Essay

Fidelity, Betrayal, and Desire: Translating *La princesse de Clèves*

DAVID HARRISON

It would be impossible today to talk about the narrative voice of *La princesse de Clèves*, the historical novel written by Marie-Madeleine Pioche de La Vergne, Countess de Lafayette, in terms of invisibility and objectivity—that is, the terms that were used to praise the novel on its first publication and for most of its subsequent literary life. Published anonymously in 1678, *La princesse de Clèves* depicts a young, aristocratic heiress who dutifully marries the Prince de Clèves before understanding the nature of love and desire and who must subsequently battle both the extramarital advances of the handsome Duke de Nemours and her own, intense longing for Nemours, all while managing the obligations of living at the court of King Henri II and Queen Catherine de Médicis. This tumult of passion and political ambition is recounted by a third-person narrator whose seeming impartiality in analyzing the characters' emotions made one early reader proclaim that the book had no narrator at all, just as it had no avowed author. The Abbé de Charnes, in a pamphlet supporting the novel written shortly after its publication, praised the author's reserve, saying, "On ne le [l'auteur] peut accuser d'autre affectation de celle de n'en point avoir. On ne le voit point dans son Ouvrage. Il s'y est caché comme au titre de son Livre" ("He [the author] cannot be accused of having any other particularity than that of having none at all. He is not seen in his work. He has hidden himself in it just as he is hidden in the title of the book"; 615).[1] Hippolyte Taine, writing in the mid–nineteenth century, described Lafayette's style in similar terms, saying, "Mme de La Fayette n'élève jamais la voix. Son ton uniforme et modéré n'a point d'accent passioné ni brusque" ("Madame de Lafayette never raises her voice. Her uniform and moderate tone

DAVID HARRISON is professor of French at Grinnell College. He translated *La princesse de Clèves* for the bilingual, digital edition of the novel (edited with Hélène E. Bilis, Jean-Vincent Blanchard, and Hélène Visentin) published by Lever Press in 2022.

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Modern Language Association of America

PMLA 138.3 (2023), doi:10.1632/S003081292300041X

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

does not bear any note of passion or harshness"; 338). Henri Peyre, in his 1942 study of French classicism, referred to the "froideur apparente" ("apparent coldness") of Lafayette's style and praised her "narration si unie, si réservée et si sereine" ("narration that is so unified, so reserved, and so serene"; 141).

These tributes to narrative dispassion have given way to a more nuanced appreciation of Lafayette's work, in which the narrator, instead of being completely inconspicuous, calls strategic attention to the gender dynamics that structure the protagonist's life.[2] But the rediscovery of the narrator's specificity has been accompanied by a completely different discourse regarding translations of *La princesse de Clèves* into English. Here the scholarly community might as well be back in 1678 with the Abbé de Charnes, for it seems that the translator of Lafayette's novel, unlike its narrator, ought best to remain as disembodied and invisible as possible, so as not to upset the interpretive possibilities created by the author. Faith E. Beasley, for example, whose scholarly work has been especially important in helping readers recognize the gendered implications of Lafayette's approach to history, concludes that "the best translation is one that maintains the text's ellipses and ambiguities and not one in which the translator interprets as she or he translates, because such renderings often preclude the interpretation that the reader has derived from Lafayette's carefully constructed prose" ("Teaching" 137). Beasley's admonishment suggests that the translator of *La princesse de Clèves* is always at risk of betraying the subtlety of the text by imposing a particular interpretation, as if honoring the elusive narrative presence of the author required the translator to be steadfastly absent.

La princesse de Clèves has been translated into English multiple times throughout its history, but it is five translations, all completed in the mid– to late twentieth century, that have received scholarly commentary, precisely because they are the ones that are readily available to use in undergraduate or graduate courses: the 1950 translation by Nancy Mitford for Penguin Classics, reissued by New Directions in 1951; the 1978 revision of Mitford's translation for Penguin done by Leonard Tancock; the completely new translation for Penguin done by Robin Buss in 1992; the 1992 translation by Terence Cave for Oxford World's Classics; and the 1994 translation published for the Norton Critical Edition, based on the 1891 translation of the novel by Thomas Sargent Perry and revised by John Lyons.[3] Each of the translators provides prefatory material or notes, or both, to explain their individual choices, and nearly all of them articulate a goal of "fidelity" to the original text that, echoing Beasley's comments, requires translators to largely efface themselves.[4] For example, Buss, in the introduction to his translation, says his work "attempts to reconcile fidelity to both the letter and the spirit of Mme de Lafayette's novel" ("Note" 20). Cave, in his introduction, describes the work of the translator in terms of discretion: "I would prefer [my translation] to be regarded as performing, in written form, the work of a discreet interpreter" (xxx). Lyons, for his part, in his preface to the Norton edition, says that "[t]he goal of the translator must be to bring the reader as close as possible to the experience of reading the original text" (vii). In all these cases, the translation aims to create the illusion that Lawrence Venuti has called the "translator's invisibility," meaning "the appearance . . . that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the 'original'" (1).

Certainly the five twentieth-century translators of *La princesse de Clèves* make themselves visible in their paratextual material: Cave, for instance, points out in his introduction that he has "attenuated some of the more awkward instances" of Lafayette's subordinated clauses (xxix). But even the use of notes seems to violate some implicit sense of readability; Buss says that he "added as few notes as possible" ("Note" 20), and Lyons states that the changes he made to the Perry translation are unmarked, since extra footnotes would "burden the text with an additional layer of interpretation, distracting readers from Lafayette's narrative" (vii). Mitford's version of *La princesse de Clèves* is the most unburdened of them all, containing no footnotes and no explanation of particular dilemmas faced by the translator. Such an approach earns the praise of Thomas Francis-Noël in his article

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

"Recent English Translations of *La princesse de Clèves*." Francis-Noël echoes critical voices like that of Hippolyte Taine when he says that Mitford's text "never draws attention to itself as a translation; its goal is transparency" (276).

Ironically, the emphasis on the translator's invisibility ultimately undermines the potential for translation to help the reader understand the complexities of the novel, particularly its treatment of erotic sentiments. Lafayette depicts the sexual tensions of the novel with an abstract, elliptical vocabulary that challenges every reader—of the French and the English—to judge whether a particular word, used in a particular circumstance, carries an erotic subtext. Buss even states in his introduction that "*The Princesse de Clèves* is a story of erotic love" (4). Insisting that the translator avoid interpretation when faced with ambiguous words merely denies the fact that rendering a term into another language is, by nature, interpretive. By contrast, highlighting the translators' choices underscores the challenges that even the very first readers of *La princesse de Clèves* faced in interpreting the text, as shown by the different pamphlets and letters that circulated following its original publication.[5] The fact that the princess evaluates her actions in relation to her multiple and shifting notions of fidelity (fidelity to her mother, fidelity to her husband, fidelity to her husband's memory) parallels the way the translator often makes an explicit appeal to an ideal of fidelity when engaging in interpretation.[6]

What I am proposing, then, is a version of what A. E. B. Coldiron, following Venuti, has referred to as a "critical taxonom[y] of visibility" (198)—in this case, a study of how recent English translators of *La princesse de Clèves* reveal themselves at specific moments of their work and how this visibility can advance literary criticism of the novel. Moreover, I would like to suggest that infidelity, rather than fidelity, is the key to understanding the translator's work with *La princesse de Clèves*. Lafayette establishes the paradigm of infidelity with her adaptation of an anecdote about the Vidame de Chartres's relationship with Queen Catherine de Médicis. Not only is Lafayette quite unfaithful to her source, her version of the anecdote makes infidelity a key for arriving at the inner truth of a character. From here, we can consider the ways that English translators of *La princesse de Clèves* become more visible when making what might seem to be unfaithful renderings of Lafayette's prose into English. Such infidelity is useful, because it sheds light on the paradoxes and ambiguities of the text's representation of erotic love. By focusing on a select group of examples, I argue that every translator of *La princesse de Clèves* is forced into some form of infidelity, and thus the most faithful translation of the novel is one that gives the reader access to the variety of choices that prior translators have made—an edition, in other words, that renders visible the competing fidelities that interpretation requires.

Infidelity as Insight: The Story of the Vidame de Chartres and Catherine de Médicis

Set at the French Renaissance court of Henri II, *La princesse de Clèves* presents itself as a true account of its historical era, in keeping with the conventions of the *nouvelle historique* ("historical novel"), the genre to which *La princesse de Clèves* belongs. Writers of such works often drew from first-person memoirs that recounted details about the Valois kings and prefaced their stories with references to their historical sources, as if to prove that the narrative was authentic by virtue of being transcribed from an original report (Zonza 326). In the case of *La princesse de Clèves*, Lafayette adapted material from various sources.[7] While she does not directly name these sources at the start of the novel, Lafayette famously described *La princesse de Clèves* to her friend the Chevalier de Lescheraine as "des Mémoires" ("memoirs") and not "un Roman" ("a novel"), indicating that she wanted her work to be read as historically accurate (Lafayette, "À Lescheraine" 989).

But a significant episode in *La princesse de Clèves*—the story of the relationship between the Vidame de Chartres and Queen Catherine de Médicis—demonstrates how Lafayette is unfaithful to her source in order to capture a larger truth about love and marital fidelity. Appearing initially as one of Jean Le Laboureur's additions to Michel de Castelnau's *Mémoires*, the story recounts, in a

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

single paragraph, how Catherine de Médicis was drawn by natural "inclination" into a short-lived relationship with the Vidame de Chartres, despite the vidame's meager aristocratic pedigree. While exhibiting the classic masculine traits of courage and political savvy, the queen is ultimately similar to the other women at court in having the amorous "passion" that characterizes the Valois dynasty:

> Pour achever l'éloge de cette Princesse, je dirai que parmi ses grandes occupations où elle faisait paraître un courage d'homme, avec toute la prudence et la conduite d'un parfait Politique, elle n'oublia pas tellement son Sexe, qu'on puisse dire qu'elle ait été exempte de la passion qui dominait à la Cour, depuis le roi François premier son beau-pere, et qui a duré jusques à l'extinction de la posterité de Valois. Elle eut diverses inclinations, et entre autres pour François de Vendôme vidame de Chartres. . . . Je ne veux pas dire que cette amitié ait passé les bornes de la galanterie. Outre que c'était la mode, parce qu'il n'y avait guère de Dames qui n'eussent leurs Chevaliers, c'était un moyen de s'assurer de personnes qui la servissent par le plus puissant de tous les engagements. (Le Laboureur, "Additions" 500)

> To conclude the tribute to this Queen, I should say that amid her great deeds where she demonstrated a manly courage, and with the prudence and performance of a perfect statesman, she did not forget her sex to the point that one could say she was spared the passion that dominated the court since the days of her father-in-law, King François I, and that lasted until the end of the Valois dynasty. She had several affections, and among others for François de Vendôme, Vidame de Chartres. . . . I do not mean to say that her relationship with him went beyond the line of gallantry. In addition to being the fashion of the era, since there was not a single noblewoman who did not have her own knight, it was a way of securing people who would serve her with the strongest of all attachments.

Here, then, is a secret about Catherine de Médicis that illustrates the queen's political savvy but also, more generally, how she and other women delight in the power of "la galanterie."

Lafayette does something quite different with this story, beginning with the way that she introduces the concept of "la galanterie" in her novel. In its oft-cited opening line, *La princesse de Clèves* celebrates the gallantry of Henri II's court,[8] but then the text makes gallantry an expression of infidelity, since it is exemplified by the king's adulterous relationship with Diane de Poitiers. Lafayette introduces Catherine de Médicis in a sentence that raises doubt about the queen's feelings about her husband's unfaithfulness: "[I]l semblait qu'elle souffrît sans peine l'attachement du Roi pour la Duchesse de Valentinois, et elle n'en témoignait aucune jalousie; mais elle avait une si profonde dissimulation, qu'il était difficile de juger de ses sentiments" ("She appeared to bear the king's devotion to the Duchess de Valentinois without distress, and she betrayed not a hint of jealousy. But she was so good at dissemblance that it was difficult to know her true feelings"; 331). Thus, instead of presenting "la galanterie" as something that unites all women, Lafayette presents it as divisive, her Catherine de Médicis symbolizing the possibility of pain and suffering due to a man's infidelity.

If Lafayette's historical source answers the question "Did Catherine de Médicis ever have a love affair?," *La princesse de Clèves* asks a different question—"Is Catherine de Médicis jealous of Diane de Poitiers?"—and uses the anecdote about the Vidame de Chartres to provide an answer. One might say that Lafayette is unfaithful to the original text, for she is uninterested in making the queen yet another example of the passions of the Valois court; instead, Lafayette deploys the story about the vidame to illustrate the bleak loneliness that can lie behind such love affairs. In Lafayette's rendering, what attracts the queen to the vidame is the possibility of having a confidant who can hear her woes. As the queen explains to the vidame in a secret meeting:

> Je vous choisis pour vous confier tous mes chagrins, et pour m'aider à les adoucir. Vous pouvez juger qu'ils ne sont pas médiocres. Je souffre en apparence, sans beaucoup de peine, l'attachement du Roi pour la Duchesse de Valentinois; mais il m'est insupportable. Elle gouverne le Roi, elle le trompe, elle me méprise, tous mes gens sont à elle. (404)

> I have chosen you so that I can entrust you with all my woes, and so that you can help me to alleviate them. You can understand that they are not small.

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

> By all appearances, I tolerate with little distress the relationship that the king has with the Duchess de Valentinois, but it is unbearable to me. She governs the king, she is betraying him, she scorns me, and all my servants are on her side.

The mystery surrounding the queen's jealousy is now categorically resolved, but in a way that only reinforces how Lafayette has transformed her original source. Instead of courtly gallantry, the queen is motivated by suffering and isolation, trying to cope with the betrayal of her husband as well as that of Diane de Poitiers, who Catherine suggests is unfaithful to him.

Moreover, in a stroke of genius, Lafayette makes the Vidame de Chartres the narrator of the episode that recounts his relationship with the queen. Rather than learn Catherine de Médicis's heartbreak from the third-person, "invisible" narrator, we learn it from the vidame himself, who tells his story to the Duke de Nemours. The entire episode becomes an act of infidelity, since the queen has made the vidame promise to have no other love affairs, so that she can confide in him with security. When a letter to the vidame from one of his ex-lovers circulates at court, proving that he has been unfaithful to the queen's demands, the vidame turns to the Duke de Nemours for advice. Hence the story of his relationship is told as an act of desperation, the vidame trying to find a way to hide his infidelity and remain within the queen's favor. The vidame's betrayal of the queen is what gives the reader access to her true feelings, spoken in direct discourse with a poignancy that the original source lacks.[9]

On multiple levels, then, the story of the Vidame de Chartres and Catherine de Médicis exemplifies the relationship between infidelity and truth, even as it depicts the anguish that romantic infidelity produces. Lafayette takes the story from a historical source but betrays its original meaning in order to create a deeper, more nuanced portrait of the concept of *galanterie*. She changes Catherine de Médicis's motivation for the relationship, to underscore the grief that can be produced by sexual liaisons. Furthermore, she has the vidame become the narrator of the story, making it another instance of male infidelity, yet one that provides the clearest window into the queen's secret feelings. The episode offers an interesting paradigm for translators of *La princesse de Clèves*. Contemporary translators typically fear the possibility of being unfaithful to the source text by rendering a word or expression incorrectly or with insufficient precision; such infidelity risks making the translator visible by showcasing the mistake to a reader who knows the original text. Lafayette, though, suggests that textual infidelity may still provide insight, just as romantic infidelity may result in the most straightforward expression of the suffering it causes. To understand this point, we can turn to Nancy Mitford's translation of *La princesse de Clèves*, which, in its apparent infidelity to Lafayette, raises an important question about the text's depiction of erotic love.

Translating Love, Passion, and Happiness

In her 1950 translation of *La princesse de Clèves*, Nancy Mitford does not speak to her process of translating the novel; her colorful introduction, however, provides insight into her views of the novel's characters and its conflicts. To start, Mitford gives a cheerful assessment of the court of Henri II as portrayed in the novel: "The Princesse de Clèves and her friends are one of the most delightful groups of people ever described in fiction—young, gay, spontaneous, good, generous and beautiful" (ix). A reader familiar with the novel in French would immediately be taken aback by this statement, knowing that the court is often depicted as a viper's nest of competing ambitions in which "good[ness]" is absent, as shown by the anecdote about the Vidame de Chartres. Mitford later reinforces this rosy view when she says that Lafayette "has quite recaptured the chivalrous and romantic attitude to love which prevailed in the Sixteenth Century—very different from the practical approach to her own generation" (xxi). Clearly, Mitford believes that *La princesse de Clèves* endorses the pursuit of love as a means to happiness, unlike the "practical approach" in the era of Louis XIV.[10]

Mitford underscores this interpretation in her introductory remarks about the relationship

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

between the Duke de Nemours and the princess, which results in a flagrant example of the translator's infidelity to Lafayette's prose. Mitford refers to Nemours as "perhaps the most irresistible character in any novel" (xxii)—a surprising assessment, given that the princess's final action is to resist Nemours's entreaties of marriage. For Mitford, the princess's refusal of Nemours constitutes a "curious shrinking from happiness," plausible only because Lafayette portrays the character so well that the reader "can just believe in the renunciation." Mitford suggests that it would be better for the princess to give in to the "compelling fascination of M. de Nemours." Such an opinion skews Mitford's rendering of one of the final sentences of the novel. In the original French, Lafayette makes clear that, concerning Nemours, "des années entières s'étant passées, le temps et l'absence ralentirent sa douleur et éteignirent sa passion" ("as the long years passed, time and absence slowed his pain and extinguished his passion"; 478). Calling to mind a fire being doused, the French verb *éteindre* ("to extinguish") conveys a stark image of Nemours eventually losing his love for the princess. In Mitford's rendering, though, the embers still flicker: "At last, after the passage of whole years, his love and his grief became less acute" (202). Mitford translates the French *ralentir* ("became less acute") but eliminates entirely the verb *éteindre*, as if to confirm the translator's earlier judgment that, had she not "shr[unk] from happiness," the princess could have enjoyed unending love with Nemours. For a reader familiar with the original text, Mitford makes herself visible by choosing to depict Nemours's emotions in a way that is unfaithful to Lafayette.

Nearly all the subsequent translations of *La princesse de Clèves* comment on Mitford's version as exemplifying the perils of a translator taking too much liberty and thereby becoming too visible. Robin Buss, who praises the "fluen[cy]" and "distinctive tone" of Mitford's version, nonetheless criticizes her "errors" and "gratuitous omissions" and suggests that Mitford turns the novel into one better suited to her own world of the twentieth century than to that of Lafayette ("Note" 19–20). Terence Cave says that Mitford makes the novel "lighter, less serious, more like the consumer historical novel" and that this "disqualifies [Mitford's] version as a means of approaching the original text" ("Note" xxxi). Both Buss and Cave render the final portrait of Nemours in terms that are much closer to the original text. Cave's translation reads, "[T]ime and absence diminished his pain and quenched his passion" (156), while Buss's reads, "[T]ime and absence assuaged his pain and extinguished his feelings" (175). Both of them refuse Mitford's use of "love" as a translation of the French "passion," Buss even going so far as to suggest that all the "feelings" that Nemours bears for the princess—not just love or passion—disappear.

But it is Leonard Tancock, tasked with revising Mitford's translation (with her consent) for a 1978 Penguin reissue of the work, who is the most critical of the earlier version. In his prefatory "Note on the Revision of This Text," completed after Mitford had died, Tancock states that "[t]he translator must always be faithful to his original, and he has no right whatever to take any liberties with it" (24). This rebuke of Mitford seems even harsher with the gendering of the translator as "he," as if Mitford's approach somehow bears the mark of a woman's infidelity.[11] Tancock claims to have made over four hundred corrections to Mitford's version, "from trivial points to very important emendations, in a few cases substitution of a whole paragraph" (26). Indeed, Tancock changes Mitford's version of the final sentence about Nemours to "time and absence healed his grief and his passion died away" (198). Once again, Mitford's "love" is changed to "passion." This reflects Tancock's view of erotic desire in the text, which he elaborates in his "Note" and which is a direct rebuttal of Mitford's assessment that the princess could find happiness with Nemours. Tancock states that the "eternal truth" (23) of *La princesse de Clèves* is its salutary distinction between passion and love:

> What is really important about *La princesse de Clèves* is not so much its value as a historical novel, or analogies between court life in sixteenth-century France and that of Versailles in Madame de Lafayette's own time, as its deep insight into the realities of human

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

> character, the distinction between sexual passion, which is inevitably transitory, and love based upon respect and understanding which alone can give enduring trust and happiness. (24)

Tancock dismisses Mitford's view of sixteenth-century France as unimportant to the interpretation of the novel. Furthermore, in contrast with Mitford, who states that the princess "shrink[s] from happiness" by not pursuing her passion with Nemours, Tancock aligns happiness with "love based on respect and understanding" instead of with "sexual passion" ("Note" 24). Tancock's formula appears to be based on the novel's opposition between Nemours and the Prince de Clèves, in which the former represents the unstable but exciting power of sexual attraction, while the latter stands for respectful marital devotion. If Mitford's unfaithful translation suggests that Nemours's passion is a form of love that can bring happiness, Tancock's more faithful rendering suggests the reverse, siding with the calmer virtues of the Prince de Clèves.[12]

At face value, Tancock seems to have the stronger argument; after all, the princess rejects Nemours, and his passion dies. But, on closer inspection, the French text reveals an ambiguous message about the relationships among love, passion, and happiness—one that does not fully disqualify Mitford's judgment and in fact explains the difficulties faced by all translators of the novel. We can start with the instruction that the princess receives from her mother, Madame de Chartres, before her marriage. Madame de Chartres instructs her that "ce qui seul peut faire le bonheur d'une femme . . . est d'aimer son mari et d'en être aimée" (338), which is rendered as follows by the translators:

> that which, alone, can make for the happiness of a woman [is] to love her husband and to be loved by him (Buss 30)

> the only thing that can ensure a woman's happiness [is] to love one's husband and to be loved by him (Cave 10)

> the one sure means of securing a wife's happiness . . . is to love her husband and to be loved by him (Perry-Lyons 8)

> the one line of conduct which can make a woman happy . . . is . . . loving her husband and being loved by him (Mitford 12; Mitford-Tancock 37)[13]

In addition to choosing "happy" or "happiness" for "bonheur," the translators all choose "love" and "being loved" for Chartres's "aimer" and "être aimée." Given that Chartres marries her daughter to a man for whom the princess has no "inclination," it seems obvious that Chartres distinguishes sexual attraction from love, in line with Tancock's rule.[14] But should the translator therefore try to use a different verb or phrase for "aimer" than "love"? If one were to translate Madame de Chartres's dictum to say that her daughter should "love her husband as a dear friend" or "love her husband with respect but not passion," the translator would be unfaithful by adding many extraneous words that are not in the text. Should the translator introduce a note to comment on Chartres's use of the verb *aimer*? Doing so would help establish the translator's perspective, but it would also violate the notion of "readability" (that is, invisibility) that the translators cite to justify limiting their notes to a minimum.

In any case, glossing Madame de Chartres's use of *aimer* would necessitate further glossing, since Lafayette uses the verb *aimer* in ways that associate it with passion or erotic sentiments. For example, later in the novel, when the princess reflects on her feelings toward Nemours, the narrator reports that she considers the duke "un homme digne d'être aimé par son seul attachement, et pour qui elle avait une inclination si violente, qu'elle l'aurait aimé, quand il ne l'aurait pas aimée" (464).[15] Furthermore, the French noun *amour*, which is used approximately fifty times in the text and is readily translated as "love," is *never* used to describe the princess's feelings toward her husband.[16] The Prince de Clèves admits as much when he tells the princess that "je n'ai jamais pu vous donner de l'amour, et je vois que vous craignez d'en avoir pour un autre" (420).[17] By contrast, when the narrator describes the princess's feelings toward Nemours, it is said that she has a heart "nouvellement

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

abandonné aux charmes de l'amour" (474).[18] Lafayette's vocabulary undermines a strict formula about the nature of love, such as Tancock provides, and raises the possibility that passionate or erotic love can actually bring happiness, as Mitford would suggest.

An interesting comment by the narrator seems to further support Mitford's outlook; it occurs at the moment when, after her husband's death, the princess reflects on the possibility of marrying Nemours. The narrator tells us that "une passion endormie se ralluma dans son coeur" ("a dormant passion rekindled in her heart"); this passion is linked directly to love, since this is also the moment, cited above, when the princess admits to herself she would have loved Nemours even if he had not loved her. But the princess then turns against this reverie, and the narrator says that "elle ne trouvait guère moins de crime à épouser Monsieur de Nemours qu'elle en avait trouvé à l'aimer pendant la vie de son mari" ("she considered it no less of a crime to marry Monsieur de Nemours than it had been to love him during the life of her husband"; 465). The princess considers her passionate thoughts about Nemours a form of infidelity to her husband, yet the narrator then makes the following assessment of the princess's fears: "Elle s'abandonna à ces réflexions si contraires à son bonheur" (465).[19] It is an unexpected and surprising intervention, for the narrator seems to be abandoning "invisibility" in favor of stating directly to the reader that the princess's thoughts of infidelity are standing in the way of her happiness, which suggests that she could be happy in marrying Nemours.

Of course, the princess ultimately rejects Nemours not because she fears happiness but because she fears her happiness will not endure, since Nemours may fall in love with yet another woman.[20] Tancock may therefore be right that the novel portrays "sexual passion" as "transitory," but this does not mean that the novel endorses "love based upon respect and understanding," for the simple reason that the words for love in the text are so frequently associated with passion. One could also speculate whether a Nemours-Clèves marriage would defy Tancock's rule and bring enduring happiness to both characters, since the narrator describes their love in hyperbolic terms that place it outside the norms of other relationships.[21] Despite the "extinguish[ing]" of Nemours's passion after the princess leaves him, Lafayette does not absolutely solve the riddle of how he would behave if the princess were to be with him.[22] This enigma comes from the vocabulary used by Lafayette, in which words like *aimer*, *amour*, *passion*, and *bonheur* are employed so frequently that one is left to decide if they are being used interchangeably or not, leading to the translators' variety of interpretations. Mitford's understanding of these terms in *La princesse de Clèves*, despite leading her to make some bona fide errors in her translation, cannot be rejected outright. It is more accurate to say that Mitford's infidelity, especially when it is most visible, forces the reader into a deeper interpretive engagement with the text's ambiguities and leads to a conclusion that no single translation, on its own, can adequately express the meaning of love in the text.

Gazing on the *Personne*

The questions surrounding love and passion lead naturally to the dilemma of the gaze in *La princesse de Clèves*. As Cave points out in his introduction, "one of the most insistent aspects of the novel's style is what one might call the rhetoric of appearances," as exemplified by the frequent use of verbs such as *paraître* ("to appear"), *sembler* ("to seem"), and *voir* ("to see"; xxix–xxx). On nearly every page of the novel, characters cast their gaze on one another, and some of these gazes are overtly erotic, such as when the Duke de Nemours spies on the partially unclothed Princess de Clèves in her country house (451). But in other cases, the sexual nature of the gaze is left for the translator to decide, and no more so than when the gaze is linked to the term *personne*. Rendering this term into English proves difficult, for there is always the risk that the translator may invest *personne* with too little, or too much, sexual nuance. In other words, the translator's gaze always lies behind a character's gaze, and for this reason the visibility of the translator is a constituent element of all forms of vision in the text.

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

A good example comes from the story of the Vidame de Chartres and Catherine de Médicis, where *personne* is used in conjunction with the expression "liaison particulière." The vidame tells the Duke de Nemours that he is flattered by the opportunity to have a "liaison particulière" with the queen, especially because the queen's *personne* remains "extrêmement aimable" ("extremely attractive"; 403). The French term *liaison*, in its seventeenth-century context, can simply mean an agreement between two people based on shared interests.[23] Mitford renders "liaison particulière" as "special relationship" (99), Cave as "private relationship" (78), and Buss as "intimate liaison" (97), though Perry-Lyons calls it a "love-affair" (54). The translators all characterize the potential relationship between the vidame and the queen differently, Buss choosing the most sexually suggestive terms. These interpretations are further challenged by *personne*, which, like *liaison*, has multiple meanings in seventeenth-century French. In the Académie Française's 1694 dictionary, the term is defined as the "figure extérieure" of a subject, the physical properties of a person (*Dictionnaire*). But Antoine Furetière's 1690 dictionary defines *personne* as the "individu" of a subject, something more related to a subject's character than to physical appearance. In the case of the vidame's statement, Mitford translates *personne* as "physical charms" (99), and Buss echoes this physicality with "one who is still extremely attractive" (97). Cave, by contrast, goes with "personal charms" (78), and Perry-Lyons has a similar formulation with "a queen who was still so charming" (54). While "personal charms" and "charming" may have an erotic connotation, "physical charms" and "attractive" have a stronger one. Mitford and Buss, then, attribute a more sexual gaze to the vidame than do the other translators; they make the queen into a figure of an erotic power that recalls her political power. Such a choice adds greater depth to the characterization of Catherine de Médicis in the novel, since it tempers the one-dimensional interpretation of her as a long-suffering spouse, but it also reduces the complexity of the vidame, since it turns his courting of the queen into yet another conquest.

Christopher Braider's analysis of the word *personne* in *La princesse de Clèves* provides a useful taxonomy but does not clarify the erotics of the word (279–84). Braider classifies each of the 145 uses of the term, engaging in a process of translation to determine if *personne* means "appearance," "demeanor," "individuality," "public identity," or something else (279). But the slippage between these different categories demonstrates that for Braider, just as for Buss, Cave, Mitford, and Perry-Lyons, determining the extent of the physical body in *personne* is extremely subjective—as subjective as the desires of the characters, or the translators, themselves. For example, Braider cites a sentence about Catherine de Médicis's wanting to keep Diane de Poitiers close to her *personne* as an example of the queen's "public identity" (280): "la politique l'obligeait d'approcher cette Duchesse de sa personne, afin d'en approcher aussi le Roi" ("the affairs of state required her to keep a close relationship with the duchess, in order to keep close to the king, as well"; 332). Braider seems to be thinking along the lines of Mitford and Cave, who here use the English cognate "her person" (Mitford translates "approcher cette Duchesse de sa personne" as "keep the Duchess closely attached to her person" [4], Cave as "keep Mme de Valentinois close to her person [3]), as if the narrator were referring to Catherine de Médicis's official, public body. Yet merely two paragraphs later, when the narrator says that Diane de Poitiers had such power over the king that she was mistress of both "sa personne et . . . l'État" ("his person and the state"; 334)—Mitford (7) and Cave (6) also translate *personne* here with the English cognate "person"—Braider classifies this use of *personne* in terms of the king's "individuality" rather than his public persona (279). But are the two cases really that different? Does the queen not desire to retain some physical proximity to Diane de Poitiers precisely because the latter has such physical supremacy over the king?

Three further examples from the text illustrate the way that the translation of *personne* can reveal presuppositions about gender that may be in the text or may be coming uniquely from the translator. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator says that the King of Navarre gained everyone's respect from

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

the "grandeur" that appeared "en sa personne" (332). Cave (4), Buss (24), and Perry-Lyons (4) all render "sa personne" as "his bearing," while Mitford uses "his lofty character" (4–5). Navarre becomes a model of male stateliness, quite different from the vidame, whose gaze on the queen's *personne* carries an erotic charge. A few pages later, the Marshal de Saint-André is described as having achieved an "éclat" that he sustained through his merit and "l'agrément de sa personne" (335). Only Cave gives a visual meaning to the sentence by translating "éclat" as "lustre" (7), whereas other translators choose more abstract, immaterial nouns such as "position" (Buss 27), "prestige" (Mitford 8), and "distinction" (Perry-Lyons 6). Cave is also the only one who gives a physical quality to "sa personne" by opting for "his pleasing personal appearance" (7), whereas Buss (27), Perry-Lyons (6), and Mitford (9) all choose "charm." By contrast, when the narrator describes the "éclat" of Mademoiselle de Chartres (the young woman who will become the Princess de Clèves) and says that her face and "personne" were full of grace and charm (338), Buss and Cave employ a description that fully suggests an erotic gaze. Buss refers to her "radiance" (30) and Cave to her "lustre" (10), and both translate "sa personne" as "her figure."[24] To refer to Mademoiselle de Chartres's "figure" is a marked shift toward physical specificity—as if one were taking the character's measurements—in contrast with the more abstract "charm[s]" of the Marshal de Saint-André and the "bearing" of the King of Navarre. Is this because Mademoiselle de Chartres's female body is implicitly more sexualized than that of the two men, or is it because the two (male) translators, in assuming the narrative gaze, are making visible their own erotic investment in this character?

The problem of interpreting the eroticism of *personne* becomes the most difficult when Mademoiselle de Chartres expresses her feelings about the Prince de Clèves to her mother. Asked whether she has any "inclination" for the Prince, the daughter replies that "elle n'avait aucune inclination particulière pour sa personne" ("she had no particular inclination for his *personne*"; 347). Lafayette could have ended the sentence with the pronoun "pour lui" ("for him"), since the phrase "inclination pour lui" occurs throughout the novel in other contexts (339, 358, 371, 391, 435, 438). Why, then, insist on "inclination *pour sa personne*"—the only time that such an expression is used in the novel—if not to underscore Mademoiselle de Chartres's lack of sexual feelings for the Prince de Clèves, as Michael Moriarty suggests (81)? And yet the reader knows that Mademoiselle de Chartres is very naive and that her mother has taught her to distrust passion. It seems implausible that such an innocent, isolated young woman, who knows her mother's ideas about virtue, would openly express her physical desires. Here lies the translator's conundrum: making the reader notice the physical dimension of the vocabulary while demanding that we not attribute more sexual sophistication to the character than she realistically bears. To say, as Perry and Lyons do, that the princess has "no special love for him" evacuates the physical dimension of the statement (14), which is why Mildred Greene cites this as an example of Perry's desexualization of the text (505). To choose the English cognate "person," as Mitford and Cave do—as in "she was not particularly attracted by his person" (Mitford 24)—seems curiously listless and indistinct, as if this daughterly confession to her mother suddenly ended on a ceremonial note. Buss says "she was not particularly attracted to him" (39), which captures some of the erotic character of the statement, but the pronoun "him" erases the fact that Lafayette has chosen *sa personne* and not *lui* to end the sentence. In a sense, all are unfaithful, because the sentence itself cannot be captured by a single phrase in English.

The problem of translating *personne*, as with so many other terms used by Lafayette, is one of interpreting the nuances of bodies and emotions in the text. If my analysis has shown that interpretation is constitutive of translation, it makes sense to give as much visibility as possible to such interpretation to enhance the literary understanding of the text. How might this be done? Cave remarks in his introduction that he would have preferred that his translation be accompanied by the original text—"a bilingual edition with the translation on a facing

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

page" (xxx). Such an idea finds support in Coldiron, who, in advocating more visibility for the translator, says, "Facing-page translations invite readers to witness and to experience for themselves the translator's engagement with the prior text, and thus to know the fact and process of translation as integral to the literary experience even as they first read a work" (198). The growth of electronic publishing makes such facing-page translations more economically viable than they are in print, where the doubling of pages may substantially increase production costs. In addition, future translators of *La princesse de Clèves* should refer to prior translators' choices at key moments of the text, so that problems of interpretation become clarified by a dialogue between different options. Again, this seems possible in the realm of electronic publishing, where a highlighted word or sentence could be linked to a list of the renderings that Buss, Cave, Mitford, Perry-Lyons, and Mitford-Tancock have made. This is also in line with Coldiron, who says that "[t]he digital revolution" offers possibilities such as "links to alternative translations, dictionaries, or a translator's site or biography; a video clip of the translator discussing her choices for a particular line; or sound files of both language versions read aloud to display and juxtapose their respective oral-aural qualities" (197). In the end, our understanding of *La princesse de Clèves* will grow deeper as we allow translators to break the illusion of transparency and make their work a conversation with their predecessors, permitting a range of infidelities that create insight rather than condemnation.

Notes

1. All French quotations from *La princess de Clèves* are taken from the 2014 Gallimard-Pléiade edition, edited by Camille Esmein-Sarrazin. All translations from the French are mine, unless otherwise noted. In certain cases, I have avoided providing my own translation in order to place the focus on the choices made by the translators discussed in this article. Ideally, I would give no translation of my own but would simply provide the various renderings made by others, but space considerations do not allow this. It goes without saying that my translations are subject to the same "infidelities" as those of other translators, and they are not conceived as providing a transparent window onto the text.

2. Feminist scholarship has been essential in this reconsideration of Lafayette's narrative voice. The key works are Miller; DeJean, "Lafayette's Ellipses" and *Tender Geographies*; Beasley, *Revising Memory*; Grande; and the essays in *An Inimitable Example*.

3. The novel was first translated into English in 1679 as *The Princess of Cleves, the Most Famed Romance* (R. Bentley and M. Magnes). It then appeared in a new translation in 1720 (John Watts) that was reprinted in 1777 as part of *A Collection of Novels Selected and Revised by Mrs. [Elizabeth] Griffith* (G. Kearsly). The characters of the novel were also freely incorporated into a seventeenth-century English stage play written by Nathanael Lee and first published in 1689 (London). The nineteenth century saw the publication of Thomas Sargent Perry's translation, which is the basis for the Norton Critical Edition of the novel. To reflect the fact that John Lyons revised the Norton edition, I refer to it as "Perry-Lyons."

4. Mitford is the outlier among the group, since her introduction provides no specific commentary on the role of the translator.

5. These different writings are compiled by Camille Esmein-Sarrazin in a dossier that accompanies her edition of *La princesse de Clèves* (Esmein-Sarrazin).

6. The idea of fidelity in translation dates to the Roman poet Horace, who counsels against word-for-word translation of Greek poetry, attributing such a style to a stilted "fidus interpres" ("slavish translator"; lines 133–34, pp. 460–61). In subsequent eras, translators such as the Christian scholar Jerome, in his fourth-century translation of the Bible, endorse the Horatian idea of sense-for-sense translation, and Dryden, in his preface to Ovid's *Epistles,* says that translating "too faithfully is indeed pedantically: 'tis a faith like that which proceeds from Superstition" (*Translation Studies Reader* 38–39). Early modern translators often adapt the source text to the cultural norms of the target audience, to the point that some seventeenth-century French translations are labeled "belles infidèles" ("beautiful but unfaithful"); McMurran notes that in eighteenth-century English translations of French novels, "basic distinctions between source and target were intentionally blurred" (7). Venuti argues that after World War II a new idea of fidelity—what he calls "the regime of fluency"—emerges in English-language translation, in which the translator is expected to render the source text in a way that effaces any sign of the translator's work, as if giving direct, unmediated access to the original (1–6).

7. These sources include the memoirs of Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, and those of Pierre Mathieu, as well as François Eudes de Mézéray's *Histoire de France* and the annotations of Jean Le Laboureur to Michel de Castelnau's *Mémoires*. The two-part article by H. Chamard and G. Rudler details what Lafayette borrowed from these sources.

8. "La magnificence et la galanterie n'ont jamais paru en France avec tant d'éclat, que dans les dernières années du règne de Henri second" (331); "Magnificence and gallantry have never

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

sparkled as brilliantly in France as they did during the final years of the reign of Henri II."

9. Buss notes this paradox in the introduction to his translation, where he says, "The irony is that she [the Queen] is wrong to trust the Vidame, and we only learn that she has taken him into her confidence because he is giving a verbatim account of her remarks to the Duc de Nemours" (16).

10. It should be noted that *The Pursuit of Love* is the title of a 1945 novel written by Mitford only a few years before she would publish her translation of *La princesse de Clèves*. Hepburn, in analyzing *The Pursuit of Love*, says that Mitford viewed France, and French literature, as being more accepting of erotic love than was her native England. Hepburn writes, "An avid reader of La Rochefoucauld and Madame de Lafayette, Mitford found better models of erotic sensibility and better fates for mistresses in French fiction than in English fiction" (355).

11. Among the five translators discussed in this article, Nancy Mitford is the only woman.

12. Buss suggests a similar binary choice between happiness and passion when he says in his introduction that "[t]he princess is caught in a tragic dilemma, offered the possibility of happiness with a loving husband, but driven to reject it by an impulse more powerful than the desire for happiness" (7–8).

13. I refer to the version of *La princesse de Clèves* translated by Mitford and revised by Tancock as "Mitford-Tancock."

14. The noun *inclination* is certainly ambiguous and can indicate a natural disposition toward another person without necessarily implying sexual desire. But my interpretation is in alignment with that of Philippe Sellier, whose analysis of the word in *La princesse de Clèves* concludes that Lafayette uses it to evoke not a "tendre amitié sentimentale" ("tender sentimental friendship") but rather deeper and more uncontrollable "passions amoureuses" ("passions of love"; 225). Furetière's 1690 *Dictionnaire*, in its definition of *passion*, associates *inclination* with "tout désir violent" ("any violent desire").

15. "[A] man worthy of being loved for his fidelity alone, and one for whom she felt so strong an attraction that she would have loved him even if he had not loved her" (Buss 161); "a man, in short, worthy of being loved simply for the strength of his attraction, and for whom she had such a violent inclination that she would have loved him even if he had not loved her" (Cave 142); "in short, . . . a man worthy to reign alone in her heart, whom she loved and would have loved even had there been no return" (Mitford 183; Mitford-Tancock 182); "in short, a man worthy to be loved for his love alone, and for whom she felt a passion so violent that she would have loved him even if he had not loved her" (Perry-Lyons 99).

16. This was determined by doing a keyword search of the noun *amour* on an electronic version of the novel available through Project Gutenberg (Lafayette, *Princesse* [*Project Gutenberg*]).

17. "I have never been able to inspire love in you, and I see that you are afraid of loving another man" (Buss 95); "I have never been able to inspire love in you, and I see that you are afraid you may feel it for someone else" (Cave 114); "I have never been able to make you love me, and now I see you are afraid of loving somebody else" (Mitford 123; Mitford-Tancock 131). "I have never been able to make you love me, and I see that you fear you love another" (Perry-Lyons 66).

18. "[S]o recently abandoned to the charms of love" (Buss 172); "so freshly acquainted with the charms of love" (Cave 152); "given over for the first time to the delights of love" (Mitford 197–98; Mitford-Tancock 194); "[that] had so recently seen the joys of love" (Perry-Lyons 106).

19. "She gave herself over to these ideas, which were so hostile to her happiness" (Buss 162); "She gave herself up to these reflections, fatal as they were to her happiness" (Cave 142); "She fervently embraced these ideas, though they were a death-knell to her happiness" (Mitford 184; Mitford-Tancock 183); "She gave herself up to these reflections, which were so hostile to her happiness" (Perry-Lyons 99).

20. In her final comments to Nemours, the princess says, among other things, "Vous avez déjà eu plusieurs passions, vous en auriez encore; je ne ferais plus votre bonheur" ("You've already had several love affairs—you would have more still, I would no longer be the source of your happiness"; 471).

21. For example, at the moment of their final conversation, the narrator says that Nemours "fit voir, et par ses paroles et par ses pleurs, la plus vive et la plus tendre passion dont un cœur ait jamais été touché" (472–73). Buss translates this as "exhibited the most powerful and tenderest passion that ever possessed a human heart" (170), while Cave says he "revealed the most ardent and tender passion that has ever touched a human heart" (150), and Perry-Lyons calls it "the liveliest and tenderest passion that heart ever felt" (104). Mitford opts for "as lively and tender a passion as has ever been felt by human heart" (194; Mitford-Tancock 191).

22. Cave, in his introduction, claims that the princess's retreat, at the end of the novel, signifies the renunciation of happiness: "For the character, the void in which her personal life and happiness are swallowed up is a traditional retreat, the exemplary convent" (xxvi). Lyons, in his "Editor's Afterword" to the Norton edition, evokes Madame de Chartres's instruction and says about the princess that "[r]ather than aspire to a situation in which she loves her husband and is loved by him, as she could in a marriage with the Duke de Nemours, she rejects marriage altogether in favor of retreat" (114). One of the earliest readers of the novel, Roger de Rabutin, Count de Bussy, wrote in June 1678 to his cousin, the Marquise de Sévigné, to say, among other things, that Madame de Clèves should be "ravie" ("delighted") to reconcile her virtue with her love by marrying the Duke de Nemours after the death of the Prince de Clèves (Bussy-Rabutin 516).

23. In the 1694 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, one definition of the noun *liaison* is "l'attachement & . . . l'union qui est entre des personnes particulieres, ou des Estats & Communautez *&c.* soit par amitié, soit par interest" ("the attachment and union that exists between individuals or States and Communities, either out of friendship or interest").

24. By contrast, Perry-Lyons uses the cognate "person" (8), and Mitford opts for the vague "general aspect" (12).

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Works Cited

Beasley, Faith E. *Revising Memory: Women's Fiction and Memoirs in Seventeenth-Century France*. Rutgers UP, 1990.

———. "Teaching *La princesse de Clèves* in Translation." Approaches to Teaching Lafayette's *The Princess of Clèves*, edited by Beasley and Katharine Ann Jensen, Modern Language Association of America, 1998, pp. 127–38.

Braider, Christopher. *Experimental Selves: Person and Experience in Early Modern Europe*. U of Toronto P, 2018.

Buss, Robin. Introduction. Buss, *Princesse*, pp. 1–18.

———. "A Note on the Translation." Buss, *Princesse*, pp. 19–21.

———, translator. *The Princesse de Clèves*. By Madame de Lafayette, Penguin, 1992.

Bussy-Rabutin, Roger de. "Lettre à la marquise de Sévigné, 26 juin 1678." Lafayette, *Œuvres*, pp. 516–17.

Cave, Terence. Introduction. Cave, *Princesse*, pp. vii–xxx.

———. "Note on the Text." Cave, *Princesse*, pp. xxxi–xxxii.

———, translator. *La Princesse de Clèves*. By Madame de Lafayette, Oxford UP, 1992.

Chamard, H., and G. Rudler. "Les sources historiques de *La princesse de Clèves*." *Revue du seizième siècle*, vol. 2, 1914, pp. 92–131, 289–321.

Charnes, Abbé de. "Conversations sur la critique de *La princesse de Clèves*." Lafayette, *Œuvres*, pp. 611–706.

Coldiron, A. E. B. "Visibility Now: Historicizing Foreign Presences in Translation." *Translation Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2012, pp. 189–200.

DeJean, Joan. "Lafayette's Ellipses: The Privileges of Anonymity." *PMLA*, vol. 99, no. 5, Oct. 1984, pp. 884–902.

———. *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*. Columbia UP, 1991.

Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1694. *The ARTFL Project*, U of Chicago, artfl-project.uchicago.edu/content/dictionnaires-dautrefois. Accessed 1 June 2021.

Dryden, John. "From the Preface to *Ovid's Epistles*." *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by Lawrence Venuti, 2nd ed., Routledge, 2004, pp. 37–42.

Esmein-Sarrazin, Camille. "Autour de *La princesse de Clèves*." Lafayette, *Œuvres*, pp. 479–711.

Francis-Noël, Thomas. "Recent English Translations of *La princesse de Clèves*." *EMF: Studies in Early Modern France*, edited by David Lee Rubin, vol. 8, 2002, pp. 268–83.

Furetière, Antoine. *Le dictionnaire universel*. 1690. Vol. 3, SNL / Le Robert, 1984. 3 vols.

Grande, Nathalie. *Stratégies de romancières*. Champion, 1999.

Greene, Mildred S. "The Victorian Romanticizing of Sex: Changes in English Translations of Madame de Lafayette's *La princesse de Clèves*." *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 70, no. 4, 1976, pp. 501–11.

Hepburn, Allan. "The Fate of the Modern Mistress: Nancy Mitford and the Comedy of Marriage." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2, 1999, pp. 340–68.

Horace. "Ars poetica." *Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica*, translated by H. Rushton Fairclough, Heinemann-Loeb, 1926, pp. 442–89.

An Inimitable Example: The Case for the Princesse de Clèves. Edited by Patrick Henry, Catholic U of America P, 1992.

Lafayette, Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne [Madame de Lafayette]. "À Lescheraine." Letter no. 78-1. 13 Apr. 1678. Lafayette, *Œuvres*, pp. 988–89.

———. *Œuvres complètes*. Edited by Camille Esmein-Sarrazin, Gallimard-Pléiade, 2014.

———. *La princesse de Clèves*. Edited by Benjamin F. Sledd and Hendren J. Gorrell, *Project Gutenberg*, 3 Jan. 2007, www.gutenberg.org/files/20262/20262-h/20262-h.htm.

———. *La princesse de Clèves*. Lafayette, *Œuvres*, pp. 327–478.

Le Laboureur, Jean. "Additions aux 'Mémoires' de messire Michel de Castelnau, seigneur de Mauvissière." Lafayette, *Œuvres*, pp. 498–504.

Lyons, John D. Preface. Perry, *Princess*, p. vii.

———. "Secret History and the History of Secrets." Editor's afterword. Perry, *Princess*, pp. 109–17.

McMurran, Mary Helen. *The Spread of Novels: Translation and Prose Fiction in the Eighteenth Century*. Princeton UP, 2010.

Miller, Nancy K. "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction." *PMLA*, vol. 96, no. 1, Jan. 1981, pp. 36–48.

Mitford, Nancy. Introduction. Mitford, *Princess* [New Directions], pp. vii–xxviii.

———, translator. *The Princess of Clèves*. By Madame de Lafayette, New Directions, 1951.

———, translator. *The Princesse de Clèves*. By Madame de Lafayette, revised by Leonard Tancock, Penguin, 1978.

Moriarty, Michael. "Discourse and the Body in *La princesse de Clèves*." *Paragraph*, vol. 10, Oct. 1987, pp. 65–86.

Perry, Thomas Sargent, translator. *The Princess of Clèves*. By Madame de Lafayette, revised by John Lyons, W. W. Norton, 1994.

Peyre, Henri. *Le classicisme français*. Éditions de la Maison Française, 1942.

Sellier, Philippe. "*La princesse de Clèves*: Augustinisme et préciosité au paradis des Valois." *Images de La Rochefoucauld: Actes du tricentenaire, 1680–1980*. PU de France, 1984, pp. 217–28.

Taine, Hippolyte. "Madame de La Fayette." *Essais de critique et d'histoire*, 2nd ed., Hachette, 1866, pp. 335–49.

Tancock, Leonard. "Note on the Revision of This Text." Mitford, *Princesse* [Penguin], pp. 23–27.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge, 2017.

Zonza, Christian. *La nouvelle historique en France à l'âge classique (1657–1703)*. Honoré Champion, 2007.

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Abstract: While it no longer seems possible to speak of an invisible narrator of *La princesse de Clèves*, the 1678 historical novel by Madame de Lafayette, the notion of an invisible translator defines the work of late-twentieth-century English translations of the novel. According to this view, the translator should remain unseen by the reader and therefore "faithful" to the original text, so as not to upset the interpretive possibilities that Lafayette offers. In fact, however, the translator's infidelity is both necessary and vital to interpreting eros in *La princesse de Clèves*. The novel itself makes infidelity a form of insight, and Lafayette's vocabulary forces English translators into situations where any choice can be simultaneously unfaithful and correct. Like the character of the princess, translators have conflicting fidelities that should be made visible to fully reveal the richness of the novel.

https://doi.org/10.1632/S003081292300041X Published online by Cambridge University Press