

### HERBERT E. CRAIG: Assessing the English and Spanish Translations of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*

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Among the translations of European modernist fiction into English, C.K. Scott Moncrieff's version of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* stands as a work that influenced countless readers and stood for decades as a literary masterpiece in its own right. However, as Herbert E. Craig shows in his comparative monograph on English and Spanish translations of Proust, it was actually the Spanish poet Pedro Salinas who produced the earliest translations of the first two volumes. Craig, who has written previously on the Spanish-language reception of Proust, takes an interesting approach in this study, selecting key sections of different volumes in the *Recherche* and comparing all of the available versions in English and Spanish through close textual analysis. As he points out in his introduction, the main difference between the two languages is that "the former has had more revisions of a single translation, [while] the latter has had more different translations" (4).

Scott Moncrieff's Proust can be compared to Willa and Edwin Muir's translations of Franz Kafka as canonical modernist texts; Craig even cites a 1925 review in which Edwin Muir refers to *The Guerimantes Way* as a "remarkable translation" and praises his fellow Scottish translator for his "plasticity and adaptableness of mind: that secondary inventive faculty which can discover a great variety of ways in which one thing can be said" (114). However, Scott Moncrieff also encountered considerable criticism, including from Proust himself, who disliked his choice of the Shakespearean *Remem-*

*brance of Things Past* for the overall title of the series. Nevertheless, even after a revised edition of Proust's original appeared in French in 1954, correcting many of the editing errors made in the later posthumously published volumes, Scott Moncrieff's version continued to be used as the basis for several updated editions in English, first by Terence Kilmartin (1981) and then D.J. Enright (1992). Like Proust himself, Scott Moncrieff died prematurely and was unable to translate the last volume, *Le temps retrouvé*, which appeared in separate British and American editions in the 1930s, by Stephen Hudson (*Time Regained*) and Frederick A. Blossom (*The Past Recaptured*) respectively, followed in 1970 by Andreas Mayor's version that was printed (under both titles, but primarily as *Time Regained*) with the Kilmartin/Enright editions. As Proust's work approached the public domain in the late 20th century, Penguin Books published an entirely new edition edited by Christopher Prendergast, in which each volume was produced by different translators with varying styles: Lydia Davis, James Grieve, Mark Treharne, John Sturrock, Carol Clark, Peter Collier, and Ian Patterson. This was complicated by an extension of U.S. copyright laws in the 1990s, which delayed the American publication of the last few volumes by almost 20 years. In the meantime, the Proustian scholar William C. Carter began to prepare another revision of Scott Moncrieff's translation for Yale University Press, the first six volumes of which have appeared since 2013.

Craig deals with this complex history quite well in Chapters 1–8 of his mono-

graph, giving extensive comparative examples and then offering his own overall evaluation of the different translations. For the “Combray” section of Proust’s first volume, for example, he concludes that “C.K. Scott Moncrieff made numerous omissions and additions, as well as other errors,” while his “revisers Terence Kilmartin and D.J. Enright rectified many of these shortcomings, but left some and even added a few of their own,” which he finds to be the case for Carter’s revisions as well (39). Discussing the later translations of the first volume, while Craig describes James Grieve’s stand-alone version (published in Australia) as “radically distinct,” he concludes that Lydia Davis’s Penguin rendition is “much more faithful” to Proust’s language and thought, “while at the same time avoiding Scott Moncrieff’s omissions, additions and other errors” (39). He also brings up the question of mutual influence, particularly in the case of “Un amour de Swann”, the self-contained episode from the first volume that is probably the best-known (and perhaps most often taught) part of the entire *Recherche*. Examining a 2017 translation by Brian Nelson, Craig suggests “it is evident that at times he did follow the work of Lydia Davis,” along with the Enright revision of Scott Moncrieff and the version by James Grieve (67). Although Grieve’s translation of the first volume was not included in the Prendergast-edited series, he was selected by Penguin to translate the second volume, *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, for which he replaced Scott Moncrieff’s more metaphorical title *Within a Budding Grove* with the more literal *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*. The same title change was made by Carter for his revised version of Scott Moncrieff, which Craig concludes is the best available edition due to Grieve’s overly free interpretation of Proust’s text.

For the third volume, *Le côté de Guermantes* (*The Guermantes Way*), Mark Tre-

harne’s new Penguin translation is, by contrast, “closer to a revision than any of the other volumes of this edition” (112). However, due to Treharne’s “clear disregard for Proust’s complex sentence structure, which was intentional and characteristic of his work,” and Scott Moncrieff’s “numerous omissions, additions and other translation errors,” Craig “somewhat reluctantly name[s] D.J. Enright as the author of the best version” (114). Apart from Carol Clark’s translation of *La prisonnière* (*The Prisoner*), for which Craig also prefers Enright’s revision of Scott Moncrieff, he finds the new Penguin translations superior for the rest of the series: John Sturrock’s *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (*Sodom and Gomorrah*), Peter Collier’s *Albertine disparue* (*The Fugitive*), and Ian Patterson’s *Le temps retrouvé* (*Finding Time Again*). The latter case “is unique because it has been translated to English more times than any other complete volume” (161), although as noted above, there is no definitively “canonical” version since Scott Moncrieff was not able to translate it. Examining Stephen Hudson’s, Frederick A. Blossom’s, and Andreas Mayor’s versions, all of which were published alongside Scott Moncrieff’s translation of the earlier volumes, Craig criticizes Hudson’s extensive omissions and errors, finding Blossom’s version superior, while Mayor’s greatest drawback “is that he continually expanded upon Proust’s text” and even “added completely new sentences” (168). Kilmartin’s and Enright’s revisions of Mayor’s translation suppressed some of these additions but did not substantially change his “re-writing” of the text. Thus, Craig concludes that Patterson’s is “the most careful and accurate translation among the six versions that I have examined here. Not only did he avoid the additions of Andreas Mayor and his revisers, he is closer to Proust in construction and word choice, without falling into literalism or Gallicisms” (172).

In Chapters 9–10 of his monograph, Herbert E. Craig turns to the Spanish

translation history of Proust, which while quite different from the English reception, has notable similarities. As he does with Scott Moncrieff, Craig finds numerous drawbacks to the seminal translation by Pedro Salinas, who “omitted numerous words, phrases, clauses and even sentences. He also made several mistakes and was careless in confusing Proust’s characters” (202–203). However, Salinas’s text was used by later translators like Virgilio Piñera and Elena Carbajo as the basis for their own versions, whether directly acknowledged like the Kilmartin/Enright revisions or not (219). Some of the best translations of Proust into Spanish were by translators who only completed one or two volumes of the series, such as the version of “Un amour de Swann” by the Barcelona critic and writer Carlos Pujol, who also “wrote a novel that is related to Proust: *El lugar del aire* (1984)”, making him “the only one of the twenty-five translators and three revisers in this study to have written a Proustian novel” (234). Two different Spanish translators, Mauro Armiño and Carlos Manzano, began retranslating the entire series almost simultaneously, and their parallel versions appeared starting in 2000. In his final evaluation, Craig concludes that “Mauro Armiño made the smallest number of errors and omissions and created the best translation in all instances”, unlike his evaluations of the best English translators, who differ for almost every volume (339).

Besides translations published in Spain, editions from Argentina have played an important role, particularly during the Franco regime: “Although *Sodoma y Gomorra I* – the most explicit and controversial part of this work – was published in Spain without difficulty during the Republic (1932), the Francoist censors in 1952 withdrew from circulation the entire double volume” in which it was included, and “[for] fifteen years Spaniards could only read this volume through

the Argentine translation and edition which was allowed to circulate in Spain” (334). More recently, the publisher Losado in Buenos Aires has posthumously released a translation by Elena Canto, who like Scott Moncrieff, died before finishing the entire series, and who “used on occasion words from Argentina or Latin America rather than peninsular Spanish words” (195). One interesting detail Craig uncovers through his personal contacts with editors and publishers is that although “Canto’s version ended with *Sodoma y Gomorra*”, her editor Miguel de Torre Borges (the nephew of Jorge Luis Borges) “simply attributed to Canto volumes 5 and 6 because he did not want to leave his role as editor and presume to be the translator” (289). These volumes are actually “an updating of Marcelo Menasché’s text” from 1945, giving Latin American readers “access to the most current version of the *Recherche* in their own language and dialect” (291).

Herbert E. Craig’s painstaking analysis of the English and Spanish translations of Proust offers numerous insights for those readers who may wonder how far their own reading experience diverges from the original. While those less interested in nitpicking small differences between versions may find their interest waning in the middle (a reasonable reaction, one might add, to Proust’s *Recherche* itself) his detailed presentation offers a constructive example of translation studies based on comparing the specific choices of individual translators, rather than making theoretical generalizations based on abstract models of language and culture. Despite the frequently critical remarks that such an approach entails, Craig ends by “compliment[ing] all of the translators for their hard work [...]. They have often performed a herculean task to make available for both English and Spanish-speakers Proust’s multivolume work, one that most of them could not have read in the original

French” (339–340). One might in turn compliment Craig for the “herculean task” of reading and comparing multiple translations, which even the most devoted readers of Proust will rarely find time to do. Despite its narrow focus, his overview of the translation and publication history of Proust’s work in both English

and Spanish provides broader insights into the international reception of European modernism.

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**ANTONIO BARNÉS – MAGDA KUČERKOVÁ (eds.): The Figurativeness of the Language of Mystical Experience: Particularities and Interpretations**

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The collected volume *The Figurativeness of the Language of Mystical Experience: Particularities and Interpretations*, edited by Antonio Barnés and Magda Kučerková, constitutes a relevant contribution to the current academic debate on religions. In addition to the interest the book holds for specialized researchers, its chapters offer an appropriate balance between academic quality and a language accessible to a wide range of readers, thus appealing to a general audience whose attention to mystical issues has grown in last decades. In terms of content, the volume presents a clearly structured idea of the mystical experience around the axis of the figurativeness of language. This structuring axis is in turn articulated around nodal issues (anthropology, epistemology, symbolism, rhetoric, existential perspective and art), which cover different facets of the mystical experience.

In the first chapter, the reader will discover mysticism from an anthropological perspective thanks to the contributions by Francisco Javier Sancho Fermín on the different levels of mystical experience, Silvia Brodňanová on imagination as a potential factor in Teresa de Jesús’

works, Lucie Rathouzská on imaginative contemplation in the 14th-century English mystics, and by Ján Gallik on death as radical border in Jan Čep’s novel *Hranice stínu* (The border of a shadow, 1935).

Chapter 2 explores another nodal point for the understanding of mystical experience: epistemology. It includes essays by Silvia Julia Campana on mystery between Martin Heidegger, Maister Eckhart and the contemporary Argentinian poet Hugo Mújica, Fabiano Gritti on David Maria Turolde’s dialogue with the Absolute, Andrea Raušerová on the reflections of the Czech novelist Julius Zeyer, and Silvia Rybárová on the presence of silence in the work of Sylvie Germain.

Symbolism, one of the fundamental questions of the figurativeness of mystical experience, is addressed in Chapter 3 through Antonio Barnés’s study on the Machadian perspective on dreaming and childhood. His reflections are complemented by Ján Knapík’s section on Jung’s notion of self in St. Teresa of Ávila, and Magda Kučerková’s thought-provoking analysis of the symbol of the heart as a path to deification.

The different uses and types of language in mystical experience are dis-