian Literature*, “from 1900 to the start of the Quiet Revolution, 67 literary translations were published -- an average of little more than one book a year.”<sup>3</sup> Or to quote Joyce Marshall when Marshall translated her first short story by Gabrielle Roy around 1959, “nobody much was translating then.”

These were, of course, momentous years for the arts in Canada and Québec generally, and more particularly, for the institutional recognition of both English-Canadian and Québec literature. The lives of the translators profiled here were marked in one way or another by this broader tapestry of events and in turn, they left their own mark on it. What is perhaps most striking is how intricately the flowering of translation during this period is connected to the warp and weft of other dimensions of literary life in Canada, both chronologically and institutionally.

In the 1950s, the growing national interest in culture was reflected in the report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, otherwise known as the Massey Commission Report. Filed in 1951, it led to the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts by an act of the Canadian Parliament on March 28, 1957. While writers’ conferences may be commonplace today, the first Canadian Writers’ Conference to bring together participants from across the country was held in Kingston, Ontario, in July 1955. Both Marshall and Jones attended. Nor was this kind of professional brainstorming get-together unique to English Canada. Jones also participated in the *Rencontre des poètes*, a Québec writers’ retreat held in 1958 at Morin Heights in the Laurentians. Spurred on by the enthusiasm of Montréal anglophone poets A.J.M. Smith and Frank Scott, Glassco would organize his own informal conference of poets in Foster, Québec, in 1963; it was, he writes, “no sterile love-feast, no singsong or genteel eisteddfod. There was a constant sense of clash and conflict...sharply differing conceptions of the role of the poet in society and even of the nature of poetry itself.”<sup>4</sup> For Marshall, Jones, and Glassco, whose work as translators was fundamentally grounded in their practice as writers, these lively encounters and exchanges played a crucial role in their motivation and opportunities for translation. Their careers show the different ways in which they negotiated the tensions between their two creative activities, as part of an important, but intermittent, tradition of anglophone writers translating.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, the interest in translations from Québec would grow as much for political as aesthetic reasons. As Claxton puts it, “Big changes were happening in Québec and English-speaking Canadians needed to understand what they were about.” Significantly, it was during these years of not-so-Quiet Revolution, artistic ebullience, and Front de libération du Québec bombings that Jones, Stratford, Gaboriau, and Fischman all arrived in Québec. Understandably, it is also during this decade that it became intolerably evident that, if literary translation in Canada were to finally develop after over two hundred years of French-English coexistence, appropriate institutional structures needed to be put in place. Starting in 1959, the Canada Council funded translations on an ad hoc basis, but, as Claxton pointed out in 1967 in her urgent call to action, “Culture Vulture,” such aid would be to no avail if the translations were of poor quality. She called for professional training for translators, prizes to recognize their work, and a professional association to ensure quality. A year later, Stratford would sound a different alarm. Pointing out that “non-literary works, history, geography, economics,” were taking “the biggest part of the [council’s] pie,” he decried the dearth of literary translations in Canada: “The brute reality ... is that public interest is small, or nascent at best, that publishers are reluctant to run the risk of large scale promotion,” not to mention the “lack of competent translators ... [and] weak incentives for those that are, since rates for literary translation are so inferior to commercial rates.”<sup>6</sup>

The move towards increased professional recognition of literary translation in the 1970s was one response to these practical challenges. The Literary Translators’ Association of Canada, with Claxton as president and Stratford as secretary, was officially voted into being on May 17, 1975, at the Bonaventure Hotel in Montréal. By enabling them to share information and experience, the association helped translators in their contractual negotiations with publishers and lent a specific professional identity to the practice of literary translation. At the same time, the creation of the association was very much in keeping with other, similar, professional regroupings of the time. The Writers’ Union of Canada held its first meeting in Ottawa on November 3, 1973; the Québec equivalent, the Union des écrivaines et écrivains Québécois, was founded in March 1977 in Montréal. All three groups would be concerned about changes to Canada’s copyright laws, although not necessarily for the same reasons. The 1970s was also a



period of identification of shared Canadian research interests within academic circles, which sought to contribute to an increased understanding between anglophone and francophone cultures in Canada, although their precise impact on literary translation is yet to be examined: the Association for Canadian Studies was founded in Kingston, Ontario, in 1973; the Association for Canadian and Québec Literatures in Toronto, in 1974.

However, the most important impetus in this period for improving the professional status of literary translation between English and French was undoubtedly the creation of the Canada Council Translation Grants Program in 1972. A year later, the council would inaugurate its annual prizes for literary translation, renamed in 1986 the Governor General's Awards. Although the fee structure was conservative, to say the least, in terms of commercial rates, the program did ensure steady funding for literary translation, and thus the number of texts that were translated increased considerably. As John O'Connor points out, "approximately ninety percent of all French-to-English literary translations in Canada have appeared in the quarter-century since the Canada Council inaugurated its program of financial support for literary translation."<sup>7</sup>

The portraits that follow illuminate the seminal role of particular individuals within a complex interweaving of institutional structures. In the 1950s and 1960s, CBC program organizer and producer Robert Weaver and Frank Scott, himself an award-winning translator,<sup>8</sup> were important forces in generating translation opportunities. It was Weaver who launched Marshall's career as a translator; he wanted to include a short story by Gabrielle Roy in his new radio series *Anthology*.<sup>9</sup> As editor of the *Tamarack Review*, founded in Toronto in 1956, he published Marshall's translations of Naïm Kattan's "Montreal Letters." Despite probable opposition from other members of the editorial board, he also included Glassco's translations of Saint-Denys Garneau in the review. Scott's exchange of letters with Anne Hébert over his translation of her poetry, published in 1970 under the title *Dialogue sur la traduction*, with a preface by Northrop Frye, was an inspirational text for contemporary Canadian and Québec literary translators. As these portraits demonstrate, Scott also played a generous role as literary matchmaker, encouraging Glassco to translate Saint-Denys-Garneau's *Journal*, sending Jones to the *Rencontre des poètes* that would change his destiny as poet, and generally stimulating, along with fellow Montréal poet, A.J.M. Smith, intercultural and intracultural literary exchange.

For Jones, Ellenwood, and Godard, it is clear that involvement with a literary review or press was crucial in facilitating their translation work.<sup>10</sup> The bilingual poetry review *ellipse*, founded by Jones in 1969, served as a key publisher for both English-Canadian and Québécois poets, in the original and in translation, and the review stimulated valuable discussion on the translation process. Ellenwood published many of his translations in the review *Exile* (founded in 1971), or at Exile Press (created in 1976), both directed by York University colleague Barry Callaghan; in her portrait of Ellenwood, Barbara Kerslake describes Callaghan as Ellenwood's veritable translation "pipeline." Similarly, much of the initial incentive for Barbara Godard's early translations came from her involvement with *Open Letter*, a journal of experimental writing and criticism founded by Frank Davey, with whom she directed the Coach House Press Québec Translation Series from 1975 to 1985. In the 1980s, Godard's involvement in the feminist review *Tessera* provided her with opportunities to develop her translation and translation-related activities, notably through a special issue, *La traduction au féminine / Translating Women*, published in 1989.

De Lotbinière-Hanwood, Van Burek, and Gaboriau found equivalent support in their participation in other artistic milieux. Through her position as a member and the coordinator of Powerhouse Gallery in the early 1980s, de Lotbinière-Hanwood made a connection with Montréal feminist writers and artists that informed her future practice of translation. Van Burek's and Gaboriau's translation activity is grounded in their involvement with the Toronto and Montréal theatre milieu.

For Stratford, Claxton, and Fischman, the situation is somewhat more complex. While Stratford's status as an academic gave him access to scholarly reviews for publishing his reflections on the state of literary translation in Canada, including editing a special issue of the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* in 1979, this did not necessarily open publishers' doors for his own literary translations. Revealingly, it is in the portraits of these three translators that one catches something of the nitty-gritty work involved in actually getting a translation published. To quote Stratford's comments in the portrait below, the translator "really does get thickly covered in dust from the market place." Claxton and Fischman's cultivated, ongoing relationships with publishers are in some ways their equivalent to the more

specific community of interests to which other translators are connected. Fischman, in particular, negotiates these relationships, as Pamela Grant points out, through a sense of loyalty to her authors, in much the same way that an art gallery cultivates and promotes a stable of artists. The portraits point to the particular efforts of a small number of presses -- Oberon, Exile, Coach House, Talonbooks, House of Anansi, Simon and Pierre, Lester and Orpen Dennys, and McClelland and Stewart -- who rose to the specific challenges involved in editing, printing, and promoting translated texts.

These interconnected networks shed a certain light on what might at first glance appear to be an unexpected, if not paradoxical, effect of the Canada Council Translation Grants program. Set up “in the hope that making the best writing in French or English available in the other language would foster mutual understanding and cultural exchange,”<sup>11</sup> the program has indeed contributed substantially to an increase in literary translation. It has also drawn attention to the vast number of important books that still remain untranslated. By 1997, as John O’Connor points out, Canadian anglophones had acquired access to only a small part of Québec literary works: “approximately 300 works of fiction, 100 books of poetry, and more than 50 plays, as well as numerous other works” including “anthologies in various genres; journals and travel accounts; autobiography and literary criticism; folklore and folksongs; and children’s books.”<sup>12</sup> Other studies by contemporary translation scholars lend weight to the criticism Stratford voiced in 1977: “The fact is we lag behind most Western nations in this field .... There never has been any systematic attempt to translate major works of the cultural other.”<sup>13</sup> There are considerable discrepancies between the range of Québec works chosen for translation into English, and the works that Québec writers, critics, and scholars themselves would identify as their canonical texts.<sup>14</sup>

The relationships between translators and publishers that surface throughout these portraits demonstrate in concrete terms how tensions between economic and literary values have been articulated within the practice of literary translation in Canada. The patterns of how texts are chosen, tend to be, for better or for worse, a somewhat random affair based on encounters between writers, individual publisher interests, and translators’ affinities. Within this haphazard context, particularly with the increased professional recognition of translation since the 1970s,

translators have responded in two ways. Some, such as Ellenwood, Godard, and to a lesser degree de Lotbinière-Harwood, have been part of what one might call strategic alliances with publishers around specific aesthetic and/or political values, thus facilitating publication of works that espouse these values. Others, including in particular Gaboriau, Claxton, and Fischman, for whom translation is a principal profession (this is also true of Van Burek, whose translation work is closely connected with his role as theatre director and producer), have negotiated more directly the tensions between their own affinities and the values of the marketplace, in other words, between what they would like to translate, and what the publisher or producer thinks will “play” or “sell.” It is this latter model that appears to have gained momentum in the 1990s.<sup>15</sup>

### **Conceptualizing the Practice of Literary Translation**

Interestingly, the translators profiled in this book have been active almost solely in professional organizations related to literature rather than in professional translators’ associations. While provincial associations had long been in existence (the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario was founded in 1921 and the Société des traducteurs du Québec in 1940), and were themselves active in the 1970s in the pursuit of increased professional recognition and accreditation, these were not the professional affiliations of choice within official literary translation circles. Claxton, one of the few well-known translators to be an active member of a professional order of translators, points out that tensions between literary translators and those who specialized in non-literary texts were already present when the Literary Translators’ Association of Canada (LTAC) was created: “certain Québec professional translators’ circles, having succeeded in unifying disparate groups, regarded [the] initiative as a betrayal.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, while the Canadian Association of Schools of Translation was founded in 1973, and the 1970s marked an important expansion in the number of Canadian university translation programs, this evidence of increasing professionalization does not appear to have led to any form of consistent, institutionalized contact between LTAC members and the university community involved in training professional translators.<sup>17</sup>

This division can be related to a persistent cultural perception, widely held but empirically difficult to justify, that there is an inherent difference between literary and

pragmatic (including technical) translation.<sup>18</sup> The superior financial rewards for commercial translation and the demands of the marketplace have certainly influenced the conception of professional translation programs. Beyond these factors, however, the experience of our leading literary translators reveals an historical reality that bears noting: theirs is exclusively a self-learned, learn-as-you-go practice of translation. As Marshall observes, “I learned whatever I’ve learned about the craft of translating by doing. [When I tackled my first translation] I’d never met anyone who’d done even a single translation -- in fact, there were few such people in this country at the time. I’d never (nor have I yet) taken a course in translating. (I don’t think that in those days there were any such courses.)”<sup>19</sup>

Marshall’s use of the word “craft” is also significant. Jones or Stratford might well have said “art.” Both words define the view of translation that underlies more or less explicitly the way the translators profiled here conceptualize their practice. When discussing their work, all emphasize, directly or indirectly, the individual, creative dimension of translation. This is consistent with the self-directed learning process that their particular generation of literary translators has assumed. At the same time, by affirming the specificity of literary translation against the broader, and more recognizably “professional” field of commercial translation, and by under-reporting the economic constraints of their practice, they validate their “literary” status as independent, aesthetic creators. The tension between the two visions of the translator encapsulated by “literary professional” is not always disclosed in the portraits in this collection, although it may well be specific to the practice of literary translation, a dynamic component of the inevitably “in between” nature of such an activity. To this tension must also be added, as these portraits demonstrate, the active intercultural brokerage functions negotiated by the translator.

The articles in this volume trace in detail each translator’s method of translating, the translators’ experiences with both their authors and their publishers, and their expectations of their translations. Not surprisingly, each has his or her own approach and process. Blake can be seen “as an amateur ethnologist, fascinated by difference ... in a rear-guard attempt to preserve an idealized vision of a culture.” For Glassco, “translations must stand on their own, dependent on their own poetic merits, owing to their originals nothing but the inspiration that

has here found a partial rebirth.” Personal affinity, a sense of challenge, the “desire to promote French-Canadian literature in English Canada” and a “conception of the translator’s relative freedom to choose and invent” were important factors in both Stratford’s choice of books to translate and his approach to the process of translating. Joyce Marshall’s memories of her lengthy, sometimes heated, and always productive discussions with author Gabrielle Roy were part of a process of negotiation to arrive at a translation that met both Roy’s expectations of English, and Marshall’s own demands as a writer. “I approach a translation as I would a poem,” says Jones. “I work on both the same way.”

For Claxton, attentiveness to the “accuracy of references to time and space are clearly part of the civil contract the translator undertakes with his or her reader.” Fischman reflects, “Translating a book means, for me at any rate, becoming totally absorbed, not only in it, but by it.” And Godard writes in her translation journal, “Translation is not a carrying across, but a reworking of meaning.” De Lotbinière-Harwood emphasizes translation as an experience of embodied language, how she feels reading a text’s words, and how her body reacts to the words she herself writes in response. In the field of theatre translation, where actors have to say the words she finds, Gaboriau works through a collective experience aimed at making “the translation play.” Van Burek readily admits that his biggest challenge was finding an anglophone voice for Michel Tremblay’s *joual*.

### **Fostering the Study of Literary Translation in Canada**

When I asked the scholars who have contributed portraits to this volume to participate in the project, I little anticipated the breadth and depth of commentary about translation that would result. Nor did I expect such a wide range of motivations and metaphors to emerge.

Translators as smugglers, performers, activists, virtuosos, comparatists, and ventriloquists, translators who retreat between the lines, translators who flaunt their signature, translation as news from the front, or engineering the passage -- the metaphors of the translation process that emerge from the portraits in this book are as varied and numerous as the translators themselves.

Some of these captivating and evocative images extend to the role of literary translation

in facilitating intercultural communication in Canada. From an early view of translation as “a bridge of sorts,” Stratford gradually shifted to a more complex view of translation “as a paradoxical creative process in which author and translator enter into a ‘close yet critical discipleship’ based on faithfulness and betrayal, sameness and difference. Stratford also suggests the image of the parallel as way of conceptualizing the relationship between English-Canadian and Québec literature. Jones used the image of the ellipse to represent the interaction between the two linguistic groups, although he considered the Canadian reality to be “rather more fantastic, a figure generated by the interaction of language from myriad centres -- something more like the older definition of God, as a circle whose centre is nowhere and whose circumference is everywhere.”<sup>20</sup> His statement that “Our cultural reality is not a stable figure; it is a figure of transformation”<sup>21</sup> would resonate with more than one of his fellow translators.

Like literary translation in Canada, the discipline of translation studies is still mapping its territory.<sup>22</sup> Through its detailed analysis of the practice of a generation of acclaimed Canadian anglophone literary translators, this volume seeks to make a contribution not only to the study of literary translation in Canada, but also to a broader understanding of literary translation as intercultural exchange. At the crossroads between Europe and the United States, Canadian translators have participated in the international exchange of ideas about translation, sharing their own experience and profiting from the writings of literary translation scholars and practitioners from other parts of the world. Concepts from New Criticism and the American translation workshop tradition, particularly under the influence of Ezra Pound, can be seen at work in the way Jones and Ellenwood envisage the artistic integrity of the translated text.<sup>23</sup> Godard and de Lotbinière- Harwood have been an integral part of the international development of a feminist practice of literary translation. Throughout the portraits, other connections surface through references to editorial contacts, the distribution of translations, and public readings. At the same time, the particular intercultural context of literary translation in Canada offers new insights and leads to the formulation of concepts useful for understanding the social practice of literary translators in other countries.

This volume does not claim to represent all the major contemporary Canadian anglophone translators. A variety of factors, predominantly of a pragmatic nature, have played a

role in the final choice of subjects. The relative newness of translation studies in Canada<sup>24</sup> has meant that the contributors to the volume come from a variety of disciplines: Québec literature, comparative literature, English-Canadian literature, critical theatre, drama studies, and translation studies. They have all taken up the challenge of the portrait framework with enthusiasm, ingenuity, and grace. The translators themselves have responded with generosity, providing up-to-date lists of their published and unpublished translations, as well as their various written texts on translation. The bibliographies included at the end of each portrait will no doubt serve as an important resource for the further study of their individual and collective practice.

Many of the translators who lobbied for the Canada Council Translation Grants Program, who founded the Literary Translators' Association of Canada in 1975, and who are still working tirelessly on behalf of literary translation and their Québécois authors, are close to retirement, if such a notion can indeed be applied to their continued devotion to translating. It is time to examine their rich heritage, to gather together the biographical and bibliographical information that can foster further research, and, through a collective analysis of their work, to lay the groundwork for a better understanding of the intercultural importance and complexity of anglophone literary translation in Canada.

## NOTES

1. Hugh MacLennan, *Two Solitudes* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), p. 2.
2. Unda Gaboriau, "The Cultures of Theatre," in *Culture in Transit*, ed. Sherry Simon (Montréal: Vehicule Press, 1995), p. 89.
3. John J. O'Connor, "Translations: French to English," in the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, ed. Eugene Benson and William Toye (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 1127.
4. John Glassco, *English Poetry in Québec: Proceedings of the Foster Poetry Conference, October 12-14, 1963*. (Montréal: McGill University Press, 1965), p. 6-7.
5. The tradition of the writer/translator is much more prominent in Québec letters than in



English-Canadian literature. For a parallel volume of portraits of Canadian francophone translators see Agnes Whitfield, ed., *Le Métier du double*, Collection Nouvelles études québécoises (Montréal: Fides, 2005).

6. Philip Stratford, "French-Canadian Literature in Translation," *Méta* 13, no. 4 (Dec. 1968): 182.

7. O'Connor, "Translations," p. 1127.

8. Frank Scott has not been included in this book, since a comprehensive study of his life and work already exists. See Sandra Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination: A Life of P.R. Scott* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987).

9. Weaver gave one of the lectures at the First Canadian Writers Conference in Kingston in 1955. Robert Weaver, "Broadcasting," in *Writing in Canada: Proceedings of the Canadian Writers' Conference Held at Queen's University July 1955*, ed. George Whalley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956), p. 112.

10. For the broader context of small literary magazines in Canada, see Ken Norris, *The Little Magazine in Canada 1925-80* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1984). The report of the Royal Commission on Book Publishing, *Canadian Publishers and Canadian Publishing* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1972), offers an in-depth analysis of the Canadian publishing industry in the early 1970s. More recently, Roy MacSkimming, in *The Perilous Trade: Publishing Canada's Writers* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2003) has traced the adventures of Canada's main presses. However, there is surprisingly little direct information on the practice of literary translation in any of these volumes.

11. Gérard Pelletier, quoted by Ruth Martin, "Translated Canadian Literature and Canada Council Grants 1972-1992: The Effect on Authors, Translators and Publishers," *ellipse*, no. 51 (1994): 56.

12. O'Connor, "Translations," p. 1127.

13. Philip Stratford, *Bibliography of Canadian Books in Translation: French to English and English to French / Bibliographie de livres canadiens traduits de l'anglais au français et du français à l'anglais*. (Ottawa: Humanities Research Council of Canada / Conseil de recherches sur les humanités, 1977), p. ii.

14. See, for instance, Ruth Martin, "Translated Canadian Literature," pp. 55-84; Larry Shouldice, "On the Politics of Literary Translation in Canada," in *Translation in Canadian Literature Symposium 1982*, ed. Camille R. LaBossiere (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1983), pp. 73-82.
15. John O'Connor raises concerns about the effect of market factors on literary translation in Canada, particularly in view of the economic recession in the 1990s and its consequences for Canadian publishers, O'Connor, "Translations," p. 1132. See also Agnes Whitfield, "Translations, Traductions," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2002-2003): 291-306; and "Translations, Traductions," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2003-2004): 79-96.
16. Patricia Claxton, "Introduction: Looking Back," *Méta* 45, no. 1 (2000): 7.
17. This remains much the case today, despite the fact that the association is now housed permanently in a building belonging to Concordia University in Montreal, and that some individual members teach part-time or full-time within different university programs. In the late 1990s, an attempt was made by the LTAC executive to set up an official mentoring program, but due to lack of funds, the program was not implemented.
18. As Peter Newmark has pointed out, "all sorts of false distinctions have been made between literary and technical translation" by translation theorists, "but the distinction between careful, sensitive and elegant writing ... cuts across all this." Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), p. 5-6.
19. Joyce Marshall, "The Writer as Translator," *Canadian Literature*, no. 117 (1988): 26.
20. D.G. Jones, "Tracing Ellipse," *ellipse*, no. 4 (1988): 21.
21. Jones, "Tracing Ellipse," p. 21.
22. For an analysis of James S. Holmes's initial mapping of the discipline, see Mary Snell-Hornby, "Translation Studies -- Art, Science or Utopia," in *Translation Studies: The State of the Art*, ed. Kitty M. van Leuven-Zwart and Ton Naaijken. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991), pp. 13-24. For recent trends, see the John Benjamin's online *Translation Studies Bibliography*, ed. Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, John Benjamins Publishing <[www.benjamins.com/online](http://www.benjamins.com/online)>.
23. See the chapter "The American Translation Workshop" in Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary*

*Translation Theories* (London / New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 7-42.

24. For further bibliographical references, see the Université de Sherbrooke's online *Bibliography of Comparative Studies in Canadian, Québec and Foreign Literatures* <[www.compcanlit.ca](http://www.compcanlit.ca)>, which includes Translation Studies.

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