

Call for Papers

one-day conference

October 7th, 2017

Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris-3

Prismes EA 4398 (TRACT / 19-21)

The poetics of Woolf through the prism of translation

Something rich and intensely poetic is at work in Virginia Woolf's writing, arising from her extraordinary ability to recreate moments of fullness of being. These dazzling yet fleeting moments are laden with a multifaceted sensory truth and they act on us like the perfect language that the author praises in a review of *The Greek Anthology*, a translation of Greek poetry into English by W.R. Paton: 'In [these moments] we seem not to read so much as to recollect what we have heard in some other life.' Something rich and finely chiselled that speaks to us, that we recognize as being true, that sounds and feels deeply familiar. These moments of intense plenitude are set against the backdrop of the stream of consciousness, the subtle racing of thought and time as Virginia Woolf endeavours to capture that perfect language so that the 'veil lifts in the [...] writing to reveal something beautiful, something strong and sincere.'

In her essays, in her diary and her correspondence Virginia Woolf reflects upon the translator's activity, which she likens to the pirouettes of an acrobat, a thing of beauty, or again an 'impossible task'. The theoretical conclusions that she comes to are rooted in the experiencing of the source text and its translation, and they touch upon a range of issues whether these be social, cultural, linguistic. In the process of translation, something else is at stake: the specificities of each language - the genius of the *other* language -, echoes and memory, the unconscious language brought to light, the hesitant reading and understanding of an elusive text that can only be grasped through the use of a bilingual edition, the emotion that springs from a first impression, the role of rhythm and sounds, the intricate relationship between translation and the imagination.

What do Woolf's essays, book reviews, diary and correspondence tell us about her poetic theory of translation? How do her collaborative translations and perhaps her own writing reflect this critical thinking? Do her insights into translation herald 20th and 21st-century translation theories? Finally how does the poetic quality of Virginia Woolf's writing translate into French?

Abstracts of around 250 words should be sent by May 31st to Jessica Stephens (jessica.stephens@univ-paris3.fr) and Claire Pegon Davison (claire.davison@univ-paris3.fr), together with a short biographical note.

A peer-reviewed publication of a selection of papers is planned.

Virginia Woolf, 2009 (1929), « On not Knowing French », *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 5, ed. Stuart N. Clarke, London, The Hogarth Press.

-----, 1966 (1925), « On not Knowing Greek », *Collected Essays*, London, The Hogarth Press.

-----, 1966 (1925), « The Russian Point of View », *Collected Essays*, London, The Hogarth Press.

-----, « The Perfect Language », *TLS*, 24 May, 1917.