



Translating H el ene Cixous: French Feminism(s) and Anglo-American Feminist Theory

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R esum e de l'article

Traduire H el ene Cixous : le(s) f eminisme(s) fran ais et la th eorie f eministe anglo-am ericaine — Les traductions en anglais des travaux d'H. Cixous constituent un cas int eressant pour l'examen des crit eres significatifs entrant en jeu dans un projet de traduction. Cixous, repr esentante de ce que la communaut e f eministe anglo-am ericaine a d ecrit comme le « f eminisme fran ais », reste tr es connue pour deux de ses travaux  crits il y a pr es de vingt ans : « le Rire de la M eduse » (1975) et la Jeune N ee (1976). Bien que le premier ait  t e traduit presque imm ediatement, il a fallu attendre dix ans avant que le public anglophone n'ait acc es au second en traduction. Compar ee   Luce Irigaray et   Julia Kristeva, Cixous demeure l'auteure dont les oeuvres sont les moins accessibles en traduction   ce public, malgr e sa production prolifique. La politique d' dition, le d ecalage, les probl emes que posent les traducteurs « universitaires » et la difficult e de la traduction sont ici abord es dans leurs relations avec les traductions des oeuvres de Cixous.

Translating H el ene Cixous: French Feminism(s) and Anglo-American Feminist Theory

Lynn K. Penrod

«We translate what the American women write, they never translate our texts.» H el ene Cixous

Since we are always required when translating to "take a position" relative to other cultures and languages, we must as well remain ever vigilant as to the nature of the position assumed. Is it one of domination or is the other culture, the other language seen as a model? Is there an attempt at enrichment of our own culture or is "naturalization" of the other considered the objective? We need also to consider questions relating to the distance in time, in space, which separates translations from their originals as well as those arising from the most fundamental decision of all: whether or not to translate a given text at a given time. Who the translators are and the nature of the literary institution they belong to will also necessarily affect the way translations are produced.

Within the parameters of these questions how can we view the political import and impact of translation within the very large domain of international feminism — or perhaps

feminisms is the better word. If we consider one writer and two of her texts which have proven to be extremely significant in their bridging of what we will call "French feminism" and what we can loosely term Anglo-American feminist theory. The writer in question is Hélène Cixous and the two texts in question are her essay, "Le Rire de la Méduse" (which originally appeared in a special number of *L'Arc* in 1975 and in English translation in the American feminist journal *Signs* the following year), and her co-authored (with Catherine Clément) book, *La Jeune Née* (originally published in Paris in the same year as "Le Rire de la Méduse" but not translated into English until 1986).

What is intriguing about these two works, and about the more general question of translating Hélène Cixous, is the enormity of their influence on ongoing debates within feminist communities and on the political significance of a concept such as *écriture féminine* on discussions about the very nature of difference itself. It is arguable that the translated "Laugh of the Medusa" along with the "Sorties" section of *The Newly-Born Woman* have radically transformed the course of all language-centered theoretical debates in Anglo-American feminist circles over the course of the past fifteen years.

Several factors relating to translation not only as a cultural phenomenon but also as a political activity are important considerations when we look at Cixous-in-translation: (1) first of all, the choice factor [who? what? where? when? why?]; (2) secondly, the *décalage* factor, or time-lag between production of the text in the original to its initial translation; (3) thirdly, the academic-as-translator factor; and (4) fourthly, the "difficulty" or "interdisciplinary" aspect of translation.

Hélène Cixous translation in context

The inter-relationships of French and Anglo-American feminisms provide an important background for Cixous translation. Others have attempted to delineate the basic ideological and pragmatic distinctions between these two worlds (among them Toril Moi, Jane Gallop, Elaine Marks, Barbara Godard and virtually anyone

introducing collections of feminist essays or feminist conference proceedings of the seventies or eighties in which one or all of the three members of French feminism's holy trinity — Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray or Julia Kristeva — is cited extensively). Furthermore, these distinctions are not unimportant ones as they relate to translation.

In her excellent 1985 essay titled "A Topography of Difference," which serves as the introduction to *French Feminist Criticism: Women, Language, Literature. An Annotated Bibliography*, Virginia Thorndike Hules has compared French approaches and preoccupations about theories of difference with those of American feminist theorists of difference, focussing on five aspects of French inquiry which are most unfamiliar to the Anglo-American feminist world:

- (1) the centrality of the modernist perspective in which language and writing ('écriture') are the locus of sexual difference;
- (2) the overriding importance of the psychoanalytic model in defining specificity and tracing its effects in writing;
- (3) the differences between American and French interpretations of Freud;
- (4) the metaphorical and metaphysical dimensions of woman and the feminine that are part of this approach; and
- (5) the prominence of a Marxist critical tradition that politicizes and polarizes the theoretical arena. (Hules, p. xli)

Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron explain carefully in their introduction to *New French Feminisms* (published in 1981 and still a source for many anglophone Women's Studies courses which tackle French feminist theory) that they "do not wish to suggest that all French feminists are theoreticians and that all American feminists are activists. That would be a gross oversimplification of what has been and is happening in each country." (Marks and de Courtivron, p. x)

Yet this general tendency to categorize Anglo-American feminism as activist and French feminism as theorist has,

nevertheless, been endemic. Sandra Gilbert, in her introduction to the translation of *La Jeune Née*, provides a typical comment:

For an American feminist — at least for this American feminist — reading *The Newly-Born Woman* is like going to sleep in one world and waking in another — going to sleep in a realm of facts, which one must labor to theorize, and waking in a domain of theory, which one must strive to (f)actualize. (Gilbert, *NBW*, p. x)

Although Gilbert is sensitive to connections between Cixous's brand of French theorizing and theoretical work done in English (pointing out links to Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology*, and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*), she also reminds us that

Anglo-American feminists, heiresses of Wollstonecraft and Woolf, Barrett Browning and Gilman, often seem to begin projects of liberation from more moderate positions than the one Cixous articulates. Documentation is important to us, and we don't as a rule define our history as primarily 'hystery' — or mystery. (*NBW*, p. xv)

What is interesting to note, however, is Gilbert's later essay (which appeared in the 1989 anthology, *The Future of Literary Theory*), "The Mirror and the Vamp," in which she and Susan Gubar attack Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva for allegedly practicing "the arts of the vamp." (p. 151) Both *femme fatale* and vampire, the vamp is "delectably sensual and transgressive" but also dangerously glamorous, for she not only "suck(s) the blood of male theory" (p. 152) but "the drama of seduction and betrayal that she enacts in her foray against patriarchal structure may end up being as seductively treacherous to women as to men." (p. 154)

Transatlantically and translationally speaking, so-called "French" feminisms have centered around the translated works of three writers — Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva. In discussing the politics of translating, however, there are some significant distinctions which need to be made.

In the case of Julia Kristeva, we note that virtually all her work is currently available in English translation, most often in reasonably-priced paperback editions published by Columbia University Press. The vast majority have been translated by an informally unified group of translators of staff and graduate students in Columbia's French and Comparative Literature departments (Leon S. Roudiez, Alice Jardine, Anne Menke, *et al.*). When Kristeva spent several terms in the seventies as a distinguished visitor at Columbia and Yale, she was not only a powerful intellectual presence but also formed an invaluable alliance with her future translators. The wide range of her writing and interests — from semiotics and the poetics of discourse to Biblical exegesis, writing on depression, the positioning of the other, and, most recently, two novels which focus on the French intellectual milieu of the sixties and early seventies — might otherwise have provoked delay or partiality in the translation process. Yet for Kristeva this has not occurred. Of the twenty-two Kristeva titles listed in the 1992 edition of *Livres Disponibles*, fourteen (or sixty-four percent) are currently in print as well in English translation.

The case of Luce Irigaray falls somewhere in between the relatively strong showing of Kristeva translation and what in comparative terms can only be categorized as the extreme paucity of translation in the case of Hélène Cixous. Irigaray's writing, most especially her *Speculum of the Other Woman* and *This Sex Which is Not One*, have been widely available since the mid eighties. In addition, the more social sciences orientation of her writing (her keen interest in psychoanalysis and applied linguistics as they relate to the feminine) has contributed to the greater speed of translation and to the availability of much of her essay-length work in various journals. Although the percentage of book-length works available in English translation is rather low at twenty-three percent (three English translations out of thirteen listed titles in the 1992 edition of *Livres Disponibles*), she has been widely anthologized as well. *Marine Lover*, *Elemental Passions*, and *Je, tu, Nous* (a collection of Irigaray's best known pieces) have all been recently published.

The case of H el ene Cixous as a translation phenomenon is substantially distinguishable from her two best-known French counterparts. Since 1965 she has published a total of forty book-length works, thirty of which are currently listed in *Livres Disponibles*. Yet out of the thirty titles in print in French, only three book-length translations are in print, yielding a percentage of ten percent. Three other English translations of Cixous's lecture materials and selected essays as well as two translations of works for the theatre (*Portrait of Dora* and *The Conquest of the School at Madhubai*) make the overall picture somewhat better, but for a major French writer, the partiality of Cixous translation into English is something which needs to be examined.

I. Translation and the politics of choice: Who? What? When? Where? When? Why?

Obviously translation always involves a multitude of choices. And the journalistic formulaic five W's — who? what? where? when? and why? — are not always as easily answered in the world of translation politics as they are for the op-ed page editor of the *Globe and Mail*.

Interestingly enough, the first two questions are in most cases mutually exclusive since, in the normal course of events, the "what?" for an initial translation is the key. That is to say, it is the text — its ideas, its "content" — which presents itself to a reader/publisher so powerfully that translation becomes an imperative. After the initial translation, however, the "who?" and the "what?" are more intimately intertwined. If the initial "what" made the text's author famous, or indeed infamous, then perhaps the "who" will become the deciding factor in the politics of translating future or other texts by the same author. Sometimes it takes years, however, before a "who" becomes always translated.

This is indeed the pattern we can observe in the available translations of the works of H el ene Cixous. It is clear that her very first translators, American academics Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, had been stunned and overwhelmed by the powerful

essay, "Le Rire de la Méduse," when it initially appeared in a special number of *L'Arc* in 1975 devoted to none other than Simone de Beauvoir. The Cohen translation appeared in print rapidly, in 1976, in the very popular and extremely widely-circulated American feminist journal, *Signs*. It is this single essay by Cixous, which, I would argue, served as the catalyst for what would become, particularly in the United States, "French feminism."

As Gallop points out,

the phrase 'French feminism' referred, however, to only a narrow sector of feminist activity in France, a sector we perceived as peculiarly French. 'French feminism' is a body of thought and writing by some women in France which is named and thus *constituted* as a movement here in the American academy. Its most effective context may thus be American literary studies where it became a force to be reckoned with by most critics, feminist and non-feminist alike (p. 41).

The Cohens' translation was reprinted four years later, in 1980, in *New French Feminisms*, which effectively served to canonize the phenomenon of French feminism within the Anglo-American academy. Not only is Cixous's "Laugh" last, it is also the longest text in the collection and the only piece near its length left unabridged. Following the publication of *New French Feminisms* by one year, Elaine Showalter's 1981 essay, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," affords further evidence of the American academy's newly-discovered need to incorporate French feminism into academic feminist theorizing. Although Showalter's 1978 essay, "Toward a Feminist Poetics," had not mentioned French feminism at all, the 1981 essay included four out of six epigraphs from French writers. Indeed a rather large flap was created when Showalter on one occasion doubled her epigraph, adding Cixous's words after Woolf. Two of Showalter's six epigraphs come from "The Laugh of the Medusa." It is clear that, if any text is emblematic of "French" feminism, it is this one.

The "who?" and the "what?" choice factors here relating to Hélène Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" fit in neatly with

the "where?" and "when?" factors. Responding to the "why?" factor is perhaps not so crucial at this juncture. The political choices surrounding the Cixous corpus will become more problematic with the passage of time, however, and the lack of any move towards translating all of Cixous perhaps points us to the real political questions which nag at us as translators looking back.

Nicole Ward Jouve, in a recent essay called "Translating French Feminisms into English," has the following to say about Cixous:

I am particularly concerned with what has happened to Hélène Cixous: partly because she's been more than the others [Irigaray and Kristeva] the target of attacks, a kind of French Aunt Sally epitomizing all that is wrong with the twin vices of 'essentialism' and 'biologism,' partly because she is [...] a writer of creative as well as theoretical prose. (p. 49)

According to Jouve, Cixous is the most misrepresented of the 'trinity' in that her theoretical texts have been more translated and read than her fiction. Thus a continuing and fast-changing, evolving practice is patchily represented, the few available fictions (like *Angst*) solidified into a false representativeness. Also, there is no clear-cut distinction between what passes for theory, what passes for fiction, or drama. The theory is creative and written as such, the fiction is critical and works on theory. Ironically, up to the last few years, the essays have been easier to read than the fiction.

II. Translation and the politics of *décalage*

Nicole Ward Jouve's concerns about the fate of Hélène Cixous in English translation resurface in a problem which exists most especially with contemporary, sometimes admittedly trendy, texts, of the time lag between original publication and publication of the translated version. As we saw in the case of Cixous's "Laugh of the Medusa," the *décalage* factor was negligible, one year. Yet the other work which has come to "represent" her "theoretically feminist" ideas within the Anglo-American feminist academy, *La*

Jeune Née, published the very same year as "Laugh of the Medusa," did not appear in translation until more than a decade had passed, in 1986. More interestingly, however, for the world of Anglo-American feminist theorizing, the brief opening section of Cixous's contribution to the co-authored book, "Sorties," did appear in abridged form in *New French Feminisms*. Although in the humanities we have not yet taken to counting citations as a measure of our research productivity, it would be tremendously enlightening, I believe, to have a citation count of the first section of Cixous's essay. A conservative estimate would place that number in the hundreds. And it must be remembered that from 1981 to 1986 only nine pages out of a total of 131 represented what Cixous had said in *La Jeune Née*. Since 1975 Cixous has written much more on various aspects of what she calls *écriture féminine* and a feminine libidinal economy, yet until 1991 almost all of it remained unavailable in English translation. Those members of the Anglo-American feminist academy who could not read French, however, happily continued writing as if Cixous were still laughing at the Medusa, being newly born day after day. It will be very interesting to observe the reaction of anglophone feminist theorists once they begin to grapple with the texts in the four translations which have appeared recently: Verena Conley's translation of various seminars by Cixous, *Reading With Clarice Lispector* (Minnesota, 1990), Deborah Jenson (and others)'s translation of Cixous's *Coming to Writing and Other Essays* (Harvard, 1991), and Verena Conley's translation of some of Cixous's theoretical work, *Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Kleist, Lispector, and Tsvetayeva* (Minnesota, 1991), and Sarah Cornell and translation of *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (Harvard, 1993).

III. The politics of the academic translator: audience, words, and art

Translating Cixous — who does it and why, what the challenges are and the rewards involved — is an incredibly interesting question. One of the fascinating yet to date virtually unexplored sources of information regarding the politics of literary translation is to be found by examining the lists of those who

have actually performed the job. In contrast to the case of Julia Kristeva, where fully fifty percent of the works have been translated by the same individuals, Cixous's texts have been translated into English by a variety of translators.

Cixous's best-known translator in North America is Betsy Wing, who translated both *La Jeune Née* (*The Newly-Born Woman*) for the University of Minnesota's Theory and History of Literature Series in 1986 and, more recently, in 1991, *Le Livre de Promethea* (*The Book of Promethea*) for the University of Nebraska Press's European Women Writers Series. In France, several members of Cixous's long-running seminar at Paris VIII, Sarah Cornell, Ann Liddle, Deborah Jenson, and Susan Sellers have over the years collaborated to produce, most notably, the bilingual *Vivre l'Orange/To Live the Orange* in 1979 as well as the series of collected essays, both theoretical and poetical, published by Harvard University Press in 1991, *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*.

An essential point to note about the *Vivre l'orange* "translation," however, is that Cixous herself is one of the collaborators. A bilingual text, Cixous's first published version of what she terms a reading *with* Clarice Lispector, it has French and English texts facing each other. Indeed, reading *Vivre l'orange* involves a complex process of interlingual translation. As Barbara Godard has described it,

Puns, multilingual polysemic word plays, proliferate across languages, setting in play a chain of signifiers that produce an inter-language moving between English, French, Portuguese in a textual contamination, transformation. (Godard, p. 112)

Godard argues that because of its position within the French feminist discursive system, the translation of *Vivre l'orange* had little impact on the norms of translation for other French feminist texts, though it established a model for translation of Cixous's work into English.

In the world of theatre, Cixous has been translated by Anita Barrows, who published *Portrait of Dora* in Great Britain in

1979. The other important contributor to the translation of Hélène Cixous's work is Verena Conley, who in her 1984 book, *Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine*, was one of the first to provide English translations of lengthy passages from the entire Cixous *œuvre* and who most recently, again in the University of Minnesota series, has translated two series of Cixous's seminars given in recent years at Paris VIII at the *Centre de Recherches en Études Féminines*.

Both Betsy Wing and Deborah Jenson have written about the experience of translating Cixous. In her introduction to the translation of *The Book of Promethea*, Wing notes that "the pleasure and problems of translating Cixous begin, of course, with the very notions of 'author' and 'translator'" (Wing, *BP*, p. vi). Like Barthes or Derrida, Cixous sees writing as "a generous and generating process that escapes the control of its originator" (Wing, *BP*, p. vi). She is always concerned with giving the reader a desire to write, "to enter into the process of desire that will permit the emergence of a certain sort of work." Cixous herself has defined this process as a kind of 'love story with dreams' where her part as author is to "note down what emerges from her unconscious in an attempt to work with the forces that drive and pressure her, Cixous, as I, the author" (Wing, *BP*, p. vi). Such forces of course in turn become part of the process of "writing," defined as a constant process of the production of meaning in which the reader is to participate as actively as the "original" writer. As Betsy Wing so aptly tells us:

Although translation at its most seductive can feel as if one is letting words come in the eyes and out the fingers, or, as Cixous [in the *Book of Promethea*] describes her own writing: like a cardiograph — left hand on the body, right hand on the page, there is a lot of work that takes place somewhere between eyes and fingers. Despite their oneiric quality, Cixous's texts are not at all "automatic writing;" they consciously pose questions and give answers. The freedoms they offer a reader or a translator result from the demands they make. (Wing, *BP*, p. vi)

Deborah Jenson, in her essay "Coming to Reading Hélène Cixous," points to the challenges encountered by all translators of Hélène Cixous:

Translating the resonant poetics of Hélène Cixous's work into anything but her particular language — which is not French, not German, but poetry — is a difficult (Promethean?) task in which the reader must participate for full effect. The gathering connotative force of Cixous's word-play resists any word-for-word equivalence. (Jenson, *CW*, pp. 194-195)

Citing Betsy Wing among previous Cixous translators, Jenson refers to Wing's opting to render words that were "too full of sense" in the original through "a process of accretion" in the translation (Wing, *NBW*, p. 163). Jenson and her translator colleagues in the *Coming to Writing* volume have more frequently chosen instead "a one-to-one relationship of the English terms to the French, although these terms may function simply as signposts to other possible readings" (Jenson, *CW*, p. 195). Jenson, Liddle, Cornell, and Sellers argue that Wing's decision to explicitly present a series of terms in answer to the poetic multiplicity of one term "bypasses the relationship between the reader and the French text, in which several meanings may be called into action at once or allowed to lie dormant" (*ibid.*). Jenson expresses the hope that readers of the collection "will accept the author's invitation to lend it a little 'soul'" (*ibid.*).

IV. Interdisciplinarity and the difficulty factor: *écriture féminine*

One of the principal "explanations" given for the lack of English translations of Cixous is the perceived difficulty in dealing with a writer whose "language," as Jenson has pointed out, "is not French, not German, but poetry." Professional translators have indeed tackled her massive doctoral thesis on James Joyce (Sally Purcell's *The Exile of James Joyce*) as well as the Médicis prize winning novel, *Dedans (Inside)*, and the fictional *Angst*. Ironically enough, Cixous's most recent work has been writing for the theatre and her collaborative efforts with Ariane Mnouchkine of Paris's *Théâtre du Soleil*, yet to date her plays are not available in translation.

Problems developed in the Anglo-American academy with the earliest translations of *écriture féminine* as "feminine writing," leading to misunderstandings over Cixous's alleged "essentialism." Although the phrase was changed early on in translation to "writing said to be feminine" or, in Quebec and later throughout North America to "*écriture au féminin*" or "writing in feminine," it still crops up as "feminine writing" from time to time and continues in that form to elicit lengthy negative commentary.

The entire issue of the translation dilemma posed by *féminin, féministe* in Cixous and in all French texts is an important one indeed. But the difficulties encountered with Cixous's texts are extralinguistic as well between Cixous (as well as other French theorists) and the Anglo-American feminist academy. Even in a 1981 special issue of *Yale French Studies* devoted to "Feminist Readings: French Texts/American Contexts," the response to the translation of "The Laugh of the Medusa" underlines the political static surrounding transatlantic feminisms:

At one level, the problem is simply one of translation: feminist theory, for example, has until very recently been virtually unavailable in English. Several recent translations, however, have set in motion a process that assures increasing availability of French material. Yet there is an obstacle to this venture: the density of French material and in particular its penchant for ultimately untranslatable word play. The problem of translation, moreover, goes beyond words to broad differences in cultural context. Mary Jacobus, for example, recounts the difficulty of translating a text like "The Laugh of the Medusa" to an American classroom where Cixous's complex dialogue with Derrida (not to mention Derrida's with Lacan) left the students 'very excited, very frustrated, very dislocated.' (Gaudin *et al*, p. 7)

Translation of Cixous, then, is not only the linguistic act but also the cross-cultural movement of a philosophical inquiry which is not necessarily readily at hand for the Anglo-American audience.

Bina Freiwald, speaking of the reception of French feminist theory in translation, underscores the necessity for recognition of diversity and heterogeneity within French feminist theory as well as a recognition that certain key terms remain perhaps untranslatable because of a complex cultural grounding that cannot be conveyed or even suggested by the target language.

Early mediators/translators often provided an explanatory apparatus around key words — for example, *écriture féminine* and *jouissance*. Freiwald argues that if the Anglo-American academy had but better recognized the fuller cultural translations of such terms as glossed by Elaine Marks, Carolyn Burke, or Betsy Wing, "we might have been spared over a decade of dismissive American coy righteousness, annoyingly accompanied by repeated accusations of essentialist biologicistic determinism and inexplicable fainting spells at the mere mention of the word *jouissance*" (Freiwald, p. 63).

In Nicole Ward Jouve's words,

Cixous's texts grope for, adumbrate, a way of being, of becoming rather, that involves both the wish to go forward and the courage to lie still, to wait, to dive inside. Only by actually doing it, which is costly, riddled with frustrations and difficulties and errors, only by committing oneself — believing, hoping, trusting, giving — can one get *to* (not, get) what the writing is *for*. It is not a matter of returning it to the writer, however megalomaniac or narcissistic "she" may appear — it's a matter of taking over, as in a relay, and trying to get to where the best and the deepest of you can take you: the scope that the "I" of the writing has given you is epic so that you, reader, may know no bounds. It is visionary so that *you* may be empowered. (Ward Jouve, p. 59)

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ABSTRACT: Translating Hélène Cixous: French Feminism(s) and Anglo-American Feminist Theory — The works of H. Cixous in English translation represent an interesting case study to examine the relevant choice factors which enter into the project of translation. Cixous, as a representative of what the Anglo-American feminist community has described as "French Feminism" remains best known for two works, both written nearly twenty years ago, "Le Rire de la Méduse" (1975) and *La Jeune Née* (1976). Although the former text was translated almost immediately, the latter waited a decade before reaching an English reading audience. Compared to Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, Cixous remains the least available in translation to an English audience despite a prolific output over the course of her career. The politics of choice, the *décalage* factor, the problems of academic translators and the "difficulty factor" are discussed as they relate to Cixous's translated works.

RÉSUMÉ: Traduire Hélène Cixous: le(s) féminisme(s) français et la théorie féministe anglo-américaine — Les traductions en anglais des travaux d'H. Cixous constituent un cas intéressant pour l'examen des critères significatifs entrant en jeu dans un projet de traduction. Cixous, représentante de ce que la communauté féministe anglo-américaine a décrit comme le «féminisme français», reste très connue pour deux de ses travaux écrits il y a près de vingt ans: «le Rire de la Méduse» (1975) et *la Jeune Née* (1976). Bien que le premier ait été traduit presque immédiatement, il a fallu attendre dix ans avant que le public anglophone n'ait accès au second en traduction. Comparée à Luce Irigaray et à Julia Kristeva, Cixous demeure l'auteure dont les œuvres sont les moins accessibles en traduction à ce public, malgré sa production prolifique. La politique d'édition, le décalage, les problèmes que posent les traducteurs «universitaires» et la difficulté de la traduction sont ici abordés dans leurs relations avec les traductions des œuvres de Cixous.