tives on Borges, Derrida, Cixous, Creeley, and Barthes, among others, as a testimony to timeless dialectics, while bearing witness to a universal dialogism. We trust you will find these collaborations stimulating, inciting, and exciting, because you, dear reader, complete the necessary loops of thought contained within this issue, and through your reading, you extend the collaboration between measured letters, and open minds.

"Any differences between our versions and Scott's...": Collaboration, Anxiety of Influence, and a Translation of Anne Hebert's "Le Tombeau des rois"

Lee Skallerup Bessette

What does it mean to collaborate when translating? The concept itself is contentious. Lawrence Venuti famously wrote about how the translator has historically been silenced, rendered invisible. In the late 1980s and 1990s, there seemed to be a movement on the part of translators to assert their presence and authority. In 2004, I sat listening to Sheila Fischman talk about her work as a translator. Next to her sat Naim Kattan, whose work she had translated. I had just presented a paper on the author as collaborator in translation and was working on my dissertation, which dealt with that same topic. A junior scholar, I screwed up as much courage as possible and asked her about her experience collaborating with the authors she translated, such as Kattan. Fischman was polite, but firm, in her response. She does not collaborate in her translations; they are hers and hers alone. But, she hastened to add, after completing a draft of the translation, she would send questions to the author or get together to discuss the work. There would seem to be a tension between the role of the author and the role of the translator in the process of recreating a work in another language.

But what if the person collaborating is equally invisible or disregarded within the process of production? André Lefevere writes the following in the introduction to his book *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*:

This book deals with those in the middle, the men and women who do not write literature, but rewrite it. It does so because they are, at present, responsible for the general reception and survival of works of literature among non-professional readers, who constitute the great majority of readers in our global culture, to at least the same, if not a greater extent than the writers themselves. (1)

The role of the editor is often quite important but often ignored; all we see is the finished, published product. We don't consider what the editor does as collaboration, although often the changes and work the editor does could be considered as such. This paper deals with the question: can collaboration between translator and editor be possible? I will be looking specifically at the
"collaboration" that took place between translator Peter Miller and fellow translator/poet/editor Louis Dudek for Miller's translations of Anne Hébert's book *Le Tombeau des rois*. Complicating this collaboration is the presence of a third party, the famous *Dialogue sur la traduction* that had just appeared. The specter of the *Dialogue* looms large over the proceedings.

But what of the relationship between these men, all three poets and translators in their own right? Harold Bloom in *Anxiety of Influence* writes:

> Weaker talents idealize; figures of capable imagination appropriate for themselves. But nothing is got for nothing, and self-appropriation involves the immense anxieties of indebtedness, for what strong maker desires the realization that he has failed to create himself? (5)

While Bloom was talking about the influence of poets on one another, one wonders if the same anxiety that he speaks of could not be applied to understanding the type of collaboration, or resistance to collaboration, that takes place between Miller and Dudek, with Scott's voice constantly imposing itself, or rather, Dudek continues to insist on its place in the discussions. There is, obviously, a great deal of indebtedness to Scott, from both Dudek and Miller; without Scott's work as a poet, translator, teacher, and lawyer, there would be little audience or opportunity to publish translations of French-Canadian poems. But how far does that debt carry? And, to return to the question of the translator's invisibility, how indebted is the translator to the original author, in this case, Hébert? When one has access to her thoughts on the poem and on translation, how much weight must a translator place on those thoughts? When does collaboration end and the creation of a new poem in another language begin?

Peter Miller is not one of the best-known names in Canadian literature. Nonetheless, he played an invaluable role as an editor/business manager for Contact Press during the 60s. With Louis Dudek and Raymond Souster, Peter Miller helped shape the face of modern poetry in Canada, by helping to keep the small press devoted to poetry financially viable. He was an equal editorial partner in the literary operations of the Press as well; any poetry manuscript needed two of the three editors' approval if it was to be accepted for publication by the Press. Miller himself published two collections of poems through Contact, as well as three collections of translations: *The Tomb of Kings* by Anne Hébert, *Selected Poems* by Alain Grandbois, and *The Sun-Stone* by Octavio Paz. The Contact Press Archives, located at the University of Toronto, also contain a completed, unpublished manuscript of translations of Gaston Miron's early poetry.

In an undated letter, probably from sometime in 1964, Peter Miller writes the following to his two fellow editors:

For years I have felt that this central poetry collection of Anne Hébert's is an indivisible classic which should be available in full English.... Frank Scott's fine translations in the Klank selection of Hébert-Garneau include only six poems from *Le Tombeau des Rois* [sic]. My versions differ somewhat from his. How would you two feel about this as a Contact bilingual edition, if permissions can be obtained? (Contact Press Archives)

Attached was a copy of Miller's manuscript of his translations of Hébert's poetry. Souster would seem to have replied almost immediately, and offered Miller some feedback in what Souster calls Miller's "inversions." For example, in "Les grandes fontaines," the French line reads "N'y plongent aucune image" which Miller translates as "Plunge into them no image," and Souster instead suggests "Plunge no image into them" (Contact Press Archive). Further along in the poem, the French reads "Où veillent les droits pillars/De ma patience ancienne" which Miller translates as "Where watch the straight pillars/Of my long time patience watch" and Souster suggests changing to "Where the straight pillars of my long time patience watch" without suggesting a line break. It should be noted and neither of these changes were incorporated in the final version of the translations.

As Miller explains to Dudek in a letter dated December 23 1964, "I can only say that the word-order is in every case quite deliberate, to achieve a particular effect that I am after: a feeling, if you will, that accords with that of the original without violating rules" (Contact Press Archives). Overall, however, Souster lends his support to Miller's work, calling the translations "a beautiful job." Here we see Souster doing the more traditional work as an editor/colleague, offering a few pieces of advice and then throwing his support behind the project.

Dudek takes much more time to get back to Miller, but finally on May 23, 1965, sends Miller twenty-eight pages of handwritten comments on the translations, with another typewritten page dated two days later with additional comments (Contact Press Archives). Louis Dudek's archives, located at the National Archives, Ottawa, contain Miller's handwritten corrected manuscript that was sent back to Dudek for approval on June 4, 1965. Dudek makes an interesting comment to Miller in his one of his opening remarks in regards to Miller's translation of "The Tomb of Kings": "Any differences between our versions and Scott's..." (Contact Press Archives, emphasis added). Dudek took his role as editor at Contact Press very seriously, and while Miller was the translator, the collection was to be published by the press that Dudek had helped found. Dudek shared Souster's enthusiasm for the translations, writing: "You've got a great book here, very important, and a permanent part of Canadian literature" (Contact Press Archives). Dudek's role, however, was much more involved than Souster's in the process of revising Miller's translations.
In his introduction to his translation of *The Tomb of Kings*, Peter Miller writes: “To my fellow-editor and good friend Louis Dudek I offer my best thanks for having studied the translations in minute detail, and for his resulting suggestions towards corrections of errors and improvements of language. A great many of his recommendations have been adopted in the final versions” (Hébert 12). Dudek, in his comments dated May 23, 1965, points Miller to Scott and Hébert’s dialogue in *Tamarack Review* in an aside at the beginning of his comments on the poem “The Tomb of Kings”:

Don’t forget that [Scott] has consulted Anne Hébert on many points. Have you checked both his translations of his correspondence with A-H published in *Tamarack Review*? Any differences between our versions and Scott’s – in the sense of the words – must be confirmed by superior research or consultation with the author. Otherwise you will be caught wrong where the means to correct reading was available to you. (Contact Press Archives)

Dudek places the emphasis on being able to consult with the author as a resource in order to create an accurate translation. Miller agrees, and at the top of his annotated and corrected manuscript, he writes to Dudek: “Some of these changes result from your own excellent suggestions; others from AH’s own explanations in *Tamarack*” (Dudek Fonds). In the spirit of *Dialogue*, the following is a recreation of the more salient points of the conversation between Dudek and Miller in regards to “The Tomb of Kings.”

The information is taken from the Contact Press Archives, letter dated May 23 1965, and the Louis Dudek Fonds, letter dated June 4 1965. The format used below will follow the format used in *Dialogue*, starting with the original line in French, then as translated by Miller, followed by Dudek’s comments, then Miller’s, and finishing with Miller’s final translation of the line.

**Line 3:** Le taciturne oiseau pris à mes doigts
Trans: With the taciturn bird captive at my fingers
LD: “Pris à mes doigts” must mean there that the bird is “gripping my fingers” (I’ve just confirmed this from F.R. Scott’s translation.)
PM: Yes, as you point out, Anne H explains “pris à” in *Tamarack*. Apart from a wish to avoid crass imitation, I think maybe taking has the edge over gripping, as it is a closer translation of prends and has the double sense of catching and holding.
Final Trans: “With the taciturn bird taking my fingers”

**Line 4:** Lampe gonflée de vin et de sang
Trans: Lamp swollen with wine and with blood
LD: Read “A lamp swollen...” In English this apposition would require an article: and it is the bird who is a lamp.
Final Trans: A lamp swollen with wine and with blood

**Line 7:** Étonnée
Trans: Astonished
LD: Astonished could be “Myself surprised” to make clear that it is not the kings who are astonished or surprised. (The French of course is clear; i.e. “myself” would correspond to this inflection)
Final Trans: Astonished

**Line 10:** Au long des dédales sordus?
Trans: Along the dulled labyrinths?
LD: “Through the silent labyrinths?” Dulled is not so good.
PM: I can’t help using FR’s muted, it is the only good word.
Final Trans: “Along the muted labyrinths?”

**Line 13-14:** Cette enfant fut-elle liée par la cheville/Pareille à une esclave fascinée?
Trans: Was that child bound by the ankle/Like a fascinated slave?
LD: Possibly “Like a slave in fascination” or “Like an astonished slave” (better) – if you have not used “astonished” in line 7.
Final Trans: Was this child bound by her ankle/Like a fascinated slave?

**Line 16-17:** Presse le fil,/Et viennent les pas nus
Trans: Presses on the thread/And the naked footsteps come
LD: “Pulls on the thread” might be just as correct for “presse” – and more apt.
PM: If AH had intended pulls she would have said tire. Accuracy demands presses for presse – one can picture it – by pressing on the thread the footsteps are made to come. [Miller provides two sketches to make his point]
Final Trans: Presses on the thread/So come the naked footsteps

**Line 22:** Suitte sous le pas des portes
Trans: Oozes under the doorsteps
LD: “Leaks at the sills of doors” might be better. I do not see odours “oozing”; thought it is better than “sweating.” Leaks is also a dictionary equivalent for suite.
PM: Leaking at the doors would be very uncouth manners? You’re right. Larousse says “le pas de la porte” is seuil, or sill, not a step. Thanks.
Final Trans: Seeps from the sills of the doors

**Line 23:** Aux chambres secrètes et rondes
Trans: By the secret round rooms
LD: Why “By”? These are the doors of rooms in the Tombeau des Rois. Say – “Of the round and secret rooms” (or chambers).
Final Trans: Of the rooms, secret and round

Line 24: Là où sont dressés les lits clos
Trans: Where the sealed beds are poised
PM: AH explains about the beds. FRS could not improve on close
but I hope enclosed brings out her meaning more clearly.
Final Trans: Where the enclosed beds are arrayed.

Line 25: L’immobile désir des gisants me tire
Trans: The unmoving desire of the effigies draws me
LD: “The stillled desire” would be wonderful for “l’immobile désir.”
How about – “The stillled desire of the dwellers draws me” (Why call
them “effigies”? She is thinking of them as quite aware, ghosts in fact)
PM: Gisant is (Larousse) “une statue d’un personnage rendré.”
Therefore the representation draws her not the body inside.
Final Trans: The still desire of the effigies draws me.

Line 26-27: Je regarde avec étonnement/À même les noirs ossements
Trans: I look with astonishment/As upon the black bones
LD: “As even on the black bones” (Je regarde at line 26 might be
enforced with I gaze)
PM: Still and gaze are two fine suggestions. Thanks. AH’s own
explanation satisfies me that “as upon black bones” gets her image
across. À même here is purely positional, not emphatic, so I have
thought best to simplify. No – changed my mind to “as set on the
black bones” - deliberate ambiguity.
Final Trans: I gaze with astonishment/As set on the black bones.

Line 30: Sur la poitrine des rois, couchées
Trans: On the breast of the kings, laid out
PM: For couchées I am much tempted to use displayed. Only a
frenzy for strict accuracy prevents me.
Final Trans: On the breast of the kings, laid out

Line 31: En guise de bijoux
Trans: By way of jewels
LD: “en guise” – “by way” is weak. “In the form of jewels.” “In the
guise of jewels.”
Final Trans: In the guise of jewels.

Line 37: Offrande rituelle et soumise
Trans: Ritual and submissive offering
LD: The “and” could be omitted: “Ritual submissive offering”
Final Trans: Ritual and submissive offering.

Line 44: Semblable au vent qui prend, d’arbre en arbre
Trans: Like the wind that catches, from tree to tree
LD: “Like the wind that lifts/stirs, from tree to tree” better?
PM: Surely catches is exact for prend. Stirs doesn’t have the same
connotation. Incidentally, AH points out the relationship to fire
which prend (catches).
Final Trans: Like the wind that catches, from tree to tree.

Line 45: Agite sept grands pharaons d’Êtè
Trans: Stirs seven great ebony pharaohs
LD: “Disturbs Touches Shakes (Yes!) seven great pharaohs of
Ebony”
PM: Shakes is too violent a word for agiter
Final Trans: Stirs seven great ebony pharaohs.

Line 46: En leurs étuis solennels et parés
Trans: In their solemn ornate caskets
LD: “In their solemn ornate tombs” for rhythm.
PM: (étuis) AH points outs that these boxes or cases fit neatly,
following the shape inside.
Final Trans: In their solemn ornate casings.

Line 51: En un cliquetis léger de bracelets
Trans: In a light tinkling of bracelets
PM: FRS has “tinkle” (one tinkle) but I see the rattle as being
continuous – hence tinkling.
Final Trans: In a light tinkling of bracelets.

Line 52: Cercles vains jeux d’ailleurs
Trans: Vain rings games of elsewhere
LD: “Vain rings elsewhere games”
Final Trans: Vain rings games of elsewhere.

Line 53: Autour de la chair sacrifiée
Trans: Around the sacrificed flesh
LD: “About the flesh once sacrificed.” (This would be entirely true to
the original: “Once” simply emphasizes the fr. tense)
Final Trans: Around the sacrificed flesh.

Line 54: Avides de la source fraternelle de mal en moi
Trans: Thirsty for the brotherly source of evil in me
PM: AH says “avide” is more general than thirsty (or hungry)
Final Trans: Craving the brotherly source of evil in me.

Line 56: Sept fois, je connais l’état des os
Trans: Seven times, I know the vice of bones.
L.D.: “Vice” is to ambiguous in English. How about “the vice-press of bones,” “the screw-press”?
PM: American usage permits spelling vise for the tool, thus enabling avoidance of ambiguity of vice.
Final Trans: Seven times, I know the vise of bones

Line 59: Les membres dénoués
Trans: My limbs unknotted
PM: AH explains this sense of dénoué
Final Trans: My limbs unfettered

Line 61: Quel reflet d’aube s’égarce ici?
Trans: What gleam of dawn strays here?
PM: FRS again. All honor to him.
Final Trans: What glimmer of dawn strays here?

Louis Dudek’s remarks about the poem conclude as follows: “A fantastic poem of entry into ‘death’s other kingdom.’” Miller adds his own concluding paragraph to the end of his annotated and corrected version of “The Tomb of Kings”:

This is undoubtedly AH’s greatest poem. Difficult even in French, but worth the challenge. Of course, Frank Scott’s translation is so superb that a newcomer is not needed, but one has to be made for presentation of the book in its entirety. And I have hazarded a version which does differ from his in some respects. The purpose is not competitive, but purely towards a definitive version in English for which he is mainly responsible, with additions of your thoughts and mine. (n.p.)

What is interesting here is Miller’s mixture of resources: Dudek, Scott’s translations, Hébert’s comments as well as Miller’s own aesthetic preferences. He certainly does create his own version of the poem in English. One of the interesting aspects of the dialogue between Miller and Dudek is Miller’s reinterpretations of some of Hébert’s comments. Often taking Hébert’s advice to Scott, Miller nonetheless makes many of his own word choices when it comes to his version. For example, for the line “pris à mes doigts,” Miller acknowledges Hébert’s explanation, but chooses “taking my fingers” instead of Scott’s gripping, which Dudek had also suggested. In the case of the translation of the line “Presse le fil,” Miller defends Hébert’s intentions to Dudek, and keeps the more literal translation of “Presses on the thread.” In mentioning this example, it is also interesting to note the balance Miller strikes between his own voice and Dudek’s suggestions. Many of Dudek’s suggestions would seem to try and preserve more a degree of Hébert’s economy of language, while Miller’s style is slightly wordier than Hébert’s original French. One exception would be Dudek’s suggestion to translate the line “Étonnée” as “Myself surprised,” while, without comment, Miller remains close to the original text by simply translating the line as “Astonished.” One also notices in Miller’s comments and translation choices his “frenzy for accuracy” as he calls it. With no obvious mistakes, Miller certainly provides an accurate, if wordy, translation of “The Tomb of Kings.”

In conclusion, can we call this a collaboration? Is this simply an editor doing his job, or a friend helping another friend with his work? It should be noted that rarely did either of the three editors offer this much feedback to poets submitting manuscripts for publication; the typical response was either a nay or yea. Dudek, as a friend, editor, poet, and fellow translator took it upon himself to go above and beyond what he typically did at Contact Press. One could also argue that Miller was in an unequal position in relation to Dudek, both in terms of their prestige and their role at the Press. The archives provide no hint that Miller was anything but a professional equal at Contact Press, with an equal say in terms of what was published there. It is also interesting to note the relationship that Dudek had with F.R. Scott, his contemporary in the English department at McGill. Is Dudek’s interest a way of ensuring that a more senior professor in his department doesn’t think less of him? Is Miller experiencing what Bloom would call a few years later, the anxiety of influence, struggling against other voices to finally create his own translation of the poem? Finally, what do we make of Dudek saying “our translations” when talking about Miller’s work? Regardless of whose name appeared on the cover, Dudek certainly saw himself as a collaborative partner in the process.

To restate the question again, at what point do we decide where to draw the line between a collaboration and just simply having an extra set of eyes looking over and offering feedback on a manuscript? Throughout my archival research for my dissertation, I found case after case after case of friends, poets, translators, editors, and peers providing feedback to one another about each other’s translations. As put by John Glassco to fellow poet/translator Gwladys Downes: “I hope you don’t find these suggestions intrusive. Frank Scott, Arthur Smith, George Johnston and many others, as well as myself, all mutually submit our translations to each other, and always benefit from the final version. Of course, this is mainly because we are constantly meeting” (Glassco Fonds). One shouldn’t simply dismiss the importance of these extra hands; one would imagine that an extra set of hands would have helped Janis Pallister avoid translating “Et cet oiseau que j’ai respire” as “This bird that I’ve inhaled.” There are those who would see the situation between Miller and Dudek not as collaboration, but as one peer helping another in their work. But, other than it being the author herself, how is their discussion about the translation any different from the one that took place between Scott and Hébert? Are we not still privileging the author if we only accept
collaboration as being between author and translator, or when credit is equally shared on the title page? It is not an easy answer, but an important question to ask when studying those who are in-between, yet so pivotal to literary history.

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Quadrilogue: Having It Four-ways

Gregory Betts, Gary Barwin, derek beaulieu, and Hugh Thomas

The following conversation was conducted over a series of months in 2011 through Google Documents. The participants have each experimented with various collaborative writing strategies and projects together, creating a unique network of polymorphous collaboration. The conversation highlights various strategies, problems, and possibilities that have emerged out of those experiences.

Gregory: Nancy Shaw and Catriona Strang in their “IDR – Manifesto” write this intriguing little entry on collaboration that seems a useful point to begin our own discussion: “Writing in collaboration creates for me a sphere, a little shifting spot my comrades and I inhabit together. As the other kid-filled spheres I more often frequent are delightful but very demanding, I could not access our humming, cooking and regenerating space on my own. I literally could not get there, nor could I write without the ideas and impetus my cohorts provide. Collaboration offers me love and possibilities unattainable in any other land.” It’s marvellous that such a statement comes not from an individual, but from different or blurred voices. What do you think? In your experience, does collaboration give you access to some place that is unavailable on your own? What are the geographies, or the psychogeographies, of that space?

derek: My experience with writing collaboration (with Gary Barwin, with Christian Bök, with Mark Laliberte, with Jordan Scott and a few other occasions) has been a natural extension of my larger practice. I see the various aspects of a ‘writing life’ as interwoven – so that writing, editing, publishing, performing, reviewing and discussion around the arts are all threads in the same sweater. For me it’s akin to Burroughs and Gysin’s idea of the “Third Mind” that collaboration asserts a mind which is neither of the collaborators. It’s not a matter that “two heads are better than one,” it’s that the collaborative act actually creates a mind. It’s that mind which is the previously unavailable space. Collaboration does not necessarily have to be with a present writer however – and I’m intrigued about the possibility of translation as collaboration – are, for instance, “Local Colour” and “Flatland” translations or collaborations?
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