"A Word Can Make All the Differences" : Translating Caribbean Feminist Discourse and Simone Schwarz-Bart's Pluie et Vent Sur Télumée Miracle

Stacey Lynn Diliberto

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Abstract

How is a literary text—and the culture it represents—translated? Is the translated text a hindrance to the unique voice of an author, or is it beneficial for the circulation of the text in a culture that is not the author’s own? Must the translator be an insider to the author’s culture, or can any translator take up the task of interpretation? This thesis seeks to investigate these questions by examining the English translation of Simone Schwarz-Bart’s *Pluie et Vent Sur Télumée Miracle*. Barbara Bray, the translator of *Pluie et Vent*, renames the book in English as *The Bridge of Beyond*. How does this renaming affect a reader’s perception of the novel, especially when the reader is unfamiliar with French Caribbean Creole culture? What responsibilities does a translator have in remaining as faithful to the novel as possible?

In the case of the translation of Schwarz-Bart’s novel, which is so closely tied to Créolité and Caribbean feminist discourse, there are certain cultural and linguistic differences that exist between the French original and the English translation. What might have caused the translator to make such changes from the original, and what effect might these changes have on the reader, if any?

I argue that because translators do not render in a vacuum, all rewritings are never exactly as the original. There is always a set of cultural, historical, and political beliefs that influence the rewriting of a literary text. Because of this fact, readers should become aware of these influences and understand that manipulations in the rewriting of literature exist. Also, instead of being unknown names alongside the author on a title page, translators should make their intentions, objectives, and choices known through prefaces, introductions, or footnotes.
“A WORD CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE”: TRANSLATING CARIBBEAN FEMINIST DISCOURSE AND SIMONE SCHWARZ-BART’S PLUIE ET VENT SUR TÉLUMÉE MIRACLE

A THESIS

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STACEY LYNN DILIBERTO

Montclair State University

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Introduction

Michel Foucault in *L’Ordre du Discours* asserts that a word (*une parole*) can "nevertheless make all the difference" [cette parole qui portant faisait la différence] (14). Words are perhaps the most powerful components of language since through words one can derive meaning. For authors in particular, words are significant since they are harnessed and used when writing to interpret the world and its events. The words an author uses are especially important because it is through them that a unique voice is established and silence is defeated. If words, as Foucault affirms, make all the difference, what happens when an author’s carefully selected words are interpreted and rewritten in another language by someone else? Is the translation of a text a hindrance to the unique voice and culture of the author, or is it beneficial for the circulation of a text in a culture that is not the author’s own? This thesis seeks to investigate these questions by exploring Guadelopean author Simone Schwarz-Bart, and her novel *Pluie et Vent Sur Télumée Miracle* (literally translated as, *Rain and Wind on Télumée The Miracle Woman*). This book, strangely translated into English by Barbara Bray as *The Bridge of Beyond*, is fairly popular in Francophone and Caribbean studies; however, outside of these areas of study it is not mentioned or approached enough. How is a text like Schwarz-Bart’s translated and does its translation affect its reception into a given culture or literary canon?

The inspiration for this thesis came after reading the original French text and wondering why the English translated version’s title veers so far from the original French title. If the novel promotes women storytellers and the resilience of women in the face of hardships, why does the English title focus on the name of a location and not on the woman, Télumée, who tells her history and triumphs over adversity, as the French
version does? Also, much of *Pluie et Vent* centers on original Creole metaphors and proverbs told from grandmother to grandchild. The text is in fact sprinkled with French-Creole terms and ideas. Do these proverbs, terms, and metaphors, get “lost in translation” for English-speaking audiences who are not familiar with French-Creole culture?

According to Susan Bassnett and Andre LeFevere (two of the most prominent translation studies scholars) in their book *Translation, History, and Culture*, a translation is a rewriting of an original text. They state: “All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way” (vix). While translations can help the evolution and popularity of a literary text in a particular society, they can also distort meaning. Translation does not simply require transcribing words from one language to another; it also includes interpreting ideas and concepts in a faithful manner. With these ideas in mind, can the reader trust the translator? In regards to Schwarz-Bart’s text, how does its English translation manipulate the English speaking reader? Can the non-Caribbean audience truly understand the author’s intentions and subject positions as a Caribbean woman through a translated text? Can the reader grasp the Caribbean feminist discourse promoted in the novel?

As a Caribbean woman writer, words for Schwarz-Bart are particularly important since they allow her to resist silence. This silence stems from the historical absence of texts by Caribbean women and the illegitimization of women in the major literary movements of the Caribbean by their male counterparts. For instance, along with *Négritude* and *Antillanité*, much of Schwarz-Bart’s text can be associated with the *Créolité* movement in the French-Caribbean; however, it is not recognized as such.
Créolité is a literary movement that began in the 1980s by Patrick Chamoiseau, Jean Bernabé, and Raphael Confiant. This movement seeks to legitimize the Creole language and culture in French Caribbean literature. Creole has always been considered an oral language, and much of oral literature in the Caribbean has been passed down through Creole. *Pluie et Vent* centers on oral history as it is passed down through the generations of the Lougandor family, a family of strong, Guadeloupean women. Schwarz-Bart’s act of writing down this oral history is a type of translation in itself. Although Schwarz-Bart writes in French, the colonizer’s language, she does not compromise her “Creoleness” when writing and uses Creole ideas and philosophies with French to express her exact meaning. One can say, then, that there is a double translation of the text: from oral (Creole) to written (French), and from French to English. Although Schwarz-Bart’s novel can be associated with *Créolité*, she is not considered an “official” member of the movement because as a woman, she is not recognized on the same level by her male counterparts. When translating a work by an author like Schwarz-Bart, one must therefore be aware of the challenges the Caribbean woman author faces with voicelessness and denial.

The first part of this thesis will discuss the emergence of Caribbean women’s writing and *Pluie et Vent’s* place in the genre. During the last 20 years, there has been an increase in Caribbean Studies; yet with the exception of Maryse Condé, French-Caribbean women writers remain somewhat secondary to emerging scholarship of the region. Also, since curricula tend to privilege canonical texts, the Caribbean woman’s voice is hardly heard. Authors like Schwarz-Bart provide the feminist Creole/Caribbean perspective on history and culture and show that there is a distinct feminist discourse in
the region. It is necessary to place *Pluie et Vent* in this context in order to understand just how important is a faithful translation of the novel. As a woman author, how does Schwarz-Bart write in a field dominated by men, and how does she assert her power and legitimacy as a Caribbean woman who speaks in Creole and writes in French? To help answer this question, chapter two will focus on the “Creole universe” created in the novel and the importance of oral history and storytelling. Some of the proverbs in the story will be examined to show how the characters express Creole philosophy. “Creoleness” is central to understanding the novel and the author. In chapter three, translation studies will be applied to the English translation of the text. Can audiences foreign to Caribbean culture and language understand Schwarz-Bart’s Caribbean feminist perspective and the Creole universe through translation? While drawing some conclusions on translation, audience reception and the inclusion of the novel into a literary canon will be briefly discussed as well.
Chapter One:

Affirming the Voices of Caribbean Women—Simone Schwarz-Bart and Caribbean Feminist Discourse

Colonized for more than five centuries and forced to adopt western culture, thought, and language, the people of the Caribbean have faced the challenge of affirming their own unique voice and culture that is independent from the Eurocentric ideology that dominated the islands for hundreds of years. Caribbean writers in particular have addressed these issues in their writing since literature is a vessel for culture. In their works, these authors have continually asked the question: how does one write in the colonizer’s language yet assert one’s own vision of the world?

The study of Caribbean literature is a relatively recent occurrence owing to the growing awareness of the rich history, culture, diversity, and political experience of the Caribbean people. To study Caribbean literature is to recognize that there exists a relationship with language, culture, and the world. This relationship can be defined as Caribbean Discourse, a term coined by the Martinican author, Edouard Glissant, in his 1981 essay *Le Discours Antillais*: “This discourse as defined by Glissant [as *Antillanité*] is produced within a space that has been shaped by slavery, colonialism, Creolization, and insularity” (Shelton 346). *Antillanité* aims to root Caribbean identity solidly within “the Other America”¹ and the world. There is a distinct Caribbean history and culture that shares similarities with the histories and cultures of Latin American and the plantation society of the American south. *Antillanité* endeavors to reclaim and define a Caribbean history and culture that is independent of the European history and culture brought to the islands during colonialism. *Antillanité* also challenges the dominant social and political forces that surround the islands and threaten them with assimilation and extinction. As
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Glissant states in *Le Discours*, “the idea of Caribbean unity is cultural repossessions. It reinstates us in the true essence of our beings; it cannot be assumed for us by others” (Glissant 18). While authors like Glissant have passionately explored the need for the West Indian to reclaim his Caribbean identity and history, many Caribbean women writers believe that women have been left out of this reclamation.

In *La Parole des Femmes*, an essay on Francophone women’s writing, Guadeloupean author, Maryse Condé, comments “that writers of history have denied the West Indian woman her rightful ‘historical image’” (qtd. in Wilson 179). While most scholars and men authors have accepted that there is discourse in the Caribbean, the distinct discourse of women in the region has been overlooked. Until the mid-twentieth century when Caribbean women’s writing flourished, Caribbean women authors were silenced. This silence stemmed from the historical absence of texts by women that showcased their position on major issues such as slavery, colonialism, decolonization, women’s rights and other social and cultural issues. Also, because of the illiteracy in the region, many women could not express their positions in the language of the colonizer, the “official written language.” When women were able to write, it could be difficult for them to be published on account of the lack of literary institutions that privileged women. As Marie-Denise Shelton mentions in an overview of women writers in the French Caribbean, many times when she was published, the writer would have to “submit to the requirements and priorities—often fanciful—of foreign literary establishments” (346). Works could be inaccurately edited or translated since sometimes these foreign literary houses were unfamiliar with Caribbean culture and Caribbean women’s experiences.
Women writers in the French Caribbean were barely heard of until the 1970s when authors like Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart emerged and provided the woman’s perspective of the Caribbean. They were women who wrote about women. Until then, male authors in Martinique and Guadeloupe represented women through characters, most with secondary roles. According to Shelton, “the development of literature by women had been thwarted or at least retarded by the prevailing social order in Haiti, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, where literature had been traditionally viewed as a male prerogative” (346). The number of women writers was therefore small in comparison to that of their male counterparts. If defining a Caribbean discourse was necessary to establish Caribbean writers and thinkers in the world, it was imperative for women authors to identify their place in that discourse. To reemphasize Glissant’s words, a feminine identity “could not be assumed by others” (men). Men could not faithfully write the experiences of Caribbean women; therefore, the aim of Caribbean feminist discourse is to present the world (the Caribbean) from the women’s perspective.

A feminist standpoint—a woman’s consciousness—is vital since it provides the other side of the story. The feminist point of view of Caribbean literature focuses on women’s culture and women’s place in the world. It complicates one’s notion of the Caribbean and expands and redefines the meaning of a Caribbean woman’s identity. The Caribbean woman’s text is essential as Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido state in *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature*, because it “becomes a locus for the rewriting of the woman’s story into history” (6). One can particularly see this reclamation in Simone Schwarz-Bart’s *Pluie et Vent sur Télumée Miracle*. 
One of the ever-present themes in Caribbean literature by women is the problems and consequences of exclusion and dispossession. Shelton establishes in her essay that these narratives generally “in the first person by a female character present themselves as frustrated enunciations which affirm and deny, create, and dissolve the female sense of self” (348). These novels, written like a type of autobiography, show the endless struggle of a female protagonist whose self-identity becomes so shattered that she withdraws from the world and enters into madness. This phenomenon, known in the Caribbean literary world as *la folie Antillaise* is apparent in such works as *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *The Drifting of Spirits* by Gisèle Pineau. According to the *Bloomsbury Guide to Women’s Literature*, *la folie Antillaise* is a recurrent motif in the literature of the French Caribbean. This folly, or madness, can be viewed as a defense mechanism, and is a reaction to a crisis caused by the difficulty of entering into or staying within a set of rules established by a different culture. The language in which one speaks, thinks, and writes has been established by the colonial power, and “some authors see it as a kind of ‘illness’ to which West Indian societies are prone as a result of the colonial encounter” (Buck 551). Although not the definitive theme of Caribbean women’s writing, *la folie* (female neurosis) is important because it criticizes the social structures that cause a Caribbean woman to lose her sense of self. It is a “call, ‘implicit or explicit,’ for the transformation of the structures of society and the system of values that destroy freedom” (Shelton 352). For many authors like Schwarz-Bart, writing becomes a commitment to telling the true history and social reality of her people. Through the telling of her history, a woman can reclaim her voice and heal the deep wounds in her psyche.
Some works by Caribbean women challenge the idea of alienation and madness. Instead of showing their female heroines as vulnerable, they offer images of women who find a voice in order to take back power over their lives and destinies. These works open up new pathways for women and the Caribbean as a whole. Such is the endeavor of Simone-Schwarz-Bart’s *Pluie et Vent sur Télumée Miracle* in which the author affirms life over death and destruction, and the acquiring of a unique identity through female identification. With her novel, Schwarz-Bart shows that the idea of an entire Caribbean self and Caribbean history is possible.

*Pluie et Vent sur Télumée Miracle* is a description of life in Guadeloupe during the beginning of the twentieth century. The epic, multi-generational novel focuses primarily on the life of Télumée Lougandor, a woman who was raised by her grandmother, Toussine, or *Reine Sans Nom* (Queen Without a Name). The novel begins with Télumée as an old woman who stands in her garden and reflects back on the experiences that shaped her life. The novel is divided into two sections: “la présentation des miens” (My people) and “l’histoire de ma vie” (My story). The first section narrates the matriarchal lineage that Télumée is a part of and shares in. Télumée comes from a line of strong women with *deux cœurs*, two hearts. The second heart is gained when the women have suffered and persevered through adversity. The influence of the Lougandor women becomes an important aspect of Télumée’s life and in the novel because it is through the lives and experiences of the Lougandors that Télumée learns to direct her own life and find her “second heart.” Most importantly, it allows her to tell her own story, and as Ronnie Scharfman asserts in the article “Mirroring and Mothering,” “this retroflection [on the lives of Télumée’s ancestors] is the precondition for reflection and
introspection” (89). The key to Télumée’s ability to acquire her own voice and become the subject of her narrative comes from the fact that she is able to position herself into a female history.

The important values that Télumée acquires (strength, resistance, and the pride in being a Caribbean woman) become important themes in the novel. One of the most significant themes is the wisdom that she develops from Reine Sans Nom’s proverbs and stories. Reine Sans Nom’s stories express the philosophy of resistance that is important to the Lougandors. What sets the Lougandors apart from the other women of Guadeloupe is their refusal to view their suffering as a misfortune, but rather as a part of life. Télumée learns this philosophy through her many experiences, both good and bad. She is also greatly inspired by her grandmother’s proverbs, one, in particular, which refers to Télumée’s position as a woman: “Si lourds que soient tes seins, tu seras toujours assez forte pour les supporter” [No matter how heavy your breasts are, you’ll always be strong enough to support them] (Schwarz-Bart 68). In Télumée’s world, the woman is a figure of strength that can resist and overcome even the worse situations that life may bring.

The philosophy of resistance is also illustrated in the allegory of Wvabor Longlegs and his horse, *Mes Deux Yeux* (My Two Eyes), a story told to Télumée on her grandmother’s knee. As Scharfman states, “the story of Wvabor Longlegs is a kind of Genesis, the tale of the fictional origins of man and of madness” (95). It serves as an educational tool for Télumée. Wvabor lost direction in his life because he allowed his horse to lead him astray. With this allegory, Reine Sans Nom teaches Télumée the important lesson that one needs to control and lead her own life:
si grand que soit le mal, l’homme doit se faire encore plus grand, dût-il s’ajuster des échasses... derrière une peine il y a une autre peine, la misère est une vague sans fin, mais le cheval ne doit pas te conduire, c’est toi qui dois conduire le cheval (Schwarz-Bart 82).

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however tall trouble is, man must make himself even taller, even if it means adjusting one’s stilts... behind one pain there is another, misery is a wave without end, but the horse must not guide you, it is you that must guide the horse.

Wvabor Longlegs’ story is a myth about internal enslavement and the struggle for control. In a larger sense, it can mean a woman’s struggle to articulate her own history in her own words: “whether the horse be a figure for sensual love, for madness, for narrative, the structure of the dynamic is still the same. In all instances, the question is one of struggling against the forces of domination, without getting carried away or broken” (Scharfman 96). Télumée truly hears these words and adopts this philosophy. They accompany her through all the disasters in her life: the racist insults of the Desaragne family, the rejection by her true love, Elie, and the loss of loved ones like Reine Sans Nom, Man Cia, Angebert, and Sonore. Instead of succumbing to la folie Antillaise, she remains steadfast: “me félicitant d’être sur terre une petite negresse irreductible” [happy to be an irreducible little black woman on the earth] (Schwarz-Bart 94).

Télumée doesn’t fall victim to the self-loathing described in Franz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks that affects her fellow countrymen—a consequence of many who are
in oppressive systems in the Caribbean. Instead, she is able to demonstrate the mastery of herself needed to overcome the forces that lead to failure. Télumée, as an old woman, has withstood the rains and the winds (les pluies et les vents) of her life. She has truly gained her second heart as her ancestors have. She has no regrets and wishes to relive her life in the exact way she has. As Wilson affirms, “Télumée’s life is rooted in positive values and a belief in herself acquired on her grandmother’s knee. It is a security conferred by a belief in an alternative vision of reality to which many Antillais do not subscribe to or have access” (54). Pluie et Vent stresses the importance of individual courage and female solidarity found in the family. By the novel’s end, Télumée has lost all that she loved, yet remains intact: “without belongings, she knows exactly where she belongs” (Scharfman 99). The one thing she has left, her garden, becomes a place where she can cultivate happiness and have control despite the ravaging elements. The novel, therefore, has a satisfying conclusion since it encourages the resilience of women. As Scharfman states, “it is a gratifying conclusion, both in aesthetic terms and in terms of the problematic of identity, that in the end of her voyage Télumée should be renamed by the community as her grandmother was before her...she is dubbed Télumée Miracle” (99). What is the miracle? It is that of the strength and success of women. Télumée’s success becomes a symbol of the value of female bonding in formulating identity and deconstructing oppression.

Throughout the novel, Schwarz-Bart actively participates in and places women in a distinct Caribbean discourse. She definitely values self-esteem and self-worth in women, and she articulates these qualities to the reader through writing. Writing, therefore, becomes the vessel to communicate the experiences of the Caribbean woman.
She is very much concerned with informing the world of these experiences; ones that are least often found in official historical records. She helps create a new definition of the Afro-Caribbean reality, and furthermore, her works formulate a redefinition of the Caribbean woman’s reality.

In a 1979 interview conducted by Roger and Héliane Toumson in *Textes Etudes et Documents*, Schwarz-Bart says of her novel *Pluie et Vent*: “C’est une espèce de mémoire que j’ai voulu restituer” [it is a space of memory that I wished to restore] (15). It is important to note that the French verb *restituer* ("to restore") can mean to give back that which has been stolen. What an interesting choice of words given the history of silenced voices in the Caribbean, particularly those of women. According to Wilson, she sees her text as neither a novel nor a story, but as a piece of memory, a piece of history (185). Although most believe *Pluie et Vent* is a fictional autobiography, the author says that the character, Télumée, is based on a real woman from her hometown Goyave. According to the author, *Pluie et Vent* is not a literary account of the life of Stephanie Priccin (known as Fanotte), but a homage to her, “une collecte de moments privilégiés” [a collection of privileged moments] (qtd. in Mckinney 58). The novel is a celebration of women who are rarely heard of in Caribbean history, and is, therefore, a site for reclamation. As said by Schwarz-Bart, Fanotte’s worst fear was that the meaning of her life experiences would be lost, for young Antilleans no longer listened to or relayed the stories of the older generation (Mckinney 58). By transcribing Fanotte’s voice through Télumée into fiction, as a printed text, the author ensures that such a memory is preserved. The novel, then, becomes a revisioning of history told from the perspective of a woman who would most likely not have a venue to be heard under any other circumstances: “as Télumée
remembers, Schwarz-Bart strives to correct the master’s version, the silences and
distortions of her story/history, personal and public (Wilson 186).

Later in this interview, Schwarz-Bart remarked that her editor wanted her to omit
the first section of her novel, but for her without it “there was no novel” because “c’est
notre memoire” [it is our memory] (qtd. in Wilson 186). Télumée’s history is part of the
story of Caribbean people, of Caribbean women, who although marginal, have the power
to rebuild their lives and relationships that will enable them to survive intact. It is a
collective memory, histoire, story, of a particular people. It is therefore important what
language is used when translating a novel like this since the message is tied to such a
sensitive and important issue. The translator must make sure that she does not overpower
the text with her own agenda, and tell the story for Télumée. The voice must rest with the
storyteller, with the Caribbean woman.
Chapter Two:

“Tout un Univers Créole” — Creole Culture and Storytelling in *Pluie et Vent*

To further understand Simone Schwarz-Bart’s novel and the importance of an accurate translation, one must first comprehend the significant role Creole has played in the formation of culture and language in the Caribbean. Moreover, one must be aware of how Creole culture has influenced Schwarz-Bart and the writing of her book. In the interview with Toumson, Schwarz-Bart herself speaks of her need to transcribe to the reader her idea of the French-Creole reality. She wants to communicate “*tou un univers Créole,*” the Creole universe the reader encounters in *Pluie et Vent Sur Télumée Miracle* (Wilson 186). In Télumée’s Creole world, the island and all its characteristics reign supreme, and the female narrator challenges the dominant tradition of male and European storytelling techniques.

The repercussions of colonization were felt by inhabitants of the Caribbean long after slavery was abolished. Those who live in a postcolonial world sometimes continue to be colonized psychologically, especially in the French-Caribbean where colonialism was thought to be “*une mission civilisatrice*”—an implementation of French culture, language, and religion—and where the islands are considered “overseas departments” of France to this day. It is difficult to find cultural value in the island one inhabits after being indoctrinated with Eurocentric ideas and cultural practices for so long. Several twentieth century French-Caribbean authors became aware of this pessimistic position as colonized peoples and sought to define their cultural identity in terms of their historical and racial connections with Africa and the Caribbean, rather than their political ties with
France. Three literary movements were conceived out of this examination: Negritude, Antillanité (mentioned in chapter one), and Créolité.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, Créolité, or “Creoleness,” was started by Martinican authors Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphael Confiant, and the linguist Jean Bernabé in the 1980s. This neologism which concerns itself with culture and the revisioning of history can be considered an extension of Glissant’s Antillanité which strives for self-acceptance (une acceptation de soi) in a postcolonial world. It focuses particularly on the redefinition of Caribbean culture through the language and folk traditions that characterize the diverse population of the islands. As Richard and Sally Price state in their article “Shadowboxing the Mangrove,” “the Créolistes see themselves as stressing the historical interpenetration of peoples and cultures that created a truly new, syncretic Creole culture” (129). Créolité is based on hybridity, and the constant metaphor used to describe this phenomenon is métissage (the French word for “racial mixture”). It is a “callaloo,” a cultural interaction and synthesis which takes all of the contradictions and conflicts to create a distinctive “new” society and body of writing.8

In Éloge de la Créolité (In Praise of Creoleness), the manifesto on Creole culture and literature, Chamoiseau and his colleagues discuss the author’s position in a postcolonial society:

It is a terrible condition to perceive one’s interior architecture, one’s world, the instants of one’s days, one’s own values, with the eyes of the other…This [cultural, political, and economic dependence] determined a writing for the Other, a borrowed writing, steeped in French
values...which did nothing else but maintain in minds the domination of
an elsewhere (886).

According to the authors of the Éloge, before the acceptance of their “Creoleness,”
French-Caribbean writings were “Frenchified,” written in the French tradition, and had
no distinct connection to the Caribbean. Créolité seeks to reestablish the author’s
connection with the land and with the Caribbean milieu through language. For the authors
of the Éloge, “Creoleness is an annihilation of false universality, of monolingualism, and
of purity” (892). If the French language and culture are used as a means of control, the
people of the Caribbean manipulate the language for their own means to subvert power.

As the authors of the Éloge further mention:

We made the French language ours. We extended the meaning of some of
its words, deviated others. And we preserved many of its words which
were no longer used. In short, we inhabited it. It was alive in us. In it we
built our own language, this language which was chased by cultural kapos
and viewed as a profanation of the idolized French Language (900).

The Creolistes created a “neo-French” to describe their distinct experiences in the
Caribbean. Language is what links the West Indian to the land, to her past, and to her
history.

Since Creole is a hybrid of African, French, and island cultures, it is no surprise
that some facets of each of these cultures would be adopted. One feature in particular,
African folklore and the art of oral storytelling brought to the islands by slaves, is central
to Créolité. As the Éloge authors explain, “Creoleness, has still today, its privileged
mode: orality. Provider of tales, proverbs, ‘titim,’ nursery rhymes, songs, etc., orality is
our intelligence; it is our reading of this world, the experimentation, still blind, of our complexity” (895). The Creolistes seek to reclaim the past creative literary modes of their ancestors and enrich the writings of the present. Reclaiming the oral tradition is not a step backwards, but one towards the future to restore true cultural identity and history. By incorporating Creole culture into the new writing, the Creolistes believe they will “create a literature [their own literature] which will obey all the demand of modern writing while taking roots in the traditional configurations of [their] orality” (Chamoiseau 896). They will resolve the literary traditions of the colonizer and the colonized and create a new form of literature that will reflect this reconciliation.

While the Créolistes find a creative and powerful way to find a compromise between the languages and cultures of the colonized and colonizer, there is one major hole in their argument: women are not included or legitimatized in the movement. When it comes to gender and sexuality, Créolité, like the literary movements that preceded it, seem to privilege the male. It is interesting to note that Schwarz-Bart’s Pluie et Vent was written in 1972, long before the establishment of the Créolité movement; however, she is not included in the canon of Creole authors (who are all male). The Creolistes view cultural and literary production as primarily a male activity and limit women in their ability to create both creative and political prose. Some of the literary works by male authors, for instance, Chamoiseau’s Texaco, include women characters; however, they place these characters on the sidelines. They rarely have the roles of narrator or heroine.

Even though the Créolistes do acknowledge the works by fellow women authors like Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart, they sometimes reduce these authors to their gender. When the Creolistes write, for instance, in their Lettres Creoles of Schwarz-
Bart, they describe her and limit her to her physical appearance. Chamoiseau and Confiant state in their *Lettres Creoles*:

A meeting with the Guadeloupean novelist Simone Schwarz-Bart is always a pleasure. Beautiful in her inalterable manner, the hair flowing free in the wake of her former braids, the blasé look of her eyelids, the wide smile, a simultaneous seductiveness and simplicity...to reread and reread once more her *Télumée Miracle* is to be enriched each time (qtd. in Price 124-125).

While the authors praise Schwarz-Bart for her work, they commend her more for being an attractive woman. Her prose did not earn her full recognition by her male counterparts mostly, it seems, because of her sex. Her inclusion and acknowledgment in their *Lettres Creoles* seems, as the critic A. James Arnold claims, “a tactical necessity on their part” in order to maintain their credibility among those who would criticize them for the exclusion of women authors (qtd. in Price 125).

Also, it seems the Creolistes see these literary works by their female counterparts as small works of fiction with interesting narratives but no real political agenda. Schwarz-Bart herself has been charged with “a lack of militancy [in her novel] and accused of sharing the passivity of her women characters who accept and even glorify ill-treatment” (Jones xv). Some actual reviews of *Pluie et Vent* include:

Madame Schwarz-Bart makes pity for the poor seem impossibly smug.

This is poverty gilded over by literature and veiled in exoticism. (qtd. in Schwarz-Bart 174).
For the Creolistes, literature is a means of subverting the oppressive and dominant power through language. Literary works are vessels to bring about social change. Glissant himself in *Le Discours Antillais* proposes that one of the purposes of the author is to make readers aware of oppression and inspire action. Some believe Schwarz-Bart, as a woman, loses sight of this goal and is apolitical, a claim that I will further disprove.

French-Caribbean women writers like Schwarz-Bart are ever concerned with social change. Her contemporary, Maryse Condé even writes in *Le Roman Antillais* that the Caribbean writer must be a modern-day maroon—one of the few heroes Afro-Caribbean people have ever had:

> Le rôle de l’écrivain sera donc celui-là. Rappeler les révoltes, les soulèvements, les empoisonnements massifs des maîtres, en un mot la résistance et le marronage... En fait, le marronage, c’est-à-dire le refus de la domination de l’Occident, symbolise une des constantes de l’attitude antillaise (qtd. in Scarboro 14).

The role of the writer will thus be this: to remind us of the revolts, the uprisings, the massive poisonings of masters, in one word resistance and marooning. In fact, marooning, that is, the refusal of western domination, symbolizes one of the constants of the West Indian attitude.

In the Toumson interview, as a challenge to those critics who view her as politically disengaged, Schwarz-Bart says that her writing has wide political and social connotations: “Pour moi c’est un acte politique; mais pas avec un sceau, une marque politique” [for me it is a political act but not with a seal or badge on it] (qtd. in Wilson
What can be more challenging to the social and literary norms created by men than writing about a woman who is both the center of the novel and the storyteller? This is a challenge to the Créolistes' view that storytellers are always men, and as Condé mentions in her essay "Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Novel," women writers bring about disorder to the conventions of literature because they modify them (130).

As stated before, Creole literature is founded upon the oral tradition. The Créolistes consider the storyteller (le conteur) as the center and founder of Creole culture since he relays the stories and histories of his people orally from generation to generation. The Créolistes regard the storyteller as always being male which thus excludes women from the process of preserving and transmitting national identity and culture. The author Odile Ferly in her article, "Writing Cultural and Gender Difference," demonstrates that in Lettres Créoles, Chamoiseau and his colleagues write:

C'est lui [le conteur] le seul producteur de littérature audible, une littérature articulée dans l'ethno-texte de la parole et qui, dans la parole, se forge un langage soumis aux ambivalences de la créolisation, à l'opacité de Détour pour survivre et à l'inédit insoupçonné de la culture créole (qtd. in Ferly 8)

He [the storyteller] is the sole producer of audible literature, a literature rooted in the ethno-text of the oral word and which, within the world of orality, forges a language subject to the ambivalences of creolization, the opacity of the roundabout route taken in order to survive, and to the unsuspected novelty of Creole culture (Trans. Ferly).
One important fact that the Créolistes seem to forget is that throughout the Caribbean, women have always played important roles as keepers of history and culture. Storytelling is often a female activity since a female relative (a mother, grandmother, or aunt) recounts the stories of the family and the history of the land to the child. In an interview, the Martinican woman author, Ina Césaire, affirms that both men and women tell stories but that storytelling in public occasions is kept for men and private occasions for women: “you know, during funeral wakes, women serve the food; they have to cater for forty to fifty people all night long. In addition, when the father comes back in the evening from the cane fields, he eats and goes to bed; he is too tired to tell stories” (qtd. in Ferly 1). For many French-Caribbean women writers like Gisèle Pineau, Sylvaine Telchild, and Simone Schwarz-Bart, it is this female relative that trains the author or the fictional female characters in the art of storytelling since she is the caretaker.

Despite the Créolistes’ omission, one could say that Schwarz-Bart in Pluie et Vent was one of the first woman authors to write a novel based on the “waconteuse,” the woman storyteller. Pluie et Vent centers on storytelling as a means of communicating family history through the generations. Reine Sans Nom and then Télumée learn to harness their words and reclaim the history of their community. Reine Sans Nom, the first storyteller in the novel, remembers her history though songs: “She sang ‘Yaya,’ ‘Ti-Rose Congo,’ ‘Agoulou,’ ‘Trouble Brought on Yourself,’ and many other splendid things that no longer charm the ears of the living. She knew old slave songs too” (Schwarz-Bart 31).

About the style in which Schwarz-Bart chose to write, the author even states in the Toumson interview: “c’est la technique orale, celle du conte, du griot…il fallait que nous nous retrouvions” [I chose to use the form of oral folktale, of the woman storyteller, the
“waconteuse,” the African griot, because it was necessary for the Caribbean people to rediscover themselves] (qtd. in Wilson 186). The woman storyteller learns to gain mastery over self and language by using the strength of her ancestors. For Télumée especially, storytelling provides a world “où les arbres crient, les poissons volent, les oiseaux captivent le chasseur et le nègre est enfant de Dieu” [where trees cry out, fish fly, birds capture the hunter, and the black person is a child of God] (Schwarz-Bart 79). It is through these proverbs and stories that Télumée and her fellow islanders come to understand and comprehend the world around them. The proverbs root them firmly in their land and the magical realm that is very much a part of their lives. The Creole culture is most important for an individual’s development, and as the authors of the Éloge interestingly point out in one of their footnotes, the word “Creole” derives from the Spanish word “crillo,” which comes from the Latin verb “criare” and means “to raise” or “to educate” (906). This is an interesting fact given the relationship between orality and Creole education.

*Pluie et Vent* can be read as what Ann Scarboro calls *un roman d’initiation*, an education novel in which the main character Télumée is initiated into the world through her grandmother’s proverbs and stories. True education does not come from school, the colonial educational system, where the villagers learn to respect and revere the far-removed culture of France. Instead, they learn about their own land, their own history, and their own way of being from an oral education. For example, when Télumée asks her grandmother’s friend, Man Cia, what is a slave and what is a master, the sorceress describes them using the myth of the White of Whites, the first white man “who would take a Negro in his arms and squeeze him until his spleen burst” (Schwarz-Bart 38). The
descendants of this man are still living in the large white houses scattered on Guadeloupe. From this story, Télumée realizes that “slavery was not some foreign country, some distant region from which a very few old people came, like the two or three who still survived in Fond-Zombi” (Schwarz-Bart 39). Slavery occurred right at home and is still ever-present in the landscape.

Thanks to Reine Sans Nom and Man Cia, Télumée is taught that the means of overcoming a life of despair is through language: “avec une parole, on empêche un homme de se briser” [with a word, one prevents a man from annihilating himself] (Schwarz-Bart 76). Words are powerful and are sources of imagery to help her and her people describe and philosophize about life. In fact, each character in Pluie et Vent uses some sort of Creole proverb to come to terms with the world around them. For example, for Angebert, Télumée’s father, life is not “une jungle où l’on se fraie une voie par tout les moyens...pillez, brisez, dévalisez, je ne suis pas du tournoi” [a jungle where one makes his way out by any means available...loot, break, steal, I am not part of that tournament] (Schwarz-Bart 34-35). Commenting on her small stature and the hard labor she does as a laundress, Télumée’s mother, Victoire, declares, “petite hachette coup gros bois et s’il plait à Dieu, nous irons encore comme ça” [a small ax cuts a large tree and if it pleases God, we will continue to manage] (Schwarz-Bart 31). The proverbs define the world in few words. They function as a means of survival and allow West Indians to connect intimately with their land and with the African heritage that is their foundation.

Télumée’s lessons are communicated in the language and images of folk wisdom, but why, then, does Schwarz-Bart write her novel in French, the language of the colonizer? To explain this precarious situation, Nathalie Buchet Rogers in her article
“Oralité et Écriture dans *Pluie et Vent sur Télumée Miracle*” sums it up best: the proverbs are not included in the text for local color, but to illustrate the tension between a culture that is strongly founded on oral tradition and the presence of written culture from the western world (435). Some have called Schwarz-Bart’s slide between French and Creole as a “Creole voice in standard French” (Wilson 187). Through the use of Creole proverbs, Schwarz-Bart finds a creative medium to illustrate the hybrid culture of Guadeloupe and invites the reader to immerse herself in the world of her characters. The author, as a true Creoliste, unites both the oral and written traditions, and is, in many ways, the translator of her culture. Most likely, Télumée and her people speak and tell their tales in Creole, but Schwarz-Bart perhaps translates them into French in order to reach a larger audience and give them a glimpse into daily Creole peasant life. One example is Man Cia’s French version of a Creole proverb: “Soit un vrai tambour à deux faces” [be a drum with two sides]. As McKinney points out, this proverb comes from the Creole “tanbou a dé bonda” (64). Another, “however heavy a woman’s breasts, her chest is always strong enough to carry them” is originally known in Creole as “tetees pas janmain trop loud pou lestomaque” (Jones xiv). If one of the goals of Caribbean Creole feminist discourse is to make the woman’s voice heard, Schwarz-Bart uses the colonizer’s language to communicate the Creole universe to as many people as possible: “Schwarz-Bart has attempted to render the consciousness of a Creole speaker not by creolized dialogues or footnotes, but by sustaining the strangeness of an unfamiliar world-view” (Jones xiii). Through the act of writing the novel, Schwarz-Bart ensures that the oral tradition that is so valued by her and people will be “heard” by the reader. She also makes sure that readers will comprehend Télumée’s world, one of her goals for writing the novel.
Restating the words of the Creolistes, Schwarz-Bart makes the French language hers. She allows the Creole universe to inhabit the standard, formal language of writing.

At the heart of *Créolité* is the quest for respect and acceptance from the world. Creolistes like Schwarz-Bart seek to communicate and legitimize the Creole culture that defines who they are to the world at large. It is important, then, to keep these goals in mind to understand why the translation of a text like *Pluie et Vent* is essential. Translation requires the faithful communication of culture as well as language. If the novel is based and centered on the oral tradition and the intimate relationship between the Creole and French languages, the translator must do all in her power to render the translation as accurately as possible. For a reader who is not familiar with the Creole universe or the language that Schwarz-Bart writes in, she must trust the translator since the translated text is the one opportunity to become acquainted with the author’s ideas. Does the English version of Schwarz-Bart’s novel convey the Creole Universe? Does the English language impose itself on the French/Creole relationship? Chapter three will seek to answer these important questions.
Chapter Three:

Can We Trust the Translator? Translating Pluie et Vent Sur Télumée Miracle

After having established Schwarz-Bart’s rightful place in French-Caribbean literature and the value of her work for understanding the postcolonial Caribbean feminist consciousness, one must now examine the translation of her novel into English and question the impact this translation has on foreign audience reception. One must focus on its English translation and not any other since currently English is perhaps the most dominant and wide-spread language in the world. If Schwarz-Bart’s goals as a woman and as a Creoliste are to illustrate the previously untold experiences of Caribbean women and unite the oral and written cultures that define French-Caribbean reality, then the translator of her novel must be ever mindful of these goals to make sure its meaning is not jeopardized or misconstrued as has been the case for other works like hers. In fact, Anne Donadey and H. Adlai Murdoch discuss the misreading of postcolonial works in their book Postcolonial Theory and Francophone Literary Studies. They claim that there has been an increase in the study of postcolonial literature and theory, but only a few non-English scholars have been analyzed. When they have been approached, their works have been read in English translation and have in many instances been taken out of context (2). In this same book, E. Anthony Hurley demonstrates this misinterpretation with the English translation of Franz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks. Fanon’s main chapter, “L’Expérience Vécue du Noir” [The Black Person’s Lived Experience], has been instead translated as “The Fact of Blackness,” and by “replacing experience with fact and black person with blackness [it] moves the reader away from the subjective experience of black individuals. It connotes a unitary conception of what it means to be black and
makes Fanon appear more rigidly essentialist than he in fact is" (2). From this example, one can see that translations can distort meaning. Readers of translated works must be aware of possible distortion and seek out secondary sources or alternative translations that will clarify questions and misconceptions. What happens, though, when only one translation is available, as is the case for Schwarz-Bart’s novel? Can and should the reader take the translator’s word for its faithfulness to the original?

Translation once consisted of translating verbatim the original text. In the last twenty years or so, translation studies have taken a cultural turn. Translators must now translate culturally specific concepts as well since no translation or text exists in a vacuum. Therefore, we must consider contributing factors, such as culture, that have shaped the literary text and its rewriting. Translations are made to respond to the demands and interests of individuals in a given culture, especially when two or more cultures exist in one region (Bassnett and Lefevere 7). Translating word for word could not guarantee that the translation would have an effect on readers in the target culture as it did on the source culture, thus adaptation (functional equivalence) of concepts and ideas in the literary text had to be made.

According to Lefevere and Bassnett, a culture assigns different functions to the translation of different texts: “the way translations are supposed to function depends both on the audience they are intended for, and on the status of the source text they are supposed to represent in their own culture (8). The rise of French-Caribbean texts in translated form perhaps grew out of the need for English-speaking audiences to acquaint themselves with the experiences of the postcolonial world, quite possibly a result of
Multiculturalism. Translation is, therefore, vital for the understanding and interaction between cultures.

According to Lefevere, translation is perhaps the most influential and recognizable form of rewriting since it is able to circulate the image and works of an author in another culture beyond the borders of her own. It leads to renown and transmission among larger audiences and is a force of evolution in the literary world (9). Translations can introduce new concepts, new genres, and new voices and provide new ways for literary innovation. Also, together with “historiography, anthologizing and criticism, it prepares works for inclusion in the canon of world literature” (Lefevere 27).

Paradoxically, rewritings, whatever their form, can also repress innovation since they can alter meaning and intention. Inevitably, translation has this negative distinction because it is, as a rewriting, “manipulation undertaken in the service of power” (Bassnett and Lefevere vix). This power comes from the publishing company who owns the rights to the book and hires translators to rewrite the work into a particular language that will reach a target audience:

The publisher who allows the translator to manipulate the original [text] does, at the same time, have the power to introduce [the author] to a new audience, albeit, not in optimal conditions. And the conditions are not optimal because the publisher has to bow to another kind of power: that wielded by his/her banker(s): s/he won’t be able to publish anything anymore in the not too distant future if what s/he publishes now doesn’t sell” (Lefevere 6).
Larger and more receptive audiences generate more profits for the publishing company. It is not so much the accuracy of a translated text that matters but the amount of revenue it can produce. For this reason, literary works are sometimes not translated as faithfully as they should be. Either the translator will make painstaking efforts to accurately transcribe the source text and author’s ideas, or, as happens so frequently, will regard the target audience’s profits more important, thus manipulating the text in the way she sees fit (Lefevere 11). The translator can thus “colonize” the text with her own agenda. For postcolonial works, such as Schwarz-Bart’s, it is ever important that voices such as hers are not colonized. After struggling for so long to find a voice, postcolonial authors should not be brought to silence again because of an inaccurate translation or another dominating voice.

One complication that arises with translated texts is the anonymity of the translator. These individuals are trusted with the significant task of transcribing words and cultures from one language to another and yet they remain in the shadows. Not many readers know who they are or where they come from. As the writer Murray Bail states, “below and parallel to the authors they translate, the names of some translators become permanent fixtures, like pilot fish alongside whales. Their names are smaller, faceless” (6). Translators are trusted with the task of being “cultural intermediaries” but most of the time no one knows their intentions when translating. Barbara Bray, for instance, the translator of *Pluie et Vent*, has her name alongside Schwarz-Bart’s on the cover of the book, but no lay reader truly knows who she is since there is no blurb on her on any English editions of *The Bridge of Beyond*.¹³
Finding information on Bray proved to be difficult; in fact, the most information found on her came from the official website of MacNaughton Lord, the agency that represents Bray, which claims that she is well-known in the literary community. According to the agency, Bray, a former script drama editor at the BBC, is Britain’s leading freelance literary translator, having won several awards in translation. While her specialization is in broadcasting and theatre, Bray has translated many French literary works into English including some by Marguerite Duras and Marcel Proust. It is important to note that most of the texts she has translated are all by white, European authors. Given this fact on her expertise, how then, could someone like Bray be chosen to translate Schwarz-Bart’s novel? Could a European woman, who is essentially from the colonizer’s culture truly grasp and understand Schwarz-Bart’s position as a French-Caribbean Creole woman and provide an accurate translation? Is there a risk of having the postcolonial, Caribbean consciousness overshadowed by the European ideology of the translator?

In an interview, Maryse Conde mentions that Bray was selected to translate her novel *Ségou*, a story of the black experience in Africa. About Bray she asserts:

While [Bray] may have been a very effective translator for someone like Marguerite Duras, she did not have sufficient knowledge of West Africa, and there were evident lapses—choices of words and phrases that were wrong or went against the grain of the text. When knowledge of content is insufficient, translators must be counted as enemies (qtd. in Apter 92).

It is apparent from this quote that Conde is not pleased with the translation of her book and does not view Bray, or any translator, too highly. For her, cross-cultural translations
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cannot be rendered with complete accuracy or faithfulness to the original text. She has even been quoted as saying that translations are different works altogether, distant from the original version. Because of the difference, she will not read her works in translation and yet she understands, paradoxically, that translations are necessary for the wide circulation of her works. Unfortunately, Schwarz-Bart has never commented on Bray’s translations of her novels, but one wonders if she shares the same response towards translation as her fellow author Condé. Because Condé and Schwarz-Bart write in the same time period, about the same postcolonial themes, and use Creole ideas and expressions to convey meaning, it seems safe to suggest that Schwarz-Bart may have some issue with translation as well. One questions if Bray has ever spent time in the Caribbean interacting with its people, and knows the history of the plight of Caribbean women. Does she have any rapport with Schwarz-Bart? The answer to this question does not appear likely.

Richard Philcox, Condé’s husband and official translator,14 sheds light as to how translators are chosen to interpret literary texts. In an interview, Philcox mentions that in France, the editors of publishing companies hold the rights to an author’s work. Editors have the power to negotiate translating rights, and it is the publishing house that usually chooses the translators from a list of distinguished individuals. It is for this reason that Bray was chosen over him to translate Ségou. At the time, he was relatively unknown (Kadish and Massardier-Kennedy 750). From this explanation, one can see that the translation relationship is between the publishing house and the translator, not between the author and translator. One can assume, then, that Schwarz-Bart had little say in who
was chosen to translate her text. How has this distant and no doubt non-existent relationship affected the translation of *Pluie et Vent*, if at all?

In her introduction to *The Bridge of Beyond*, Bridget Jones comments on how Bray’s translation does a sound job in staying faithful to the novel’s main themes. There is no doubt that an English-speaking reader would understand the development of the novel’s plot. One technique in which Bray is believed to be successful is the breaking up of paragraph-long sentences into shorter ones that tend to focus on the book’s message and themes without the “fluff.” As Jones’ introduction states, “Bray favors a plainer and more direct text which checks the tendency to whimsical ramblings... [she] goes for economy without pursuing finer shades of meaning” (xiv). This idea of how Bray has minimized the original text can be seen in the opening lines of the novel. In the original version, Schwarz-Bart writes:

Le pays dépend bien souvent du cœur de l’homme: il est minuscule si le cœur est petit, et immense si le cœur est grand. Je n’ai jamais souffert de l’exiguïté de mon pays, sans pour autant prétendre que j’aie un grand cœur (11).

A country often depends on a person’s heart: it is miniscule if the heart is small and immense if the heart is big. I have never suffered from the insufficiency of my country, although I don’t pretend I have a big heart (trans. mine)\(^{15}\)

Bray translates:
A man’s country may be cramped or vast according to the size of his heart. I’ve never found my country too small, though that isn’t to say my heart is great (2).

In Schwarz-Bart’s version, the author demonstrates that a country’s enormity is determined by the size of a person’s heart—the heart of a man or a woman.¹⁶ With the use of a colon, she introduces, in detail, the particular criteria for determining this size, thus allowing the reader to reflect on these particular details. In Bray’s translation, however, the translator eliminates the independent clause by shortening the sentence, and instead seems to rush through the details by simply writing that a country is “vast” or “cramped”. She condenses a lengthier description to two words making it easier to skim over the sentence and the significance behind it. The translator also changes the subject of the original (a country) to “a man’s country,” which seems to suggest that women’s hearts do not count in determining size. With the omission of the independent clause and the punctuation that precedes it, the reader may fail to notice these important details of the original when reading the translated version. In addition, the reader may overlook that women influence size as well—part of Schwarz-Bart’s message that women are significant in all aspects of life. This difference in the two versions (original and translated) shows how Bray reduces essentially three sentences into two and, therefore, alters the meaning behind them. It is interesting to note that because of this reduction, the paperback version of The Bridge of Beyond is one hundred pages shorter than the original paperback French edition. According to Jones, the plot’s themes are there, but the
sentences are much more concise. As clarified above though, the sentences often do not elaborate on and alter the deeper meanings found in Schwarz-Bart’s descriptions.

While some may welcome the reduction of “whimsical ramblings,” others may view Schwarz-Bart’s “ramblings” as an important cultural aspect that she wishes to impress on the reader. Since *Pluie et Vent* is in many ways partly a transcription of oral stories told through the generations, the ramblings may be considered a literary technique that seeks to achieve the characteristics of oral storytelling. Oftentimes, when stories are told orally, there is no clear distinction where a sentence ends and another begins. Could this be the literary technique Schwarz-Bart is trying to achieve? Perhaps the length of the novel’s passages is necessary to its overall essence and meaning.

Even though one may view Bray’s shortening of the text as a constructive trait, the useful aspects of the translation may stop there. As with the translation of Condé’s *Ségou*, Bray has difficulty with the vocabulary of Caribbean flora and fauna and character nicknames in *The Bridge of Beyond*: “either names are left in the original, justifiable with place names, but less so with fish or plants, or approximations are attempted” (Jones xiv). For example, Bray leaves the word “mombin” in its original: “You smell of cinnamon in spite of the mombins” (Schwarz-Bart 65). For a reader who is not familiar with Caribbean flora and fauna, she would have no idea what a “mombin” is. The translator might have looked up the word and found it to mean “kumquat,” thus clarifying meaning for the reader.

In another example, the tree, *balisier rouge*, is translated into the English as a “red canna tree” when in fact it is actually known as a “heliconia” (Jones xiv). The more accurate equivalent would have sufficed since the type of plant may conjure up a certain
image for the reader. In many Caribbean novels, images of Caribbean flora stand for much more. For instance, in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea—a reinterpretation of Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre—the main character, Antoinette, is likened to a flamboyant tree. The flamboyant tree is often known as the "flame tree" because it looks as if it is on fire, and on many islands, including my birthplace of Puerto Rico, the flame tree is a symbol of the Caribbean. Antoinette's comparison to a flame tree suits her well since it is with fire that she seeks revenge at the end of the novel on those who displaced her from her Caribbean home. Like Rhys, Schwarz-Bart is often very particular as to how she describes her characters in terms of nature since usually the natural element stands for something more. As clarification, Télumée, in all her strength and splendor after marrying her true love Elie, is compared to a heliconia, a plant that is much sturdier than a red canna:

\[\text{Je me suis retrouvée sous le regard d'Élie, l'âme vide et légère, un balisier rouge tout droit (Schwarz-Bart 144; emphasis added)}\]

\[\text{I found myself in Elie's sight, my soul light and free, a tall heliconia (Trans. mine)}\]

\[\text{I was back again in Elie's sight, a tall red canna, my soul light and free (Trans. Bray 94; emphasis added).}^{18}\]

According to the biologist, Donna Johnson, in her article "Life on the Heliconia Plant," a heliconia is a plant (similar in appearance to a bird-of-paradise) with a waxy and significantly thick stem and banana-like leaves. It bears tough, colorful bracts that
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protect its flowers from insects and the elements (Johnson 4). While a red canna is related to a heliconia, it is different in several significant ways, most notably, in its stem, which is much narrower than that of a heliconia. Its flowers are much more exposed and fragile making them less-equipped to handle the elements. A heliconia is much more durable and resistant than a red canna; thus, Téhumée’s comparison to the plant is more suitable since she herself is resilient against the elements (sorrow and misfortune). By mistranslating the name of the plant, the symbolic importance can be lost.

Téhumée is also likened to a *filao* or casurina, a flamboyant (flame tree), and a bamboo: “Sway like a filao, shine like a flame tree, creak and groan like a bamboo, but find your woman’s walk and change to a valiant step, my beauty” (Schwarz-Bart; trans. mine 80). All of these trees, like the heliconia, are known for sturdiness and splendor. They all suit *Pluie et Vent*’s theme of female strength and resilience. They all can withstand the elements (the rains and the winds) and flourish in beauty when the storms have calmed, as Téhumée does by the end of the novel. Given the symbolic importance of nature in the novel, it is therefore very important to get the correct translation for the metaphor to function properly in the text.

Even though translation now consists of adaptation to decipher meaning in literary texts, finding functional and cultural equivalents can be difficult as is the case for *Pluie et Vent*. Sometimes descriptions and concepts which are native to the author’s culture are too complex to translate properly. Palma Zlateva writes about this difficulty in her essay “Text and Pre-Text”:

An author constructs a world based on the inventory of her native language and for an audience which shares her universe of discourse. [...]
When a translator plays the part of the reader, on the other hand, she must apply both her knowledge and her intuition to the author’s universe of discourse, very conscientiously, but also very cautiously. The translator’s knowledge is very often not the result of direct observation, but rather the result of information about the author’s universe of discourse acquired from other texts. In practice the translator often knows more about the literary tradition the author writes in, but less about her living reality” (31).

Only when one translates or edits does one realize how essential the translator’s experience of the author’s world is. Sometimes cultural references do not translate well. An example of this problem can be found in Bray’s translation of part of Reine Sans Nom’s physical description. In *Pluie et Vent*, Schwarz-Bart writes: “Reine Sans Nom était habillé à la manière des ‘negresses à mouchoir,’ qui portent un madras en guise de coiffe” (48) [Reine Sans Nom was dressed in the “handkerchief woman” style wearing a madras scarf as a headdress]. Bray translates this sentence: “Queen Without a Name was dressed in ‘mammy’ style with a head scarf” (28). While Bray’s translation is a lot less confusing than mine, it is questionable since it invokes a certain image for the reader: the mammy. “Mammy” is a Jim Crow Era caricature of African-American women. She is a racial stereotype created by defenders of slavery and is unique to the United States (Morgan 87). For Bray to describe Reine Sans Nom in this way is to reduce her to an object, a racist and foreign one no less. Bray assumes and approximates an American stereotype for Schwarz-Bart’s description. The “mammy” conjures up the dominant slave-era ideology that justified the exploitation of female slaves and contributed to the
social construction of a black women's gender and low sociopolitical status (Simms 880).

With this description, how may the American reader view Reine Sans Nom? Would the reader think that Reine Sans Nom's image is like another Aunt Jemima portrait on a pancake box? To view Reine Sans Nom in this way would only perpetuate a long lasting stereotype of black women, and unfairly categorize her with a uniquely American stereotype. One cannot lump all women of African descent into the same category. Each culture is distinctive. "Mammy" stands for everything Reine Sans Nom is not. "Mammy" is faithful to her white master, dull-headed, always on call, non threatening, and asexual.

As Simm states in the article "Controlling Images and the Gender Construction of Enslaved African Women":

> The mammy image contributed to the stability of white male domination by portraying an ideal type of the Black female slave in her relationship with her master. Through her genuine devotion to servitude and consent to subordination, the mammy exemplified the ruling class definition of white male superiority and the Black female subaltern (Simm 882).

In *Pluie et Vent*, Schwarz-Bart seeks to challenge these dominant, racist ideals with characters like Reine Sans Nom and the other Lougandor women. The reader should not view Reine Sans Nom as a "mammy," but as the strong, "fighting cock" she is:

> We Lougandors are not pedigree cocks, we're fighting cocks. We know the ring, the crowd, fighting, death. We know victory and eyes gouged out. And all that has never stopped us from living, relying neither on happiness nor on sorrow for existence, like tamarind leaves that close at night and open in the day (Schwarz-Bart 80; trans. mine).
To avoid the “mammy” image, Bray might have researched the description more thoroughly or provided a footnote to explain her choice of words. Since “mammy” is a loaded word, perhaps it would have just been better to describe Reine Sans Norn’s way of dress without giving an approximation. Sometimes, it seems, one culture cannot be substituted for another.

Perhaps the most noticeable and questionable element of Bray’s translation is her rendition of the novel’s title. Schwarz-Bart’s title for her novel is *Pluie et Vent Sur Télumée Miracle* (literally, Rain and Wind on Télumée the Miracle Woman). Bray renders the English version as *The Bridge of Beyond*. Why would Bray choose to deviate so far from the original, and why would she rename another’s work? Although these questions are difficult to answer since one cannot truly understand the translator’s intentions, one can question her choice.

As already established, Schwarz-Bart’s novel explores the resilience of women in a harsh, postcolonial Caribbean environment. Despite adversity, women have authority to steer their lives and tell their own version of the history of their people, thus challenging the powers that conspire to bring them down. Télumée triumphs over the rains and the winds of her life and she forever ingrains her experiences on paper uniting both the oral and written traditions of Guadeloupe.

Usually a title gives the reader an idea of the narrative to come. If this is true, how can *The Bridge of Beyond* express these central themes of *Pluie et Vent*? Why does the title focus on a place and not on the woman who makes the entire story possible? Since part of the purpose of translation in the publishing world is market-driven, perhaps Bray changed the title to make it more appealing to a larger audience. Translating the title
literally might make it too unfamiliar for English-speaking audiences. The literal translation perhaps sounds too foreign, and is thereby less marketable. Finding a functional equivalent would, therefore, clarify the idea behind the original for the readers.

In the novel, the “bridge of beyond” (*le pont de l’Autre Bord*) is a bridge that unites the town of L’Abadonnée to the rural region of Fond-Zombi. Télumée must cross this bridge in order to get to her grandmother’s house. It is a treacherous bridge to cross consisting of disintegrating planks with a river running below:

> et soudain se fut l’Autre Bord, la région de Fond-Zombi qui déferlait devant mes yeux, dans une lointaine éclaircie fantastique...de-ci de-là apparaissaient des cases appuyées les unes contre les autres, autour de la cour commune, ou bien se tassant sur leur propre solitude, livrées à elles-mêmes, au mystère des bois, aux esprits, à la grace de Dieu (Pluie et Vent 47-48)

and suddenly there was the Other Side, the region of Fond-Zombi that unfolded before my eyes, in a fantastic plain...here and there appeared houses resting on top of one another, around the common yard, or settled on their own solitude, given over to themselves, to the mystery of the woods, to the spirits, to the grace of God (trans. mine).

One could say that Télumée’s act of crossing the bridge changes her life because it is “beyond” the bridge where she is introduced to her grandmother’s world of magic. This is Elizabeth Wilson’s explanation for Bray’s title:
Telumée is sent to live with her grandmother and is led across the bridge of beyond separating her from the ordinary world and bringing her into the mysterious world of the morne (hill), with its rich heritage of legend and myth. There, cut off in her grandmother’s hut Telumée is initiated into her grandmother’s world. Toussine symbolically leads the young Telumée safely across the dangerous bridge. In her grandmother’s tiny room, isolation from the ordinary world becomes a positive, enriching experience (Wilson 55).

While crossing the bridge is essential indeed for Telumée’s growth, why emphasize isolation by making this the title? Telumée is not alone in her experience. As Reine Sans Nom tells Telumée: “You see, the houses are nothing without the threads that join them together. And what you feel in the afternoon under your tree is nothing but a thread that the village weaves and throws out to you and your cabin” (Schwarz-Bart 85). It is Telumée’s entrance into the community at Fond-Zombi that truly shapes the woman she becomes. She does not grow and develop alone, but among family and friends. Her story is her family’s history, and can stand for the story of Caribbean women as a whole. Schwarz-Bart’s emphasis on the rains and the winds of life in the title solidifies her intentions of making her story the history of her people—all who have withstood the elements to survive: “thus the meaning of the novel’s French title is extended beyond its specific reference to Telumée’s fortitude, to embrace every member of her race and to indicate their innate ability to survive” (Ormerod 108-109). As Telumée states at the end of the novel, “as I struggled others will struggle” (Schwarz-Bart 172). All individuals can
endure the rains and winds; for that reason, to rename the book would only overlook this intention.

It seems, then, that the title *The Bridge of Beyond* is not only a rewriting but a complete rethinking of the original concept. This situation can get tricky since most of the time the reader of the translated text has no idea that the title has been rewritten without doing research on it. By rewriting the text, the translator has manipulated the audience to think a certain way and to expect something that may not be there. The reader should not assume that the translation is completely akin to the original. To read a literary work in translation is to know that some sort of manipulation has taken place. Also, the reader should not assume that the translator is a native informant of the text. As stated before, most of the time, the translator has been contracted by the publishing house to rewrite the work, and may not be truly invested in its accuracy. They may have no relationship with the author or the original text. Is it appropriate, then, for a cultural outsider to translate a work, especially a postcolonial work such as Schwarz-Bart’s?

According to the Creolistes, no person who writes in or translates the Creole language or culture can ever succeed “without an intuitive knowledge of the poetics of the Creole language” (*Éloge* 899). For Schwarz-Bart’s novel, which uses Creole concepts to authenticate and firmly establish her people’s position in the world, it is imperative that her translator know this ideology. The translator might need to research the culture behind the language to have some relationship to the text she is translating. She should not remain anonymous—a simple name on a title page—but allow the reader to understand her technique and intentions. It would seem that in order to reconcile the translator’s intentions with the text, she might need to write a preface or introduction
explaining her reasons for the choices she made in translating the text. In the same way the author affirms her voice, the translator should affirm her objectives as well.
Conclusion

Can a word, then, as Foucault states in *L’Ordre du Discours*, make all the difference? Can a literary text that is so rooted in the culture and history of the author translate well into another language? After having established Schwarz-Bart’s *Pluie et Vent* in its cultural, historical, and political contexts, and examining Barbara Bray’s translation of the novel, it seems that all rewritings, whatever their form, are never innocent or exactly as the original. Writers do not write and translators do not render in a vacuum. There is always a set of cultural, historical, and political beliefs that influence the writing and rewriting of a text. In no way should this thesis seem as an attack on Barbara Bray and her translation of *Pluie et Vent*, but it should question her choices in her method of rewriting. What might have lead her to her translation choices such as rewriting the title, labeling Reine Sans Nom a “mammy,” and shortening the length of the text to be more concise? Why are some of the names of Caribbean flora and fauna, which function as symbols and metaphors, left in the original or rendered differently? By asking these questions, we can suppose that there is always a context in which the translation takes place, “always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed” (Bassnett and Lefevere 11).

For Bray, the translator, even if she has “mastered the author’s language and tradition in detail, and knows everything about her world, she is still the carrier of another language and another tradition, living in another world” (Bassnett and Lefevere 32). One has learned that an outsider, a translator, can never know exactly what the author is trying to convey. She might translate plot development accurately, but the attention, as many
say, is “in the details,” in the way colloquial Creole terms, proverbs, and character
descriptions are deciphered.

Because the translation relationship more often exists between the publishing
house and the translator, not the translator and the author, the translator’s understanding
of the author’s “universe of discourse” can be theoretical since she has never experienced
it firsthand. It is for this reason that the translator should have some sort of personal
relationship to the text. Since language expresses culture, translator should be, as
Bassnett and LeFevere, suggest “bicultural, not bilingual” (11). In the case of Pluie et
Vent and its English version The Bridge of Beyond, the voice must always be that of the
Caribbean woman, the colonized, not the colonizer. Instead of the Eurocentric ideology
that prevailed in the Caribbean for many years during and after colonization, the
Caribbean postcolonial ideology must make itself known in the works by postcolonial
authors such as Schwarz-Bart.

The translator must understand that language is of the utmost importance in the
Caribbean. Roger Toumson explains this importance:

Dans l’espace énonciatif antillais, la parole est l’enjeu d’un conflit brutal entre
deux histories, deux cultures, deux pensées. Elle énonce une solution de
continuité, une émergence. (qtd. in Scarboro 22)

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In the West Indian space of enunciation, the word is at stake in a brutal conflict
between two histories, two cultures, two ways of thinking. It enunciates a solution
of continuity, of emergence.
Schwarz-Bart uses language to proclaim the marginalized, Caribbean feminist voice. The way in which Schwarz-Bart combines French and Creole, then, cannot be overlooked. Schwarz-Bart incorporates nature imagery and the philosophical language of Creole with classical French, creating a multi-dimensional structure that encourages the reader to explore Télumée’s Caribbean universe. We find this structure in the way characters in the novel use natural elements and Creole proverbs to come to terms with the world around them. For instance, when Télumée is solicited sexually by her white employer, Monsieur Desaragne, she tells him, “les canards et les poules se ressemblent, mais les deux espèces ne vont pas ensemble sur l’eau [ducks and chickens resemble each other, but the two species do not go together in water] (Schwarz-Bart 114). She understands that Desaragne’s solicitation is wrong and uses images from nature to get her point across. In another example, Laetitia, the woman who ultimately runs off with Elie, warns Télumée:

Voilà ce que tu es pour Élie, ma congresse, une succulente canne congo qu’il aspire, mais auras-tu toujours du suc pour le contenter? Ce n’est pas que je sois jalouise de ta saveur, mais je te le dis: danser trop tôt n’est pas danser...alors un conseil, ne te réjouis pas encore” (Schwarz-Bart 141).

That is what you are to Elie, my girl: a succulent Congo cane that he sucks. But, will you always have the juice to satisfy him? It’s not that I am jealous of your flavor, but I will tell you: to dance too soon is to not dance at all…thus some advice, do not rejoice just yet” (trans. mine).

With the image of the Congo cane, Laetitia advises Télumée to not get too comfortable in her blissful union, for it will come to an end. These examples illustrate how the Creole
universe is tied closely to nature and language. As stated earlier, Schwarz-Bart seems to write in French, but thinks in Creole, and she merges the two in the novel to articulate her Caribbean experience. Since this language relationship is so closely joined, to read the text in English would seem to lose this connection. How can French Creole ever be rendered accurately into English?

Télumée draws her energy from the language and culture of the island which allows her to find her own identity as a Caribbean woman, and her presence and continuation in that milieu. As she states both at the beginning and end of the novel: “soleil levé, soleil couché, les journées glissent et le sable que soulève la brise enliserà ma barque, mais je mourrai là comme je suis, debout, dans mon petit jardin, quelle joie!” [sunrise, sunset, the days slip by and the sand blown by the wind will swallow up my boat. But I will die here, where I am, standing in my garden: what happiness!] (Schwarz-Bart 255). She feels right in her place where she is, in Guadeloupe—the island: “the island in Schwarz-Bart’s fiction is not a place to be fled nor a prison in which one slowly dies; it is the locus of self-discovery and human relation” (Shelton 354). Schwarz-Bart affirms the forces of life against those of death and destruction. With her, the ideas of Caribbean self and Caribbean history become possible. Télumée, her heroine, like her ancestors before her, expresses all that is possible to express in spite of adverse conditions threatening her resolve to live.

Because they portray women as strong and resilient individuals, the works of Schwarz-Bart, like those of other Caribbean women authors, are beneficial for studying because they challenge the dominant ideas about history and culture. They give the alternative perspective and write about the voices that go unheard. Because of this
important and subversive quality, translations of these texts must be accurate since the translated text is the only version most monolingual audiences are exposed to. In the English-speaking world especially, educational systems have come to rely increasingly on the use of translated literary works in teaching, yet few educators know if the translated text in question is accurate (Bassnett 4). For instance, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is read throughout the country in high schools and colleges; yet does anyone know if the text is rendered correctly? Perhaps the reader could find out if one examined the Italian original and translated version side by side. It is essential, then, to understand the translation/rewriting process and the inevitable manipulation of literary texts. Schwarz-Bart has her own ideology and ideas upon which she draws. The translator must, therefore, recognize these ideas and not make general conclusions about the author or the text. As illustrated in chapter three, Reine Sans Nom, a Caribbean woman, cannot be described with a stereotype like "mammy," a culturally specific image of African-American women in the U.S. Also, just because the setting is the Caribbean does not mean it has to be deemed exotic (for its folkloric and historical detail) and generalized in that way.

Furthermore, those who wish to incorporate literary works such as Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et Vent* into the curriculum must aid their students in searching for meaning, not superficial understanding, between the lines. While they are studying works like Schwarz-Bart's they should question the universality of canonical texts. Margaret Willen explains that from traditional curriculum, from canonical texts, readers "extrapolate a set of cultural values considered to be universal" (762). When studying a text like *Pluie et Vent*, readers should not approach this novel seeking only to verify the dominant
Eurocentric values learned from canonical texts since “a full or even adequate understanding of another culture is never to be gained by translating it into one’s own terms” (Willen 762). A novel like *Pluie et Vent* validates differences in culture and provides a counterpoint to Eurocentric values. By using Creole and oral storytelling techniques, Schwarz-Bart, as a true Creoliste, seeks to define French-Caribbean feminist identity in terms of its historical, cultural, and racial connections with Africa and the New World.

Not to read a translation, though, would be unimaginable. If a reader does not know the language of the author, how else would she be exposed to the work unless she learned the new language? Since learning a language is no easy task, the translation would have to suffice. Because the translation is the only piece of work that the reader has access to, the translator must be well-aware that the translation of that text must be as faithful as possible. How else will a reader understand the positions and cultures from which the author is coming without renditions? How else can a reader grasp the complicated views of the world without translations? Without them, a lopsided view of the world is given. Some critics of translation believe that the translated product is a “maimed” result. As the author Vissarion Belinsky observed, “to read a work in translation is like kissing a beautiful woman with a handkerchief over her face” (qtd. in Bail 6). While there is always something underneath that the translator does not disclose, the reader must be conscious of these omissions and seek to question them.

We need to study and read translations in order to make ourselves aware that manipulations in the rewriting of literature exist. As Lefevere writes, the study of translations might serve as a means to see through the manipulations of all types of texts:
“a study of rewriting will not tell students what to do; it might show them ways of not allowing other people to tell them what to do” (Translation, Rewriting 9). We need translations, though, since they broaden and diversify the scope with which we study literature. While some may argue that literal translations render prose less satisfying in an aesthetic fashion, with culturally specific works such as Pluie et Vent, the translator must endeavor to make it as faithful to the original. There is, most likely, a way to translate a text without completely rewriting it, and through footnotes, introductions, and prefaces, a translator can explain her translation methods and choices to the reader. Ultimately, we need Schwarz-Bart’s voice of resilience to be heard all over the world. We need the voice of Caribbean women’s discourse to challenge the powers that be and the traditional literary canons in place. If the present English translation does not suffice, we should create a new one that is sensitive to the culture and plight of Caribbean women so that readers will always know that she is “not a statue of salt that is dissolved by the rain” [n’est pas une statue de sel que dissolvent les pluies] (Schwarz-Bart 172; trans. mine).
Endnotes:

1 Glissant refers to the “other America” in *Le Discours* as being the rest of the Caribbean, the southern United States, and Latin America. He seeks to unite the French Caribbean with the greater world outside its borders in order to realize that experience transcends national diversity. The movement originated from a critique of previous literary movements, most notably *Négritude*. Fellow Martinican author Aimé Césaire was one of the founders of *Négritude* which looked to Africa as the primary source of identification for Afro-Caribbean peoples.

2 According to the CIA Fact Book and UNESCO, 10 to 30% of Caribbean people cannot read or write. One can imagine that the number was much higher during the earlier parts of the twentieth century.

3 It is interesting to note that the French word for “story,” *histoire*, also means “history.”

4 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

5 The word *homme* in French can mean “man,” but it can also mean “mankind” (both women and men). In this particular passage, Schwarz-Bart is referring to mankind. She is not excluding women from the proverb.

6 The French word, *negre*, (fem. *negresse*) means the color black or “black person.” Bray translates the word as “negro” in the English version. Because “negro” is a loaded word and can be considered a racial slur in the U.S., I have chosen to use the original French meaning. It is important to note as well that in many parts of the Caribbean, “negro/negre/negresse,” can be considered terms of endearment. For instance “negrito,” the Spanish diminutive of “negro,” is perfectly acceptable in Puerto Rico or Cuba.

7 This information was acquired from a lecture on “Creolization” at the University of Central Florida, Orlando by Dr. Rosalyn Howard (Feb. 2, 2006).

8 “Callaloo” (a Trinidadian word) is a Caribbean stew that incorporates many ingredients like leafy vegetables, meats, and seasonings. The word has come to represent the Caribbean milieu which is a mixture of cultures and languages (Howard Lecture, 2006).

9 Bassnett and Lefevere explain in *Constructing Cultures* that English is the dominant language today so most translations are slanted towards the language.

10 This was known as *Tetrium Comparationis*: every word used in translation is equal to every word used in the original (Bassnett and Lefevere, *Translation, History and Culture*, p. 3).
Multiculturalism is “a view, or policy, that immigrants, and others, should preserve their cultures with the different cultures interacting peacefully within one nation” (Harrison 99).

This term is coined by the author Sherry Simon in her book *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*.

Bray is also the translator of Schwarz-Bart’s second novel *Ti Jean, L’horizon*. Once again when translating the book into English, she interestingly changed the title to *Between Two Worlds*. It would perhaps be worthy to explore this change in another research endeavor. Why change the title to something so different?

Since Conde views translators as “enemies,” one wonders why she would have married her translator, her “opponent.” Does she view her husband in the same way that she views Bray, or is she forgiving to Philcox, since as an “insider,” he can directly ask the author about how to render her work? It is also interesting to note that Philcox is a white man.

I have chosen to translate Schwarz-Bart’s words as literally as possible in order for the non-French speaking reader to make a comparison between the original and Bray’s translation.

See Endnote 5.

See Encarta Encyclopedia. CD-ROM. Microsoft Corp., 2005 for more general information on Caribbean flora.

Bray uses the passive voice (“I was back again in Elie’s sight...”) as opposed to Schwarz-Bart’s use of the active voice in the reflexive verb “to find oneself” (“I found myself in Elie’s sight...”) Does the use of the passive voice lessen Télumée’s confidence in her strength as a woman? We must remember that the active voice is more direct and vigorous and reflects/establishes the writer’s/character’s voice (Strunk and White 18).

This again is my translation in brackets. Though a bit confusing, I have chosen to translate the sentence as closely as possible to the original so that the reader can see the difference between Bray’s translation and Schwarz-Bart’s original. Some sentences such as these do not translate well into English without manipulating the meaning.

*L’autre bord* literally means “the other side.” How Bray translated this word for “beyond” is a mystery. The question, then, arises: should one translate proper place names?
Works Cited and Consulted


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