Introducing foreign women authors into 19th-century Netherlands: Criteria for translating their works

Zagraniczne pisarki w dziewiętnastowiecznych Niderlandach – kryteria tłumaczenia ich prac

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Abstract
The 19th-century Netherlands witnessed a growing number of literary works written by foreign women authors being introduced to its national literature. The present paper analyses the reasons for such a process and the role the translators played in it. Basing on the findings of the European HERA 'Travelling TexTs 1 1790–1914' project, the author discusses the presence of translations of women's writings in Netherlands and other European countries. Further, the article focuses on the Dutch literary critics' opinions about the translations of women's works and the translation criteria they put forward.

Abstrakt
W XIX wieku w Niderlandach znacząca ilość dzieł literackich pisarek zagranicznych została przedstawiona holenderskim czytelnikom I wprowadzona do holenderskiej literatury. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia przyczyny pojawienia się takiego procesu a także rolę, jaką odegrali w nim tłumacze/tłumaczki. Odnosząc się do wyników europejskiego projektu zatytułowanego HERA 'Travelling TexTs 1 1790–1914' autorka analizuje obecność tłumaczeń dzieł kobiet w Niderlandach porównując ją do innych krajów europejskich. Dalej artykuł koncentruje się na opiniach holenderskich krytyków literackich na temat powstałych w tym czasie tłumaczeń dzieł kobiet oraz na zaproponowanych kryteriach ich tłumaczenia.

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Introducing foreign women authors into 19th-century Netherlands: Criteria for translating their works[1]

During the 19th century a growing number of women authors came to the fore across Europe. In the Netherlands this was also the case. It appears from the 19th-century Dutch press that this development was often considered to be largely influenced from abroad. Critics (mostly male in these situations) complained about the presence in "our" Dutch literary field of foreign women authors, whose works were being translated and presented to "our" Dutch women. The impression that Dutch women were following the example of foreign ladies, and took up a pen themselves in order to translate these works, worried a number of these critics greatly:

> It seems to become quite a fashion: ladies writing books or in their spare time (!) being busy translating foreign books. And it is not surprising that the writing tendencies of these blue-stockings (that is what they are called?) are encouraged if men of authority accept recommending them.[2]

Was it really the influence from abroad that led a large number of women to write and publish their writings? A recently published history of Dutch literature suggests that it might rather be due to the inspiration provided by two late-18th-century Dutch female novelists who worked and published together and who were not easily intimidated by negative male critics: Elisabeth Wolff and Agatha Deken[3]. These two women were also translators themselves – for instance of Stéphanie de Genlis' works[4] – and we might think that the influence of foreign women could have played a role for this earlier generation, and have continued to inspire Dutch women during the 19th century.

Given the large numbers of (1) translated "female" works and of (2) female translators, it is at least worthwhile to document the relationship between foreign women authors and their Dutch audiences, taking into account the role

1 I thank Francesca Scott for her comments on an earlier versio of this tekst.

2 Review article (not signed) about the Dutch translation (1863), by Ms. W.J.A. Jackson, of Dinah Mulock's *Mistress and maid* (1863), in *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* 1863-1, p. 349.

3 Willem van den Berg and Piet Couttenier, *Alles is taal geworden. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1800-1900*. Amsterdam, 2009, p. 115.

4 See for instance Suzan van Dijk, "Madame de Genlis traduite par Elisabeth Bekker: transfert culturel ou participation à un même mouvement international?", in Christine Lombez and Rotraud von Kulessa (eds.), *De la traduction et des transferts culturels*. Paris, 2007, p. 63-74.

played by translation. A first step towards this will be made here. The context is the European HERA "Travelling TexTs 1790–1914" project (2013–2016), in which five "smaller" countries are collaborating[5]. This project will, in one of the next phases, allow for a comparison of the ways in which the writings of foreign women – in most cases French, English and German women – were received in Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Spain.

The corpus we are now working on contains some 1700 translations into the Dutch language, and published in the Netherlands. It has been built up over the last 15 years[6], using different kinds of large-scale sources which give information about the contemporary reception of women authors' works, most particularly the contemporary periodical press. This information was included in our online database entitled *WomenWriters*[7], conceived especially for this kind of research[8]. The corpus, although too large to be studied here in detail, is still provisional. Given the large number of 19th-century periodicals – not all of them having been completely digitized at this moment – we do certainly not pretend to have gathered all review articles of women's work that exist for the period[9]. Yet we think there is enough material for us to start the discussion in a useful way. What role did the works of foreign women writers play in the Dutch 19th centur Did they actually integrate the Dutch repertoire? Is it possible to trace criteria which may have led to translating these works? Did women translators play any recognizable role? This is what I will now discuss – being well aware that at some point there will be a clear need for a comparison between the reception of "male" and "female"

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5 Cf. http://heranet.info/ttt/index.

6 Thanks to financial support by NWO (Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research; 2004–2010) and COST: the European COST Action "Women Writers in History" (IS0901, 2009–2013). For the "prehistory" of the project, see Suzan van Dijk, Anke Gilleir and Alicia Montoya, "Before NEWW (New approaches to European Women's Writing). Prolegomena to the Launching of an International Project", in *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 27, 1 (2008), p. 151–157.

7 www.databasewomenwriters.nl.

8 It is now being developed into a Virtual Research Environment, thanks to funding by CLARIN-NL for the project COBWWWEB (*Connections Between Women and Writings Within European Borders*; 2013–2014).

9 Concerning this press we have started by focusing on (1) a number of periodicals generally considered important, and (2) a number of key years over the century, selected because during each of those years relevant publications were issued (for instance: 1856 and 1874 – in both years a women's periodical was being published, none of which actually will be referred to in this contribution). Most present is the *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* (*VLO*) which was also one of the first periodicals available in digital form. An overview of the so-called "reception sources" is visible here: http://neww.huygens.knaw.nl/sources.

writings. Given the lines of our research project, such a comparison will be done later.

1. Translated women: numbers and names

A global overview of the presence of *translations of* women's writing shows – over the century – the dominance of Anglophone writers[10].

*countries in which women authors were active, c. 1800–1900**	*numbers of women whose works were translated into Dutch:*
England/Ireland	177
Germany/Austria	119
France/Switzerland	75
Sweden	22
USA	29
Italy	21
Norway	8
Denmark	5
Spain	1
Romania	1
Poland	1
Russia	1
total	460**

* According to WomenWriters database November 2013.

** This number obviously will need to be compared, at some later moment, to that of translated male authors.

The numbers per country, as presented above, include also those women for whom there is not more than one translated text listed in the *WomenWriters* database (among these we find names that have not been completely forgotten, such as Friederike Unger, Anne Brontë, Jeanne Campan[11]), next

[10] It might be seen as surprising that England and Ireland have been put together, while USA is left separately: being a European project we wanted indeed to keep separated Europe and non-Europe.

[11] It is not clear for the moment if each of these women's works would have been the only one she *wrote*, the only one – out of several – which was *translated*, or the only one *found so far*.

to extremely popular authors – very often novelists. I will focus here on this second category and select those women authors who had at least six of their works translated into Dutch. I concentrate on translations of originals from the three "large" cultures[12], including those in book form as well as shorter texts published in periodicals. Under the heading of "translation" we include also those Dutch versions of foreign works, which are clearly announced as being "adaptations": the distinction between the two categories needs to be researched separately[13], as it is clear that "translations" are sometimes "free interpretations" of the original texts.

In the table below I mention the period during which translation took place for each of the authors. Clearly, some of them (such as Sophie Cottin, Wilhelmine Birch, Charlotte Elizabeth) would have been immensely popular during a relatively short period and were afterwards, perhaps, quickly forgotten. The column at the right hand side of the table below specifies, as much as possible, the total production of titles for each of these authors, in order to give an impression of the percentage that was translated. For some of the authors, this is only a small part of a large oeuvre (George Sand[14], Ida Hahn-Hahn, Florence Marryat).

language	*name*	*translated into Dutch*	*period of translation*	*total titles*
French	Cottin, Sophie (1770-1807)	7	1809-1820	6
	Genlis, Stéphanie de (1746-1830)	30	1779-1907	67
	Sand, George (1804-1876)	16	1833-1929	140
total		*53*		
German	Arndt, Henriette (1785-1862)	10	1832-1873	18
	Birch-Pfeiffer, Charlotte (1800-68)	8	1841-1907	18
	Birch, Wilhelmine (1836-1916)	10	1871-1891	11
	Hahn-Hahn, Ida von (1805-80)	14	1845-1870	40
	Lewald, Fanny (1811-1889)	6	1860-1886	20
	Marlitt, Eugenie (1825-1887)	14	1869-1910	14

[12] Being well aware that many translations of works written in "smaller languages" came to us through one of these three "dominating" cultures.

[13] Nearness to the original (according to our present norms) will not be discussed here now; it will be tested at a later moment.

[14] Cf. Suzan van Dijk, "George Sand in Nederland. Ontwikkelingen in het receptieonderzoek", in *De Negentiende eeuw* 2010-1, p. 69-91.

	Mühlbach, Luise (1814-1873)	49	1847-1910	70
	Pichler, Karoline (1769-1843)	18	1813-1837	19
	Polko, Elise (1823-1899)	24	1858-1896	25
	Schoppe, Amalia (1791-1858)	19	1824-1869	25
	Wildermuth, Ottilie (1817-1877)	10	1856-1884	14
total		*181*		
English	Aguilar, Grace (1816-1847)	8	1850-1873	9
	Braddon, Mary (1835-1915)	49	1860-1910	56
	Bray, Anna Eliza (1790-1883)	7	1831-1859	8
	Brontë, Charlotte (1816-1855)	6	1850-1935	4
	Broughton, Rhoda (1840-1920)	9	1870-1900	12
	Eliot, George (1819-1880)	13	1859-1925	18
	Elizabeth, Charlotte (1790-1846)	7	1850-1859	8
	Ellis, Sarah (1812-1872)	14	1842-1874	13
	Gaskell, Elizabeth (1810-1865)	11	1849-1895	18
	Marryat, Florence (1838-1899)	20	1866-1910	52
	Mulock, Dinah (1826-1887)	26	1859-1910	34
	Ouida (1839-1908)	39	1872-1910	48
	Wood, Ellen (1814-1887)	25	1860-1869	39
	Yonge, Charlotte (1823-1901)	25	1855-1900	32
total		*259*		

Most of these translated authors are novelists – *often* writing domestic, historical or sensation novels. In several cases they also presented themselves as educators (Genlis, Ellis), authors for children (Schoppe), travel writers (Hahn-Hahn), or playwrights (Birch-Pfeiffer). For some of them religion was important: Elizabeth (Protestantism, received favorably in the Netherlands) or Genlis and Hahn-Hahn (Catholicism, less well accepted in the Netherlands and providing problems for translators).

There is an interesting development over the century: most of the French authors in this table (two out of three) represent the early years of the 19th century, they tend to be "replaced" gradually by German and English authors. Concerning French in particular, we need to keep in mind, however, that there were also authors whose works were *not* translated, because they were read in the original version. Since the 17th century, French had not only been a *lingua franca* in Europe and "the international" court language, but it was also in a way a "female" language in the Netherlands: whereas the sec-

ondary school for boys (of the upper classes) used to be the "Latin school", in contrast the girls went to a "French school" or were taught at home by French or Swiss governesses. This obviously implied that there was less of a need to translate French texts which seemed to address female readers[15]. The following French authors, for instance, were clearly well present in the Netherlands; yet – for the moment – we have not found any translations of their work into Dutch.

	nrs. of reception documents
Agoult, Marie d' (1805-1876)	14
Dash, Comtesse (1804-1872)	22
Gyp (1849-1932)	14
Reybaud, Fanny (1802-1870)	14

Obviously, translation did not cover the whole of the reception and circulation process. It does provide important indications about the degree of appreciation for foreign writers in a given country, but in many cases it leaves us with questions about the reasons for translating and the responsibility for initiating a translation. In the following I will put to one side the initiatives taken by translators themselves or by publishers, and instead consider the role *literary critics* may have played in this process.

2. Critics about these foreign women authors

Concerning the translations being read and appreciated by Dutch readership: research in lending libraries (private and public – such as Van der Hoek Leiden; Damesleesmuseum The Hague[16]) shows that many of them were indeed included in the catalogues: the translators' activities were clearly useful. But during our research we also found that literary critics had different opinions: they certainly did not always agree with the readers about the value to be attributed to these "imported" female writers[17]. I will *now* focus on the

[15] Because of this familiarity with French language, works by English or German women were also, in the Netherlands, read in French translation, as shown by copies available in 19th-century public libraries.

[16] An important commercial lending library in Leiden, and a private lending library in The Hague, of which only women ("ladies") could be member. See Bernt Luger, "Een negentiende-eeuwse leesbibliotheek", in *Wie las wat in de negentiende eeuw?* Utrecht, 1997, p. 21-32, and Lizet Duyvendak, *Het Haags Damesleesmuseum 1894-1994*. The Hague, 1994.

[17] Concerning the last part of the century, we need to take into account for the Netherlands that the Berne Convention (1886) has been signed only in 1912, which made it

way in which critics of the "general cultural press" commented on the works of foreign women, and on the opportunity of translating more works by the same author. These articles are more numerous in the second half of the century (due also to the growing numbers of periodicals), but for the moment I leave chronology aside[18].

The critics' comments help us to understand the context in which the aforementioned "importations" took place: their reactions however may differ, from a warm welcome to some of these women to, more often, objections. Two kinds of *objections* can be distinguished: (1) against the fact that the published author was a *woman*, and (2) against the country she represented, against which several types of prejudices were held that "justified" negative judgments. One is of course aware that the woman in question might be an exception and that in spite of everything her work can be approved of. This then, is to be decided mainly on the basis of four criteria, appearing as items in many of the review articles that discuss the writings of foreign women[19]:

a) The reputation of the author – in the Netherlands or abroad;
b) The readability of the original text;
c) The skills of the translator;
d) The availability of a Dutch audience for this text.

Judging authors and works on these points can of course lead to conclusions *pro* and *contra*. Furthermore, compensation from one item to another is possible: an author of small reputation may have been translated by a talented Dutch man or woman; for badly written books, an audience may still exist …

a) The reputation of the author

Having intentionally selected a group of authors who have been much translated, we cannot be surprised to notice that the reviewers often start by stating that the author they present is indeed well known, or even famous. This applies for instance to the German writers Karolina Pichler, Amalia Schoppe and Ottilia Wildermuth[20], to the English authors Mary Braddon and

profitable for publishers to issue translations. Future comparison within HERA TTT context will inform us about the consequences.

18 I also leave aside now articles by leading critics such as E.J. Potgieter and Conrad Busken Huet who more often commented upon the original texts, and sometimes suggested they would *need to be* translated.

19 Possibly also in reviews of foreign "male" works; as said, the comparison is to be made later.

20 Review articles in *VLO* 1829-I, p. 148 and *Recensent* (*Rec.*) 1829-I, p. 332; *VLO* 1838-I, p. 685, and *VLO* 1863 I-IV, p. 11.

even more Dinah Mulock[21]. In the subsequent comments about the reasons for their fame in the Netherlands, it often appears that some connection with the protestant religion played a role. According to the critic of *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* (*VLO*: Patriotic Literary Exercises), Mulock had shown in her *John Halifax* (1856) "what can be the life of a good man, of a Christian"; Charlotte Elizabeth is approved of as being "a friend of Jesus Christ"[22]. Most appreciated and famous, however – even without references to Christianity – was George Eliot, whose first novel, *Adam Bede*, assured her popularity "in all cultivated circles". This novel had been applauded in all the journals of all European countries as a "literary product of extremely rare value", the author herself being considered as an "exceptional female genius"[23].

But there was also some danger in having a good reputation: more recent publications could provoke certain disappointment. This happened, for instance, to Eugénie Marlitt: being translated into all kinds of foreign languages was considered, according to the reviewer of *De Gids* (The Guide), to be as a sign of sympathy created with "common readers", yet he finds certain aspects he had so much appreciated in *Goldelse* (1866) lacking in *Das Geheimniss der alten Mamsell* (1867)[24]. In a less explicit way, the reviewer of *Letterkundig Magazijn* (*LM*: Literary Magazine) noticed the famous name of Karolina Pichler on the cover of *Quintin Messis* (1828), but considered the book had little importance besides the "merit" of doing no harm[25]. One of Elise Polko's first works (*Sie schreibt!* 1869) had made a strong impression, but when reading a later collection of her short stories (translated anonymously and published as *Vrouwentypen* [Types of women], 1871) the reviewer – who is a woman: Jacoba Zwaardemaker-Visser[26] – is not sure any more: she compares Polko's writing to the movements of a butterfly, but "is she giving us nectar? Or is there some poison in what she is offering us?"[27].

The Ida Hahn-Hahn case is different further still: according to the *VLO* reviewer a "book bearing her name cannot count on a positive reception", in

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21 *VLO* 1875, p. 72 and *Gids* 1875-IV, p. 527.

22 Review articles about the Dutch translation of Mulock' s *A life for a life* (1859), translated by Miss W.J.A. Jackson (1860), in *VLO* 1861-I, p. 22; and about the translation of Elizabeth's *Judah's Lion* (1843), translated by Elisabeth Hasebroek (1850), in *VLO* 1851-I, p. 254.

23 Respectively *VLO* 1867-I, p. 664; *VLO* 1864-I, p. 268; *VLO* 1867-I, p. 663.

24 Review article by P.N. Muller in *Gids*, 1869-I, p. 88 – written before the translation by G.P. Kits van Heijningen was published (1870).

25 Review (anonymous) of the anonymous translation (1828) in *Letterkundig Magazijn* (*LM*), 1829-I, p. 479.

26 See also below.

27 Review published in *VLO* 1872, p. 257.

the Netherlands at least[28]. There is no disappointment here: her 'bad reputation' is directly linked to her choice of Catholicism.

b) The readability of the original text

The critics are not focusing *exclusively* on the author's gender; they also comment on the *work* under consideration. Sometimes there is an explicit comparison to male authors, as for instance with the critic reading Dinah Mulock's *Mistress and maid* (1863): he is well aware that women's writing cannot be as fascinating and absorbing as the works written by Eugène Sue, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas "and others"[29]. But in general, being written by a woman is not a reason in itself for the reviewers' disapproval. The latter can be hesitant, as the anonymous *Gids* reviewer about Wildermuth's *Aus dem Frauenleben* (1855): "One is unsure about the judgment. So much is bad here, next to so much that is good"[30]. In the same journal, some twenty years later, we find an enthusiastic reaction to a work by Rhoda Broughton. It is written by a female critic: the tone is completely different. Maria Henriette Koorders-Boeke understands that a woman (Francisca Gallé) who is herself a novelist wanted to translate "such a beautiful text, so delightful to render in one's own language"[31]. Another positive opinion, about Luise Mühlbach's *Königin Hortense* (1856) needs to be considered in relation to a mistake made by the critic. He announces the book as being written by *Ludwig* Mühlbach and is happy about it: "we cannot deny that this well written and in general rather reasonably well translated book left us with a pleasant impression"[32]. Elsewhere the male critic is overtly negative about the woman author he comments on, as in the *Portefeuille* when speaking about Ouida: "admittedly, she is successful, but often her characters and her plots are not corresponding to real life"[33]. There seems to be a general wish for the connection between fiction and "real life" to become clear to the reader. This is felt as lacking in novels by Ouida. *Lack of plausibility*, in foreign women's novels, is one of the aspects found that are quite intensively discussed – next to the way of pre-

[28] Review of Hahn-Hahn's *Doralice: ein Familiengemälde aus der Gegenwart* (1861, translated by H.A. Banning 1864), in *VLO* 1864, p. 357.

[29] On the contrary he cannot believe that her translator, Miss W.J.A. Jackson would indeed be "femini generis", given the good quality of her translation – see below. Review of Mulock, *Mistress and Maid*, in *VLO* 1863-I, p. 350.

[30] Reviewing the translation (1856) by J.J.A. Goeverneur, in *Gids* 1857-I, p. 431.

[31] Review of Broughton's *Cometh up as a flower* (1867, translated 1875), in *Gids* 1875-IV, p. 368.

[32] Review of the translation by N.S. Calisch (1858), in *VLO* 1858-I, p. 529.

[33] Review of her *Guilderoy* (1889, translated the same year by Wilhelmine van Westrheene) in *Portefeuille* 1890 nr. 45, p. 6.

senting, which is sometimes described as "boring", and the morality that is too far removed from what Christianity requires.

Concerning plausibility, a number of foreign women authors are reproached on this point; for instance, Birch-Pfeiffer's *Burrton Castle* (1834), Hahn-Hahn's *Clelia Conti* (1846) and Braddon's *Captain of the Vulture* (1862)[34]. The "improbabilities" concern both plot and characters. When they are found in travel writings (Mühlbach, *Reisebriefe aus Aegypten*; 1871), a *Gids* critic scoffs: "bringing such narrations to such a large circle of readers, without searching for the truth, is indeed a sign of irresponsibility"[35]. Over the years, with new books being published, the authors are followed on this particular point: a *VLO* critic admits that Braddon "is progressing: there are considerably less of those improbabilities she used in order to spice up her stories"[36]. Even without comparing to previous missteps, critics allow themselves to express positive appreciations, albeit formulated in a negative way: in Sarah Ellis' work they find "a cardinal virtue which is: *lack of* exaggeration"; in Charlotte Yonge's *The young step-mother* (1861) "the whole story is so simple, so naturally written, corresponding so clearly to the truth, that *nobody will be able* to find any trace of exaggeration here"[37].

Simplicity on the level of the plot can of course degenerate into narration which is felt to be long-winded and boring. This opposite reproach is also repeatedly found, for instance, in review articles of Mulock's *A life for a life* (1859), Braddon's *Dead-sea fruit* (1868) and Ouida's *Guilderoy* (1889)[38]. But here again compensation is possible: the reviewer admits that Ouida's dialogues are well done, and contain truths formulated in an appropriate manner. Concerning Mulock "and more generally English women authors, one must admit that their works express a clear and good meaning". And Mulock's *Mistress and maid*, which was negatively compared to Victor Hugo "and others", can be acknowledged as having several good lessons and useful advice, as well as right understanding of social circumstances[39].

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34 Reviews, respectively, in *Rec.* 1844, p. 175; *Rec.* 1847, p. 359; *VLO* 1870-I, p. 387.

35 Review of the translation by A.A. Deenik (1871), in *Gids* 1872-I, p. 544.

36 Review of the translation by A.A. Deenik (1869) of her *Dead sea fruit* (1868), in *VLO* 1871-I, p. 630.

37 Respectively *VLO* 1862-I, p. 211 (Ellis being translated 1861 by a man using the female pseudonym Mariette) and *VLO* 1863-I, p. 76 (Yonge translated 1863 by an anonymous translator) (my italics).

38 Respectively Mulock's *A life for a life* (1859) according to *VLO* 1861–1, p. 22; Braddon's *Dead-sea fruit* (1868) according to *VLO* 1871-I, p. 631; and Ouida's *Guilderoy* (1889) according to *Tijdspiegel* 1890-I, p. 435.

39 Review of Mulock's *Mistress and maid* (1863), in *VLO* 1863–1, p. 349 (mentioned in n. 1).

Most important perhaps – speaking about "good meaning" – is the way in which morality is handled. French authors are handicapped on this point, given the reputation of 'loose morals' attached to French behavior in real life and in fiction, even for an educator such as Stéphanie de Genlis. The *VLO* critic cannot approve, or consider as appropriate for Dutch girls, her novel about Madame de Maintenon. Because of Maintenon's intimate relationship to the King (which started during the life of the Queen): "we see little or no moral intention in this publication; there was no need to be informed about the intrigues which are usual in most Royal courts"[40]. On the other hand, Schoppe's *Die beiden kleinen Seiltänzer* (1835) is "full of moral and religious truths"; and also *A life for a life* (1859) in which Mulock "is pointing to the only source from which a noble, true, and moral life can flow, allowing this book to be called a truly Christian-moral novel"[41].

c) The skills of the translator

The first task of the translator – according to some of the reviewers – seems to be decision making: to translate or not? When writing a review about a book which has already been translated, this kind of suggestion may appear slightly superfluous. It is, however, formulated several times in this or a similar way: "Mr. Banning would have been of more use to our literature when leaving this work untranslated"[42]. In some cases there is the additional suggestion that the translator might have been aware of the futility of his or her enterprise: "This superficial book did not deserve a Dutch translation […]. The translator himself must have felt the same way, and did his job as quickly as possible"[43].

The quality of translation is not always considered as very high – without reference to gender distinctions for explanation. A number of female translators are even explicitly lauded: the translation (1842) of Schoppe's *Gilles de Raiz, oder die Geheimnisse des Schlosses Tiffauges* is "completely satisfactory", which is taken for granted as the female translator is also an author in her own right. The *ALM* critic informs us about it, but this author/translator has until now not been identified[44]. Jacoba van Westrheene, on the other hand, is indeed well known – both as an author and as a translator – and critics are extremely positive, for instance, about her rendering of Braddon's *Strangers*

40 Review of the 1827 translation by Jan de Quack of Genlis, *Madame de Maintenon* (1806), in *VLO* 1827-I, p. 660.

41 Respectively in *ALM* 1839, p. 44 and *VLO* 1861-I, p. 24.

42 Review of Hahn-Hahn, *Doralice*, in *VLO* 1864, p. 357.

43 Review of Mühlbach, *Reisebriefe* in *Gids* 1872-I, p. 548.

44 Review in *ALM* 1842 nr. 26, p. 523.

and pilgrims (1873) and of Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871): "She has a command of the English language, which not all translators possess"[45].

Some male translators cannot equal her. For instance, Wildermuth's *Aus dem Frauenleben* (1855), while possessing the required "Christian seriousness, without any exaggeration", is a disaster in its Dutch version by J.J.A. Goeverneur. According to the *VLO* critic, it is a pity that it shows its German origin so clearly: "for our female Netherlands, it will not really be 'genieszbar'"[46]. In the Dutch version of Grace Aguilar's *The Mother's Recompense* (1851), the rigid bookish tone must be due to the translator (a man adopting a female pseudonym[47]) who used numerous participles and other (in Dutch) artificial constructions[48]. The translation of Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret (*1862*)* is a "mess", in which the critic detects a perfect lack of linguistic knowledge on the part of the translator – who actually is W.J. Mensing, considered an authority in his field[49].

Can male translators have worked faster, while women took their time? This question would perhaps need some attention. But the often observed mediocre quality of translation has also been directly related to the *need* for novelistic literature: "As there is little original Dutch production, no wonder publishers search for it in foreign countries, and real or self-declared translators (male as well as female) are legion"[50].

d) The availability of an audience.

There was indeed a great demand for novels from the reading societies which were flourishing during the 19th century, and which many critics considered to be responsible for the existence of bad translations: "Our numerous reading societies are constantly requiring stores of new novels for their readers"[51]. This is a recurrent topic. Clearly these societies constituted an important factor, and contrary to the present-day situation, their members were mostly men – as we may conclude from the separate mention of another category of readers: women. Ellen Wood's *Dene Hollow* (1871), for instance, is recommended "for reading societies", but also "all mothers can without worrying allow their daughters" to read this book[52]. Fathers are invited to

45 Respectively in *LK* 1874-III, p. 213 and *TS* 1874-III, p. 226.
46 Review in *VLO* 1857-I, p. 310.
47 Chonia, pseudonym of Jan Christiaan Kindermann.
48 Review in *Gids* 1854-I, p. 867.
49 Review in *VLO* 1864-I, p. 4.
50 Review article about Fanny Lewald by J.H.C. Heijse, in *Gids* 1872-III, p. 575.
51 *Ibid*.
52 Review of the translation (1872) by Charlezia Petronella Teding van Berkhout-Chappuis, in *VLO* 1873, p. 14.

buy Birch's *Höher als die Kirche* (1877): "give it to your wife, or rather to your daughter, who will surely feel sympathy for the two loving hearts"[53].

For both categories of readers, quality – of original text as well as of translation – seems to be considered of relatively small importance. There is consensus among the critics about the existence of large numbers of readers "who are not demanding"[54], and will admire, for instance, Hahn-Hahn's, *Clelia Conti* (1846) – in spite of the characters being "unreal" and the descriptions containing "numerous improbabilities"[55]. Speaking about Braddon's *One Thing Needful* (1886), in which there is neither "harm" nor "benefit" to be found, the critic of *Leeskabinet* (Reading cabinet) makes the distinction between "readers of good taste", and "those who like reading any novel just so as to kill the time". For the latter category of readers Braddon's book may be OK[56]. The fact that an audience is available for books by foreign women may have been sufficient for the publisher and for the owner of a bookshop. But the critics express disdain towards some of these readers, and hence to those who are writing for them.

Female readers were supposed to be the intended audience of authors who were also female – such as, for instance, Ottilie Wildermuth, who "writes for a female readership [and] possesses herself all the vices and virtues characteristic of lady-authors". The *VLO* critic admits that she is "talented", but considers that her talents, expertise and publications "mainly concern details of domestic everyday life"; she "neither possesses the real understanding of the outside world nor the right sense for this world". He concludes by stating that "women's happiness lies in faithful love and dedication to her domestic tasks". This would be "the principal idea of this authoress", and it is not surprising to see him adding: "who would condemn her?"[57].

No man would certainly have condemned someone suggesting that women take care of men's well-being, but another aspect of women's readership was probably of importance to publishers: often women were not just *individuals*. They were potentially surrounded by a supplementary audience for the books, as they were supposed to be or to become mothers, and have children – in particular also daughters – who were in need of being educated. Comparable to the reading societies, women were or represented *groups* of readers. Critics are conscious of the importance of this role. A journalist,

53 Review of the translation by Constant (1877) in *LK* 1877-III, p. 217.

54 The "common readers" mentioned in an earlier quotation? (see n. 26).

55 Review of the translation by J.F. Bosdijk (1846), in *Rec.* 1847, p. 359–360.

56 Review of the translation (1888) by Fenna de Meyier, entitled *Lady Darnel,* in *LK* 1890-III, p. 4.

57 Review of C.E. van der Bilt la Motte's translation (1860) of Wildermuth, *Nora* in *VLO* 1861-I, p. 362–3.

speaking about Elisabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* (1864), says he wishes to see this book "in the hands of all cultivated ladies, married or not, those that possess daughters or have none"[58]. For Charlotte Elizabeth's *Personal Recollections* (1847) the critic notes that "mothers and all those who are educators will be happy to consult particularly those chapters in which she gives details about her youth, education and adolescence"[59].

The journalist even imagines *direct* communication – leaving out the mother or educator – between the female author and her young (female) readers. He would like to see a cheap edition of George Eliot's *Felix Holt, The Radical* (1866) "for our dear, gracious and a bit prudish" young ladies: "they need to possess this novel […] in order to reflect everything which is discussed between Felix and Esther, and to re-read it". He considers the book "extremely useful for many Dutch young ladies"[60]. This direct contact can also have been the intention of *female* intermediaries, who started to be admitted in "male" periodicals such as *De Gids*[61]. Some of these openly spoke as women. Maria Henriette Koorders-Boeke expresses her gratitude to Rhoda Broughton "the author [of *Cometh up as a flower* (1867)], to the woman who translated it [Francisca Gallé] *and* to the editorial board of *De Gids*, who allowed me to acclaim the book – and also to regret that such pure, beautiful and amiable books are not written more often, in particular that we, the Dutch people, do not possess this kind of talent"[62].

The consciousness of this lack of talent among the Dutch is of course interesting, but cannot be developed here[63]. In the final part of this contribution I will look at the translators: who were these people that made foreign women's texts available for a Dutch readership – taking into account the more or less ambivalent attitude of the critics combined with often quite spectacular commercial success?

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58 Review of the translation (1868) by Jacoba van Westrheene, in *VLO* 1869-I, p. 509.

59 Review of the translation (1853) by Elisabeth Hasebroek in *VLO* 1853-I, p. 680.

60 Review of the translation (1867) by Jacoba van Westrheene in *VLO* 1868-I, p. 67.

61 But in their presentations of Koorders-Boeke and Zwaardemaker-Visser, Van den Branden and Frederiks do not mention both women's activities as literary critics in their biographical dictionary – see J.G. Frederiks and F. Jos. van den Branden, *Biographisch woordenboek der Noord- en Zuidnederlandsche letterkunde*. Amsterdam 1888–1891.

62 Review of the translation (1875) by Francisca Gallé in *Gids* 1875-IV, p. 366.

63 A comparison between attitudes toward foreign and Dutch women authors will be provided later; as will also be studied the difference between reactions formulated in the general cultural press and in women's periodicals.

3. Translators: male and female

Having noted the distinction to be made between male and female readers or critics, I will also now distinguish between male and female *translators*[64] – and discuss briefly these categories.

On the whole, the number of male translators involved in these translations (speaking about the corpus of "intensively translated women authors" from the three larger cultures[65]) is larger than that of female: 75 male vs. 58 female[66]. For many of the men we found only one translation of a woman's book (some of the anonymous publications might of course appear to have been provided by a man). The table below contains some of the translators who were particularly active in working on women's writing – with some additional information both on their activities other than translating, and on translating works from other women authors than those considered here.

male translators	*(other) relevant activities*	*translated nrs. of works from present female corpus (women concerned)*	*works by other (less popular?) women*	*years of translating activities (works by women)*
Andriessen, Simon J.	prot.minister, writer for children	1	2	1866-1898
Busken Huet, Conrad	literary critic, prot.minister	2		1875-1877
Chappuis, Herman T.	army officer, polygraph, novelist	1	1	1879-1880
Deenik, Albertus Agathus	prot.minister	15	2	1868-1888
Goeverneur, J.J.A	poet, polygraph, writer for children	3	5	1849-1866

64 Apart from the fact that quite often we are not (yet) informed about the identity and name of the translator.

65 It is interesting to include for instance the work provided by Els Biesemans for translators (male and female) of Scandinavian literature. Some of these translators were indeed considerably more prolific than – apparently – those under consideration here. See Els Biesemans, *Vertalers van Scandinavische literatuur naar het Nederlands tussen 1860 en 1940. Evolutie van hun ideologische, maatschappelijke en professionale voorkeuren*. Ghent, 2013.

66 As for all data provided: as far as we are informed up to now…

Kits van Heijningen, G.P.	prot.minister, journalist	8 (1)	0	1869–1892
Mensing, C.M.	translator (in particular of Dickens), brother of W.J.	4 (2)	11	1848–1857
Mensing, W.J.	translator, owner of bookshop, brother of C.M.	2	5	1846–1863

The presence of protestant ministers is clearly visible here. We might add that this fact corresponds to a characteristic of 19th-century Dutch literature as a whole, where the number of "protestant minister/poets" (so-called *dominee-dichters*) is presented as an important factor in the literary field[67]. The second table is more substantial and seems to suggest that women could have been more interested than men in translating works by other *women*. This will be checked, later on, on a larger scale, going well beyond this corpus of most popular writers in French, German and English. We need also to take into account that all male and most of the female translators were of course not exclusively focusing on foreign *women*'s work: translating male authors, not just novelists, would have been, most often, their core business.

female translators	*other relevant information*	*translated nrs. of works from present female corpus (women concerned)*	*works by other (less popular?) women*	*years of translating activities*
Deventer-Busken Huet, Anne Marie van	sister of Busken Huet, husband also translator	2 (1)	3	1868–1884
Doedes, Aleida	collaborating with sister-in-law	4 (1)	6	1871–1900
Doedes-Clarisse, Wilhelmina	focusing on children's books, collaborating with sister-in-law		2	1879

[67] Cf. Willem van den Berg, "La littérature du XIXe siècle", in Hanna Stouten, Jaap Goedegebuure, Frits van Oostrom (eds.), *Histoire de la littérature néerlandaise*. Paris, 1999, p. 461.

Gallé, Francisca	teacher, novelist, collaborating with Busken Huet	1	2	1875-1881
Goeje, Reinoudina de	journalist (women's press), writer for children, father prot. minister	2 (2)	10	1870-1893
Hasebroek, Elisabeth	novelist;brother prot.minister	4 (1)	6	1843-1865
Huygens, Cornélie	feminist; socialist; niece of Jeanne H.	5 (1)	6	1882-1891
Huygens, Jeanne	aunt of Cornélie H.	3 (3)	2	1887-1891
Jackson, W.J.A.		5 (2)	7	1857-1869
Koorders--Boeke, Marie Henriette	literary critic; husband prot. minister	3 (2)	11	1871-1888
Teding van Berkhout-Chappuis, Charlezia	family ties with Chappuis, H.T.	3 (1)	4	1872-1882
Tholl, Anna Dorothea Busken Huet-van der	wife of Busken Huet	3 (1)	3	1858-1871
Westrheene--van Heijningen, Jacoba van	teacher, novelist, father and brother prot. ministers	7 (4)	5	1861-1876
Westrheene, Wilhelmine van	family ties with previous	1	3	1870-1915
Zwaardemaker-Visser, Jacoba Berendina	literary critic, father prot. minister, husband publisher	2	3	1875-1889

Putting together these data about a selected number of active translators is quite suggestive. Translating activities seem to have been linked or combined with other ways of literary mediating, addressing in particular also children or young people. Translating may have been a collaborative act, taking place in a family context, including one or several protestant ministers. We can see this connection to educating and teaching in relationship to the critics' insistence on the (preferably Christian) morality of these books, which are not always praised very highly, yet for which one is aware of the existence of a large public.

One of the next questions will be to know what actually happened to all these women's texts when these men and women rewrote them in the Dutch language. Were they perhaps used more or less as "sermons" to be distributed outside of the church? And were they translations or, in fact, *adaptations*? In earlier research about some Dutch versions of works by George Sand we found interesting indications. As mentioned above, many of the numerous works she started publishing 1831 were left untranslated in the Netherlands. It was actually her *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* (1863), a novel showing the strange behavior of a Catholic priest, confessor of a young woman, which was translated as one of the first – and very quickly: in 1864 – by a protestant group called the Evangelic Society (Evangelische maatschappij). It was then distributed among the southern, Catholic, part of the country. For different reasons several of Sand's theatre pieces were forbidden: *Claudie* (1851; about a woman having children without being married) and *L'Autre* (1870; about a married woman who had a lover).

Here translators can have played interesting roles. The female translator, J.M. Anne, of Sand's piece *Le Marquis de Villemer* (1864) announced in her preface to the Dutch version (1877) that she had eliminated the element of adultery. Adultery though is still present in the text: it is the *child* born from adultery which was written out of the story[68]. Did other translators carry out similar interventions? And were women's texts more easily subject to this kind of treatment? These are some of our next questions.

[68] See for details Suzan van Dijk, "De vrijmoedige omgang met George Sand. Een vertaalgeschiedenis", in *Filter* 5 (1998), p. 14.