



University of Reading, UK – 24, 25 and 26 June 2021

Abstract Proposal Deadline: 1 December 2020

E-mail: e.bolchi@reading.ac.uk

Eighteen years have passed since the publication of the volume *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*, edited by Mary Ann Caws and Nicola Luckhurst as part of the project ‘The reception of British authors in Continental Europe’. This landmark project proved how the study of the reception of authors in Europe is “part of the grander task of considering the history and culture of Europe as a whole, rather than isolated national histories with a narrow national perspective” (Caws and Luckhurst 2002). The study of literary reception across languages and cultures stimulates new responses in wider disciplinary fields. The European context, characterized by a variety of historical, political and socio-cultural circumstances, can offer enriching insights both into the study of a single author and into a comparative analysis of the translation and reception processes in the different language zones.

Bearing in mind the theoretical and critical approaches of reader response theory, reception studies, and of literary translation and cultural mediation studies, this conference aims to explore how the way in which Virginia Woolf’s work has been translated, published, distributed, reviewed and discussed has influenced how she was read by the ‘common readers’ in Europe. Moving from Jauss’s lesson that “literature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing subject but also through the consuming subject—through the interaction of author and public” (Jauss 1982), the aim is to delineate the cultural and literary mediation around Woolf’s works in Europe also in order to identify and characterize her European readers through.

Following more recent lines of inquiry that look at translated literature as “part of the target literature’s literary corpus” (Even-Zohar 1990 and Sisto 2019), it is now timely to investigate how the translations of Virginia Woolf’s works have become part of the literary poly-systems (Even-Zohar 1990) across various language zones, and to assess the extent to which these translations had a role in the creation of a foreign canon in the country of arrival (La Penna 2008). To understand how Woolf’s works were – or were not – available in particular marketplaces, text materiality studies (Wilson and Battershill 2018) and the study of censorship can provide relevant lines of investigation which may provide answers to Billiani’s question “to what extent does censorship, when applied to translation, succeed in producing new textual spaces and generating new sites of meaning?” (Billiani 2007)

The main aim of the conference is to foster a critical discussion on the cultural mediation of Woolf in European countries with specific focus on how literary institutions (publishing houses and book series, literary periodicals), literary agents (translators, literary agents, editors), and the composite

sociocultural factors driving the selection, production, and publication of Woolf's works "socially framed" (Long 1992) the reading of her works and shaped her readers through processes of popularization and canonization in the literary systems in Europe. We welcome contributions focussing on microhistories of translations and re-translations, specific trends of scholarly reception, Woolf's reception in literary periodicals and her role in the intellectual debate of European countries. In addition, we would like to explore the importance of digital humanities, of the web and of social media in creating "communities of practice" (Wenger et al. 2002) around Woolf's works and thought.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- translations and re-translations of Virginia Woolf in European languages
- censorship
- publishing houses
- book series
- literary periodicals and journals
- materiality of texts
- feminisms and feminist reading and reception of Woolf
- archival studies
- biographies and microhistory of translators, editors, mediators and literary agents
- microsociology and history of cultural mediation
- intellectual networks
- presence of Woolf's work in television and radio
- presence and impact of Woolf in the web and social media
- presence of Woolf in reading groups and book clubs
- multimedia artistic adaptations (from rewritings to artistic exhibitions inspired by Woolf)
- legacy and influence of Woolf in European literatures

Keynote speakers at the conference will be **Claire Davison** (Professor of Modernist Studies at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), **Nadia Fusini** (Professor of Comparative Literature at Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa), **Daniel Göске** (Professor for American Literature at Universität Kassel), and **Laura Lojo-Rodríguez** (Senior lecturer at the University of Santiago de Compostela).

The conference is part of the project *Virginia Woolf and Italian Readers*, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 838658.

The conference will take the form of panels of thematically linked papers. Each panel will consist of 20-minute paper presentations in English to leave room for discussion. Those wishing to present papers in languages other than English can discuss the possibility before submitting the proposal.

Selected papers will be considered for publication in an edited volume.

The conference is meant to take place at the University of Reading, UK, but we are considering the possibility to organise some session of the conference on-line. Given the extraordinary circumstances we are currently experiencing, we are also setting up a contingency plan that will allow us to hold the entire conference on-line, should the Covid-19 situation not be resolved by March next year.

Abstract submission deadline: 1 December 2020

Notification of acceptance: 1 February 2021

Paper submission deadline in case of on-line conference: 1 May 2021

Proposals of no more than 500 words accompanied by a short bio (up to 300 words), contact details and indication of preference between remote or in person participation should be sent to e.bolchi@reading.ac.uk.

Elisa Bolchi
Daniela La Penna
Nicola Wilson

References:

- Billiani, F. (2007) *Modes of Censorship and Translation: National Contexts and Diverse Media*. St. Jerome Publishing, Manchester.
- Caws, M.A. and Luckhurst, N., eds. (2002) *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*. Continuum, London.
- Even-Zohar, I. (1990) "The position of translated literature within the literary polysystem", *Poetics Today*, 11, 1, pp. 45-51.
- Jauss, H.R. (1982) *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti. Univ of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- La Penna, D. (2008) "Historicizing value, negotiating visibility: English and Italian poetic canons in translation". In: La Penna, D. and Caselli, D. (eds.) *Twentieth-century poetic translation: literary cultures in Italian and English*. Continuum, London, pp. 1-22.
- Long, E. (1992) "Textual Interpretation as Collective Action", *Discourse*, 14: 3, pp. 104-130.
- Sisto, M. (2019) *Traiettorie. Studi sulla letteratura tradotta in Italia*. Quodlibet, Macerata.
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R. and Snyder, W. M. (2002) *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston MA.
- Wilson, N. and Battershill, C., eds. (2018) *Virginia Woolf and 'The World of Books': Woolf Selected Papers*. Clemson University Press, Clemson.