



Palimpsestes

Revue de traduction

26 | 2013

La cohérence discursive à l'épreuve : traduction et
homogénéisation

Resisting Enunciative Homogenization: Isabelle de Montolieu's *La Famille Elliot*: The Case of the first French Translation of Free Indirect Discourse from Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

Adam Russell



Electronic version

URL: <http://palimpsestes.revues.org/1978>

DOI: 10.4000/palimpsestes.1978

ISSN: 2109-943X

Publisher

Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 octobre 2013

Number of pages: 175-195

ISBN: 978-2-87854-613-2

ISSN: 1148-8158

Electronic reference

Adam Russell, « Resisting Enunciative Homogenization: Isabelle de Montolieu's *La Famille Elliot*: The Case of the first French Translation of Free Indirect Discourse from Jane Austen's *Persuasion* », *Palimpsestes* [Online], 26 | 2013, Online since 01 October 2015, connection on 04 October 2016. URL : <http://palimpsestes.revues.org/1978> ; DOI : 10.4000/palimpsestes.1978

The text is a facsimile of the print edition.

Tous droits réservés

Adam RUSSELL

**Resisting Enunciative Homogenization:
Isabelle de Montolieu's *La Famille Elliot*:
The Case of the first French Translation of
Free Indirect Discourse from Jane Austen's *Persuasion***

Jane Austen's posthumously published "late" novel *Persuasion* (appearing in 1818, bound with *Northanger Abbey* in "two-decker" format) was first translated into French by the Swiss novelist, Isabelle de Montolieu, as *La Famille Elliot, ou L'Ancienne Inclination*, Paris, 1821.¹ She had previously published in 1815 a translation of another of Austen's novels, *Sense and Sensibility*, as *Raison et Sensibilité, ou les deux manières d'aimer*. By the time that she undertook these translations of Austen's novels, she had already established a reputation as the author of a very successful novel, *Caroline de Litchfield*, published in Lausanne in 1786, as well as numerous translations and adaptations of English and German fictional works. Her prodigious output continued up to the time of her death in 1832. Her translations were not intended to be "faithful" to the original—they were known as adaptations, or imitations. The following expression, or disclaimer, would typically appear on the title page—"traduction libre de l'anglais." The common reader would have assumed that perhaps nothing more than the skeleton of the original story would be reproduced. In a sense, it was an expectation that the transla-

1. Further abbreviated as *La Famille Elliot*.

tor would make judicious choices as to what to keep and what to discard of the original. The fact that Montolieu was so popular for so long, showed that her readers had much confidence in the choices she made when she translated (and adapted) foreign works to suit their tastes. At a superficial level, Montolieu's most obvious amendments to the original would include changes to the title and the names of the characters. She justifies (in her prefatory remarks) the change from *Persuasion* to *La Famille Elliot, ou L'Ancienne Inclination*, as a necessary improvement to the title of the original, which she considered inadequate to the purpose, as it simply revealed far too little about the actual theme of the novel. According to an authoritative French nineteenth-century literary biographer, Joseph-Marie Quérard, it was often a case of something lost *and* something gained:

Quoi qu'il en soit ses traductions ont eu du succès, et presque toutes ont eu l'honneur de la ré-impression et cela parce que chez Mme de Montolieu les charmes de l'imagination et les richesses du sentiment dédommagent de l'infidélité dans ses versions. (Quérard, 1834 : 270)

Kathryn Sutherland discusses some of the “specific features that mark Austen's contribution to the novel as a serious modern literary form.” According to Sutherland, Austen's greatest achievement is the “narrative method inflected by the personal subjectivity of a self-conversing heroine” (Sutherland, 2004: 253-254). This is most evident in *Persuasion*.²

According to John Pikoulis, *Persuasion*'s drama is actually played out in Austen's representations of the heroine's mind. Anne Elliot, the heroine in the original (modified to Alice in the translation), is frequently depicted reflecting upon the waning fortunes of her narcissistic, spend-thrift father, Sir Walter Elliot; the cold, calculating selfishness of her eldest sister, Elizabeth; or the family's imminent move to Bath. Most preoccupying of all is the intense revival of her feelings of longing and regret regarding her erstwhile fiancé, Captain Wentworth. Such unsettling feelings are occasioned by the

2. At the beginning of *Persuasion*, the rot has definitely set in for most members of the debt-ridden Elliot family. There is a pervasive atmosphere of anxiety and mourning, as the narration depicts each character haunted by an increasing awareness of the inevitable flight of time, and the missed opportunities it carries away with it.

arrival in the neighbourhood of Wentworth's sister, the wife of the prosperous Admiral Croft, who is to become the tenant of Kellynch Hall, the ancestral seat of the Elliots:

Anne is both a "creation" and the novel's experiencing centre. Her consciousness constitutes *Persuasion*'s drama, such as it is. For that reason, the plot can no longer be identified with an external chronology but with the discoveries she makes. *Persuasion* has granted the inner life precedence over social interaction (or brings it more nearly into equilibrium with it). (Pikoulis, 2005: 25)

The narrative discourse in *Persuasion* certainly evinces a predilection for the representation of the heroine's perceptions, thoughts and feelings. In short, her consciousness is, as Pikoulis describes it, the novel's "experiencing centre," conveyed to the reader by a narrative technique known as free indirect discourse (FID). FID is a complex modality that produces what Bakhtin calls "double-voiced speech," or two (or more) heterogeneous utterances—"one overt and manifest, the other covert and implicit in the surface utterance." (Bagby, 1982: 39)

Monika Fludernik observes that "many examples of FID do not have any expressive markers at all," making their identification as fragments of FID entirely dependent upon "the reader's stylistic perspicacity." According to her, FID "materializes in the reading process." (Fludernik, 1993: 441) Discerning voices in the text requires a great deal from the reader, as the surface utterance is considered to contain an almost audible "other" voice, or several voices that may be audible behind the voice of the narrator. The presence of this "other" voice (or point of view) needs to be articulated deductively by the reader: "the other's point of view can be deduced from the surface speech as a subtextual feature which conditions that speech." (Bagby, 1982: 54) The frequent use of FID imbues *Persuasion*'s narrative discourse with a high degree of enunciative heterogeneity, placing a huge burden of interpretation on Austen's translator. Judging from comments made in the Preface to the first French translation of *Persuasion*, these more subtle features of the narration were clearly apparent to Montolieu.

In the preface to *La Famille Elliot, ou L'Ancienne Inclination* (Paris, 1821), Montolieu contrasts what she terms the "puerility" of the gothic novel with the "subtlety of insight or depth of feeling" of Austen's representation of her heroine's consciousness. She characterizes this as "almost impercepti-

ble, delicate nuances that come from the depths of the heart.” (Austen, 1828 [1821]: vol. 1: xxii, my translation) Clearly, Montolieu was one of Austen’s first critical readers. If she intends to seduce the reader by emphasising one of the apparent qualities of the novel—its subtle depiction of the heroine’s consciousness, or more loosely, the self-talk of her inner life—then, surely her praise is not gratuitous? Would Montolieu abandon this element of the source-text narration in her translation after drawing her readers’ attention to it? What does Montolieu’s translation do with the enunciative heterogeneity of Austen’s text?

The most recent comparative studies of the translation of FID from English into French are to be found notably in the work of Bruno Poncharal (2003), Kristiina Taivalkoski-Shilov (2006) and Charlotte Bosseaux (2007). Bosseaux states that FID is always “worth studying in translation” because of the issue of “enunciative homogenisation.” (Bosseaux, 2007: 127) An important objective of Bosseaux’s work focuses on the degree to which enunciative homogenization occurs in the translation of FID in three French translations of Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*.

According to Taivalkoski-Shilov, whose work analyses eighteenth-century French translations of reported discourse in the novels of Fielding, “a wide variety of strategies” have been implemented by translators to translate reported discourse from source to target texts. These strategies include “addition, full reproduction, résumé, and full omission.” (Taivalkoski-Shilov, 2006: 60) FID may disappear in passages of another discourse type, a process known as disambiguation. This phenomenon had previously been documented by Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher (1981: 439). Taivalkoski-Shilov’s work sustains the hypothesis that translation generally diminishes the “enunciative heterogeneity of a text.” As Bosseaux succinctly states:

Indeed, all studies reviewed demonstrate and emphasise the duality of free indirect discourse and the fact that translators can or will find themselves disambiguating the type of narration by choosing between a style or discourse that is more direct or indirect than that of the original. (Bosseaux, 2007: 67)

Both Bosseaux and Taivalkoski-Shilov conclude that the enunciative heterogeneity of their corpus of texts is generally homogenized in translation, in such a way that the division between the characters’ and the narrator’s voices

becomes more visible. The attribution of FID in heterodiegetic narration is complicated by the fact that the narration is the exclusive domain of the narrator, yet certain non-verbalized perceptions and thoughts detailing aspects of the subjectivity of the character are embedded in the narration. Poncharal demonstrates that, in English, the preterite (simple past) characteristically allows for an almost seamless embedding of characters' subjective perceptions within passages of FID. The use of the preterite in FID means that the heroine's voice and that of the narrator are regularly confused in *Persuasion*. (Pikoulis, 2005: 28) However, when translated into French, the *alternance* of the *passé simple* and the *imparfait* inherent to French narrative discourse often functions to indicate (to the perspicacious reader) the source of the enunciation: "En français, la frontière entre ce qui appartient au domaine de l'énonciateur origine absolu et l'énonciateur rapporté doit être fermement maintenue" (Poncharal, 2003: 187-188). Alain Rabatel (2004: 3) refers to this phenomenon as *altérité énonciative*, which serves to denote two ontologically distinct sources of an utterance. Previous studies of the translation of passages of FID from English to French concur on the following point. The enunciative heterogeneity that the presence of FID infuses in the English texts is omitted or diminished by degrees in the French texts through various processes of disambiguation. We would therefore expect to find that Montolieu's translation *La Famille Elliot* also homogenizes and disambiguates fragments of FID. However, I would like to draw attention to another phenomenon that has not been as thoroughly investigated as the processes of disambiguation have been. Montolieu's text frequently adopts another strategy (other than disambiguation or omission) for the translation of passages of FID representing the heroine's consciousness.

Instead of disambiguation, we find re-ambiguation of a great many passages. Re-ambiguation occurs through Montolieu's frequent recourse to the delicate tracery of the pronoun *on* and the *imparfait*: "L'imparfait est alors [...] la marque de la situation d'énonciation origine dans sa composante subjective." (Poncharal, 2003: 186) Sylvie Mellet observes that the pronoun *on* in association with the *imparfait* introduces bivocality into narration. (Mellet, 2000: 92) Mellet analyzes the co-occurrence of the pronoun and the *imparfait* in fragments of FID in a way that recalls Dorrit Cohn's description of FID "as the moment when the thought-thread of a character is most tightly woven into the texture of third-person narration." (Cohn, 1978: 111) The pronoun *on*

fulfils, in the words of Mellet, the role of a “precious auxiliary” to the enunciative heterogeneity inherent to FID:

Comme l'imparfait, auquel il est souvent associé dans ce contexte par les romanciers contemporains, le pronom indéfini *ON* est donc un auxiliaire précieux de l'hétérogénéité énonciative caractéristique du style indirect libre: riche de sa vacuité référentielle, il s'adapte à tous les contextes et change aisément de référent au fil des paragraphes. (Mellet, 2000 : 105-106)

This present analysis of extracts is an attempt to demonstrate that the use of the pronoun *on* with the *imparfait* in passages of FID in *La Famille Elliot* is a key device for the maintenance of the bivocality of the source text. The heroine's subjectivity is consistently traced in occurrences of the pronoun *on* with the *imparfait* in *La Famille Elliot*, placing the representation of her consciousness at the centre of the narration.

However, this delicate and complex linguistic embedding of the heroine's consciousness in the narration remains relatively invisible unless the pronoun *on* in association with the *imparfait* is carefully decoded: “C'est la valeur aspectuo-modale de l'imparfait qui est mise en avant [...] au detriment de sa composante temporelle.” (Poncharal, 2003: 186) The *imparfait* is the lens through which a character's subjectivity becomes visible, as it tends (far more often than the *passé simple*) to be the tense that represents the character's perception and thought processes. As noted above, Rabatel refers to this alternation of *imparfait* and *passé simple* tenses—indicating a switch in narrative level—as *altérité énonciative*. Jacques Jayez (2004: 1-11) develops a similar concept, borrowing the term “hybridization” (of point of view) from the work of Manfred Jahn (1999: 85-110) to demonstrate how *both* character and narrator alternate in their assumption of the role of *énonciateur*. Jayez defines hybridisation as narration yielding complementary information about the same situation derived from distinctly different sources. He demonstrates that in a number of cases several points of view may “coexist” in the same narrative or descriptive sequence, known as a “phenomenon of hybridization.” Each element of narrative information is attributed to different agents. Jayez illustrates his concept with a particularly frequent narrative configuration: character (a) defines the localization of a scene, while the contents or details of the scene are described by another agent (usually identified as the narrator). Information on the locality of the scene is provided by the point

of view of (a)—often with the use of the *imparfait*—while information on the contents of the scene is given from the point of view of (b) with frequent recourse to the *passé simple*. For hybridization to occur there must be cohesion between the two types of information. In other words, there must be evidence of shared knowledge of the situation or locality. For instance, the objects described by (b) must be visible in the locality assigned to (a) and the properties mentioned by (b) must be compatible with the minimal properties that their visibility entails in the situation or locality assigned to (a). Hence, the emphasis Rabatel places on establishing anaphoric and/or cataphoric associations, or semantic relations between the represented perceptions of (a) at the secondary level and the predicated perception of (b) at the primary level. (Rabatel, 2004: 3) The presence of the pronoun *on* adds another layer of complexity to this process.

The value of this pronoun is unstable and depends wholly on its context. It is therefore important to tease out the semantic content of each individual occurrence of the pronoun in relation to both its immediate and global contexts. The interpretation of the pronoun *on* ultimately involves two distinct, but related processes. The first process concerns the determination of the value of individual occurrences of the pronoun with reference to characters within the fictive universe. Its referential limits need to be explored by asking *to whom* the pronoun actually refers. By value, I refer to the polysemy of the morpheme *on*, that is to say its semantic content, as it potentially shifts from its usage as an indefinite pronoun (in which it has no specific referent) to its function as a definite personal pronoun, where it refers specifically to first, second or third persons (singular or plural) across the narration.

The second process involves the attribution of fictive subjectivity to the occurrence of the pronoun, particularly with regard to passages representing the heroine's consciousness (thought report). The pronoun's value (or semantic content) is not considered to be equivalent to the "source" subjectivity ultimately responsible for its utterance, although they may sometimes coincide. For instance, when *on* is embedded in a representation of the heroine's *consciousness*, it may simply denote her perception of another character's use of the pronoun. This occurs when the narration reports another character's speech filtered through the heroine's consciousness. Sometimes, what appear to be discrete occurrences of the pronoun emanating from a variety of different sources may actually denote a single, subjective source—the heroine's

own observations and perceptions. A network of otherwise latent relationships that point to the same subjective source are often only discernible across a much wider segment of the narration. The present study therefore bases its analyses on the premise that an accurate interpretation of the pronoun is only possible through inference with reference to its immediate context *and* to the global context of the passage.

Rabatel has devised a simple formulaic description of the representation of perception in fiction that draws attention to its linguistic expression and the mental processes from which it arises and/or which it stimulates. He represents the process of the representation of perception (or *point de vue*) in the following shorthand: X (focaliser); V (verb of perception / mental process); P (perception / the focalised). This formula is used to determine the identity of the focaliser (or value of X) in direct, indirect, and free indirect discourses. (Rabatel, 2001b: 153-157) In so far as his approach seeks to determine (inferentially) the value of each occurrence of the pronoun *on* in heterodiegetic narration, his protocols of interpretation will be applied to the occurrences of the pronoun in the extracts below. (Rabatel, 2001a: 32)

Extract 1

The passage below portrays the heroine in a moment of self-communion. In this scene, she is seated in a gig with her former fiancé Captain Wentworth and Henrietta Musgrove. Wentworth, Anne (Alice) and Henrietta are returning to the Musgrove manor, where they intend to inform the Musgrove parents of their daughter Louisa Musgrove's accident.

Louisa, Henrietta's sister, has just had a serious accident on the Cobb at Lyme, where she fell on her head. For some time before the accident, Louisa and Wentworth had been engaged in much public flirtation. She most wilfully flung herself off the steps of the Cobb with the happy thought of landing in Wentworth's arms. The first time she did this, he was prepared to catch her. Unfortunately, the second time she flung herself off the steps, she did so against his wishes, and he was unable to catch her before she landed on her head.

Persuasion

- (1) He had handed them both in, and placed himself between them; (2) and in this manner, under these circumstances full of astonishment and

emotion to Anne, she quitted Lyme. (3) How the long stage would pass; (4) how it was to affect their manners; (5) what was to be their sort of intercourse, (6) she could not foresee. (7) It was all quite natural, however. (8) He was devoted to Henrietta; always turning towards her; and when he spoke at all, always with the view of supporting her hopes and raising her spirits. (9) In general, his voice and manner were studiously calm. (10) To spare Henrietta from agitation seemed the governing principle. (11) Once only, when she had been grieving over the last ill-judged, ill-fated walk to the Cobb, bitterly lamenting that it had ever been thought of, he burst forth, as if wholly overcome— (12) “Don’t talk of it, don’t talk of it,” he cried. “Oh God! that I had not given way to her at the fatal moment! [...]” (13) Anne wondered whether it occurred to him now, to question the justness of his own previous opinion as the universal felicity and advantage of firmness of character; (14) and whether it might not strike him, that, like all other qualities of the mind, it should have its proportions and its limits. She thought that it could scarcely escape him to feel, that a persuadable temper might sometimes be as much in favour of happiness, as a very resolute character. (Austen, 1988 [1923]: 116)

La Famille Elliot

(1) Il la plaça, ainsi que sa compagne de voyage, dans le coupé, et se mit entre elles : (2) Alice était partagée entre la surprise et l’émotion de se sentir si près et peut-être si loin de lui. (3) Comment ce voyage **se passerait-il**³? (4) quelle **serait** leur manière d’être ensemble? (5) que **se diraient-ils**? (6) **Elle ne pouvait le prévoir**. (7) Le tout alla très naturellement; (8) il se dévoua entièrement à Henriette, se tournant toujours de son côté, mais sans affectation, et seulement avec l’idée de relever son courage et ses espérances, de lui donner des forces pour soutenir celles de ses parens (sic) : (9) **on** sentait qu’il s’étudiait à être calme dans sa voix, dans ses manières; (10) épargner toute agitation à Henriette semblait être sa tâche et son projet. (11) Une seule fois, quand elle se désolait de cette dernière promenade sur le parapet, regrettant amèrement de ne s’être pas opposée, et rappelant que Louisa l’avait absolument voulu, il éclata aussi en regrets, et s’écria vivement : (12) « Ne parlez pas de cela, n’en parlez pas; ne reprochez rien à votre sœur, c’est moi seul qui en suis la cause! » [...]. (13) **Alice vit que** dans ce moment il doutait lui-même de la justesse de son opinion précédente sur les avantages de la fermeté de caractère; (14) qu’il trouvait enfin que, semblable à toutes les qualités de l’esprit, elle devait avoir ses bornes, et qu’un caractère docile qui se laisse quelquefois

3. Words in boldface are used liberally throughout the text to emphasize crucial points.

persuader contribue bien plus au bonheur que l'opiniâtreté. (Austen, 1828
[1821]: vol. 1.: 237-238)

This fragment of FID thought report is opened in the target text in (2) where the narration shifts from verbs in the *passé simple* in (1) to the *imparfait* in (2) and the conditional in (3), (4), and (5). The representation of the heroine's mental activity is foregrounded by the commentary concerning her astonishment and emotion in (2) of both target and source texts. The target text extends the fragment from a nebulous cluster of clauses that only hint at the heroine's musings (in [6] of the source text) to an indirect representation of the questions she is pondering, employing the interrogatory mode in (3), (4) and (5) for this purpose. All of the verbs here are in the conditional—this mood reflects the heroine's temporal orientation, while the presence of third person pronouns maintains some narratorial distance from the discourse of the heroine's actual monologue. The conditional is really a future-in-the-past. This means that it is absolutely hybrid between the narrator's temporal orientation (in the past) and the character's (which would be in the future). The presence of the pronoun *on* with the *imparfait* in (9) introduces a species of ambiguity that actually re-ambiguates the passage.

Given that there are three characters present in this scene—Wentworth, Henriette Musgrove and the heroine—the pronoun's value (X) has to be restricted to them. The *imparfait* of the verbs in (9) anchors the narration in the personal space and time of the observer(s). When taking into account the immediate context of this particular use of the pronoun *on*, it needs to be noted that it occurs just after the instances of FID representing the heroine's thoughts in (3), (4) and (5). The interrogatory mode with the verbs cast in the conditional represents the temporal orientation of the heroine's mind. This fragment provides evidence for anaphoric association with an obvious observer prior to this occurrence of the pronoun. Moreover, the commentary attributing this narrated perception in (6) to the heroine—*elle ne pouvait le prévoir*—is unequivocal evidence that establishes a link between the heroine and this instance of FID representing her mind. Were it not for the presence of another possible observer, Henriette, the pronoun's value could automatically be considered personal, and its attribution to the heroine's subjectivity would be unproblematic. However, considering that the heroine is not an exclusive grammatical agent, and that there are indeed two salient characters present

in this scene, the pronoun's potential value includes Henriette unless other evidence from the passage rules this out.

What would tip the scales more in one direction than the other—the infinitive with Henriette as its object, along with the verb in the *imparfait* in (10)? Certainly, these elements could lend weight to an analysis assigning an exclusively personal value to the pronoun, providing that they could be corroborated with other evidence from the global context of the passage, such as what follows from (11) to (14). Indeed, the heroine is again designated (cataphorically) as the observer in (13) of both target and source texts: *Alice vit que* [...].

This subsequent designation of Alice as the observer provides another logical link with the previous represented perception. Alice is therefore the obvious observer both subsequent and prior to the occurrence of the pronoun in (9). Given this supplementary evidence, the pronoun *on* in (9) could be convincingly interpreted as personal, and attributed to the heroine's subjectivity. It therefore denotes the heroine's observation concerning her own feelings and her perception of Henriette's feelings. (Russell, 2011: 200-201)

Rabatel's conceptual framework will again be applied to the following passage (extract 2). It will become obvious that interpreting the occurrences of the pronoun *on* (in this passage) accurately cannot be done without reference to a much wider context than the previous passage; hence, the inclusion of another supplementary passage (extract 3) for analysis after this one. Note that extract 3 *precedes* extract 2 in *La Famille Elliot*. Disrupting the flow of the narrative discourse in this way actually facilitates the attribution of subjectivity to the various occurrences of the pronoun *on* in these passages.

This passage recounts the aftermath of Louisa Musgrove's fall from the Cobb at Lyme Regis. She is subsequently carried to Captain Harville's house where she remains in a very critical condition—Harville is one of Wentworth's closest friends. According to Wentworth and Charles Musgrove, it is the more rational and capable Anne (Alice) who needs to stay in Lyme to nurse Louisa, not the excitable and moody Mary Musgrove (Anne's sister). Wentworth requests that Charles Musgrove accompany his wife, Mary Musgrove, and his sister Henrietta from Captain Harville's house to the inn, while Wentworth himself hurries away to prepare for their imminent departure by hiring a chaise from the inn. Mary (Musgrove) defies the advice.

Extract 2

Persuasion

(1) Captain Wentworth now hurried off to get everything ready on his part, and to be soon followed by the two ladies. (2) When the plan was made known to Mary, however, there was an end of all peace in it. (3) She was so wretched, and so vehement, complained so much of injustice in being expected to go away, instead of Anne; – (4) Anne, who was nothing to Louisa, while she was her sister, and had the best right to stay in Henrietta's stead! (5) Why was not she to be as useful as Anne? (6) And to go home without Charles, too—without her husband! No, it was too unkind! (7) And, in short, she said more than her husband could withstand; and as none of the others could oppose when he gave way, there was no help for it: the change of Mary for Anne was inevitable. (8) Anne had never submitted more reluctantly to the jealous and ill-judging claims of Mary; (9) but so it must be, and they set off for the town, (10) Charles taking care of his sister, and captain Benwick attending to her. (Austen, 1988 [1923]: 115)

La Famille Elliot

(1) Charles approuva ce plan, et Wentworth courut à l'auberge pour tout préparer, en priant Charles d'amener lui, sa femme et sa sœur. (2a) **On** n'avait pas même mis en doute le consentement de Maria à cet arrangement; il lui convenait trop bien pour qu'elle pût se livrer cette fois à son penchant pour la contradiction; elle qui prétendait être toujours malade, n'entendait rien à soigner les maux des autres, et s'en ennuyait d'abord : (2b) elle allait rejoindre ses enfans (sic) qui étaient restés seuls, et se soigner elle-même chez elle dans un bon lit, qu'elle préférait sûrement au matelas par terre qu'Alice avait demandé; (2c) **on** ne l'avait donc pas même consultée. (2d) Elle était restée dans le salon, couchée sur un canapé; (3a) mais lorsque son mari vint lui dire de se préparer à partir, elle jeta les hauts cris, se plaignit avec aigreur et véhémence de ce qu'**on** l'obligeait d'aller essayer le premier moment de chagrin et d'émotion de son beau père et de sa belle mère, qui bien sûrement attaquerait horriblement ses nerfs; et les larmes d'Henriette, elle ne voyait pas pourquoi il fallait qu'elle en fût le témoin pendant toute la route; (3b) mais il était décidé qu'**on** lui réservait toujours tout ce qu'il y avait de plus désagréable; et certainement elle ne voulait pas se soumettre à cette injustice. (4) Il était beaucoup plus naturel qu'elle restât auprès de la malade qu'Alice, qui ne lui était rien; c'était elle, et non pas une étrangère, qui devait remplacer Henriette. (5a) Pourquoi ne serait-elle pas aussi utile qu'Alice? D'ailleurs il n'y avait rien à faire que de rester là; (5b) madame Harville était si

entendue qu'**on** pouvait se fier à elle; mais puisqu'il fallait une femme de la famille, elle prétendait que ce devait être elle. (6) Que ferait-elle à Uppercross sans son mari? elle s'y ennuyerait à la mort. (6a) **On** savait bien qu'elle ne pouvait rester seule sans prendre des maux de nerfs, mais c'était bien égal à tout le monde. (6b) Quant aux enfants, il n'y avait qu'à les envoyer à leur grand-mère et leur tante, qu'ils distrairaient de leur chagrin, etc., etc. (7) En un mot, elle dit tant et tant de mauvaises raisons, que Charles, ne pouvant plus supporter ce déluge de paroles et de plaintes, finit par céder pour avoir la paix, et l'échange des deux sœurs fut décidé. (8) Alice n'avait jamais été plus contrariée des fantaisies de Maria; mais son mari ayant prononcé; il fallut bien s'y soumettre; (9) d'ailleurs **on** n'avait pas de temps à perdre en discussions, il fallait partir. Charles se chargea de conduire la faible Henriette; Bentick offrit son bras à Alice. (Austen, 1828 [1821]: vol. 1.: 233-235)

The broken syntax in (4) of the source text signals the opening of a fragment of FID reporting Mary's speech filtered through the heroine's consciousness. This fragment is characterized prospectively and retrospectively in (3) and (7) respectively as a report of verbal activity—"And, in short, she said more than her husband could withstand." The exclamatory modes of (4) and (6), and the interrogatory mode in (5) represent the expressivity of Mary's discourse within the past tense framework of the narration. The shallowness of her protest and its emotive force are reflected in the fragmented nature of the syntax and the informality of the vocabulary. These effects are reproduced in the corresponding target passage in (4), (5a), (5b) and (6). Although the exclamatory mode may disappear in the target text passage, it is replaced with a similar effect by the interrogatory mode. Moreover, the use of the conditional in (5a) and (6) conveys the temporal orientation of the character's point of view, reinforcing the effect of indirectly reporting Mary's discourse as she projects herself into an imagined future. The boundaries of this fragment of FID become visible in the target text in (3a) and (7). Note that this fragment has been considerably extended in the target text. The addition of explanatory sentences in 2(a) to 2(d) modifies the comprehension of the text for the French reader.

This is especially true in relation to the greater number of antecedents that the reader must choose among in order to interpret the pronoun *on*. The repetition of *etc.* in 6(b) intimates that Mary's speech was indeed longer still. There are four occurrences of the pronoun *on* within the perimeters of this

fragment of FID—(3a), (3b), (5b), and (6a). Given that this is a fragment of FID reporting Mary’s discourse, it would be tempting to accord the same value to all of these occurrences of the pronoun in this segment of the passage, as denoting all of the characters present at the Harville’s, except Mary herself. However, is there anything in the context that requires that Mary be excluded from every occurrence of the pronoun within this fragment of FID reporting her discourse? (Russell, 2011: 161-162) Do any of the other three occurrences of the pronoun in segments (2a), (2b) and (9) of the narration have the same value as the other four confined to the fragment of FID? Is there any evidence within the global context that would allow for individual occurrences of the pronoun to be organized into a network of latent relationships that point to the same subjective source?

Charles and Wentworth are proper nouns in (1). They represent potential salient characters for the occurrence of the pronoun with the *plus-que-parfait* in (2a) and (2c). According to Rabatel, in the absence of a process of perception predicated by a verb of perception, the value of the pronoun *on* has to be determined by inference and anaphoric and/or cataphoric association: “En dépit de l’absence explicite de nom propre et de procès de perception, la perception représentée est attribuée aux personnages contextuellement saillants.” (Rabatel, 2001a: 31) If the elements of the process of perception (or point of view) in the above passage are analysed according to Rabatel’s formula, then an argument could be made for a personal attribution of the first occurrence of the pronoun in (2a)—in this instance, its value would be limited to Charles alone. As Charles approves of the arrangement, Wentworth requests that he accompany his wife and sister from Captain Harville’s to the inn, while Wentworth hurries away to prepare for their imminent departure by hiring a chaise from the inn. According to the target text narration in (2d) and (3a), Charles alone is responsible for informing Maria of this arrangement—*Elle était restée dans le salon, couchée sur un canapé; mais lorsque son mari vint lui dire de se préparer à partir, elle jeta les hauts cris*. On the strength of this evidence, the pronoun in (2a) could therefore be restricted to this personal attribution.

However, when the source text passage is enlarged to include the preceding scene, it becomes obvious that Wentworth and Charles are not the only characters present in this scene (see supplementary passage, below; hereafter SP). The decision to leave Anne with Louisa is first made in consultation with

Henrietta in (1SP)—and *Henrietta at first declared the same*. This information is also included in the target text in (1SP): *Henriette pensait de même*. Although Henrietta's opinion has been sought, it becomes obvious in (6) of the source text that Wentworth and Charles Musgrove are actually making the decision. Then, upon Anne's entering the room in the source text, Wentworth seeks her acquiescence. This is seconded by Madame Harville in the target text—*cette dernière en parut charmée*. The value of the pronoun is therefore much richer in meaning than initially supposed. (Russell, 2011: 192-193)

Extract 3: Supplementary passage (SP)

Persuasion

[...] (1) and Henrietta at first declared the same. (2) She, however, was soon persuaded to think differently. (3) The usefulness of her staying!—She, who had not been able to remain in Louisa's room, or to look at her, without sufferings that made her worse than helpless! (4) She was forced to acknowledge that she could do no good; yet was still unwilling to be away, till touched by the thought of her father and mother, she gave it up; she consented, she was anxious to be at home. (5) The plan had reached this point, when Anne, coming quietly down from Louisa's room, could not but hear what followed, for the parlour door was open. (6) "Then, it is settled, Musgrove," cried Captain Wentworth, "that you stay, and that I take care of your sister home. But as to the rest;—as to the others; — If one stays to assist Mrs. Harville, I think it need be only one.—Mrs. Charles Musgrove will, of course, wish to get back to her children; but, if Anne will stay, no one so proper, so capable as Anne!" (7) She paused a moment to recover from the emotion of hearing herself so spoken of. (8) The other two warmly agreed to what he said, and she then appeared. (9) "You will stay, I am sure; you will stay and nurse her;" cried he, turning to her and speaking with a glow, and yet a gentleness, which seemed almost restoring the past.— (10) She coloured deeply; and he recollected himself, and moved away. — (11) She expressed herself most willing, ready, happy to remain. (12) "It was what she had been thinking of, and wishing to be allowed to do.—A bed on the floor in Louisa's room would be sufficient for her, if Mrs Harville would but think so." (13) One more thing, and all seemed arranged. [...] and Captain Wentworth proposed, and Charles Musgrove agreed, that it would be much better for him to take a chaise from the inn, and leave Mr. Musgrove's carriage and horses to be sent home the next early morning, when there would be the farther advantage of sending an account of Louisa's night. (Austen, 1988 [1923]: vol. 1: 113-115)

La Famille Elliot

(1) Henriette pensait de même; (2) cependant Charles et Wentworth la firent changer d'avis, (3) en lui représentant qu'étant entièrement inutile à Louisa tant qu'elle était dans cet état d'insensibilité, son premier devoir était d'aller auprès de sa mère pour lui aider à supporter sa douleur; si elle ne voyait ni l'une ni l'autre de ses filles, elle serait dans un désespoir qui lui coûterait la vie. (4) Henriette, qui ne pouvait même regarder sa sœur sans fondre en larmes, finit par convenir qu'elle lui ferait plus de mal que de bien, qu'elle serait tourmentée pour ses parens (sic), et qu'il valait mieux aller d'abord auprès d'eux, et revenir près de sa sœur quand elle serait plus en état de la soigner. (5) Pendant cette discussion, Alice était restée dans la chambre de Louisa; elle venait les rejoindre; la porte de la chambre où ils étaient rassemblés était ouverte, et elle entendit ce qui suit. C'était Wentworth qui parlait: (6) « Il est donc décidé, Musgrove, que vous restez ici, et que j'accompagnerai votre sœur Henriette chez elle, ainsi que votre femme, qui voudra sûrement retourner auprès de ses enfans (sic); il faut cependant que quelqu'un reste pour aider madame Harville à soigner Louisa. Une personne suffit: si Alice voulait rester? Elle est si bonne, si douce et si active! Personne ne convient mieux, et n'est aussi capable; il faut le lui demander. » (7) Elle s'arrêta un moment pour jouir du bonheur d'entendre encore Wentworth la nommer *Alice*, et faire son éloge; (8) les deux autres trouvèrent qu'il avait raison. Elle entra; ce fut Wentworth qui vint au-devant d'elle. (9) « Vous consentirez à rester, j'en suis sûr; n'est-ce pas, Al..., n'est-ce pas, miss Elliot, vous resterez? vous (sic) aurez le soin de la pauvre Louisa? Je... nous vous en prions tous. » (10) Il parlait avec un ton de confiance et en même temps de sentiment qui semblait presque rappeler le passé. Alice rougit; alors Wentworth se tut et se détourna. (11) Alice fit un effort pour se remettre, et dit qu'elle avait eu la même idée, (12) et que tout ce qu'elle désirait était qu'on le lui permît; un lit sur le plancher à côté de Louisa serait suffisant pour elle, si madame Harville voulait accepter son aide. (13) Cette dernière en parut charmée, et tout paraissait être d'accord quand Wentworth eut une autre idée. [...] Wentworth proposa de prendre une chaise légère à l'auberge pour Henriette, Maria et lui, et de laisser jusqu'au lendemain la grosse voiture et les chevaux de M. Musgrove, pour apporter des nouvelles de la nuit. (Austen, 1828 [1821]: vol. 1: 230-233)

Wentworth then hurries off to the inn, and the other three characters—Alice, Henriette and Madame Harville—are left to overhear Charles informing Maria of their decision. If we were to approach the analysis of (2a) in extract 2 by asking what the context excludes, or makes possible as a value for

on, we find that the pronoun in (2a) need not carry the exclusively personal value assigned to it above.

Does the context exclude Wentworth? Does it exclude the other characters potentially present in the scene, such as Madame Harville, the heroine and Henriette? The use of the pronoun *on* in (2a) and (2c) could therefore be analysed (conservatively) as a form of represented perception denoting the shared point of view of all the characters potentially implicated in the elaboration of this plan, with the exception of Mary. The second occurrence of the pronoun *on* in (2c) would thus be equivalent in value to the first occurrence in (2a). These values would lead to an indefinite attribution.

So far, the occurrences of the pronoun in (2a) and (2c) have been analysed in isolation. How do they relate to the value of the occurrence of the pronoun *on* in (9) in extract 2? Is this indefinite attribution also valid for this occurrence of the pronoun with the *imparfait* in (9): *d'ailleurs on n'avait pas de temps à perdre en discussions, il fallait partir*. According to Moshe Ron's observation concerning FID, another set of questions needs to be brought to bear on this passage, and passages similar to it in order to complete the process of attributing fictive subjectivity to the pronoun:

Whose words? Whose thoughts? Whose perceptions are these? Such answers are necessary in order to determine what is supposed to be happening in the story. Of course, they would not arise in the first place unless the utterances in question had been felt to be moot in respect of their attribution to a particular fictional subject. (Ron, 1981: 18)

Another interpretation of this pronoun may be proposed in the light of Ron's questions and the wider context of the occurrences of the pronoun, such as the occurrence of the pronoun with the *imparfait* in (9) in extract 2, and the presence of the *imparfait* in (10SP) of the supplementary passage (extract 3). In (10SP), the *imparfait* is used to impart Alice's perceptions as a brief process of perception and thought (aspectualization)—*Il parlait avec un ton de confiance et en même temps de sentiment qui semblait presque rappeler le passé*. This attribution is confirmed by the proceeding commentary in the *passé simple* in the following sentence (10SP)—*Alice rougit*. The fact that this instance of FID in Extract 3 representing the heroine's perceptions immediately precedes the passage in extract 2 lends further weight to an attribution of the heroine's subjectivity to the occurrences of the pronoun *on*

in this passage. This fragment of FID in (10SP) provides sufficient evidence for the designation of the heroine as the obvious observer prior to the occurrences of the pronoun in (2a) and (2c). An analysis of *both* (9) and (10SP) are therefore crucial to interpreting these instances of FID as representations of the heroine's consciousness (her thoughts and perceptions). This attribution of the heroine's subjectivity to these occurrences of the pronoun *on* with the *imparfait* places the representation of her consciousness at the centre of the narration.

Moreover in (8) of extract 2, explicit reference is made to Alice's feelings concerning her sister's refusal to comply with the arrangement—*Alice n'avait jamais été plus contrariée des fantaisies de Maria*. Alice is the most obvious observer for the fragment of FID in (9) foreshadowed by the commentary in (8). Accepting Alice as the salient character for the fragment of FID in (9), she could also be considered the most obvious subsequent observer for the occurrences of the pronoun that precede (9). They could all be most logically attributed to her within the framework of a series of fragments of FID that represent (more or less implicitly) her thoughts / perceptions from (2a) to (2c) as she persuades herself of the merits of their decision concerning Maria's removal to Uppercross—*qu'elle préférerait sûrement*.

Having arrived at this attribution for (9) of extract 2, it would seem equally logical to attribute all of the other occurrences of the pronoun in the passage to Alice according to the following pattern. A representation of the heroine's point of view is presented in (2a) and (2c), while her perceptions of what she overhears during Charles and Maria's conversation are reported in the fragment of FID speech report, from (3a) to (6b). Maria might well have used the pronoun *on*. In her discourse, the pronoun would take on the value of "vous les autres." In the consciousness of the heroine, the pronoun *on* has the value of "nous." The heroine is explicitly referred to in (2b), (4) and (5a) as *Alice*, pointing to the subjectivity from which the events are narrated. The fragment between (2a) and (2d) is a representation of the rationale behind the decision that the characters have just made. It represents a process of reasoning based upon a very firm understanding of Maria's temperament—*il lui convenait trop bien pour qu'elle pût se livrer cette fois à son penchant pour la contradiction*. In the context of the present interpretation, (2a) to (2d) is considered to be an instance of FID that reports the heroine's inward debate. This is marked minimally by the syntax and semantics. Note the use of adverbs of

inner-argument and persuasion, such as *trop bien*, *sûrement*, and *même pas* and the expression *mettre en doute* that combine to incarnate the presence of a mind in the midst of its own musings—in other words, this segment of the passage is considered to be a very faintly marked representation of the heroine's consciousness as she converses with herself. The fragment of FID (3a) to (6b) could therefore also be considered to be an example of the narration filtering a conversation through a representation of the heroine's consciousness as she herself overhears it. (Russell, 2011: 196-197)

The anonymity of *on* as an indefinite pronoun creates spaces or zones of indeterminacy within the target narrative text—it is the “perspicacity” (Fludernik, 1993: 441) of the reader that links the linguistic expression of perception (or consciousness) in fiction to its source (the agent of perception); the use of the indefinite third person pronoun *on* actually compels the reader to tease out the threads of ambiguity that the pronoun introduces into narrative discourse. The analysis of our extracts points up the inherent heterogeneity of FID that produces, *inter alia*, the range of interpretive strategies that might be located along a continuum that includes ambiguity, disambiguation and re-ambiguation. The translation of source text FID using the ambiguous pronoun *on* in association with the *imparfait* re-ambiguates the target text.

The FID produced by this association is a resource that is only available to the target language. The availability of *on* in French provides a strategy for indirectness that English does not have, and this strategy affects how fragments of FID function in *La Famille Elliot*. The general thrust of the argument advanced here is that the frequent translation ensures that enunciative heterogeneity is transferred to the target text, through a process of re-ambiguation—in such a way, and to the degree that *Persuasion's* FID is effectively preserved from the usual destiny of homogenization (or disambiguation).

Bibliography

Corpus Texts

AUSTEN, Jane, *Persuasion*, 1988 [1923], in Chapman, Robert William (ed.), *The Works of Jane Austen*, 6 vol., London, Oxford University Press.

———, 1828 [1821], *La Famille Elliot, ou L'Ancienne Inclination*, trans. Isabelle de Montolieu, 2 vol., Paris, Arthus Bertrand.

Works cited

BAGBY, Lewis, 1982, "Mikhail Bakhtin's Discourse Typologies: Theoretical and Practical Considerations," *Slavic Review*, 41, p. 35-58.

BOSSEAUX, Charlotte, 2007, *How does it feel? Point of View in Translation: The Case of Virginia Woolf into French*, Amsterdam, New York, Rodopi.

COHN, Dorrit, 1978, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

FLUDERNIK, Monika, 1993, *The Fictions of Language and the Language of Fictions: the Linguistic Representation of Speech and the Consciousness*, New York, Routledge.

GUILLEMIN-FLESCHER, Jacqueline, 1981, *Syntaxe comparée du français et de l'anglais : problèmes de traduction*, Paris, Ophrys.

JAHN, Manfred, 1999, "More aspects of focalization: refinements and applications," *GRAAT*, 21, p. 85-110.

JAYEZ, Jacques, 2004, "L'approche logique du 'point de vue'," Lyon, ENS-LSH & CNRS, p. 1-11.

MELLET, Sylvie, 2000, "Deux marqueurs de 'bivocalité,'" in Mellet, Sylvie, et Vuillaume, Marcel (éds), *Cahiers Chronos 5 : Le Style indirect libre et ses contextes*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, p. 91-106.

PIKOULIS, John, 2005, "Reading and Writing in *Persuasion*," *The Modern Language Review*, 100, n° 1, p. 20-36.

PONCHARAL, Bruno, 2003, *La Représentation de paroles au discours indirect libre en anglais et en français*, Paris, Ophrys.

QUÉRARD, Joseph-Marie, 1834, *La France Littéraire, ou Dictionnaire Bibliographique des Savants, Historiens et Gens de lettres de la France, ainsi que des Littérateurs étrangers qui ont écrit en Français, plus particulièrement pendant les XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles*, 6 vol., Paris, Firmin Didot, Père et fils.

RABATEL, Alain, 2001a, "La valeur de 'on' pronom indéfini / pronom personnel dans les perceptions représentées," *L'Information grammaticale*, 88, p. 28-32.

———, 2001b, “Fondus enchaînés énonciatifs. Scénographie énonciative et points de vue,” *Poétique*, 126, p. 153-157.

———, 2004, “Figures de la lecture et du lecteur: Quand voir c’est (faire) penser. Motivation des chaînes anaphoriques et point de vue,” *Cahiers de Narratologie*, 11, p. 1-13.

RON, Moshe, 1981, “Free Indirect Discourse, Mimetic Language Games and the Subject of Fiction,” *Poetics Today*, 2, n° 2, p. 17-39.

RUSSELL, Adam, 2011, *Isabelle de Montolieu Reads Jane Austen's Fictional Minds: The First French Translations of Free Indirect Discourse from Jane Austen's Persuasion*, Berne, Peter Lang.

SUTHERLAND, Kathryn, 2004, “Jane Austen and the serious modern novel,” in Keymer, Thomas et Mee, Jon, *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740-1830*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 244-262.

TAIVALKOSKI-SHILOV, Kristiina, 2006, *La Tierce Main. Le discours rapporté dans les traductions françaises de Fielding au XVIII^e siècle*, Arras, Artois Presses Université.