

## A STYLISTIC APPROACH TO LITERARY TRANSLATION IN PERIODICALS: THE CASE OF VIRGINIA WOOLF INTO FRENCH

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This essay analyses the discursive presence of Virginia Woolf in French literary journals of the 1920s and 1930s, in terms of both critical discourse (articles and reviews devoted to the writer and her work) and translated discourse (occasional translation of short excerpts inserted within critical commentary or longer instalments from her novels and short fiction). It mainly deals with issues at the crossroads of periodical, reception and translation studies – chiefly translational stylistics – to investigate whether the translation choices and strategies, particularly the deviations from the original, which were adopted by French intellectuals writing on Woolf in literary periodicals, might be said to be in line with the appraisal strategies they enacted, and the role these played in the creation and dissemination of Woolf's authorial profile in interwar France. The analysis will demonstrate that changes mainly concern stylistic issues such as speech and thought presentation, transitivity and/or modality patterns, rhythmic and musical effects, and make the target text more lexically varied in compliance with the stylistic conventions of the target language.

*Keywords:* Literary Translation, French Literary Periodicals, Translational Stylistics, Virginia Woolf, Reception Studies

### 1. *Introduction: Virginia Woolf at the Crossroads of Periodical, Reception and Translation Studies*

This essay proposes an 'oblique' analysis of Virginia Woolf's reception in France over the 1920s and 1930s via a close reading of excerpts from her works which were translated and published in literary journals. Examining short extracts interspersed with critical commentary or longer instalments through the lens of translational stylistics reveals recurring translation strategies, as well as deviations from the originals that were often at odds with those traits of Woolf's style particularly appreciated by critics. The analysis will demonstrate that such changes mainly regard stylistic issues like speech and thought presentation, transitivity and/or modality patterns, rhythmic and musical effects, and make the target text more lexically varied in accordance with the stylistic conventions of the target language. This study, therefore, also aims to prove that combining the perspectives of periodical, reception and translation studies may offer valuable insights into questions of linguistic/cultural transfer and circulation/appropriation of authorial figures. As the editors of

*Literary Translation in Periodicals* aptly remark, “despite the interrelatedness of Periodical and Translation Studies, the analysis of translations circulating in periodical publications remains fragmented, underexplored, and often subject to national frameworks” (Fólica, Roig-Sanz, Caristia 2020, 2). To fill this theoretical gap, their volume focuses on literary translation as “a historical product that serves a specific function within the target culture” and as “a form of cultural transfer [...] that challenges the source-target binarity, that is, the idea that cultural transfers are binary rather than triangular or multidirectional” (5). Moreover, the book calls for a greater emphasis on the translator as “agent” or “cultural mediator”, who “plays an important role in disseminating foreign literatures from a transnational perspective” (5). In this view, the flourishing areas of periodical studies and translation studies can be fruitfully joined to investigate cultural transfer (where translation is one of the main topics of research), the circulation and reception of foreign authors in national periodical cultures, the strategies used to shape authorial profiles within local spaces, as well as the role of critics, translators and publishers in the creation of discourse on foreign literature and, by way of reflection, on national literature as well.

This rich theoretical framework proves particularly instructive to analyse Woolf’s discursive presence in French literary journals of the 1920s and 1930s, in terms of both critical discourse – that is, articles and reviews devoted to the writer and her work – and translated discourse, namely occasional translation of short excerpts inserted within critical commentary or longer instalments from her novels and short fiction which were at that time being translated into French. Among the periodicals that devoted most attention to modernist literature and chiefly to Woolf, *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, along with *La Revue hebdomadaire*, *Revue des deux mondes*, *Revue anglo-américaine* and *Europe*, played a fundamental role in the construction and dissemination of her public image abroad in terms of both number and value of contributions, signed by prestigious intellectuals such as Jacques-Émile Blanche, Marcel Brion, Edmond Jaloux, André Maurois, Louis Gillet, Jean-Jacques Mayoux and René Lalou, among others. A thorough analysis of the critical articles, reviews and introductions to translated extracts which appeared in French literary journals throughout the 1920s and 1930s interestingly discloses a series of portraits with a number of recurring traits that Woolf would probably recognise as familiar, for example her accomplishment in capturing fleeting impressions or penetrating her characters’ minds by means of the interior monologue, and at the same time as revived by the passage into another language and culture. In addition, the practice of printing both short passages scattered at intervals within critical commentary and full instalments of Woolf’s fiction translated into French performed the function of introducing her work to the French public and paving the way for the publication in book format of her translated novels. To cite a few examples, the appearance of excerpts from *Flush* in *Revue des deux mondes* (translated by Charles Mauron as *Vie de Flush* between November and December 1934) and from *The Waves* in *La Revue hebdomadaire* (translated by Marguerite Yourcenar as *Les vagues: Fragment* in August 1936) preceded by one year their respective volume publications under the imprint of Librairie Stock. Similarly, extracts from *Jacob’s Room* were translated by Claude Dravaine and Marie Kieffer as *La chambre de Jacob* in *Bibliothèque universelle et Revue de Genève*

(December 1926–February 1927), *La Revue nouvelle* (March 1927) and *Revue politique et littéraire: Revue bleue* (August 1927) much in advance of the novel's appearance in book form, in a translation by Jean Talva released by Stock in 1942. This practice was initiated precisely by Mauron, who had published what is generally recognised as the first piece of Woolf's work to appear not only in French, but also in any foreign language, namely a translation of the central section of *To the Lighthouse*, "Time Passes", in the winter 1926 issue of *Commerce*, preceding the novel's publication in Britain by a few months<sup>1</sup>.

Nicola Luckhurst and Alice Staveley posit that "in France, where Woolf entered a literary culture already appreciative of modernism [...] her high modernist novels were easily assimilated" (2007, 245). Although an analysis of such articles *per se* is beyond the scope of this study, it might be interesting to note briefly that, on closer view, the attitudes shown by French critics and translators mainly oscillated between "domestication" and "foreignisation". Such terms clearly resonate with Lawrence Venuti's (1995) distinction between different strategies in translation, but here they are also employed to refer to the fact that, in these critical appraisals, Woolf was, on the one hand, almost invariably addressed as one of the most representative exponents of the modern British psychological novel – a depiction consistent with attributes which were also typical of other Anglo-American modernists like James Joyce, Henry James, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, to whom she was frequently compared, such as her mastery in representing the inner life of her characters by means of kaleidoscopic flows of images or the interior monologue technique. These qualities could also take specific connotations, distinctive of Woolf by virtue of her intellectual milieu or gender. Considering her lifelong association with the visual arts via her Bloomsbury connections, one of the features which generally recur is the portrayal of Woolf as an "Impressionist", painterly writer, at times transcending the delicate touch of her impermanent inner scenes by means of a "Post-Impressionist" reliance on the solidity of form. Moreover, the lyricism and symbolism of her poetic prose and the graceful, almost ethereal beauty of her art were traditionally related to her status as a female author. On the other hand, despite what was generally recognised as her authentic British character, it was precisely the impressionist and philosophical (even mystical) quality of Woolf's prose which most frequently occasioned parallels with French writers such as Proust, Jean Giraudoux, Anatole France, or philosophers like Bergson, in an attempt to appropriate and assimilate her figure into French culture. On the whole, the common denominator of these various critical studies is undoubtedly a generally appreciative tone with many instances of high praise addressed at Woolf as an author of rare originality, whose genius was by that time widely acknowledged both at home and abroad also thanks to translation. All of this shows the growing affirmation of the public image of a distinguished writer whose refined, elegant prose not even detractors could fail to recognise.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comparison between Woolf's original and Mauron's translation, see Haule (1983) and Patey (2017). Goldman (2017) provides an illuminating study of various states of the text between Woolf's early drafts and simultaneous first editions of the novel's central section, along with the typescript which Woolf supplied for Mauron's translation.

Such a common attitude among French commentators is also shown by the importance they admittedly attribute to the practice of translation. Not only do reviews of recently published French editions – particularly of *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves* and *Orlando* – hail Woolf’s entrance into French literature or the long-awaited possibility for French readers of appreciating her talent, but critical articles almost invariably include translated extracts of varying length from either her narrative or non-narrative texts interspersed within critical commentary and supporting the author’s main argument, and contain general remarks about the significance of the translation process for a full appraisal of any foreign writer. Considering that the study of translations published in literary journals raises questions pertaining to different research fields, this essay will mainly deal with issues at the crossroads of periodical, reception and translation studies – chiefly translational stylistics – to investigate whether the translation choices and strategies, particularly the deviations from the original, which were adopted by French intellectuals writing on Woolf in literary periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s, might be said to be in line with the appraisal strategies they enacted, and the role these played in the creation and dissemination of Woolf’s authorial profile in interwar France.

## 2. *Theoretical Background: Issues of Style in/of Translation*

As scholars have often pointed out, the investigation of style in/of translation has only recently gained momentum, for the simple reason that translation was generally considered as a derivative, rather than creative, practice. In Mona Baker’s words, the main implication of this old assumption was that “a translator cannot have, indeed *should not* have, a style of his or her own, the translator’s task being simply to reproduce as closely as possible the style of the original” (2000, 244). Jean Boase-Beier has convincingly argued that we can indeed consider the effects of style on translation and the study of translation in a threefold way:

Firstly, in the actual process of translation, the way the style of the source text is viewed will affect the translator’s reading of the text. Secondly, because the recreative process in the target text will also be influenced by the sorts of choices the translator makes, and style is the outcome of choice [...], the translator’s own style will become part of the target text. And, thirdly, the sense of what style is will affect not only what the translator does but how the critic of translation interprets what the translator has done. (Boase-Beier 2006, 1)

In her view, exploring the relationship between style and translation is notably challenging because, contrary to non-translated texts,

The role of style in translation is made even more complex by the fact that there are the styles of two texts, the source text and the target text, to take into account. And in each case, the style of the text can be seen in its relationship to the writer, as an expression of choice, or in its relationship to the reader, as something to be interpreted and thereby to achieve effects. (Boase-Beier 2006, 4)

Boase-Beier thus makes an interesting point for the present essay, highlighting that where stylistics is particularly useful to translation studies is in analysing what changes a translation makes to the original, and how these may affect the reading of the source text. When dealing with translations published in periodicals, I would add, the circumstances of such reading are made peculiar by the subset of bibliographic codes at play in any journal, which Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker call “periodical codes”<sup>2</sup>, and also – in the particular case here at issue – by the regular tendency, shown by contributors to French literary reviews of the interwar period who mediated Woolf and her work to the French public, to intersperse translated excerpts with critical commentary.

Studies of translated texts which aim to investigate the choices made by translators traditionally come under what Kirsten Malmkjær refers to as “translational stylistics”, a particular methodology of stylistic analysis “which takes into consideration the relationship between the translated text and its source text” (2004, 16). Malmkjær remarks that “*writer-orientated studies of translated texts cannot be carried out in the same way for non-translated and translated texts*”, for the simple reason that “in the case of translated texts, the writer is, of course, the translator, and translators may [...] approach their projects with very specific aims in mind for the text to be created” (13). In other words, translated texts require a different kind of approach because of the translator’s mediating presence in terms of visible traces left on the target text. Even so, “in taking the decision to translate, a translator, however creative, commits to a willing suspension of freedom to invent, so to speak, and to creating a text that stands to its source text in a relationship of direct mediation” (15), thus facing choices as well as constraints. Translational stylistics, therefore, looks for recurring patterns in the relationship between source and target text, with a view to explaining “*why, given the source text, the translation has been shaped in such a way that it comes to mean what it does*” (Malmkjær 2003, 39). Scholars have variously remarked that, although both Boase-Beier and Malmkjær conceive of the style of translated texts as inevitably influenced by the subjective interpretation of the translator, their approach clearly remains source-oriented, since they mostly focus attention on the source text’s style and its reproduction in the target text. In seeing style in relation to translation as a way of responding to the source text, and in being mainly concerned with the style of the translated text (rather than the stylistic habits of particular translators), Boase-Beier and Malmkjær share many of the assumptions of the present study, where the occasional, small-scale and unsystematic attempts at translating excerpts from Woolf’s works by French commentators would certainly prevent any possibility of finding recurring patterns of choice and talking about regularities in the style of such translators. Moreover, what may on a surface level seem a limitation still allows a comparison between corresponding passages in the

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<sup>2</sup> Building on Jerome McGann’s claim that, in any text, “meaning is transmitted through bibliographical as well as linguistic codes” (1991, 57) – the former consisting in such matters as “typefaces, bindings, book prices, page format” (13) and the latter being the semiotics and semantics of the actual words – Brooker and Thacker focus specifically on “periodical codes” as “a whole range of features including page layout, typefaces, price, size of volume [...], periodicity of publication [...], use of illustrations [...], use and placement of advertisements” (2009, 6), as well as the ways in which these contribute to meaning-making.

source and target texts, and a focus on particular stylistic choices which might be revealing of the strategies employed by French intellectuals in mediating Woolf to their audiences by means of translated as well as non-translated (that is, critical) texts.

Adopting a different perspective, Baker understands style *of* translation as “a kind of thumb-print that is expressed in a range of linguistic – as well as non-linguistic – features” (2000, 245). In her view, therefore, “a study of a translator’s style must focus on the manner of expression that is typical of a translator” and “must attempt to capture the translator’s characteristic use of language, his or her individual profile of linguistic habits, compared to other translators” (245). Lamenting the lack of a methodology for isolating stylistic features which can reasonably be attributed to a particular translator from those which are simply a reflection of the source text or of the source language in general, Baker adopts the tools of corpus linguistics to verify “whether individual literary translators can plausibly be assumed to use distinctive styles of their own, and if so how we might go about identifying what is distinctive about an individual translator’s style” (248), considering that patterns of choice often beyond the conscious control of translators are likely to reveal their cultural and ideological positioning.

Building on Baker’s groundbreaking work, Gabriela Saldanha (2011a; 2011b; 2014) and Jeremy Munday (2008) have offered significant contributions to the study of style of specific translators and translated texts. Saldanha proposes a definition of translator’s style – reflected at the level of linguistic habits and deliberate rhetorical choices in the form of consistent and distinctive strategies – as

A ‘way of translating’ which is felt to be recognizable across a range of translations by the same translator, distinguishes the translator’s work from that of others, constitutes a coherent pattern of choice, is ‘motivated’, in the sense that it has a discernable function or functions, and cannot be explained purely with reference to the author or source-text style, or as the result of linguistic constraints. (2011b, 31)

Munday, like Baker, also considers habitual and characteristic linguistic choices as a key element of translator style, which he conceives as “the linguistic fingerprint of an individual translator or of translations”, that is to say “those linguistic elements that make a translated text or series of texts identifiably the work of a particular individual or indeed genre” (2008, 7). Such linguistic elements, whether “conscious or subconscious on the part of the translator, obvious or concealed, are the result of the translator’s ‘idiolect’” (7). However, Munday’s principal concern is the relationship between micro-level stylistic choices and the macro-contexts of ideology and cultural production, which may have an impact on the translator’s decision-making. As other scholars have also noted, the main difficulty for translational stylistics lies precisely in distinguishing those aspects of style which are peculiar to a particular translator from those that are visible signs of the source text underlying it or the sociocultural and ideological context surrounding it.

In contrast with the rich theoretical background on issues of style in/of translation, intended as either deliberate or unconscious patterns of choice, scholarly work on the translation of Woolf’s fiction into French has been quite scant and restricted to her nov-

els in book format, thus completely overlooking that interesting aspect of early twentieth-century print culture which is the appearance of translated excerpts and instalments, along with critical articles and reviews, in literary periodicals playing a major role in the reception of writers in a transnational context. The limited number of studies published to date mainly ranges from impressionistic comments on the work of early and late translators such as Marguerite Yourcenar, Cecile Wajsbrot, Charles Mauron, Clara Malraux and Marie Darrieussecq (Cusin 1999; Caws 2002; Pellan 2002; Brassard, Guenot-Hovnanian 2009; Carlini Versini 2020) to more linguistically-oriented investigations of issues of gender and translation in the French versions of *To the Lighthouse* (Gisbert, Santaemilia 2003) and small-scale computer-assisted literary translation studies (Maczewski 1996). An interesting perspective is provided by Charlotte Bosseaux in a series of articles (2001; 2004a; 2004b; 2006) and in the comprehensive monograph *How Does It Feel? Point of View in Translation: The Case of Virginia Woolf into French* (2007), which perhaps represents the only systematic and large-scale investigation of linguistic aspects of Woolf's translated work. Bosseaux adopts a narratological, corpus-based approach to the analysis of style in translation, focusing on "the potential problems involved in the translation of linguistic features that constitute the notion of point of view – i.e. deixis, modality, transitivity and free indirect discourse – in order to see whether the translator's choices affect the transfer of narratological structures" (10). Proving most insightful to the present study, she claims to be "mainly interested in drawing a profile of the translations only in relation to their respective originals" and to concentrate "on the translators' linguistic choices in the translations under investigation and not on their style in their own novels and other translations" (24). For that purpose, Bosseaux compares the French versions of *The Waves* and *To the Lighthouse* with their originals and investigates the translators' use of specific strategies, in order to establish whether or not their choices affect the fictional universe represented in the text, revealing their own discursive presence.

Building on this theoretical background, the present essay, though necessarily limited in scope, aims to extend the focus of current criticism of the translation of Woolf's works into French by analysing translated passages printed in periodicals through the lens of translational stylistics and investigating how these extracts were shaped in such a way that they *came to mean what they did* – as Malmkjaer would say – to the periodicals' varied readerships, thus contributing to the reception of Woolf's authorial profile in interwar France.

### 3. *Appraising and Translating Virginia Woolf in French Literary Periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s*

In the interwar years, Woolf's work was certainly of great interest to leading writers, critics and translators in France. Interrogating Gallica, the digital repository of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, I have been able to collect a total of thirty-six texts by/on Woolf printed in French literary reviews between 1926 and 1937. Some of these texts are ex-

tracts of varying length from Woolf's short stories<sup>3</sup> or novels<sup>4</sup> translated into French and generally accompanied by a brief introduction, while most of them are critical texts (articles, reviews, *entretiens*) containing short translated excerpts interspersed with critical commentary<sup>5</sup>. For reasons of space, analysis will mainly focus on the latter type of printed material with its peculiar interlacing of critical and translated discourse, and chiefly on instances in which significant departures from the original might be explained as more or less conscious strategies, on the part of the translator, aimed at conveying a particular image of Woolf to a French readership in the context of a critical appraisal of her work and stature as a novelist<sup>6</sup>. Such strategies will be compared to those enacted by Marguerite Yourcenar, as a professional translator and a writer in her own right, in her translation of the first section of *The Waves* which appeared in *La Revue hebdomadaire* in August 1936, a few months in advance of the publication of the novel in book format, titled *Les vagues*.

In what is generally recognised as the first article devoted to Woolf printed in France, Jacques-Émile Blanche inserts translated passages from *To the Lighthouse*, but significantly alters the experimental nature of the source text by failing to reproduce the shift between direct speech and free indirect discourse, and by systematically rendering free direct thought as direct thought. Moreover, by avoiding emphatic repetition (for instance of the clause "it was not so" and of the verb "wanted", which has three consecutive occurrences in the original, while it is either omitted or translated as "attendait"/"voulait" in French) he also erases the rhythmical effect of this typical feature of Woolf's style:

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Woolf. 1927. "Jardins de Kew." Trad. Georgette Camille. *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 252: 4; Virginia Woolf. 1928. "Monday or Tuesday: Un roman non-écrit." Trad. Georgette Camille. *Les cahiers du Sud* 97: 4–16; Virginia Woolf. 1932. "La dame dans le miroir." Trad. Simone David. *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 521: 4.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Woolf. 1926. "Le temps passe." Trad. Charles Mauron. *Commerce* 10: 89–133; Virginia Woolf. 1927. "La chambre de Jacob." Trad. Claude Dravaine et Marie Kieffer. *Revue politique et littéraire: Revue bleue* 16: 462–465; Virginia Woolf. 1934. "Vie de Flush." Trad. Charles Mauron. *Revue des deux mondes* 24 (2): 342–369; Virginia Woolf. 1934. "Vie de Flush: Deuxième partie." Trad. Charles Mauron. *Revue des deux mondes* 24 (3): 603–631; Virginia Woolf. 1934. "Vie de Flush: Dernière partie." Trad. Charles Mauron. *Revue des deux mondes* 24 (4): 871–900; Virginia Woolf. 1936. "Les vagues: Fragment." Trad. Marguerite Yourcenar. *La Revue hebdomadaire* 32: 133–153.

<sup>5</sup> Jacques-Émile Blanche. 1927. "Entretien avec Virginia Woolf." *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 252: 1–2; Jean-Jacques Mayoux. 1928. "Sur un livre de Virginia Woolf." *Revue anglo-américaine* 5: 424–438; André Maurois. 1929. "Première rencontre avec Virginia Woolf." *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 327: 1; Jacques-Émile Blanche. 1929. "Un nouveau roman de Virginia Woolf." *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 331: 9; Edmond Jaloux. 1929. "Mrs Dalloway, par Virginia Woolf." *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 334: 3; Louis Gillet. 1929. "L'Orlando de Mme Virginia Woolf." *Revue des deux mondes* 53: 218–230; Jean-Jacques Mayoux. 1929. "Le roman de l'espace et du temps: Virginia Woolf." *Revue anglo-américaine* 1: 312–326; Jean-Jacques Mayoux. 1930. "À propos d'Orlando de Virginia Woolf." *Europe* 85: 117–122; Jacques-Émile Blanche. 1933. "Virginia Woolf et *The Waves*." *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 540: 6; Edmond Jaloux. 1935. "Flush, par Virginia Woolf." *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 546: 5; Edmond Jaloux. 1937. "Les vagues, par Virginia Woolf." *Les Nouvelles littéraires* 772: 4; René Lalou. 1937. "Le sentiment de l'unité humaine, chez Virginia Woolf et Aldous Huxley." *Europe* 178: 266–272.

<sup>6</sup> All the texts examined here show a general tendency among French critics to quote freely from Woolf's works, and to disregard such basic conventions as acknowledging sources and page numbers, or using ellipsis in square brackets to signal omissions. We should therefore assume that, except for reviews of French editions (where the critic is supposed to quote from the reviewed text), in all other cases the translated excerpts are the critic's own work.



«Non, dit-elle, en aplatissant pour l'allonger, le bas de son genou, je ne pourrai pas le finir». «Et quoi alors? Car elle sentait qu'il l'observait encore, mais que son regard avait changé. Il attendait quelque chose qu'il lui avait toujours paru si difficile de lui donner; il voulait qu'elle lui dit qu'elle l'adorait. Or faire cela, non, elle ne le pouvait point. [...] Une femme sans coeur, l'appelait-il, qui ne lui disait jamais qu'elle l'aimait. Mais il en allait tout autrement, non, ce n'était pas cela. [...] Car elle sentait qu'il avait tourné sa tête, en même temps qu'elle tournait la sienne; il l'épiait. Elle savait qu'il pensait: «Vous êtes plus belle que jamais». Et elle sentait qu'elle était très belle. «Ne me direz-vous donc pas une fois que vous m'aimez?» pensait-il, car son attention avait été appelée par Minta qui lisait un livre de lui, et c'était la fin du jour, et l'on s'était chamaillé sur ce sujet: irait-on, n'irait-on pas au Phare? Mais elle ne pouvait pas y aller; elle ne pouvait lui parler, se tourna vers lui, tenant le bas dans sa main, et elle le regarda. Et comme elle le regardait, elle commença de sourire, car, malgré qu'elle n'eût point prononcé un mot, il savait – oh! naturellement, il le savait – qu'elle l'adorait. Il ne pourrait nier cela. Et, souriante, elle regarda par la fenêtre et dit (pensant en soi même): «Rien sur terre n'égale cette félicité». – «Oui, vous avez raison. Il pleuvra demain». (Blanche 1927, 2)

[“No”, she said, flattening the stocking out upon her knee, “I shan’t finish it”. And what then? For she felt that he was still looking at her, but that his look had changed. He wanted something – wanted the thing she always found it so difficult to give him; wanted her to tell him that she loved him. And that, no, she could not do. [...] A heartless woman he called her; she never told him that she loved him. But it was not so – it was not so. [...] For she knew that he had turned his head as she turned; he was watching her. She knew that he was thinking, You are more beautiful than ever. And she felt herself very beautiful. Will you not tell me just for once that you love me? He was thinking that, for he was roused, what with Minta and his book, and its being the end of the day and their having quarrelled about going to the Lighthouse. But she could not do it; she could not say it. Then, knowing that he was watching her, instead of saying any thing she turned, holding her stocking, and looked at him. And as she looked at him she began to smile, for though she had not said a word, he knew, of course he knew, that she loved him. He could not deny it. And smiling she looked out of the window and said (thinking to herself, Nothing on earth can equal this happiness) – “Yes, you were right. It’s going to be wet tomorrow”. (Woolf 1927, 189–191)]

In another excerpt, the choice to replace the past simple tense of the source text with the present in the target text attenuates the stylistic significance of free indirect discourse and “the impression it gives of both a character and narrator speaking or thinking simultaneously” (Simpson 1993, 26):

Qu’y a-t-il, somme toute, de plus formidable que l’espace, là? Elle est ici, de nouveau! pense-t-elle en se reculant pour regarder, arrachée qu’elle venait d’être au bavardage, hors la vie, tous liens coupés avec les vivants, seule aux prises avec son ennemi personnel, l’ancien, le formidable ennemi. Ceci, cela, cette vérité, cette réalité, imposaient leur griffe sur elle, en leur nudité, par delà les apparences, et absorbaient toute son attention. [...] D’autres très vénérables objets se contentent d’être vénérés;

les hommes, les femmes, Dieu nous gardent à genoux, prosternés devant eux; mais cette forme, là-bas, ne fût-ce qu'un abat-jour blanc sur une table d'osier, **déclenche en nous** un perpétuel débat, **nous défie** en nous proposant un corps à corps dans lequel **nous sommes battus** d'avance. (Blanche 1927, 2)

[For what **could be** more formidable than that space? Here **she was** again, **she thought**, stepping back to look at it, drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers – this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention. [...] Other worshipful **objects were content** with worship; men, women, God, all let one kneel prostrate; but this form, were it only the shape of a white lamp-shade looming on a wicker table, **roused one** to perpetual combat, **challenged one** to a fight in which **one was bound** to be worsted. (Woolf 1927, 244–245)]

Translating extensively from *To the Lighthouse* in a review of the 1927 Hogarth Press edition, Jean-Jacques Mayoux is as unfaithful to the source text as he is appreciative of Woolf's novel. On the one hand he acknowledges that, in this book, "nothing is more real, nothing less arbitrary than the characters' inner movements", since the author employs "the technique of the 'told from the inside'. Nothing is purely objective, completely external to the characters", and yet "we are never totally 'inside' them. Dialogue, thoughts, reveries: everything is almost entirely in the indirect style" (1928, 425–426, my translation). On the other hand, among various inaccuracies such as the omission of an entire sentence, he changes Woolf's style and the novel's psychological point of view by also omitting the reporting clause in several instances of indirect thought, free direct thought, free direct speech, as well as the repetition of the verb "mean" in three consecutive interrogative sentences, thus attenuating the focus on the character's perpetual search for meaning. Moreover, the partial repetition "silliness and spite"/"silly and spiteful" is also lost when the two nouns are rendered as "niaiseries" and "humeurs", not linked by derivation mechanisms to the couple of adjectives "sots et hargneux":

Il faudrait cinquante paires d'yeux, songeait-elle. Cinquante paires d'yeux ne suffiraient pas pour faire seulement le tour de cette femme. Ce qu'il fallait surtout c'était un sens secret, léger comme l'air, pour passer à travers les serrures, l'entourer tandis qu'elle tricotait, qu'elle parlait, qu'elle était assise à la fenêtre, silencieuse et seule; [...] Que **signifiaient** pour elle et la haie et le jardin et la vague qui se brise? (Mayoux 1928, 428)

[One wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with, she reflected. Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with, **she thought. Among them, must be one that was stone blind to her beauty.** One wanted most some secret sense, fine as air, with which to steal through keyholes and surround her where she sat knitting, talking, sitting silent in the window alone; [...] What did the hedge **mean** to her, what did the garden **mean** to her, what did it **mean** to her when a wave broke? (Woolf 1927, 303–304)]

Mais quel pouvoir dans une âme humaine. Cette femme écrivant ses lettres, assise sous le rocher, résolvait toutes choses en simplicité, faisait tomber ces colères, ces irritations, comme de vieux haillons; elle assemblait ceci, et cela, et ceci encore; et de ces misérables **niaiseries**, de ces **humeurs** (elle et Charles s'étaient disputés, chamailés, avaient été **sots et hargneux**), voici qu'elle avait fait cette scène sur la grève, ce moment d'amitié cordiale – qui survivait après toutes ces années, si complet qu'elle y plongeait pour rendre corps à ses souvenirs de lui, et que cela restait dans la mémoire, presque comme une oeuvre d'art. (Mayoux 1928, 435)

[But what a power was in the human soul! **she thought**. That woman sitting there, writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable **silliness and spite** (she and Charles squabbling, sparring, had been **silly and spiteful**) something – this scene on the beach for example, this moment of friendship and liking – which survived, after all these years, complete, so that she dipped into it to re-fashion her memory of him, and it stayed in the mind almost like a work of art. (Woolf 1927, 248–249)]

Mais les morts, pensa Lily, rencontrant quelque obstacle dans sa composition, qui la fit arrêter, songeuse, et reculer légèrement, oh! les morts, on en avait pitié, on les mettait de côté, on avait un peu de dédain pour eux: ils sont à notre merci. Mrs Ramsay a pâli, passé... Dérisoire, elle semblait la voir, là-bas, au bout de ce couloir d'années, disant, pour comble d'ironie, Mariez-vous, Mariez-vous. (Mayoux 1928, 436–437)

[But the dead, thought Lily, encountering some obstacle in her design which made her pause and ponder, stepping back a foot or so, Oh the dead! **she murmured**, one pitied them, one brushed them aside, one had even a little contempt for them. They are at our mercy. Mrs Ramsay has faded and gone, **she thought**. [...] Mockingly she seemed to see her there at the end of the corridor of years saying, of all incongruous things, "Marry, marry!" (Woolf 1927, 269)]

Quoting a few excerpts from the French edition of *Mrs Dalloway* (released by Stock in 1929) in a review published in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, Edmond Jaloux reveals the translator Simone David's interventions on the text. The critic remarks that "Mrs Virginia Woolf wonders whether the classical form of the novel [...] distorts life, and whether there might be a way of approaching it more closely, or knowing it more intimately" (1929, 3, my translation). For that purpose, "it is our inner world that she exposes [...]. That is Mrs Virginia Woolf's domain; that is where she is unique" (3). Nevertheless, as far as one can judge from such brief examples, David takes liberties with Woolf's subtle narrative technique and skilful use of third person narration with internal character as focaliser, changing free indirect discourse into free direct thought and dispensing with reporting clauses three times in a short span (possibly in order to avoid repetition of the verb "pensa"):

**J'ai eu de durs moments** et cela fait rire de voir cette jeune fille. Vous vous marierez, car vous êtes gentille. Mariez-vous, et alors, vous verrez. Ah! les domestiques et le reste. Tous les hommes ont leurs manies. Mais est-ce que j'aurais choisi tout à fait de même si j'avais su? – pensa Mrs Dempster, qui aurait aimé glisser un mot à Maisie

Johnson et sentir sur la peau flasque de son vieux visage fatigué un baiser de pitié. – Car j’ai eu une dure vie. Que n’ai-je pas donné? Les roses de mes joues, ma taille, mes pieds aussi. (Jaloux 1929, 3)

[**She had had a hard time of it**, and couldn’t help smiling at a girl like that. You’ll get married, for you’re pretty enough, **thought Mrs. Dempster**. Get married, **she thought**, and then you’ll know. Oh, the cooks, and so on. Every man has his ways. But whether I’d have chosen quite like that if I could have known, thought Mrs. Dempster, and could not help wishing to whisper a word to Maisie Johnson; to feel on the creased pouch of her worn old face the kiss of pity. For **it’s been a hard life, thought Mrs. Dempster**. What **hadn’t she given** to it? Roses; figure; her feet too. (Woolf 1925, 31)]

Similarly, reviewing the French translation of *The Waves* published by Stock in 1937, Jaloux cites extracts which – as will be shown below – are indicative of the translator Marguerite Yourcenar’s systematic manipulation of the original. While changes in transitivity patterns (actor reversal, transformation of a material/existential process into a relational process) produce the effect of modifying the way characters “encode in language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them” (Simpson 1993, 82), avoiding repetition – with consequent lexical diversification – definitely alters the rhythm and resonance of the source text. In particular, not only is the choice of “danse de papillons réduits en poussières” in lieu of “poussière de papillons” questionable; it also introduces variety where sameness was perhaps originally intended to suggest the character’s obsession with word patterns:

«Quand je serai grand, j’aurai toujours sur moi un carnet très épais, aux feuillets nombreux, avec un classement alphabétique. Je classerai mes phrases. Sous la lettre D, on trouvera «Danse de papillons réduits en poussières», si, dans un de mes romans je décris un rayon de soleil sur un appui de fenêtre, je regarderai à la lettre P, et je trouverai «Poussière de papillons». Cette phrase servira. «Les fenêtres s’abritent derrière les doigts verts des arbres». Cette phrase peut servir». (Jaloux 1937, 4)

[When I am grown up **I shall carry a notebook** – a fat book with many pages, methodically lettered. I shall enter my phrases. Under B shall come “**Butterfly powder**”. If, in my novel, I describe the sun on the window-sill, I shall look under B and find **butterfly powder**. That will be useful. **The tree** “**shades the window with green fingers**”. That will be useful. (Woolf 1931, 26)]

«Sommes-nous sans épée, sans armes, incapables de jeter bas ces murailles, cette vie protégée, ces gens qui se calfeutrent derrière des rideaux, font des enfants et se réveillent chaque matin plus engagés, plus compromis, parmi leurs livres et leurs tableaux? (Jaloux 1937, 4)

[“**Was there no sword**, nothing with which to batter down these walls, this protection, this begetting of children and living behind curtains, and becoming daily more involved and committed, with books and pictures? (Woolf 1931, 189)]

As the previous examples clearly demonstrate, Woolf's most experimental novels attracted the attention of French translators and commentators alike, who, nonetheless, can be said to have often misinterpreted her skilful narrative style and underrated her much appreciated mastery in maintaining third-person narration while subtly shifting the perspective to the inner world of the characters. The choice of either direct thought or free direct thought to replace free indirect discourse in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* is certainly less impactful, and has the effect of normalising Woolf's style or demeaning her innovativeness as a novelist. Though the soliloquies in *The Waves* are maintained, some alterations in the representation of processes produce changes in the way characters convey their mental picture of reality. Moreover, in line with French literary conventions, avoiding repetition seems to have been a serious concern for translators, at the expense of the rhythm and sound effects of the source texts and of Woolf's conscious choice of such stylistic strategies.

In this regard, it might be interesting to compare these findings with the strategies that Yourcenar regularly adopted in translating the first section of *The Waves* – Woolf's most poetic and experimental novel – for the August 1936 issue of *La Revue hebdomadaire*. Yourcenar's significant departures from the original become manifest from the very first soliloquies, in which the six characters are introduced by means of short utterances describing their sensory perceptions. While the source text is characterised by the use of direct speech and a powerful rhythmical effect produced by positioning the reporting clause between a synthetic representation of their mental processes (in the form of senser + process + phenomenon) and a more elaborate description of these, the translator employs free direct speech and moves the reporting clauses freely, thus altering the rhythm of the original. Apart from various lexical inconsistencies (such as the choice of the reporting verb "murmura" instead of "dit" for Louis's speech, which is not totally accurate and creates an unjustified differentiation between his own utterance and those of the other characters), the French version fails to reproduce the musicality which is so typical of Woolf's novel by disregarding repetition and other sound effects. In particular, whereas Woolf uses either identical verb forms ("stamps"/"stamps") or different forms of the same verb ("hanging"/"hangs", "stamping"/"stamps") to create a sense of regularity, Yourcenar seems to prefer lexical variety ("piétinement"/"frappe", "trépigne"/"frappe"):

— Je vois un anneau **suspendu** au-dessus de ma tête, **dit Bernard**. Il tremble et **se balance** au bout d'un noeud coulant de lumière.

— Je vois une bande jaune pâle, **dit Suzanne**. Elle s'allonge à la rencontre d'une raie violette.

— J'entends un bruit, **dit Rhoda**. Chip... Chap... Chip... Chap le son monte, et puis descend.

— Je vois un globe, **dit Neville**. Il pend comme une gouttelette aux flancs énormes d'une colline.

— Je vois un gland rouge entrelacé de fil d'or, **dit Jinny**.

— J'entends le **piétinement** d'une gigantesque bête enchaînée, **murmura Louis**. Elle **frappe** la terre... Du pied elle **frappe** continuellement la terre. (Woolf 1936, 135)

[“I see a ring,” **said Bernard**, “**hanging** above me. It quivers and **hangs** in a loop of light”.

“I see a slab of pale yellow”, **said Susan**, “spreading away until it meets a purple stripe”.  
 “I hear a sound”, **said Rhoda**, “cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down”.  
 “I see a globe”, **said Neville**, “hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill”.  
 “I see a crimson tassel”, **said Jinny**, “twisted with gold threads”.  
 “I hear something **stamping**”, **said Louis**. “A great beast’s foot is chained. It **stamps**, and **stamps**, and **stamps**”. (Woolf 1931, 6)]

— Le coq chante, **dit Bernard**. Son chant jaillit comme un filet rouge dans la blancheur étale du matin.  
 — Les oiseaux vont et viennent autour de nous, **dit Suzanne**, avec chacun sa chanson.  
 — La bête gigantesque **trépigne**. L’éléphant enchaîné **frappe** du pied le sol du rivage, **murmura Louis**.  
 — Tiens, **dit Jinny**. Toutes les fenêtres de la maison sont pavoisées de stores blancs.  
 — On tourne le robinet de l’office, **dit Rhoda**. L’eau froide commence à couler sur le hareng placé dans un bol. (Woolf 1936, 136)  
 [“Now the cock crows like a spurt of hard, red water in the white tide”, **said Bernard**.  
 “Birds are singing up and down and in and out all round us”, **said Susan**.  
 “The beast **stamps**; the elephant with its foot chained; the great brute on the beach **stamps**”, **said Louis**.  
 “Look at the house”, **said Jinny**, “with all its windows white with blinds”.  
 “Cold water begins to run from the scullery tap”, **said Rhoda**, “over the mackerel in the bowl”. (Woolf 1931, 7)]

In these examples, Yourcenar modifies quite extensively both the syntax and the vocabulary of the source text, and at the same time expands it<sup>7</sup>. Not only does her translation frequently deviate from the original, but is also more diversified lexically, which can be interpreted as confirmation that, being herself a writer and naturally following French stylistic conventions, Yourcenar tends to avoid repetition. In *The Waves*, the reiteration of lexical items in general, and the repetition of the first person singular pronoun in particular, has rhythmical and dramatic effects which are not always recreated in the target text. When the translator does not reproduce the repetitions, the characters’ feelings are consequently less accentuated and the emphasis created by the repeated “I” in the source text is attenuated. In other words, where Yourcenar disregards Woolf’s focus on the speaking subjects and their inner worlds, there is a generalised loss of deictic anchorage. On the contrary, when repetition does occur in the target text (“elle frappe”/“elle frappe”, “chante”/“chant”) the effect is noteworthy, since the sensory perceptions of the focalising character are highlighted and the emphasis contributes to the dramatic effect of certain passages.

<sup>7</sup> Critics as well as other Woolf’s translators have often commented on the fact that Yourcenar’s *Les vagues* is more the work of a great French stylist and novelist than that of a translator, being on the whole overtly unfaithful to the original. Favouring the effect in the target language, Yourcenar often modified and left her imprint on the source text. Bosseaux, moreover, has demonstrated by means of corpus linguistics tools that the type/token ratio for *Les vagues* is higher than for *The Waves*, which means that the translator used a wider range of vocabulary than the original author.

As far as other deictics are concerned, the frequent repetition of the temporal adverb “now” in the original also gives rhythm and emphasises the continuity of the present moment of the speech act. Together with the locative adverb “here” and the use of the present tense, it serves to anchor the point of view to the speaking subject, strengthening the perpetual sense of immediacy expressed in Woolf’s novel. Even though various adverbs (such as “maintenant”, “ici”, “là”, “voici”, “voilà”) are employed in French and contribute to recreating the spatial, temporal and psychological point of view of the English original, several interesting instances of omission occur. In these cases, the target language does not always compensate for the loss of both the deictic emphasis and the patterns of repetitions of the source text:

Je ne sais quoi de rose passe devant le soupirail. Quelqu’un glisse un regard à travers la fente. Ce regard vient me frapper. (Woolf 1936, 138)

[**Now** something pink passes the eyehole. **Now** an eye-beam is slid through the chink. Its beam strikes me. (Woolf 1931, 9)]

Et nous réveillons des corbeaux somnolents qui n’ont jamais vu figure humaine; et nous trébuchons sur des glands pourris, que le temps a rendus luisants et rouges. (Woolf 1936, 142)

[**Now** we wake the sleeping daws who have never seen a human form; **now** we tread on rotten oak apples, red with age and slippery. (Woolf 1931, 12)]

— Vous **voilà** de nouveau parti avec vos phrases, dit Suzanne. **Voilà** que vous montez de plus en plus haut comme la ficelle d’un ballon rouge, à travers les couches de feuillages, hors de portée. Et vous traînez; vous tirez sur mes jupes; vous regardez en arrière, tout occupé à tourner des phrases. (Woolf 1936, 143)

[“**Now** you trail away”, said Susan, “making phrases. **Now** you mount like an air-ball’s string, higher and higher through the layers of the leaves, out of reach. **Now** you lag. **Now** you tug at my skirts, looking back, making phrases. (Woolf 1931, 13)]

Je déteste les flâneurs et les brouillons. Mais la cloche sonne, et nous allons être en retard. Laissons là nos jouets; rentrons ensemble. (Woolf 1936, 145)

[I hate wandering and mixing things together. **Now** the bell rings and we shall be late. **Now** we must drop our toys. **Now** we must go in together. (Woolf 1931, 14)]

— Miss Hudson vient de fermer son livre, dit Rhoda. Le cauchemar commence. **Voilà** qu’elle prend un bout de craie et se met à dessiner des chiffres, six, sept, huit, puis une croix, puis une ligne sur le tableau noire. (Woolf 1936, 146)

[“**Now** Miss Hudson”, said Rhoda, “has shut the book. **Now** the terror is beginning. **Now** taking her lump of chalk she draws figures, six, seven, eight, and then a cross and then a line on the blackboard. (Woolf 1931, 15)]

Maintenant, je ne peux pas couler à fond; je ne peux pas sombrer complètement à travers le drap mince. J’allonge mon corps sur le frêle matelas, et je plane suspendue. Je suis au-dessus de la terre. (Woolf 1936, 152)

[Now I cannot sink; cannot altogether fall through the thin sheet **now**. **Now** I spread my body on this frail mattress and hang suspended. I am above the earth **now**. (Woolf 1931, 19)]

Finally, Yourcenar's translation is also characterised by changes affecting the transitivity and modality patterns of the original. In the following extracts, for instance, existential and relational processes are used in the source text to describe the sensory perceptions that the characters experience, while the target text employs material processes with inanimate actors, which shift the focus onto the characters as individuals witnessing the course of events. Moreover, deontic modality ("nous devons", "il faudra") may also replace epistemic modality ("we shall"):

— Le long des murs craquelés d'or **l'ombre des feuilles met un doigt bleu**, dit Bernard. (Woolf 1936, 136)

["The walls are cracked with gold cracks", said Bernard, "and **there are blue, finger-shaped shadows of leaves** beneath the windows". (Woolf 1931, 7)]

— **La cloche de l'église sonne un premier coup**, murmura Louis. Les autres suivent: un... deux... un... deux... (Woolf 1936, 137)

["**That is the first stroke of the church bell**", said Louis. "Then the others follow; one, two; one, two; one, two". (Woolf 1931, 8)]

Mais **le grand jour l'avait aveuglée**: elle trébuche; elle se jette à terre parmi les racines des arbres, là où la lumière va-et-vient dans un battement sans fin. [...] **La lumière luit par accès**. (Woolf 1936, 140)

[But **she is blind after the light** and trips and flings herself down on the roots under the trees, where the light seems to pant in and out, in and out. [...] **The light is fitful**. (Woolf 1931, 10)]

**L'eau coule dans les sèches fissures de mon corps**. Mon corps frileux se réchauffe; mon corps inondé reluit. (Woolf 1936, 151)

[**My dry crannies are wetted**; my cold body is warmed; it is sluiced and gleaming. (Woolf 1931, 19)]

**Nous devons** plonger comme des nageurs qui ne touchent le sol que de la pointe des orteils. Suzanne, **nous devons** plonger à travers l'atmosphère verte des feuilles. [...] **Les bottes de caoutchouc du garçon d'écurie résonnent dans la cour**. (Woolf 1936, 142)

[**We shall** sink like swimmers just touching the ground with the tips of their toes. **We shall** sink through the green air of the leaves, Susan. [...] **There is the stable-boy clattering in the yard in rubber boots**. (Woolf 1931, 11)]

Mais **il faudra** bientôt nous en aller. Bientôt, le coup de sifflet de Miss Curry retentira. **Il faudra** marcher. **Il faudra** nous séparer. [...] Maintenant nous sommes couchés



sous les buissons de groseilliers, et **chaque souffle de brise promène sur nous des marbrures d'ombre.** (Woolf 1936, 148)

[But soon **we shall** go. Soon Miss Curry will blow her whistle. **We shall** walk. **We shall** part. [...] Now we lie under the currant bushes and every time the breeze stirs **we are mottled all over.** (Woolf 1931, 16–17)]

In conclusion, it seems evident that French critics and translators of the interwar years took several liberties with those experimental works by Woolf which they almost unanimously praised in their articles or reviews and deemed as being of great impact on modern European fiction. Such departures from the originals mainly concern stylistic issues like speech and thought presentation, transitivity and/or modality patterns, rhythmic and musical effects, and can be subsumed under a general tendency to avoid repetition and make the target text more lexically varied, in compliance with the stylistic conventions of the target language. While inquiring about the translators' motivations underlying these choices is beyond the scope of this essay, it might be interesting to consider the effect that such process of adaptation of a foreign author to the French literary canon and cultural context might have had on the readership of the periodical publications through which Woolf's authorial profile was constructed and disseminated. Certainly French readers cannot be expected to have had the possibility of systematically comparing source and target texts in order to disclose the mechanisms by which meaning was conveyed to them. Most probably, they came to appreciate Woolf's prose mainly through transfers which often undermined her stylistic innovations. If it is true, on the one hand, that the experimentalism of Woolf's texts becomes attenuated in translation, on the other hand this sits well with both the moderate experimentalism of early twentieth-century French fiction as compared to British modernist fiction, and the recurrent belief among French commentators that, though admirable, Woolf's formal innovations as a woman writer represent a moderate version of the much more audacious novelistic experimentation of her male contemporaries, particularly Joyce and Proust. The translation strategies through which Woolf's works were mediated to a French readership seem to be definitely in line with the typical attitudes, mainly oscillating between "domestication" and "foreignisation", shown by critics and reviewers of the interwar years. Furthermore, such strategies ultimately highlight the importance of literary translation in periodicals as a form of cultural transfer, along with the role of critics, translators and publishers as cultural mediators in a transnational context.

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