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2.

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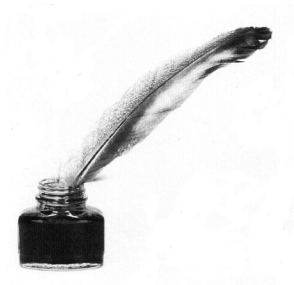

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Trans-Woolf

Edited by

Claire Davison, Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biasio

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redazione@morlacchilibri.com – www.morlacchilibri.com

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Virginia Woolf, 'The Leaning Tower'

Introduction

Claire Davison, Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biasio

Translation's myth of origins may hark back to a community's transgressive aspirations, divine wrath, and the building of a Tower of Babel, but from the perspective of literary modernism, the prismatic moment crystallised by Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator' (1923) is both a refraction of the age-old story and a new beginning. Despite drawing its inspiration from the same Genesis story, Benjamin's essay celebrates the unexpected energies of the written word when, speaking from new territories and through unknown languages, it embraces alternative configurations of its previous self. In this alternative tale of origins, extracting Orphic resonances and prismatic rainbows from the granite and marble of 'source texts', textuality willingly renounces a belief in source purity whilst nonetheless acknowledging its genealogical debt to translational encounters. In ardent yearning for those transformational powers which alone assure the promise of translation's afterlives, the translator's task thus entails thinking outside familiar mappings, crossing borders, and thereby imagining survival.

As recent Woolf scholarship has shown, there are rich networks of interconnectivity between Benjamin's conception of transitional and creative energies and Woolf's own lifelong concern with thinking outside engrained patterns, and against entrenched figures or territories of authority. These interconnections have

inspired much of the research undertaken by the Société d'Etudes Woolfiennes in recent years, as is seen in our explorations of Woolf and the 'Outlands' or 'Outlanding Woolf' which considered different modes of otherness, deterritorialisation and migration produced in and by Woolf's writing.[1] These more geographical, spatial and historiographical chartings of boundaries made strange or blurred by new angles of visions led inevitably to our thinking 'Trans-Woolf'. The idea was to now deflect 'outlandishness' through the prism of the Latin prefix 'Trans', passing via a whole constellation of related words: translation, transcription, transport, transference, transmission, transgression. Thinking 'Trans-' thus provided the conceptual movement which, bringing together a community of Woolf scholars from across Europe,[2] runs through the essays in the present volume, as it runs through the rhizomatic macrotext of Woolf's œuvre. Indeed there is something in the very lightness, drift and penetration of the prefix 'Trans' which espouses the movement, transparency and depth Woolf dreamt of as composing her poetics[3], while at the same time it roots itself in that counter-nationalist, counter-individualist dynamic at the heart of her thinking[4] which inhabits the act of translation per se.[5]

1. *Crossing into otherness – Outlanding Woolf*, edited by Catherine Bernard, Claire Davison and Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biasio, in *Etudes britanniques contemporaines*, n° 48, 2015: http://ebc.revues.org/2036?lang=en

2. The Trans-Woolf conference of the French Virginia Woolf Society took place at the Institut du Monde Anglophone, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle–Paris, 2–3 July 2015.

3. '[…] a new critical method – something swifter and lighter and more colloquial and yet intense: more to the point and less composed; more fluid and following the flight', Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, Harcourt: New York, 1982, 324.

4. 'Literature is no one's private ground; it is common ground. It is not cut up into nation ; there are no wars there'. Virginia Woolf, 'The Leaning Tower' in *The Moment and Other Essays* (Harcourt Brace and Company, 1948) 128-154.

5. In a preface to the French translation of his poems, the poet Mahmoud Darwich says of translation that it protects language from the burden of nationality without dissolving this beyond recognition: 'Le lieu de l'universel', in *La terre nous est étroite*, traduit de l'arabe par Elias Sanbar, Paris: Gallimard, 2000, 7–14. For Woolf's own engagement in trans-subjective translation, see Claire Davison, *Translation as*

In this perspective Catherine Bernard analyses translation in Woolf's writing and specifically in *Flush* as a dialectical movement at once inscribed in the hermeneutic space between languages and the modernity of fast new modes of transport leaving the subject open to moments of heuristic alienation. This opening chapter traces an ethics of cultural displacement reaching beyond any politics of identity as Woolf transcribes both the jerky velocity of Modernity and the Modernist hollowing out of a time beyond time. The 'trans' of translation is here ultimately conceived as a form of Derridean hospitality whereby in travel 'the host herself becomes pure medium' and the movement she inscribes is cristallised in fragments of epiphanic untimeliness.

In the following essay, drawing an analogy between the anonymous creator in Woolf's 'Anon' and the 'translational author', Elsa Högberg underlines Woolf's insistence on the eclipse of pre-modern cultural activity, which was communal and participatory, as a form of melancholic fidelity to a repressed cultural unconscious of capitalist modernity, whilst tracing the transmutation of the political thinking underpinning this late essay into the ethos inspiring *Between the Acts*: '"I" rejected: "we" substituted […] we all life, all art, all waifs & strays' (Woolf 1985: 135).

Focusing on the critical undertow of infra-verbal musicality in *The Voyage Out*, which both the title, Rachel's trajectory and Woolf's poetics translate as a journey into unchartered topographies, Claire Davison not only traces this journey in terms of the text's dialogue with new forms of musical expression but relates the acoustic reservoir of ever unfolding soundscapes to the unchartered territories of evolutionary narrative. Thus exploring a further dialogue between Woolf's expanding novel drafts and Darwin's 1839 travelogue *The Voyage of the Beagle*, this essay defines an unexpected transdisciplinary cartography

Collaboration: Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and S. S. Koteliansky, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

whose paths converge in Rachel's transgeneric voyage into a mythical, musical form of otherness: 'Rachel's life slips from words to music imperceptibly. She *becomes* water'.

Considering Woolf's 'Time Passes' through the prism of a secondary rendering into English of Charles Mauron's 1926 French translation of Woolf's early draft, by Katherine Swarbrick, Jane Goldman reads transversally to highlight a palimpsestic interplay between the three texts whereby Woolf's words 'are witting participants in the act of their own translation'. Interweaving fragments from Benjamin's seminal 1923 essay this chapter sets up an uncanny translational dialogue between signifying chains as they fade and reappear like the ghost of words past between languages, whilst Goldman underlining the always already presentness of French symbolism in Woolf's text, reveals the temporality of afterwardness haunting the translational encounter.

Drawing an analogy between the transference and translation as a process of 'reading through' to remembrance, the following essay echoes this trans-temporality of *nachträglichkeit* through *Al Faro*, the first Spanish translation of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse.* Spinning a Benjaminian thread between original script and its translational trajectory in the journeying to the lighthouse – as that into a past yet to be discovered – signified through the child James as he epitomizes the familiar strangeness of a child's primary contact with recited words: 'something wondering, pale, like the reflection of a light', Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biasio reads the translation as releasing the mythical and psychical anteriority of reading buried at the core of Woolf's text.

Examining a form of associative translation between text and photographic images Adèle Cassigneul reads *Jacob's Room* intermedially as a collection of flickering images open to the space of dreams. Referring to photographs of Woolf's brother Thoby as well as to the modernist circulation of clichés of Greek statuary, this essay underlines the modulating presence of a

'photographic unconscious', whereby 'the magic and shadowy quality of photography has worked its way into literature as a haunting *interpretant*', thus espousing a dream of Jacob which spectralises Woolf's text.

Reading *Three Guineas* as a reinterpretation of Kant's Ideal of *Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*[6] inflected with the question of gender, Anne-Laure Rigeade underlines a philosophy of generalised and intra-lingual translation subtending Woolf's idea of community in this late essay. The question of transmission outside the patriarchal paradigm is further examined in the light of recent French feminist translations of Woolf's text by Benoîte Groult and Viviane Forrester as they variously deflect and refract the ethics, politics and poetics of Woolf's transcription of Kantian idealism.

Through the prism of a transgressive imperative inhabiting literature since the notion of authorship, Caroline Marie explores the modalities of Virginia Woolf's transformation into *Pop Woolf*. Examining the graphic translations and texts of contemporary comic strip in a transnational context, she traces a phantasmatic feminist filiation running through Woolf's transmutation into a figure of popular culture. The essay thus underlines a transgressive heteromedial interplay which undercuts and destabilises the hagiographic tradition it seems to espouse as Woolf becomes image.

Considering Virginia Woolf's phenomenology of time in terms of a prismatic disjuncture between language and consciousness which Woolf's writing forever translates and retranslates, Annalisa Volpone reviews various examples of Italian translations of *To the Lighthouse*, in terms of tenses, to point to a temporal aporia produced between languages. Furthermore, the essay considers Woolf's philosophy of the moment and the forms of crystallisation and transfixation which express it as engaged in

6. *Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (1784). translated by Lewis White Beck. From Immanuel Kant, 'On History,' The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963.

the text's attempt to translate, mediate and ultimately transfix affects which are not immediately available to consciousness.

Focusing in turn on the question of rhythm in Italian (re) translations of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, Elisa Bolchi highlights the difficulties of transcribing polyphonic effects, such as the intrication of sound and semantic drift in a sequence of extracts translated by Linati, Nadotti, Fusini. In this respect the micro example 'out, out, far out to sea and alone' is itself paradigmatic of the translator's encounter with the trans-signifying currents traversing Woolf's 'rhizomatic macrotext'. Situating this enquiry in the wider context of *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*,[7] this essay also addresses the translator's attempts to embody Woolfian form.

Our collection of essays closes with an epilogue and testament by one of these translators – Nadia Fusini, one of the guest-speakers at Trans-Woolf. With an ear so finely tuned to Woolf's own 'undoing of English', Fusini speaks from within that space of translation in which the 'trans' is a movement involving dispossession, 'taking and being taken by the words', violation and transfertilisation 'to make Italian pregnant with Virginia Woolf', a *corps à corps* encounter producing a transferential chimera,[8] a 'metonomasia' producing its own form of transcendence in the release of sense, and ultimately 'a foundling whose mother is uncertain'. It is thus by thinking back through the mothers who had previously translated Woolf into Italian, and by thinking through her own sensual and maternal apprehensions of the novels in translation that Fusini's last words bring us back to the central premises of Benjamin's essay. Here are but some of the foreign, outlanded afterlives for which Woolf's work yearns.

7. Mary Ann Caws and Nicola Luckhurst (eds). *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*, London: Continuum, 2002.

8. The French psychoanalyst Michel M'Uzan theorises the transference as a creating of a chimera, a mythical creature formed out of the encounter of two unconsciouses, *La Chimère des Inconscients*, Paris: PUF, 2008.

Photograph reproduced in Roger Fry's *Last Lectures*, Artemis, statue from the East pediment of the Parthenon 442-432 BC Acropolis.
Web source https://www.pinterest.com/gfne36/partenone-παρθενών/

Translational ethics

CATHERINE BERNARD

Translation/Transport in *Flush* and Other Hybrids: Virginia Woolf's Ethics of Cultural Displacement

The thoughts I would like to submit here about Virginia Woolf's ethics of cultural displacement proceed from both my experience of translating some of her texts into French, and from a lexical ambiguity, a sort of creative misprision that nestles at the heart of the word translation. There is more to a translation than the mere linguistic mutation or even interpretation which the French word '*traduction*' implies. A translation is a displacement of sorts; it moves and displaces one language as it journeys from one linguistic world to another; it seems to entail an odyssey in which one is transformed even as one moves from one language to another (Hosington 28). Paradoxically, such linguistic transport also implies a cross-fertilisation of languages that gestures towards a universal language and unlimited literariness.

More broadly, as Antoine Berman underlines in the chapters he devotes to the function of translation for the German Romantics in *L'Épreuve de l'étranger*, translation may in fact be another word for interpretation and hermeneutic enlightenment. Meaning itself proceeds from a form of translation which Jakobson chose to define as 'intra-translation' (Berman 137). Hence translation becomes another word for intellection in so far as intellection necessarily implies reflexiveness. 'We may thus talk [Berman writes] of a kind of *generalized* translation: everything that implies the "version" of one thing is transposed into another one' (136: my translation). Conversely, the same Romantics would intuit the untranslatability of languages while

hoping for the possibility of translating all works into all the languages (Berman 138-139). From all these contradictions will derive a conception of translation as the locus of literariness, as the site where writing comes into its own, such as revealed at last by the foreign language.[1] The French word '*traduction*' on the contrary enlists the metaphysics of presence and, by extension its opposite, that of appropriation and treason through a sort of anxious slippage. A '*traduction*' can only be a '*trahison*'. *Traduttore, traditore*: the topos encapsulates a repressed metaphysics in which interpretation sustains itself on an avowed yearning to discover and embrace the essence of the original text even as it is interpreted; *traduit*, may mean betrayed and possibly even rendered accountable (one can also be '*traduit en justice*', brought to justice).[2]

The English term implies a more dynamic, more empiricist conception of meaning, in which the displacement from one language into another produces a movement that trans-forms language and also brings it into being. An enlightening collusion of translation and movement, of movement and metamorphosis, of metamorphosis and disclosure, of disclosure as reflexiveness comes to the fore. And the moment one acknowledges the lexical ambiguity of the word 'translation' as potentially heuristic, one realizes that Virginia Woolf's own poetics of translation is always

1. The debate has recently been revived both by Barbara Cassin, in her groundbreaking essay: *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies. Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* and her edited book: *Philosopher en langues. Les intraduisibles en traduction*, as well as by Emily Apter in her 2013 *Against World Literature. On the Politics of Untranslatability*.

2. In the field of visual arts, this was for instance best experimented with by such artists as Sherrie Levine who, in her 1979 *After Walker Evans* series, exhibits photographs of Evans' 1936 own pictures for the Farm Security Administration. The pictures are rephotographed from the Walker Evans exhibition catalogue, *First and Last* (1978). Such an excursus into contemporary visual arts may seem out of place, but this specific example serves to illustrate how central such a concern with authenticity, the dissemination of meaning and the dialectical relation of truth and illusion, of origin and reproduction now informs our late modernist world vision.

an experience by which she is transported and displaced, carried away and expressed. One also realizes that for her characters and for herself, being transported – by trains, cars, omnibuses – symmetrically implies a '*traduction*' of sorts, in which the heuristic experience of movement dovetails as a hermeneutic encounter with otherness and ultimately with oneself. One may object that such empirical lexical musings amount to nothing but a form of makeshift *bricolage*. I would argue that, as Lévi-Strauss also intuited in *La pensée sauvage* (27),[3] such *bricolage* offers a key to renewed readings of the fruitful paradoxes of art and culture, and of Woolf's poetics of translation and displacement.

Movement, travelling, speed are of the essence of Modernism, cosmopolitanism being directly contingent on the development of medium and long-distance travel. Cross-cultural encounters of course predate the 20th century. Anne Coldiron has recently shown in *Printers without Borders. Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance*, that the cross-cultural encounters of the Renaissance produced a vibrant culture of translation in which linguistic travels somehow expressed, metaphorized, or translated the new, imperialistic culture of travelling.

The modernist fascination with speed and movement may thus be interpreted as the distant avatar of the early modern yearning for an 'other', a beyond whose remote presence moves and uproots the static, pre-modern self. Such fascination with displacement has to do with the conflation of time and space effected by technologies of transport that radically upset our perception of and relation to our chronotope (see Gavin and Humphries). Marinetti's poetics of agonistic speed no doubt carries that conflation to a point of rupture, at which the physics of aesthetic emotions dovetails as the aesthetics of physical

3. In his reading of Lévi-Strauss' reflection on intellection as *bricolage*, Michel Zink also insists on how, in the field of literature, such *bricolage* might be another metaphor for the propensity of literary meaning to produce fruitful slippages and displacements (12).

aggression on culture, language and the very definition of selfhood. In so doing, it also captures what, in *Alienation and Acceleration*, Hartmut Rosa has recently analyzed as the essence of modern alienation, *i.e.* an endless movement of acceleration in which the modern project dissolves under the pressure of its own speed. Rosa is not the only one of course to stress the tyranny of acceleration; one may also mention Paul Virilio's concept of dromology, from the Greek 'dromos' which Virilio defines as the 'science of speed' in his 1977 essay *Vitesse et politique. Essai de dromologie*. Both Virilio and Rosa perceive modern speed as indexical of and instrumental to late-modernity, globalisation and media culture. For both, speed enslaves the individual. It submits it to external forces it can neither control, nor even represent to itself.

Woolf's own poetics of transport is one in which various levels of speed and forms of transport still cohabit to generate different varieties of imaginary dislocation. Her art of translation can never be as agonistic as Marinetti's. Far from it. We know how she even promotes rambling and wandering to the level of an *ars poetica* at times endowed precisely with the capacity to work against the masculine control of space and time. Just as her peripatetic imaginary may provide unexpected angles on the human psyche and on what she prefers to call 'life,' the translation made possible by fast, new transports is crucial to her reinvention of the self and to her ethics of cultural displacement. In *Flush*, and of course in such essays as 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown,' or 'To Spain,' but also in *The Waves*, linguistic and geographical displacement reflect back on modern individuation. In his 2003 essay *Moving Through Modernity*, Andrew Thacker already notes how fascinated Woolf is 'by the idea of moving through the spaces of modernity, finding the material culture of transport to be a suitable "vehicle" for rendering the quotidian [and should I add, not so quotidian] experiences of the modern world' (153). Susan Stanford Friedman has also explored how,

for the Modernists, and specifically for Woolf, 'the geography of travel is always already embedded in the geography of home, and how reading in the time-space of one's own position reflects geopolitical location' (130). Transport complexifies the inherited sense of 'geopolitical location.' It redefines the modernist phenomenological chronotope. It reinvents it as a process of homeostatic altering which reveals the self to itself, while dislodging one's vision and repertoire of sensations; and one might argue that this is a form of trans-mutation already central to the fashioning of modern subjectivity at work in such novels as *Robinson Crusoe*. Speed tends to queer such a modern sense of self in the making (see Bateman). Through fast movement, the confrontation with a cultural other produces a form of untimeliness in which the self is translated, altered and open to an experiential sense of historicity inscribed in space and in language. *Flush*, 'To Spain,' 'On Not Knowing Greek' all describe moments of heuristic alienation that no doubt pertain to the anxious experience of modern alienation. Yet, I would like to contend, those moments also posit the possibility of a sublation of modernist alienation. If modernism can be said to radically unhinge the chronotope of individuation, as Paul Ricœur showed in volume 2 of *Temps et récit*, then translation could be reread as engineering what Michel Foucault defines as heterotopias: those 'different spaces, alternative sites, mythical and actual questionings of the space we inhabit' (25, my translation). The very experience of epiphany is thus redefined as not merely opening a fracture in time, but as a moment in which time and space not so much collapse as produce untimely, unexpected frictions productive of a renewed sense of historicity. Thus might I argue provocatively that translation, in the two meanings of the term, reveals Woolf as a reader of Nietzsche, not any Nietzsche of course, the Nietzsche of the *Untimely Meditations* in which he rethinks the power of reading and, more specifically, of classical studies as 'acting counter to

our time and thereby acting on our time, and let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come' (60).

In that task of ideological undoing, translation proves of strategic importance and one can only agree, with Emily Dalgarno, that Virginia Woolf 'learned to use translation as a means to resist the tendency of the dominant language to control meaning, the first step to remodelling semantics and syntax' (Dalgarno 2012: 1).[4] As Claire Davison has also recently insisted, she used 'translation as a liberating, theatricalised mode of expression which dismantles classic divides between the "I" and the "he," the self and the other' (45). More broadly, Woolf's poetics of translation has often been analysed as 'a means of challenging the institutions in control of the circulation of literature' (Raterman 90).

Translation as transport, transport as translation induce new modalities of experience in space and time that cannot merely be conflated with Bergson's *durée* (duration), a concept which has often been used in relation to Woolf's phenomenology of experience (see Gillies).[5] It entices a mode of encounter with otherness that unhinges private experience, including the sense of one's cultural and historical position. Such unhinging partakes of Modernism's general skepticism regarding the established coordinates of time and space as laid down by the conjoined forces of imperialism, patriarchy and capitalism. As Jon Hegglund argued in *World Views. Metageographies of Modernist Fiction*, 'maps themselves become symbolic, speaking to cultural identification, imperial expansion, social injustice, or geopolitical destinies' (15). Translation as transport, transport as translation conversely unleash forces which are far from being as threatening as they still seem in Dickens's thanatography of train transport in *Dombey and Son* or in Turner's great oil

4. Emily Dalgarno refers here to Melba Cuddy-Keane's analysis in *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (142).

5. For a rejoinder to such readings, see Banfield (29, *passim*).

of 1844, *Rain, Steam and Speed. The Great Western Railway*. Translation as transport for Woolf on the contrary releases the self from her rootedness, sets her free, footloose. This has often been remarked of *Orlando*, but both *Flush* and *The Waves* resort to the transport motif to dislodge the self in possibly more forceful ways.

Elizabeth Barrett's elopement to Italy as seen by her king spaniel does not simply appropriate the romantic motif for a re-reading of female emancipation. It strikingly opposes two world visions, two cultural eco-systems, two ideological climates. The journey that carries the Brownings and Flush away towards sunny Italy and freedom is no leisurely Grand Tour. It is a jerky, breath-taking journey by train in which Flush and the protagonists are wrenched away from the staid and stifling atmosphere of Elizabeth Barrett's room at the back of the family house in Wimpole Street. The journey is a journey of true love, leaving behind the simpering pastoral of the rustic scenes printed on the room's curtains; and the journey quite aptly makes its first halt at Fontaine de Vaucluse where Flush is 'baptized in Petrarch's name' (Woolf 1999: 56). Yet the romantic and timeless paradigm is brought into untimely conflation with different rhythms, more chaotic ones, the mechanical rhythms of modernity experienced by Flush when on board the train and which alternate light and darkness, tunnels and tall light-specked houses. The mute songs of the rustics are replaced by rattling and grinding. Above all, Flush and the narration with him, is caught in an altogether different chronotope in which the soothing sounds of birds and wind and gushing water become somehow contingent on their speedy availability. The rattling and the grinding, the jolty movements of the train that fling Flush 'this way and that' (Woolf 1999: 56) reinvent a sensory repertoire in line with the joyous, regenerating energy of the characters' flight.