Translating Non-Idiomatic Phrasal Verbs into French:
Examples from Dubliners and Tender Is the Night

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It is a characteristic of English that the “verb plus particle” units known as phrasal verbs can express both the manner of an action and its direction or result. Whether the particle is an adverb or a preposition, a unit with a double function of “how” and “where” is formed, as in “the wind blew off the roof tiles”, “he turned over the page” (with adverbs) or “he ran up the hill”, “he rushed out of the room” (with prepositions). Setting aside cases where the meaning of the phrase cannot be deduced from the first semantic associations of constituent elements (as in “he gave up his job”, “he can’t put up with that woman”) we concentrate here on the infinite number of possibilities English provides to create a double description of manner and direction, using the wealth of English verbs of manner, and the precision of the most common adverbs and prepositions—adverbs and prepositions which refer literally and figuratively to surfaces (on, onto, off), closed interiors (in, into, out of), or any point in space (which can also be a person or an object) perceived as an origin or a target (with or without aggressive undertones) (away from, to, at).

The aim of the present study is to highlight this delicate area for translators of English, not to suggest alternatives. After clarifying the terminology we will study first a number of instances where translating strategies allow the meaning, sensitivity and intention of the original to shine through, and secondly, more numerous examples where part of the original message has got lost. Apart from cases of obvious misunderstanding or of non-translation we will have to determine what were the translators’ priorities, which may range from the greater reliance in French on the implicit, a preoccupation with concision that avoids heavy explanations, and a desire to maintain a rhythm. In the case of Joyce’s
and Fitzgerald's unusual and unexpected juxtapositions in phrasal verbs, it seems legitimate to demand of the translations that they transpose in one form or another as much of the intention of the author as possible.

3 The terminology surrounding the notion of “phrasal verbs” must be clarified in order to comprehend the meaning given to it in the present study.

F.R. Palmer, in *A Linguistic Study of the English Verb*, devotes a chapter to the problem of classification of phrasal and prepositional verbs, where he writes:

Two kinds of classification are appropriate. The forms may be distinguished grammatically, first, in terms of the adverbial versus the prepositional nature of the particles. Secondly, they may be distinguished in terms of idiom, some of the combinations being idiomatic, others not. The two types of classification must be kept distinct. It is often not clear whether the term “phrasal verb” is defined in terms of the first, the second, or both. (Palmer, 1965: 180-181)

4 In the present study, the type of phrasal verbs to which we refer will belong to the first (and non-idiomatic) type mentioned by Palmer, and can take one of four forms described by him, namely:

1. Verb + adverb without noun phrase
2. Verb + preposition with noun phrase
3. Verb + adverb with noun phrase
4. Verb + adverb + preposition with noun phrase (Larreya & Rivière, 2005: 183)

5 Paul Larreya and Claude Rivière, in their *Grammaire explicative de l’anglais* also mention the question of terminology:

En anglais, certains auteurs réservent le terme de *phrasal verbs* aux verbes à particule (c’est notre position), d’autres auteurs incluent également les verbes prépositionnels dans les phrasal verbs. ([ibid.]: 295)

6 The definition chosen in this study integrates into the term “phrasal verb” verbs followed either by an adverbial particle or a preposition—though even here the question of what sort of preposition arises. The authors in the same work distinguish between:

- he *ran into* the gym
  and
- he *ran* in the gym

where in the first example, *into* contains a result of the action carried out in the verb (*il est entré dans le gymnase en courant*). They describe the system behind this in English as follows:

Pour qu’il y ait sens resultant, il faut une preposition qui soit compatible avec le sens de changement de lieu […]. Dans le schéma resultant, la relation cause-effet est exprimée par la construction syntaxique, et tous les verbes d’action peuvent entrer dans un schéma resultant. (Larreya & Rivière, 2005: 316)

7 *Ran into* is the type of syntactical construction studied in this article: the two parts “cause and effect” or “manner and result” produce, literally but also figuratively, a change of place in the broadest sense of the word. The association of the verb and particle/preposition is a handy, succinct source of invention for authors, as opposed to lexicalised entries.

8 The translation of such a snappy formulation poses problems. Firstly, we often find the “verb plus particle”/“verb plus preposition” unit is a combination of just two monosyllables, thus portraying a concise airiness much appreciated by poets. The very essence of this construction lends itself to rapidity of expression. It is normal to strive to
maintain in the translation a trace of such concision, rhythm and lightness of touch, which is almost unavoidably accompanied by some semantic loss. Secondly, the work of the translator can be complicated by a verb of action being used with an inanimate subject, that is, when a categorical disparity between a subject and verb is used to produce the stylistic effect of a metaphor or personification. Strategies of translation vary from flattening the stylistic effect by re-establishing the categorical balance between the subject and verb (e.g. by introducing an animate subject with a verb of action) to maintaining the relative bizarreness of the personification. The gamut of possibilities between the two extremes leaves room for other, more or less ingenious, translations. It is the very large swathe of translating strategies studied here that will highlight the semantic, syntactical, rhythmic, and metaphorical aspects of the dilemma facing the translator.

Examples taken from two novels will serve to illustrate the translating techniques. The translations by Jacques Aubert (JA, 1974) and Pierre Nordon (PN, 1994) of James Joyce’s *Dubliners* (*Dub*) and those by Marguerite Chevaley (MC, 1951) and Jacques Tournier (JT, 1985) of Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender Is the Night* (*TITN*) will be used. The two works differ vastly in their setting and intentions: *Dubliners* describes apparently minor events in the lives of ordinary people in Dublin. The unsaid, maybe even the unsayable, are pervasive in descriptions of the attitudes of characters, fears of sinning or of sinful thoughts paralyse some characters, and the stories are shot through with mysteries about the uncomely behaviour of respectable persons like priests. *Tender Is the Night* describes the leisures, pleasures, and empty lives of young, rich and beautiful Americans in the roaring twenties who commute between the palatial hotels of Switzerland, Italy, and the French Riviera, but who also fall prey to more murky adventures involving clashes with the police, excessive drinking, shootings and fights.

**Part One: No loss of content in French translations**

On a very banal, non-problematical level, phrasal verbs in English that carry in the verb the meaning of the manner in which an action is done, and in the adverbial particle or preposition the direction or result of the same action, can often be translated by the “chassé-croisé” system: the verb in English becomes a prepositional syntagm, or an adverb, or a participle, and the particle is expressed via the verb in French. Examples such as “he ran across the road”—il a traversé la rue en courant—or “he rushed out of the room”—il est sorti précipitamment de la salle—illustrate this common syntactical transposition between English and French. French, however, does have a similar construction to the English one: “he rushed out of the room” can be said in French “il se précipita hors de la salle”. Here the manner in the verb is followed, as is common in English, by a prepositional syntagm indicating direction and result.

**a) The “chassé-croisé” method**

First, then, let us look at the relatively manageable text-book cases of translations by “chassé-croisé”—the method used to translate linguistic inventions like “Botox your years away”, which is a present-day slogan advertising an anti-wrinkle product, and was translated as “Chassez vos rides au Botox”. This method involves reversing the order of information given between French and English: the main English verb of manner is
transposed syntactically into an adverbial syntagm of some sort, and the adverbial particle or preposition in English becomes the French verb indicating direction or result. In some cases the English verb is simply translated by an adverb, as in these four examples:

1. The old woman [...] proceeded to **toil up** the narrow staircase
   
   
   La vieille femme [...] **gravit péniblement** l’escalier étroit (PN, 29)
   
   La vieille femme [...] se mit **à monter péniblement** l’étroit escalier
   
   (JA, 50)

2. He **struggled on** with his copy [...] (Dub, 126)

   Il **poursuivit péniblement** sa copie [...] (JA, 10)

3. When we were tired of this sight we **wandered slowly** into Ringsend. (Dub, 54)

   Une fois rassasiés du spectacle, nous **gagnâmes lentement** Ringsend.

   (PN, 55)

4. [...] Dick who had quickly **jerked** the wrinkles **out of** the bed [...] (TITN, 110)

   [...] Dick, qui **effaça rapidement** les plis du dessus-de-lit (JT, 170)

   [...] qui avait **vivement effacé** les plis du dessus de lit (MC, 120)

14 All versions here make a French conjugated verb form out of the prepositional syntagm.

On a purely semantic level, in the last example, the English verb **jerk** is undertranslated by the adverbs in so far as the nervousness and impatience in **jerkiness** is lost. Sometimes, in French, the translations of the English adverb or preposition are fluffed out into a more complex adverbial syntagm, as in the following examples:

5. Boys **sprinted past** on bicycles, [...] (TITN, 315)

   Il y avait des garçons sur des bicyclettes, qui **passaient en trombe** [...] (JT, 469)

   De jeunes garçons **passaient en trombe** à bicyclette [...] (MC, 330)

15 The two translations modulate the English verb for **to go at top speed** towards the prepositional syntagm of manner **en trombe**, and swing the adverbial **past** into the conjugated verb **passaient**.

6. While my aunt was **ladling out** my stirabout [...] (Dub, 16)

   Pendant que ma tante me **versait** mon porridge à **pleines louches** [...] (JA, 44)

16 **À pleines louches** retains the idea of large portions and a slightly indelicate manner of serving.

7. All the branches of the tall trees [...] were gay with little light green leaves and the sunlight **slanted through** them on to the water.

   (Dub, 48)

   Toutes les branches des grands arbres [...] étaient comme décorées de petites feuilles vert pâle et le soleil **se glissait de biais entre** elles jusqu’à la surface de l’eau. (JA, 61)

17 The dual element of sun slipping not only through the leaves but also at an angle is reproduced in French with this system.

18 Taking the expansion of the particle even further, Tournier translates **creak out** using a present participle for **creak** that follows a conjugated main verb form for **out**:

8. It was past four and under a blue-gray sky the first fishing boats were **creaking out into** a glaucous sea. (TITN, 53)

   Il était un peu plus de quatre heures, et, sous un ciel ni gris ni bleu, les premières barques des pêcheurs **s’enfonçaient en grincant dans** une mer glauque. (JT, 84)

19 These last two sentences have been able to retain in the translation what Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher in *Syntaxe comparée du français et de l’anglais* calls “la qualité agentive” of the inanimate subject coupled with a verb: a verb of process in the two languages has
been instrumentalised by an inanimate element—the sunlight, and the boats. This quality is re-inforced, as here, when the process is triggered by the subject immediately preceding the verb (Guillemin-Flescher, 1981: 225). Here, then, the personified subjects animate, in the translation, the English particle transposed into the main verb form, and the verb of manner becomes a participial syntagm. The translation may be more wordy, but nevertheless it preserves several important figurative and semantic elements of the original.

A last example here shows how the translating strategy analyses the constituent elements in the English construction, and can be prompted to introduce two different verb forms:

9. I’ve brutalised many men into shape. (TITN, 298)
   (JT, 446)

Here, being knocked into shape is the result achieved via brutal action. English, with the phrasal verb system, first delivers the manner with brutalises, unlike French, more apt to give information about the end result first. This translation shows that this phrasal verb formulation in English contains such concision that translations may have to multiply transpositions of all sorts to arrive at a faithful version, often running the risk of being long-winded.

The translating choices made above reflect a desire to use and adapt the “chassé-croisé” system to maintain as concisely as possible the elements of the English formulation. This is not inevitable, since as we shall see in Part Two, some translations of the same sentences lack the rigour observed in the above examples.

b) Other methods

Returning to the order in which we receive information with phrasal verbs, we have just seen that the order can be reversed between the two languages, but this is not always the case. In several examples, the elements of meaning in the double unit are translated in the same order as in English:

10. Far ahead he saw her yellow dress twisting through the crowd (TITN, 197)
    Il reconnut au loin sa robe jaune, qui se faufilait à travers la foule (JT, 297)
    Puis il aperçut, loin devant eux, sa robe jaune se faufilant à travers la foule (MC, 209)

Both translations maintain the personification of the dress, the manner in the verb, and the preposition through as such, without any major syntactical transposition being carried out. As we saw with the “chassé-croisé” method above, French can translate phrasal verbs by using two verbs. Here, the order can sometimes be maintained:

11. The fine night streamed away on either side (of the yacht) (TITN, 279)
    La nuit, d’un éclat surprenant, semblait glisser contre ses flancs, puis disparaître
    (JT, 418)
    La belle nuit semblait fuir, glisser sur ses flancs (MC, 292)

Away can carry the idea of disappearance from sight, as well as the idea of a process continuing. Here, the night passes by on either side of the yacht, and also passes in time, maybe even, on some more poetic level, visually. The verb stream indicates the gentle, peaceful passage of the night. Both translations add the verb of comparison sembler, unwilling to directly personify the night as in English. Otherwise, apart from the inappropriate disparaître, the elements of meaning of the phrasal verb are present in
glisser, and fuir, even if the French tends to stack together the two verbs used, in one case chronologically linked by puis, in the other, placed in juxtaposition. The system of two verbs to translate the English phrasal verb allows the translation to remain more airy than with the introduction, perhaps, of a cumbersome and explanatory prepositional syntagm. The choice of sembler also provides the text with two infinitives rather than heavier conjugated forms, and thus contributes, by compensation, to the flow of the original. Here again, as with the sun and boats (examples 7 and 8), there is an inanimate subject coupled with a dynamic verb that actualises the process and the translators have maintained this. Another example shows away with the meaning of a passage towards disappearance:

12. Seeing that his remark had meant comparatively little to him, she laughed away its effect. (TiTN, 298)
Comprenant qu'il n'avait attaché aucune importance à la réflexion qu'il venait de faire, elle se mit à rire, pour tout effacer. (JT, 445)

Here away is used to show that the result of laughing is to make the effect of a remark disappear. Laugh is the means and away is the result. In the translation, French adds the start of the laugh (semitd), whereas laughed away is inchoative by itself from the context. All the elements of meaning are there. Pour tout effacer in French can be read as either an aim or a result here, whereas it is clearly only the result in English. The order of events in the sentence (laugh, then away) can be maintained in French, provided the added semit à fluffs out the expression, and permits the use of the light infinitive form.

26 Another example uses the same method:
13. [...] or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to tea, we watched her [...] (Dub, 72)
[ou] si la sœur de Mangan sortait sur le seuil pour appeler son frère à rentrer souper, nous [...] (PN, 73)

28 A last example here creates a participial form in French for the English particle up, whereas the English present participle gazing is promoted to being a main verb:
14. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark. Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity (Dub, 88)
Le haut de la salle était maintenant plongé dans une obscurité complète. Levant les yeux, je scrutai ces ténèbres et me vis : un être mené par la vanité, jusqu'à la dérision (JA, 80)

29 Thus although the “chassé-croisé” method is known for its capacity to translate phrasal verbs into French, still it is not necessarily the only method. The English order of ideas “manner plus result” can, with some minor syntactical transformations, be followed in French. What we might remember is the variety of possibilities available. A last point here about the choice between the different possibilities: it would appear from the type of verbs of process studied in this first part that nothing either semantic or stylistic pre-determines a particular type of translating method.

Part Two: Losses

30 Most examples related to the translation of this particular structure, however, illustrate a modification of part of the structure, thus a degree of loss.
a) Loss of dynamic movement forward, impulsion

31 Here we have examples of the French translation neglecting to take into account the adverbial particle or preposition which in English dynamise the action through an expression conveying direction or result.

i) Reliance in French on the implicit

32 It might be argued in some cases that a text will not be affected by slight differences appearing in the translation. French has a greater tendency, for example, to rely on the implicit and avoid being overburdened by explicit references to positioning where the overall context is capable of filling in the gaps. Hélène Chuquet and Michel Paillard, in *Approche linguistique des problèmes de traduction*, mention examples relating to translating relative clauses, *de*, and some cases of juxtaposition where French implicitness will often be fluffed out in English: “[l’anglais a tendance] à expliciter et désambiguiser les relations” (Chuquet & Paillard, 1989: 145). It is this preference, in French, for a more implicit, and more abstract, mode of expression that explains why the reader is left to fill in logical gaps in a given context. In the words of J.-P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet in *Stylistique comparée du français et de l’anglais*:

> […] la phrase anglaise s’organise autour d’un mot image, et la phrase française autour d’un mot signe […]. D’une façon générale les mots français se situent généralement à un niveau d’abstraction supérieur à celui des mots anglais correspondants. Ils s’embarrassent moins des détails de la réalité. (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1977 [1958]: 58-59)

33 This opposition between a tendency in English to prefer “le plan du réel” and in French “le plan de l’entendement” will lead to English adverbs and prepositions not being expressed literally when translated into French. In some examples mentioned previously as using the “chassé-croisé” method, the second translation of the work deals only with the verb of manner:

15. He **struggled on with** his copy (*Dub*, 126)
   *Il se battait avec* sa copie (*PN*, 158)

34 The action in French does have duration but lacks the element conveying “continuously and painstakingly pursuing an action” in on, which might however be deduced from the context.

35 In this next example (same as number 14):

16. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark. **Gazing up into** the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity (*Dub*, 88)

36 the reader is informed that the darkness being looked into is high up, as the previous sentence makes clear. In one French translation:

> La partie supérieure du hall était maintenant complètement obscure. **Regardant vers** le noir, je me sentis le jouet grotesque de la vanité (*PN*, 89)

37 the reader could make an implicit connection with the **upper part of the hall** to avoid a literal translation of up.

38 Two examples containing the adverbial particle **in** in the sense of “movement into a place” lose this reference in French:

17. […] or if Mangan’s sister came out on the doorstep to **call** her brother **in** to tea, we watched her […] (*Dub*, 72)
One translation (number 13, above) of this sentence preferred to follow the English closely with *appeler son frère à rentrer souper*. The context, however, of his sister coming out to the doorstep to call her brother in clearly cannot be interpreted in any other way than “into their house”. This makes the implicit in French perfectly understandable. The second example, from the *Dubliners* story “The Sisters”, concerns the death of a priest who had lived in digs with the two sisters, who brought *in* meals to him, that is to say, who entered his upstairs room carrying his meals, which gives rise, through a whole network of “sous-entendre”, to a good deal of imaginary speculation. One sister says:

18. I won’t be *bringing* him *in* his cup of beef-tea any more (*Dub*, 36)

Je ne lui *porterai* plus son viandox (*PN*, 37)

Je lui *apporterai* plus sa tasse de consommé (*JA*, 54)

Interestingly, the bilingual edition comments on this use of *in*, calling it “redundant and incorrect”: « la tournure est à la fois redondante et incorrecte. Il convient de dire simplement “I won’t bring him” » (*PN*, 36). We cannot agree, for the reasons given about the additional message included in *in*. A similar phrase is repeated later:

19. Whenever I’d *bring in* his soup to him [...] (*Dub*, 36)

Chaque fois que je lui *portais* sa soupe [...] (*PN*, 37)

Chaque fois que je lui *montais* son potage [...] (*JA*, 54)

The *in* is essential to cultivate the doubt in the reader’s mind about this system of providing food for a priest who lives under the same roof. However, given that the two sisters live in the same house as the priest and provide meals for him, *porter*, *apporter* and *monter* can be understood to continue on *into* the room of the priest. An opportunity is nevertheless lost in French to suggest the innuendo of the situation. After all, Joyce could very well have said “bring his soup to him”, but did not.

**ii) Greater losses**

Another adverbial particle, *away*, is used often to indicate the prolonged duration of an action, as in “we chatted away for hours” (see also example 11 above). Dick Diver’s wife Nicole is described, with the -ING aspect, as *blooming away*, which can be paraphrased as Nicole’s permanently looking glamorous and on top form, just like a flower in full bloom:

20. [...] the Divers stood side by side in the gate, Nicole *blooming away* and filling the night with graciousness (*TITN*, 43)

Tournier translates this dynamic animation of Nicole as :

Les Diver se tenaient sur le seuil de leur porte, l’un à côté de l’autre. Nicole *ressemblait à une fleur ouverte* et son charme emplissait la nuit (*JT*, 69)

Nicole is visually compared to a flower in bloom, which is static compared to the continuous effervescence inherent in *blooming away*, and dilutes the metaphor *blooming* with the explicit reference to a resemblance in the French verb. *Glowing away* is used to describe Rosemary also in the same work:

21. In the car she [Rosemary] *glowed away* fresh and new in the morning sunshine (*TITN*, 219)

Elle était *radieuse*, dans le premier soleil, avec un visage tout animé, comme neuf (*JT*, 331)

[...] elle était *radieuse* et fraîche sous le soleil matinal (*MC*, 233)
Although this sentence describes Rosemary, indeed in similar terms to those used to describe Nicole, the use of radieuse to remind the reader of the same term as before is a useful translating ploy. Still, we remain with the static verb to be and an adjective rather than a verb of action, meaning we understand less animation, and more serenity, on the part of Rosemary in French than in English. We notice also that the translation by Chevaley drastically telescopes glow, away, fresh and new into radieuse et fraîche, where various elements of meaning and rhythm are lost. A comparison between the two contexts of Nicole blooming away and the young starlet Rosemary glowing away reveals the more childish echoes behind the cliché-ridden glowed away fresh and new that deserve not so much clipping in translation as a mention recalling the rather juvenile aspects of Rosemary. Fitzgerald describes the state of mind of Dick Diver when, in the middle of his problems, he flies to Munich:

22. Soaring and roaring into the blue he felt numb [...] A vast persuasive quiet stole over him (TITN, 202)

Tournier’s translation operates a “chassé-croisé” strategy (admittedly with loss of rhythm and assonance for soar and roar):

L’appareil s’éléva en grondant vers le ciel. Il se sentit comme engourdi [...] (JT, 305)

while Chevaley shuns the thrust behind the movement into the sky by using the static preposition dans with planant. There is thus no lifting movement from the ground up into the sky with such a translation, only a movement in the sky:

Planant dans le ciel bleu, il éprouvait un engourdissement [...]. Une vaste tranquillité le gagna. (MC, 214)

Another example of entering into a place with into is in Dubliners:

23. When we were tired of this sight we wandered slowly into Ringsend. (Dub, 54)

where into clearly indicates that they walked from one part of town into Ringsend, although one translation distorts the meaning of the preposition:

Une fois las de ce spectacle, nous déambulâmes lentement dans Ringsend. (JA, 64)

We have moved in these examples away from a greater reliance on the implicit in French to less rigorous attention being paid to the literal or figurative value of English adverbs and prepositions.

b) Loss of manner in French

Among examples we have already seen translated above, some translators have not maintained the manner present in the English verb:

24. While my aunt was ladling out my stirabout (Dub, 16)

Pendant que ma tante me versait mon manger (PN, 17)

25. All the branches of the tall trees [...] were gay with little light green leaves and the sunlight slanted through them on to the water. (Dub, 48)

Toutes les branches des grands arbres s'égayaient de petites fleurs vert pâle, que les rayons de soleil traversaient jusqu'à l'eau du canal. (PN, 49)

The ladling and slanting aspects are lost, unlike in the other translations of the same sentences (see examples 6 and 7). In other examples of the English verb, we see that such instantly evocative verbs of manner as flicker, dribble, twist, sweep, clamber, shoot, and steal are lost, since the translation is limited to formulating a verb in French reflecting the particle, as in:
26. [...] the smile still **flickered across** her face, derisive and remote (TITN, 196)
   Elle gardait ce sourire sarcastique et lointain (JT, 296)

53. The flat, static **gardait** partly translates **across** but the more dynamic comparison implied with candlelight rapidly crossing her face is lost—we must understand from the image in English that the smile is hard to deliver and maintain. What is more, the smile translated here is no longer the subject of the verb, and the more banal feminine subject is re-established, diluting Fitzgerald’s idea that the body can act independently of the owner. Chevaley’s translation:
   Mais le sourire lointain et ironique **continuait d’errer** sur ses lèvres (MC, 208)

54. maintains the personification of **smile**, though **errer** indicates more of a directionless wandering than the intermittent flash of **flicker**. The verb **dribble** indicates a slow, uncontrollable flow of saliva, or of small quantities of liquid, as in “the baby **dribbled** on his shirt”, “the river **dribbled** through the town”. Fitzgerald uses it metaphorically:
   27. Out of three thousand a year and what **dribbled in** from his publications he paid for his clothes (TITN, 178)

55. The message here is that Dick’s publications are not a commercial success since the money he receives from them comes in small quantities, and slowly. Chevaley’s translation:
   Sur ses trois mille dollars annuels et ce qui lui **revenait** de la publication de ses ouvrages (MC, 188)

56. takes only the adverbial particle **in** into account, in the verbal form **lui revenait**. An unsuspecting reader might well understand, wrongly, that Dick's income from his publications is a handsome sum.

57. In the context of the young Rosemary **twisting away** from Dick’s embraces to go and phone the film studios, the English says:
   28. She **twisted away** from him (TITN, 218)

58. and we have the memory of her curvaceous silhouette—lost in the two translations which retain only her moving **away**:
   Elle lui **échappa** (JT, 329)
   Elle **se dégagea** de lui (MC, 232)

59. **Away** also takes priority in the translations of:
   29. He wanted to **sweep away** her mother (TITN, 89)
   Il aurait voulu **écarter définitivement** cette mère (JT, 139)
   Il avait envie d’**oublier** la mère (MC, 99)

60. The determination and lack of respect present in the verb **sweep away** are sadly lacking in **oublier sa mère**, whereas **écarter définitivement** does adverbially stress some strong will. Neither translation maintains or compensates for the concrete image of **sweep**, preferring more abstract vocabulary in the verbs.

61. The verbs **climb** and **clamber** have a similar origin, but they are distinguished in that **clamber** introduces a notion of awkwardness and lack of gracefulness not present in the more neutral **climb**. We are thus disappointed to find this extra meaning lost in French:
   30. He came up the hill, smiling, and **clambered up** beside me on the bridge (Dub, 50)
   Il remontait la colline en souriant et **grimpait** pour s'asseoir près de moi sur le pont (PN, 51)
   Il monta la côte, souriant, et **grimpait** près de moi sur le parapet du pont (JA, 61)
When feelings of some sort pass through the characters, the manner is often lost:

31. [...] a first pang of doubt shot through him (TITN, 233)
 [...] une première lueur de doute s’insinuait en lui (JT, 351)
 [...] comme un premier doute s’insinuait en lui (MC, 247)

The sudden spasm of pain of this experience in English is clear with Fitzgerald’s use of pang and shot. The French s’insinuer, however, is a synonym for s’introduire, se glisser, se faire admettre adroitement, thus indicating a much slower, and more skilful process, compatible, indeed, with the equally off-target une première lueur.

A second example here is when Dick relaxes at last as he takes off in a plane:

32. A vast persuasive quiet stole over him (TITN, 202)

Trouble between Dick and Nicole is at a height: in stole over him a somewhat mysterious origin is provided for the presence of this feeling of quiet. Steal here suggests a certain cunning unexpectedness that creeps forward. The two translations:

Un calme profond l’envahit (JT, 305)
Une vaste tranquillité le gagna (MC, 247)

mention the neutrally-expressed entering of the feeling in him (gagna) or a more aggressive entering with envahit, which erroneously twists the surprise aspect of the initial steal. The French verbs translate the particle over but the sentences fail to convey the manner (steal) in which the feeling occurs in English.

When the world of nature is personified, using a verb normally associated with a human or animal subject, again the manner is lost. Verbs like slither, trail, drag, and swing are good examples. As a case in point, slither suggests the rather slippery, undulating movement typical of snakes:

33. The veranda of the central building was illuminated from open French windows, save where [...] the fantastic shadows of iron chairs slithered down into a gladiola bed (TITN, 141)
On avait ouvert les portes-fenêtres, et la véranda du pavillon central en était tout illuminée et l’ombre des chaises de fer qui s’étirait, presque irréelle, jusqu’à un massif de glaïeuls [...] (JT, 214)
 [...] (l’ombre) des sièges métalliques s’allongeait, fantastique, jusqu’à une corbeille de glaïeuls (MC, 150)

S’étirer and s’allonger stress rather the stretching, or lengthening, of the shadows, with jusque implicitly, from the context, inferring the downward movement. However, the surprising, strange resonances suggesting snakes behind slither are lost in the French. When the flowers growing outside the moving funicular in the Alps enter through its windows:

34. [...] the blossoms trailed in as they passed—Dorothy Perkins roses dragged patiently through each compartment slowly waggling with the motion of the funicular, letting go at the last to swing back to their rosy cluster. (TITN, 156)
 [...] les fleurs s’offraient d’elles-mêmes à travers les vitres ouvertes – des brassées de roses Dorothy Perkins, qui pénétraient dans les compartiments, avec de doux frissons, dus au mouvement de la cabine, et ne se résignaient qu’au dernier moment à réintégrer leurs massifs. Mais, comme d’autres prenaient aussitôt leur place, c’était un incessant va-et-vient des fleurs. (JT, 235)
 [...] les fleurs s’accrochaient au passage au funiculaire. Des roses Dorothy Perkins entraient par les fenêtres, n’abandonnant la voiture qu’au dernier moment. Cet envahissement floral se répétait sans cesse. (MC, 165)
Fitzgerald describes the way the flowers move: *trail* and *drag* suggest a slow, languorous, straggling movement that is profoundly flattened with *s’offraient d’elles-mêmes*, while *s’accrochaient, pénétraient* and *entraient* indicate the fact of the roses’ hanging on to the cabin or their entering into it, but not the manner. As for the more rapid, *swing back to their rosy cluster*, both Tournier and Chevaley transpose towards the noun form with *un va-et-vient* and *cet envahissement se répétait* where they introduce a general reflection on the scene, thus diluting the effect of the roses, in English, actively *swinging back*. The suggestive magic of the English, due in part to the whole passage being a constant, idyllic personification of the roses, undergoes a syntactic rupture in that both translators break up the sentence into two parts, but also because the point of view changes to being that of the observer of the roses, rather than the roses themselves *swinging back*. On the other hand, both translators do strive to include volition on the part of the roses with *réintégrer leurs massifs* and *n’abandonnant la voiture qu’au dernier moment*. We are nevertheless struck by the flatness of the verbs used.

Other aspects of nature have a similar fate, with the particle translated, not the manner. Two examples refer to the action of the wind:

35. [...] a few gusts of mistral from down the coast *seeped through* the Esterel and rocked the fishing boats in the harbour (*TITN*, 171)

 [...] de petites bouffées de mistral, *venues de* l’Esterel, faisaient parfois danser les barques de pêche (*JIT*, 258)

Quelques bouffées de mistral, *filtrées sur* l’Esterel, balançaient les bateaux de pêche dans le port (*MC*, 181)

Here, *seep through* achieves a cross between the tactile effect of the wind blowing and the effect of a liquid slowly infiltrating, say, the fine pores of a cloth, a ceiling, a wall. In the two translations, *filtrées* is more neutral, less liquid, than *seep*, whereas *venues* suppresses the synaesthesia and reduces the force of the phrasal verb to the geographical origin of the wind. Moreover, the English links *seeped through* and *rocked the boats* giving a causative slant to *and*, and equal weight to the two independent clauses. The passage in French towards a participial form in both translations also contributes to limiting the impact of the independent clause with *seeped through*.

In the second example referring to the wind:

36. Another gust of wind *strained round* the porphyry hills of La Napoule. (*TITN*, 171)

Une nouvelle bouffée de vent *souffla* des rochers pourpres en direction de La Napoule. (*JIT*, 258)

Une rafale de vent *contourna* les collines de porphyre de La Napoule. (*MC*, 181)

*Souffla* is a pale imitation of *strained around* in that the English shows an almost human, strenuous effort that the more banal *blew* would have lacked. Chevaley’s *contourna*, on the other hand, can be understood partly because the powerful *rafale re-enforces gust*, thus compensating for the purely directional information contained in the verb.

Lastly, inanimate objects are personified via dynamic verbs:

37. [...] as the massacre continued the posters *withered away* (*TITN*, 121)

Here there is a comparison made between the “bright posters presenting the Swiss defending their frontiers in 1914”, followed by the sentence above, referring to 1917, when news of the many war victims had replaced the initial euphoria. The posters *withered away* implies no-one had time to tend them, or seek to replace them—they simply remained on billboards and, like flowers, wilted. The two translations tackle only *away*:
Le massacre se prolongeant, ces affiches avaient peu à peu disparu (JT, 186)
À mesure que durait le massacre, les affiches disparurent (MC, 130)

The verb disparaître here implies a mysterious, even sudden, disappearance behind away, whereas the more likely understanding of away is to re-inforce wither and suggest that through their withering and their being abandoned, left to rot, the posters, quite understandably, become faded, drained of their colour by the passage of time, and eventually are unrecognisable. The word wither, along with its opposites bloom and glow, form part of Fitzgerald’s network of echoes in a novel so concerned with moral and physical disintegration. When translations lose trace of them, some essential elements of the author’s intention are lost.

In another example, the young and beautiful Nicole arrives at the hotel in a Rolls Royce:

38. [...] as he walked past the Palace Hotel, a magnificent Rolls curved into the half-moon entrance (TITN, 154)

The luxury, beauty and shapely lines of the car set the stage for its equally attractive occupant, Nicole. In the two French translations:

[...] une somptueuse Rolls Royce s’engagea dans la contre-allée (JT, 231)
[...] une Rolls Royce magnifique virait dans l’entrée en demi-lune (MC, 162)

S’engagea dans embraces only the movement into the entrance, but omits the explicit reference to the way the car curls majestically round on the path. Virait dans, however, replaces the serenity and harmonious movement of curve with a slightly more strenuous, maritime term for turning, vire.

A last example of personification of inanimate objects concerns Chevaley’s translation of a sentence seen earlier (example 8):

39. It was past four and under a blue-gray sky the first fishing boats were creaking out into a glaucous sea. (TITN, 53)
Il était un peu plus de quatre heures, et sous le ciel gris bleu les premiers bateaux de pêche prenaient la mer. (MC, 61)

Chevaley’s version is weak in that it avoids translating the manner described in the verb creak and deals only with out, which is transposed to a main verb form indicating the result. The modest nature of the boats, to be inferred from the creaking sound they make, is also lost—and thus the background depicted is all the poorer for it.

These cases above show that French will often favour a partial translation, dealing often only with the meaning of the particle and not the description of the manner in which the action took place. Whereas one might argue as we did above that, in the non-translation of particles and prepositions, French plays on the implicit, this cannot be the case for translations of verbs of manner. If boats don’t creak out of harbours but just leave, if roses don’t trail into train compartments then swing back but just enter and exit, then what is left of the echoes that make up the message encoded in the verb? Without the translation in some form of these English verbs of manner, the translation is considerably weakened. We have also seen that there is no strategy used to compensate for such a loss, either before or after the sentences quoted.

c) More serious errors involving phrasal verbs

If we consider that Tender Is the Night and Dubliners are among the most significant 20th century works of fiction in English, we must be assured that translations of them open up
a public in non-English-speaking countries that has access to all aspects of the novels. Around the question of phrasal verbs treated here, we have come across some approximations and losses, but we have also noticed more flagrant misunderstandings of the original, not to say an almost complete evacuation of the problem. We have already seen (example 27 above) that one translation of *dribbled in* had lost the slow manner of *dribble*. In Tournier’s translation, the phrasal verb and the syntax are completely misconstrued:

40. Out of three thousand a year and what *dribbled in* from his publications he paid for his clothes [...] (*TITN*, 178)
   Avec les trois mille dollars que lui *rapportaient*, chaque année, ses deux livres [...] (*JT*, 269)

84 In what might be described as a weak form of modulation, we have in *TITN*:

41. They started back with a hot sorrow *streaming down upon* them (*TITN*, 178)
   Ils reprirent la route. Une tristesse étouffante les *accompagna* (*JT*, 301)
   Ils prirent le chemin de retour *dans une atmosphère* de chagrin (*MC*, 211)

85 Given the quite common recurrence of the word *stream* in *TITN*, and its use here with the draining effect of *down upon* them, these two translations miss an opportunity to animate the hot sorrow enveloping the characters at a moment close to despair for the couple.

86 There are four examples where the phrasal verb is almost totally absent. Firstly:

42. The women’s bonnets, *perching over* velvet vests, seemed demure [...] (*TITN*, 197)
   Les femmes portaient de grands bonnets, des vestes de velours [...] (*JT*, 297)
   Les chapeaux des Suissesses, *couronnant* leurs petites vestes de velours, [...] (*MC*, 208)

87 The rather ridiculous rig-out of the women described here is conveyed with the use of *perch*—often applied to birds sitting on a wire. The author’s implicit irony is therefore lost in the Tournier version, though maintained more in the Chevaley version modulated with the rather serene, majestic term *couronnant*.

88 Secondly, to return to the difficulty posed by the translation of *bloom away* and *glow away*, Tournier’s version of the sentence:

43. All that saved it this time was Nicole finding their table and *glowing away*, white and fresh and new in the September afternoon (*TITN*, 167)
   Nicole sauva la situation, en venant vers eux, si blanche, si pure, si neuve, dans cet après-midi de septembre (*JT*, 252)

89 simply leaves out the mention of *glowing away*, eliminating one of Fitzgerald’s more common images in the novel, to *glow*. Chevaley does something similar in this third example (already seen above [20]):

44. [...], Nicole *blooming away* and filling the night with graciousness (*TITN*, 43)
   [...], Nicole remplissant la nuit de sa grâce (*MC*, 50)

90 where again *blooming away*, with another of Fitzgerald’s key words, *bloom*, is left out.

91 A last example is Chevaley’s non-translation of the sentence:

45. Abe’s account *melted* impersonally into the thronged night.
   (*TITN*, 48)

92 Her translation omits this whole sentence, despite the poetic character and rhythm so characteristic of *Tender Is the Night*. Tournier had translated:
Abe North parlait d’une voix détachée, qui se perdait dans les profondeurs de la nuit. (JT, 75)

where we have the personification of the voice, and the essential reference, for the novel, to the night.

The conclusion we reach concerning the translation into French of creative uses of phrasal verbs is that the possibility exists of finding strategies, such as the “chassé-croisé”, that provide, via syntactical transformations, a faithful transfer of the content, register, elegance and rhythm of the original. However, these strategies are not always implemented. One obvious reason involves a tendency in French to be content with an implicit rendering of the particle/preposition on the grounds that pinpointing positioning can be superfluous if the context provides a reasonable understanding of movement, result and direction. This tendency to minimise translation does not necessarily detract from the original. This is not the case for non-translations of verbs of manner—a more serious matter in so far as the different levels of meaning of some English verbs are often lost and not replaced by compensatory strategies. True, English verbs of manner are more numerous than French ones, leaving a semantic vacuum filled in French by more general terms. When the personification of the world of nature and objects is grafted on to these English verbs of manner, translations show the result is unfortunately to evade the issue. Given Fitzgerald’s penchant for poetic prose—often leaning heavily on an animation of the physical world—we find ourselves with French versions that fail to develop parallel strategies. Thus the study of how English phrasal verbs are translated into French highlights a micro-syntactical problem that in the course of a novel may well suppress networks of echoing meaning supported by rich, multi-faceted verbs, and flatten the impact of strangeness and surprise attached to bold metaphorical formulations.

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ABSTRACTS

It is a characteristic of the English language that phrasal verbs combine a “verb plus particle” unit capable of expressing the manner of an action and its direction or result. Whether the particle is an adverb or a preposition, a unit with a double function of “how” and “where” is formed. Setting aside the possible idiomatic side to some phrasal verbs, this paper concentrates on the infinite number of possibilities English provides to create a double description of manner and direction, using the wealth of English verbs of manner, and the precision of the most common adverbs and prepositions—adverbs and prepositions which adapt literally and figuratively to surfaces (on, onto, off), closed interiors (in, into, out of) and more vague places (at, to, away, from). Drawing on the existing translations of Joyce’s Dubliners and Fitzgerald’s Tender Is the Night, we weigh up the strategies, such as the chassé-croisé system, used to convey the semantic and stylistic niceties of the original in translation. We notice that because of the concision of the English structure translators, faced with the possibility of cumbersome equivalents, choose to suppress elements of meaning in English verbs of manner and to flatten the impact of strangeness and surprise attached to bold metaphorical formulations.

Les phrasal verbs en anglais forment une unité qui lie un verbe et une particule, l’ensemble exprimant la manière, mais aussi la direction, ou le résultat d’un procès, que la particule soit un adverbe ou une préposition. Nous laissons de côté un possible aspect idiomatique attaché à certains verbes à particule pour nous concentrer sur le nombre infini de possibilités qu’offre l’anglais pour créer cette double description de manière et de résultat, à l’aide d’un très grand nombre en anglais de verbes exprimant la manière, et de la précision des adverbes et des prépositions les plus courants. Ces derniers s’adaptent au sens propre et figuré à des surfaces (on, onto, off), des intérieurs bien délimités (in, into, out of), et des lieux plus vagues (at, to, away, from).

À partir des deux traductions existantes de Dubliners de James Joyce et de celles de Tender Is the Night de F. S. Fitzgerald, nous étudions les stratégies, comme le chassé-croisé, employées pour traduire en français les complexités d’ordre sémantique et stylistique. Nous concluons que la concision de la structure anglaise pousse le traducteur, confronté à des équivalents peu élégants, à supprimer des éléments de sens des verbes anglais, ce qui diminue et affadit l’effet d’étrangeté et de surprise attaché à certaines trouvailles métaphoriques audacieuses.