Tracing the Context of Translation

The Example of Gender

LUISE VON FLOTOW

University of Ottawa, Canada

Abstract. Starting from the premise that the contexts in which translations and translation studies are produced are of paramount importance (Lefevere 1992), this article looks at a number of instances where gender has played an important role — in the process of translation and/or in the studies of a translated text. It begins with the work of Julia Evelina Smith, Bible translator in the 1850s and suffragette in the 1870s, moves on to the challenges encountered when translating the eighteenth-century abolitionist discourse of French intellectual women for twentieth-century America, turns to gay writing and its translation in the 1990s, and returns to the Bible at the turn of the new century — the Vatican’s Liturgiam authenticam instructions on Bible translation and the new French Bible 2001.

Contexts are of paramount importance when we produce translations, and when we study them; they shape, influence, permit or prohibit certain versions of certain texts at certain times. They make translation, and translation studies, possible,¹ or impossible — or allow work on a cline between these two extremes. Translation is a deliberate act, eminently social, historical, and personal — a hugely variable, opportunistic act — and as such it is context-bound. Translation is planned rewriting; it produces a deliberately and inevitably different version of an already existing text — prepared under specific conditions, to reach a specific readership. Similarly, studies of translations are deliberate activities, carried out in specific socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts, which affect the outcome of the study. André Lefevere has often pointed out this contextual aspect of translation, or rewriting, most polemically in the introduction to his Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame (1992). Arguing that “rewritings”/translations are the most widely available versions of texts, he asserts that their study should not be neglected; and

¹In 1990 graduate students in the USA were discouraged from studying translation which was seen as “academic suicide.” Today, there are translation studies all across Europe, in Asia, South America, Canada, and in some of the best American universities.
those who study rewritings “will have to ask themselves who rewrites, why, under what circumstances, for which audience” (7) the work was
done. A study of translation that addresses these points, Lefevere and many
others, have shown, will take into account many, if not all, of the contextual
elements that shape a rewritten text, and “restore to a certain study of
literature some of the more immediate social relevance the study of lit-
erature as a whole has lost” (9) [my emphasis]. Lefevere is as much
concerned with the social relevance of translation studies as with that of
translation, and he firmly locates both in social contexts. In this, his work
foreshadows the current trend to use Bourdieu’s sociological concepts of
“habitus” and “champ/field” to study translations, and translators
(Gouanvic 1999; Simeoni 1998), and to develop work on the ‘ethics’ of
translation, 2 clearly also a socio-political thrust in the discipline.

Using gender as a frame of reference, this article explores the impor-
tance of contexts in translation. One of the more important determinants
in the Anglo-American (and wider Western) academic contexts of the
past thirty years, gender has not left translation studies untouched. A
number of recent books and many articles 3 attest to this situation, and
changes in research direction – from feminist, to ‘woman-interrogated’,
to gay or queer approaches – show how flexible conceptions of gender
have become, 4 and how flexibly translation studies research has responded.
Further, the spread of gender approaches from the Anglo-American trans-
lation studies realm into the academic endeavours of researchers in Austria,
Spain, Italy, Mexico, Turkey, Czechoslovakia, Brazil, China, 5 and many
other cultures/countries is a further indication of the flexibility, mobility,
and therefore, viability of the topic. Much as different contexts will affect
the translated versions of a text, so these different research contexts will
affect the gender topics addressed, and the findings. This is made clear by
Beverley Allen (1999) who argues that a term as basic to gender discuss-
ions as ‘mother’ cannot be translated with impunity from Italian to English.
Madre in Milano is not the same as mother in New York: cultural and

---

2 See the special issue of The Translator, “The Return to Ethics” (Pym 2001).
3 See my overview article “Translation and Gender Paradigms: From Identities to
Pluralities” (Flotow forthcoming).
4 I discuss some of these changes/developments in “Genders and the Translated Text:
Developments in Transformance” in Textus (Flotow 1999).
5 Conferences and research projects related to gender and translation have recently
developed in all these countries – in Graz, Austria (2001), in Valencia, Spain (2002),
in Mexico (2002), in Gargano, Italy (2003), in Istanbul (2003), etc.
contextual differences impose themselves, making difference, and not equivalence, the constant of translation.

1. A translation narrative – in context

In the following, I recount the story of a translation – its inception and its aftermaths – in order to demonstrate the vital importance of context. In the 1840s, the Northwestern United States experienced a religious movement named Millerism after William Miller, the man who had calculated that the world was about to end, and was preaching this throughout the region. Huge prayer and revival meetings were held in the early part of the decade to spread the happy news, and help prepare people for the day. Mr. Miller, a gifted orator and self-styled preacher, traveled widely and convinced thousands of their imminent ascension to heaven. In the fall of 1843, as the appointed day came closer, normal life changed significantly: people lived only for the prayer meetings, they spurned decoration in their homes and of their persons (covering the pictures on their walls, and their musical instruments with black cloths, for example), and farmers didn’t take in their crops, since they knew they would soon be going to heaven. The appointed day in October 1843 came and went, and nothing happened. The ‘Great Disappointment’ followed. As for Miller, he blamed his miscalculation on the interpreters of God’s word who had evidently made mistakes when they wrote down the prophecies.

Out of this curious context, a translation developed. A learned spinster by the name of Julia Evelina Smith, who was probably not untouched by Millerism herself, speculated that the problem might lie less in the interpretation of God’s word by the prophets than in the translation of the biblical texts Miller had used for his prediction. She therefore decided to translate the entire Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into English, and to do so as literally as possible. Unlike many of her less educated contemporaries, she could see that the King James Version that Miller had referred to deviated substantially from the Hebrew and, in line with the thinking of the Sandemanian sect to which she belonged, she decided to re-translate the Bible, staying as close to the Word as she could. Only this method would yield an answer to the question of dates and numbers. When her translation was completed about eight years later, in 1855, she

---

* I have discussed this translation event elsewhere; see bibliographical references Flotow (2000b) and (2002).
put it aside, as a bundle of about 10,000 sheets of manuscript.

Many years later, in the 1870s, Smith decided to publish the translation. Again, the context was decisive, if peculiar: as an old lady of about 80 she had become involved in the movement for women’s suffrage – the movement seeking women’s right to vote. Due to her struggles in response to mistreatment at the hands of local tax authorities, Julia Smith had become quite visible. Together with a younger sister in her mid-70s, she had already appeared before the US Senate and regularly traveled throughout New England to speak at women’s meetings. After losing a number of court cases against the tax authorities because she was a woman, she decided to publish her translation “to show that one woman can do what no man has ever done” (i.e. translate the entire Bible single-handedly from the original languages). We can assume, I think, that if the women’s movement had not been such a strong social force, and provided this context, the work would never have appeared. It is now available in the archives of the American Bible Society, New York.

A further contextual development made this translation an important artifact and authority. The project to produce *The Woman’s Bible* headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a fiery suffragette, was a largely joint effort that brought together suffragette scholars and Bible experts to comment on those passages of the Bible most important to women, and to women’s inferior position in American society. Throughout the 19th century, the Bible had served politicians and other public figures in the USA as a political instrument to justify all manner of political, civil, and social inequality for women. *The Woman’s Bible* extracts pertinent passages, comments on them, and demonstrates to what extent both the Bible and its interpreters are misogynist. Throughout the ten-year duration of this project, which caused important political rifts within the women’s movement, Julia Smith’s literal translation served as the authoritative text. The commentators wrote *about* the King James Version, since that was the main Bible in use in English, but they knew how important the ‘translation effect’ could be – the ideological twist that any translation can give to a text – and so they used Smith’s version as the most appropriate and literal reference work. After all, she translates ‘Hawwa’, the word normally rendered as ‘Eve’ and the name for the first woman on Earth, as ‘Life’, in line with the meaning of the word in Hebrew. Elizabeth Stanton’s

---

7 With regard to translating ‘Hawwa’ as ‘Life’ rather than ‘Eve’, this innovation has been corroborated in the late 20th century work of Mary Phil Korsak in *At the Start*. 
comment on this is

It is a pity that all versions of the Bible do not give this word instead of the Hebrew Eve. She was Life, the eternal mother, the first representative of the more valuable and important half of the human race (The Woman's Bible, 27).

After this brief moment of glory which lasted about 20 years, Smith’s Bible fell into disuse and oblivion, much like The Woman’s Bible, which was considered too aggressive and polemical for the large majority of mainstream women that the movement wanted to represent. Both texts were revived, however, and again the context was decisive: the second women’s movement dating from the 1960s onward. Further, in the United States, two books (both published in 1993) have focused on Smith’s religious life and her work as a Bible translator, and a number of articles written in the 1970s claimed her for feminism. I have just published the first article on her in French – in a book entitled Portraits de traductrices (Flotow 2002). In other words, this 20th century context that spawned a huge interest in women’s writing of all kinds, and in issues of gender and identity more generally, also brought these 19th century materials back into the public, academic eye.

In regard to the ideological import of Smith’s work, I am not sure that she actually produced what might be called a feminist translation, as the enthusiastic articles of the 1970s claim. Her work hardly even fit the agenda of the suffragette movement of the late 19th century, though she was able to gain notoriety and support from the movement. She was interested in seeking and revealing the ‘Word’ of God, in an approach we might now term fundamentalist. Yet, her intellectual achievement is impressive and as such considered noteworthy: she fits into the category of important, intellectual women forebears of the feminist movement whose work unjustifiably lapsed into oblivion.

The story of Julia Smith with some of its contextual details and follow-ups is not only picturesque; it is useful as a demonstration of how important context is for all aspects of translation, and for translation studies. Smith produced her translation because of the religious fervour of the 1840s and the aftermath of this social movement; she was searching

---

*Genesis Made New* (1992). In Korsak’s words, it places the focus on women as ‘life’ and not as mothers/madres.
for an explanation for the events of the early 1840s that had moved thousands of people. She published the translation in order to make a point regarding her own socio-legal situation in the 1870s; the publication would demonstrate that a woman could far surpass the achievements of a man and that therefore discrimination against women was unjustifiable. The translation was well-received and used as an authoritative text by thinkers within the women’s suffrage movement for about twenty years because it was considered more literal, and therefore true or honest or trustworthy, than other versions, and therefore served their purpose. It dropped out of sight because the aggressive critique of the Bible published in The Woman’s Bible was considered politically harmful. It was revived as an example of a woman’s intellectual accomplishment in the 1970s when researchers and scholars working in the context of a new women’s movement were looking for important women whose work had been dropped from the canon, and lost to subsequent generations. And I am reviving interest in the work of Julia Evelina Smith (translator) at a time when it has become fashionable to unearth and publicize the achievements of women intellectuals and translators. The fact that Portraits de traductrices, edited by Jean Delisle (2002) should be awarded the prize for best book of the year by the Canadian Association of Translation Studies is a further sign of this contextually opportune moment.

Context in translation involves all the conditions affecting the production, the publication, the dissemination, the reception, the lack of reception, and the revival of a text. And it affects the way a translation is studied and evaluated – even centuries later. It is a vast field that also comprises the subjectivity and the personal politics of the translator (and the translation researcher), an aspect that is garnering more and more interest. It means studying a translation in order to understand it, and formulate a coherent, reasoned, understanding of it – as an artifact of its time. It means examining a translation in the environment in which it was produced and, if possible, not imposing the aesthetic or ideological or practical demands of another era upon it or judging it from some vague personal aesthetic. It is an approach that expects difference in translation and seeks to account for it. Specifically, it means studying ‘l’horizon de la traduction’ (Berman 1995) – the personal, political, social, aesthetic conditions under which a translation is produced and received.

This is not a new idea, but it is one that regained importance in the late 20th century for a number of contextual reasons. One is the impact of the relativistic thinking that came with post-structuralist theories undermining
the authority of any text and thus valorizing the slippery, subjective, opportunist, partisan (Tymoczko 2000) aspects of meaning and meaningfulness, as typified by translation. As Edwin Gentzler (2002: 195) puts it, deconstructive and post-structuralist thinking on translation, “challenge[s] privileged concepts of the sanctity of the source text and originality of the author”, and has focused on the changeable, flexible translation effect. In this environment there is no ultimate authority, no originality, only difference and change. Further, the once solid link between language and nationality/nation has been systematically eroded through massive increases in mobility and in communications in the late 20th century (Potter 2002). In translation, where a text is produced through a malleable, flexible process, and is as indefinite as any source text, and where cultural and contextual adjustments need to be made even at the level of madre and mother, this additional lack of territorially-defined linguistic spaces enhances the influence and importance of contingent contexts.

2. Opportunism in translation

Returning to the work done in translation and translation studies under the sway of gender interests in the last decades of the 20th century, it is easy to see the impact of context. Perhaps the most immediate development as a result of the second women’s movement (from 1960s) was production. As in the case of Julia Smith’s translation, the socio-political moment, a very fecund moment, was vital. It led to vast amounts of translation, with highly motivated and educated women gaining the power to impose their work and their ideas. The translation market in anthologies of women’s writing boomed in all the European languages, and English as well. In many publishing houses lists and series of women’s writing were created and entirely new publishers, producing only books written by women, sprang up. One prime example is the German Frauenoffensive, a small collective of women in the mid-1970s which published Verena Stefan’s Häutungen (Mues in French, Shedding in English). When the book became a cult hit, the publishing house was born, and its politics established. The presence of a huge reading public of women with a great appetite for new materials that might reflect aspects of their own lives, made these business ventures possible. This burst of production was not due to any change in the intrinsic value of the texts; indeed, as Lefevere claims, there may be little intrinsic value in any text. What there is though, is context: conventions, traditions, trends, fashions, power plays that any
social context will bring and that will determine what publishers sell and people read.\textsuperscript{8}

Inevitably and logically then, there is room for aggressive and opportunist activity in such a dynamic environment. With regard to gender issues in translation, the ‘hijacking’ of texts has been seen as a part of ‘feminist translation’, at least in North America. This refers to the deliberate intervention in a text in order to incorporate contemporary feminist politics, where there are none, or nothing very visible, in the source text. Obviously, such activity is very context-dependent – relying on friendly publishing houses and readers to support it.

A good example of this practice of ‘hijacking’ into context can be taken from a book published in 1994 in the United States, Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women’s Writing – 1783-1823, edited by Doris Kadoish and Françoise Massardier-Kenney. It presents a number of abolitionist texts written by French women just before and just after the French Revolution in 1789. These texts had never before been translated into English, and were viewed by the editors of the book as work by important intellectual women forebears, ancestors of the women’s movement, so to speak. The fact that they had never been made available or read in English was seen as typical of the treatment of work by intellectual (and therefore intimidating and uncomfortable) women: Mme de Stael, Mme de Gouges, and Mme de Duras.

The translation of this material from late 18\textsuperscript{th} century France to late 20\textsuperscript{th} century United States, however, posed a series of problems. One of the most serious was the language used for the black heroines and for Blacks in general. The word ‘savage’, for instance, was a part of the normal lexicon of the French texts, and often used to refer to the slaves that were to be freed. It could not appear in late 20\textsuperscript{th} century American translations. These were adjusted, and not only because the word itself is now considered offensive, but because the writers (Stael, Gouges, and Duras) were to be viewed as important libertarian forerunners of the women’s

\textsuperscript{8} In an ongoing research project that I am heading and that investigates the German translations of Canadian writing, it has been found that, opportunistically, throughout the 1980s, the translation of contemporary writing by Canadian women was far more important than the translation of male authors in Germany, most likely in response to the huge interest in women’s texts. When this abated, and difficult social issues arose after the unification of the two Germanies in 1990, Canadian texts by so-called ‘multikulti’ (multicultural authors – members of visible minorities) predominated.
movement. They could not be given the language of rightwing racists. Similarly, the black heroines who appeared too weak, or did not reflect the characteristics that late 20th century readers might expect, had their language adjusted. The translators "purposefully heighten[ed] the eloquence of the black female character" and "effaced what sometimes appeared [...] as the whining undertones of the character Ourika" (16). In other words, the feminist American context into which these texts were being translated strongly affected the translations. They were produced and published at a time and in an environment that welcomed such material, but required important changes in the text. The 'otherness' of the late 18th century was obscured, and the text was 'hijacked' through translation, for a very specific use in the late 20th century.

3. Subjectivity and translation

One of the most interesting recent contextual developments in translation, and in translation studies, is the focus on the translator as subject. A champion of the personal aspects of translation, Antoine Berman (1995) has sought to develop a flexible method with which to understand and criticize literary translations. This puts considerable emphasis on studying the translator as an important actor in the work of translation. The focus is on that person's literary and cultural background, on their 'position traductive', and finally on their 'pulsion à traduire', the force that drives them to translate. In this, Berman is clearly referring to personal context, and to a confluence of factors: personal taste and connections, cultural traditions, trends and fashions, education, financial concerns, and so on. In terms of gender, his work was foreshadowed by the famous slogan "the personal is political" that galvanized so many women in the 1970s and 1980s, and also connects the subject position with its socio-political context. It is adapted by translation studies scholars who locate and understand translations in very specific personal environments, comparing and contrasting them with other versions of the same text or the same author, done by another translating individual, informed and formed by other contexts.

A good example of an adapted Bermanian approach that works within the current climate of changing gender politics is work by Keith Harvey (1998, 2000). As ideas about gender have undergone important changes, moving from polarized to pluralized positions, translation scholars such as Harvey have followed suit, exploring gay writing and the translation of
gay texts. Again, the social context allows this; but a very personal need
to gain access to certain texts or make materials accessible to others is
also apparent. Keith Harvey studies gay American writing, its stylistic
and semantic features, and its translations into French, and compares these
with similar aspects of French gay writing in American/English transla-
tion. He makes this study very personal, describing how as a young man
he searched through gay writing in order to understand his own feelings,
and how he sought out foreign writers such as Marcel Proust and André
Gide. He describes his disappointment in reading the English translations
of these French authors as underlying his subsequent motivation to re-
search the importance of gay community and context in translation. He
discovers that these communities, as reflected in the translations they pro-
duce and consume, are very different. In the French world, for example,
there is far less of a community that will support gay writing as gay writ-
ing. The French translations of Gore Vidal, say, or of Tony Kushner seem
not to be produced for a French community of gay men; they are
mainstreamed, much like Proust and Gide were in English translation a
few generations ago. On the other hand, certain American translations of
gay texts from France are clearly “gayed” for the more assertive Anglo-
American gay community. Eric Keenaghan’s work (2000) on an American
version of Federico García Lorca corroborates this American translation
tendency. Indeed, both Harvey and Keenaghan show that the differences
between an American translation (or hijacking, in the case of Lorca) of
gay materials is dependent on the context that places emphasis on per-
sonal identity politics, on the community that will read the translation,
and on the “subjectivité du traducteur”.

4. Controlling the context

The focus on gender, and more recently, on its diversification or plu-
ralization, may be attractive and stimulating for some; for others, it
threatens unity, tradition, belief systems, and power structures. Predict-
ably, there are attempts to control the contexts in which certain texts are
translated. And this brings us back to the Bible. A current publication
from the Vatican, entitled Liturgiam Authenticam, is a good example of
such an attempt to control translation. This publication gives directions
about how to translate the Bible, and prepare texts for congregations and
church services. Specifically, for my interests in gender and translation, it
cracks down on ‘gender-neutral, inclusive’ liturgy. This refers to the re-
cent work done by many institutions, committees, and translators to adapt
the language of the Scriptures to the social situations in which they are
used, and to recognize the fact that gender has become an important cat-
egory according to which people identify, and live.9 The Vatican condemns
translations that might have Jesus telling his disciples to become ‘fishers
of people’ rather than ‘fishers of men’ or that might refer to God as the
‘Father and Mother’. On the Vatican website, and in a text segment clearly
entitled ‘Gender’, the authors of the Liturgiam authenticam insist that:

30. In many languages there exist nouns and pronouns denoting both gen-
ders, masculine and feminine, together in a single term. The insistence
that such a usage should be changed is not necessarily to be regarded
as the effect or the manifestation of an authentic development of the
language as such. Even if it may be necessary by means of catechesis
to ensure that such words continue to be understood in the “inclusive”
sense just described, it may not be possible to employ different words
in the translations themselves without detriment to the precise intended
meaning of the text, the correlation of its various words or expressions,
or its aesthetic qualities. When the original text, for example, employs
a single term in expressing the interplay between the individual and
the universality and unity of the human family or community (such as
the Hebrew word *adam*, the Greek *anthropos*, or the Latin *homo*),
this property of the language of the original text should be maintained
in the translation. Just as has occurred at other times in history, the
Church herself must freely decide upon the system of language that
will serve her doctrinal mission most effectively, and should not be
subject to externally imposed linguistic norms that are detrimental to
that mission.

31. In particular: to be avoided is the systematic resort to imprudent solu-
tions such as a mechanical substitution of words, the transition from
the singular to the plural, the splitting of a unitary collective term into
masculine and feminine parts, or the introduction of impersonal or ab-
stract words, all of which may impede the communication of the true
and integral sense of a word or an expression in the original text. Such
measures introduce theological and anthropological problems into the
translation. Some particular norms are the following:

a) In referring to almighty God or the individual persons of the Most Holy
Trinity, the truth of tradition as well as the established gender usage of
each respective language are to be maintained.

---

9 See Sherry Simon (1996: 111-133) for a comprehensive overview of feminist ap-
proaches to Bible translation.
b) Particular care is to be taken to ensure that the fixed expression “Son of Man” be rendered faithfully and exactly. The great Christological and typological significance of this expression requires that there should also be employed throughout the translation a rule of language that will ensure that the fixed expression remain comprehensible in the context of the whole translation.

c) The term “fathers”, found in many biblical passages and liturgical texts of ecclesiastical composition, is to be rendered by the corresponding masculine word into vernacular languages insofar as it may be seen to refer to the Patriarchs or the kings of the chosen people in the Old Testament, or to the Fathers of the Church.

d) Insofar as possible in a given vernacular language, the use of the feminine pronoun, rather than the neuter, is to be maintained in referring to the Church.

e) Words which express consanguinity or other important types of relationship, such as “brother”, “sister”, etc., which are clearly masculine or feminine by virtue of the context, are to be maintained as such in the translation.

f) The grammatical gender of angels, demons, and pagan gods or goddesses, according to the original texts, is to be maintained in the vernacular language insofar as possible.

Basing its instructions on arguments such as ‘lack of precision’, ‘inauthenticity’, ‘aesthetics’ and a ‘doctrinal mission’, this document calls for a return to the use of masculine terms as the generic for human being, designating words such as ‘man’, ‘adam’, ‘anthropos’, ‘homo’ and pronouns such as ‘ils’ in French or ‘ellos’ in Spanish as being inclusive, i.e. referring to all humans. This, of course, runs counter to all the work done by feminist and other linguists to individualize and personalize language along gender lines since the 1970s. Further, the document reinstates the predominance of masculine references to various characters in the Christian belief system, the ‘Filius homini’ (Son of Man) and the ‘Pateres’ (Fathers) of the Church, a tendency of Church language that was much attenuated in publications such as the Inclusive Language Lectionary. The feminine pronoun, on the other hand, is exclusively reserved for the institution: the Church itself. The purpose of this return to ‘traditions’ is stated to be twofold: it seeks to maintain the “interplay between the individual and the universality and unity of the human family and community”. Secondly, it re-implements a “system of language that will serve her [the Church’s] doctrinal mission most effectively”. This mission is not spelled out, nor is the abstraction of individual human and universal human fam-
ily made very clear; but the intent is clear enough: to re-instate a ‘pre-gendered’, patriarchal approach to the language of the Bible and control its translation.

Foreshadowing, or coinciding with, a general move toward more traditional thinking, this decree seeks to regain authority over the contexts of Bible translation. It comes at a time when there is renewed interest in Bible translations, as exemplified by the new French Bible (La nouvelle traduction 2001). This work was created through a double effort of translation: exegetes working directly from the Biblical languages first produced literal versions, and then writers from various French-speaking cultures turned these into literary texts. These texts constitute both a return to the original Biblical writings (via the exegetes) and a reformulation of the old material in the French of the late 20th century – for a reading public of believers and non-believers. The results, finalized in “soixante-treize séminaires de traduction – autant que de livres bibliques” (24) [seventy-three translation seminars, as many as there are books of the Bible, my translation], consist of many compromises.13 One of the more interesting, given the new ‘traditionalist’ environment and the array of exegetes and translators involved, in other words the complex context, is a compromise that resonates with Julia Evelina Smith’s version. It is the translation of the name of Adam’s wife. She is ‘Eve la Vivante/ la mère de tous les vivants’ [Eve the Living/the mother of all the living], a translation that is not quite as radical or disconcerting as Smith’s stark ‘Life’ but still less traditional than what the Vatican might have preferred.

The context of this past ‘fin de siècle’, the late 20th century, with its focus on gender, subjectivity and personal politics, with its critical interest in the power of language and its critical focus on the language of power has been very fruitful for translation. It has not only refocused the attention of academics and institutions on the phenomenon, but seen the production of many new works in translation. Most importantly, it has made the figure of the translator, and often the translation researcher, stand out as that of an individual clearly affected by the context in which they are working, and equally implicated in the text: a translator who leaves a trace in every text. This is the trace of context.

13 Anne Marie Lamontagne, one of the Canadian writers participating, has described this work of discussion and compromise in a number of talks, maintaining however, that in the end, each team of exegete and writer take responsibility for the final published version of their text.