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French Studies Library Group Annual Review

Issue 9 (2012-13)

Editor

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The *FSLG Annual Review* is an annual publication, produced for the members of the French Studies Library Group. The aims of the Group are:

- To act as a focus for librarians and others concerned with the provision of library resources and services in French studies.
- To facilitate cooperation in the provision, access, promotion and preservation of French printed and electronic resources.
- To provide a forum for the dissemination of information on these topics between libraries and the scholarly user community.
- To liaise with related library groups.

Membership

Membership is open to any person or institution with an interest in the aims of the Group. To apply for membership please fill in the form at <http://frenchstudieslibrarygroup.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/fslg-application-form.pdf>. Annual membership costs £15 (retired members £10).

Notes for contributors

Contributions to future issues of the *Annual Review* are always welcome. Submissions should be preferably in electronic form (Word or rich text format (RTF)). Please send them to Damien McManus at the email address above.

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FLSG on the web: <http://frenchstudieslibrarygroup.wordpress.com/>

Electronic mailing lists

FLSG has its own JISCMail list: **FSLG** (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/fslg.html>)

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Staff and library news | 4 |
| FSLG Study Day 2012: report <i>Annick Mann</i> | 5 |
| Accessing twentieth-century French political sources <i>Anne Worden</i> | 9 |
| Conference report. Translation and reception: 21st-century French fiction in the UK <i>Teresa Vernon; Christine Anderson; Anne Cobby; Andrea Meyer Ludowisy</i> | 11 |
| La place de la critique littéraire dans la presse française <i>Patrick Kéchichian</i> | 22 |
| Qu'appelle-t-on <i>La petite édition</i> en France? <i>Claire Paulhan</i> | 31 |
| Translating, publishing and supporting contemporary fiction from French in the UK book market. Social conditions and obstacles <i>Marcella Frisani</i> | 38 |
| Resource Description and Access (RDA) at the British Library: implementing a new standard for resource description and discovery <i>Janet Ashton and Annick Mann</i> | 46 |
| Chair's report to the FSLG, 2011-2012 <i>Teresa Vernon</i> | 53 |

Staff and library news

Sarah Brain resigned from the FSLG Committee, following a change of role at the University of the West of England which meant that French studies were no longer a part of her responsibilities. Sarah has been a much-valued and active member of the committee, serving as editor and co-editor of the Annual Review, and creating the new FSLG website, and we wish her well.

Dr Anne Cobby retired from her post as Faculty Librarian at the Modern and Medieval Languages Faculty Library in March 2013, after seventeen years of service there. She was replaced by Jane Devine Mejía. Anne will continue to be the FSLG's Treasurer for another year.

Anne has co-edited a *Festschrift* for Philip E. Bennett. *The chanson de geste and its reception: essays presented to Philip E. Bennett by members of the Sociètetè Rencésvals*, edited by Marianne J. Ailes, Anne Elizabeth Cobby and Peter S. Noble (Edinburgh: Sociètetè Rencésvals British Branch, 2012)

Colin Homiski and **Nick Hearn** designed a questionnaire for WESLINE to assess the extent to which staff in libraries use their language skills to do their jobs. The deadline for responses was 1 August, and the results will be discussed at the WESLINE conference in September.

We are sorry to report that **Graham Natrass** died in December 2012. Graham was the Chair of the German Studies Library Group (GSLG) and was one of its founder members. He had a long and distinguished career at the British Library, and retired in 2005 as its Head of West European Collections. Graham was an enthusiastic supporter of the collaborative FSLG-GSLG conferences which took place over several years, and which were replaced by the WESLINE conference.

In January 2013 the Bibliothèque nationale de France signed an agreement to participate in ProQuest's Early European Books digitisation programme. 70,000 books in French printed between 1470 and 1700 will be digitised. More details about the agreement can be found in a press release at http://www.bnf.fr/documents/cp_accords_proquest-believe_eng.pdf (in English).

Also in January 2013 Erasmus, a key supplier of French materials to libraries, announced that the firm had been acquired by Dawson Books, part of the Bertram Group. Sasha Brunsmann and Kurt Tschenett, the erstwhile owners, would continue as consultants for some time, and the same teams in Paris and Amsterdam would guarantee continuity.

FSLG Study Day 2012: report

Annick Mann, Cataloguer, West European Languages Cataloguing Team, British Library

On Thursday 15 November 2012, the French Studies Library Group (FSLG) met for a study day at the Senate House Library, University of London.

The meeting opened with a presentation of the new FSLG website by Sarah Brain from The University of West England. Sarah, who was at the time the webmaster of the FSLG website, described how she developed the site and its structure.

Sarah used WordPress to set up the site, and found it easy to transfer data from the old site. Sarah had complete control over the design, and was able to create an attractive background theme without difficulty. The site has several sections, covering forthcoming events, FSLG projects, details of members of the committee, and content of the Annual Review. The address of the new site is <http://frenchstudieslibrarygroup.wordpress.com>.

After this presentation, Colin Homiski from The Senate House Library and Nick Hearn from the Taylor Institution Library in Oxford gave an overview and update on the UK Western European Language Assessment Survey which aims to survey the proportion of library staff in the higher education sector work with Western European languages as part of their professional duties. Nick and Colin hope to present the outcome of the research at the WESLINE conference in September 2013.

After lunch, Adrian Armstrong, Centenary Professor of French, Queen Mary, University of London, gave a presentation on the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) and how French studies academics and librarians can best prepare for it. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) will measure the quality of research in UK Higher education institutions and follows the Research Assessment Exercise of 2008.

The presentation focused on French research and highlighted the differences between the RAE and the REF. For RAE 2008 the quality categories were 4*-1* and unclassified, with 4* being publications and research of profound influence and instrumental in developing new thinking. A major change for the REF is the 20% weighting in results for the impact that a piece of research has beyond academia.

The RAE consisted of 67 panels focusing on academic disciplines; for the REF this has been reduced to 36. Panel 28 represents modern languages and linguistics. Criteria and weightings are more standardized than they were in RAE 2008. Staff categories have been revised and there is fuller consideration of equality and diversity.

Only 3* and 4* research can attract funding under the REF framework. The deadline for submissions to the REF is November 2013, and the publication of outcomes will be in December 2014.

Professor Armstrong ended his presentation by suggesting what libraries could do within the wide range of institutions which all have their own infrastructures and procedures. To help create an environment conducive to producing research, libraries can help greatly by being receptive to requests. Finally it may also be worth considering setting up an internet repository of submitted outputs.

After Professor Armstrong's presentation, we were invited to visit the newly refurbished Senate House Library and view the Director's Choice exhibition. We were also given the opportunity to peruse some selected items from the Special Collections. Dr Karen Attar, Head of Special Collections at Senate House Library, gave us a historical background focusing on French material and the various benefactors who helped build the Special Collections.

Mr Augustus de Morgan (1806-1871), a mathematician at University College London, collected a wide variety of printed material on mathematics, astronomy and actuarial science in different languages, as well as his own published work. His collection of about about 4500 items was donated to the Senate House Library at the time of his death. A rare astronomical work from 1528 was shown to us as part of this valuable collection.

Mr George Grote (1794-1871), classical scholar and book selector for the London Library built throughout his life a collection of 7,500 items consisting mainly of Graeco-Roman literary works, history and archaeology. It also comprised books and pamphlets on the political and philosophical issues of the time and his involvement in the early history of the University of London: he was vice-chancellor from 1862-1871. At his death his library was bequeathed to the Senate House Library. The collection was then enlarged by some additions bought by his widow and thanks to a donation of £1,000 by Sir Julian Goldsmid, The library was able to purchase more material on Greek and Latin books. The De Morgan library and the Grote collection were founding collections of the Senate House Library.

In 1903 the Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature was given to the University. The collection is focused on social and economic history between the 15th and 19th centuries and includes some material in French about the 18th century. The Fuller collection (13th to 20th century) was given to the Library to promote the teaching of paleography.

The Harry Price Library of Magical Literature, formerly the library of the psychic Harry Price (1881-1948) covers a broad range of printed material on psychic phenomena, occult and magical works. Price's widow donated the collection to the library in the 1970s. Over the years, further bequests have been received and more purchases made to enrich the collection, which amounts to some 13,000 items. To represent this collection, a popular French book on conjuring from 1792 was shown to us.

The Elzevier Collection was given to the Senate House Library by the Corporation of London's Guildhall Library in 1950. It is a unique collection in the UK and consists of 700 books printed by the Elzevier family, and about 450 books by other 17th century Dutch presses. The House of Elzevier started business in Leiden from 1580 until the early 18th century and specialised in editions of classical literature, soon distributed throughout Europe. The item we were shown was an edition of *Le théâtre de Monsieur Quinault* (1663).

The M.S. Anderson Collection of Writings on Russia Printed Between 1525 and 1917 documents Western European views on Russia. It comprises around 1,850 items collected between 1964 and 2004 by Matthew Smith Anderson who was Professor of International History at the London School of Economics. The collection was given to the University of London in 2008. The works appear in a variety of languages and forms and the particular strength of the collection is the number of translated works. John Grand-Carteret's *Les caricatures sur l'Alliance franco-russe* (1893) was one of the items exhibited for us.

The Foskett Uzane Collection consists of about 115 volumes of French works and a few English translations based around Octave Uzanne's work. Uzanne (1852-1931) was a bibliophile who founded in 1889 the Société des Bibliophiles Contemporains. In addition, the collection comprises several other works of French literature, chiefly 20th century editions of 18th century works of erotica. The collection was bequeathed to the Library by Douglas John Foskett (1918-2004), Director of Central Library Services and Goldsmiths' Librarian.

The Colin Smythe Terry Pratchett Archive which was donated by Terry Pratchett's agent Colin Smythe is a mixed media collection. It aims to collect all editions of the published writings of Pratchett as well as the translations. Dr Attar showed us their most recent acquisition, *Au guêt!* (1997), a translation of *Guards! Guards!*

Finally the oldest item we were shown was a fascinating coloured illustrated book of hours printed on vellum in Paris in about 1516.

The study day ended with two talks by Sarah Brain and Nick Hearn on two major databases for French studies: IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences) and the MLA (Modern Language Association) International Bibliography.

Reviews of the IBSS and MLA databases can be found in the eighth *Annual Review*. In brief, the IBSS covers anthropology, economics, politics and sociology. It indexes more than 2,800 journals, more than 7,000 books and book chapters and covers publications from 1951 to the present. 446 of the journals indexed are published in France.

Sarah gave us a demonstration of how to use the search and advanced search options, and particularly emphasized the thesaurus which is very useful. Sarah ended her presentation by giving us some references for guides and key facts of the database and added that some webinars are also available to teach how to use the database effectively.

Nick Hearn presented the MLA International Bibliography which is an international, on-going modern languages bibliography concentrating mostly on language and literature, but also on other subjects in the humanities. It indexes journals, books, conference proceedings and doctoral theses, and while the main coverage is from the 1920s onwards, some references go back to the 1880s. Nick demonstrated how to use standard and advanced search options, and the benefits of using the database's Directory of Periodicals.

The main advantages of the database are that it is transparent, up-to-date, and includes a broad coverage of modern languages. The disadvantages are that the indexing can be quite shallow (particularly for French) and is not always consistent. The thesaurus is not always up-to-date. Finally there is a strong bias towards the English language and North American journals.

This FSLG 2012 study day proved to be very thought provoking and had the additional advantage of being hosted in a beautiful and fascinating building. We were particularly lucky to be able to admire the Director's Choice exhibition and discover some of the rare items of the Senate House Library Special Collections.

Research Assessment Exercise (RAE): <http://www.rae.ac.uk/>

Research Excellence Framework (REF): <http://www.ref.ac.uk/>

Senate House Library, University of London: <http://www.senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/>

The slides from the presentations by Adrian Armstrong, Sarah Brain and Nick Hearn are available on the FSLG website at <http://frenchstudieslibrarygroup.wordpress.com/events/>.

Accessing twentieth-century French political sources

Anne Worden, Faculty Librarian: Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Portsmouth

This piece has arisen from an enquiry into how to access French Parliamentary debates and party. It has been written up so that others can benefit from the information.

Government Sources

For anyone in the UK needing French Government sources, the starting point should be the British Library's guides to foreign government publications page which includes France, Belgium, Luxembourg, plus a link to African official publications:

<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpprestype/offpubs/guides/govtguides.html>

On selecting 'France', you will find a link to a PDF document which contains details of government publications from France held in the British Library, the London School of Economics and Political Science and Oxford University Library Service. In addition, the document also contains links to online sources where possible. For instance the debates of the National Assembly have been digitised and are available from 1958 at:

<http://archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/index.asp>

The website of Les Archives nationales has a list of the files in the C series: Assemblées nationales:

<http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/chan/series/serieC.html>

In order to make the most of this, it is a good idea to consult the following first:

<http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/chan/fondspost1789.html>. If you click 'État général des fonds' under 'C: Assemblées nationales', you will get a very useful index to holdings.)

Le Journal Officiel de la République Française (JORF or JO) publishes major legal official information from the French Government and is available online from June 2004 onwards: <http://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/>

The Legifrance website helps you find specific laws and decrees (lois et décrets): <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/>. Full-text content is available from 1990 but if you have precise information for the measure for which you are searching, it can retrieve information from 1947 to 1989 too.

You will find an up-to-date listing of French government, institutions, administration and statistical websites on La Bibliothèque nationale de France's site: http://signets.bnf.fr/html/categories/c_351admi_france.html

Archives of Political Parties

Le Parti Socialiste (PS) archives in Paris are easily accessible and the archives of predecessor bodies such as La Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (SFIO) are also available. L'Office universitaire de recherche socialiste (L'OURS) at <http://www.lours.org/> holds the SFIO records from 1944-69, plus the PS archives 1969-71, together with archives on prominent left-wing figures such as Guy Mollet. PS archives from 1971/72 to the early 2000s can be found at the Fondation Jean Jaurès: <http://www.jean-jaures.org/Le-Centre-d-archives-socialistes>

The extensive Parti communiste français (PCF) archives are now housed in the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis <http://archives.seine-saint-denis.fr/-Depot-du-parti-communiste-francais-.html>

Archives of Le Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF) from the 1940s to 1970 can be found at La Fondation Charles de Gaulle <http://www.charles-de-gaulle.org/>. Papers from Le Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) from 1977-85 can be found at the same location.

For further details on availability of political archives across Europe see Cook, C. (Ed.). (2012). *Routledge Guide to European Political Archives: Sources Since 1945*. London: Routledge.

With thanks to Tony Chafer, University of Portsmouth, Michelle Pinto, New York University and Teresa Vernon, British Library for their helpful contributions.

Conference report: Translation and Reception: 21st-Century French Fiction in the UK

***Teresa Vernon**, Lead Curator, French Collections, British Library, London; **Christine Anderson**, Research Librarian – Latin American & Caribbean and United States Studies, Senate House Library, London; **Anne Cobby**, formerly Faculty Librarian, Modern and Medieval Languages Library, University of Cambridge; **Andrea Meyer Ludowisy**, Research Librarian – Western European Languages, Senate House Library, London*



Following on from the workshop *Constructing “21st-Century Literature in French”*: *Publication, Translation, Collection* held at the Institut français in December 2011, this study day, organised by the Society for French Studies and the FSLG, with the collaboration of the Institut français, and held at the Institut on 12 April 2013, addressed the question of how contemporary fiction in French is translated and received in the UK.

A conference report follows. We also publish the papers from the opening and closing panels. Claire Paulhan, herself a small (micro) independent publisher since 1996, looks at small independent publishing in France. Patrick Kéchichian, author, literary critic and for many years *rédauteur en chef adjoint* on *Le Monde des livres*, writes about the changing role of literary criticism in the French press. Marcella Frisani, who is currently completing a

doctoral thesis in the sociology of international cultural relations at the Centre Européen de Sociologie et de Sciences Politiques (CESSP) in Paris, analyses the social, economic and cultural conditions for the reception of translated contemporary French fiction in the UK book market.

Session 1 (a): L'édition indépendante en France

Claire Paulhan (Editions Claire Paulhan and Chargée de mission, IMEC):

Claire Paulhan opened with an overview of the sector. She drew a distinction between 'small publishers', often independent, but which could be backed by a group, published up to 20 books per year and whose books were generally distributed by specialised book distributors; and 'micro publishers' who published up to seven books per year, and distributed their books themselves. Sales are falling in bookshops (65% of sales on average) as is the case with the big groups, but direct sales via book fairs are increasing, which is not the case with the big groups. Staffing and pay are minimal, and so small publishers rarely last beyond ten years, though new ones constantly spring up, and turnover represents 1% of all French publishing. The sector, however, serves as a 'laboratory' for the large publishers, discovering new or forgotten authors in the fields it tends to specialise in: literature (15%), humanities and social sciences (10%), and essays and current affairs (12%).

Claire then outlined her own career, starting as a bookseller, getting her first publishing job under the wing of Paul Fournel, then an editor at Editions Ramsay, at that point flush with the proceeds of Régine Desforges's bestseller, *La bicyclette bleue* (1982), and subsequently at Seghers and Verdier. Having gained a thorough professional grounding in all aspects of publishing, but frustrated with not seeing the books she recommended published, she founded her own independent firm, Editions Claire Paulhan (<http://www.clairepaulhan.com>) in 1996. With about 40 books in her catalogue, Claire now publishes three or four titles per year, all twentieth century autobiographies (largely unpublished diaries, letters and memoirs, but also a few autobiographical novels), up to 1968, and with an emphasis on the inter-war period, and on authors gravitating round the *Nouvelle Revue française* (Claire is the granddaughter of Jean Paulhan, the legendary editor of the *NFR*). She refrains from seeking subsidies for her titles (about one book out of ten receives such support) as she feels other publishers need this more, but she also works part-time at IMEC, Institut Mémoires de l' Edition contemporaine (<http://www.imec-archives.com>)

Claire concluded with a look at translations. In her case, only one of her titles has been published in translation: Catherine Pozzi's *Journal* (Diary) in German, but even then only the part concerning her affair with the poet Paul Valéry. There is interest in female diarists: Catherine Pozzi, Mireille Havet, and Hélène Hoppenot, but this soon wanes as translation would represent a huge investment since Claire's books include a considerable academic *apparatus criticus* in addition to the weighty text itself. Claire suggested that two shorter autobiographical novels, Mireille Havet's *Carnaval* and Jean Guéhenno's *Jeunesse morte* (the generation destroyed by the First World War) could be suitable candidates for translation. Small publishers specialising in contemporary fiction also fail to find their books translated: their titles are not piled high in bookshops; they rarely feature in the foreign media; and, crucially, they lack a specialised department dealing with foreign rights. Authors

get noticed when they transfer to a big publisher. That said, small independent publishers in France are successful in identifying, translating into French and promoting foreign writers.

Session 1 (b): La place de la critique littéraire dans la presse française

Patrick Kéchichian, écrivain, critique, ancien journaliste au Monde:

Patrick Kéchichian used a resonant quotation from Jean Paulhan to structure his talk around the notion of 'literary event'. He started with an overview of literary criticism in the French, mainly Paris-based, press, deliberately leaving aside literary websites and blogs. This comprises specialised literary magazines (Maurice Nadeau's *La Quinzaine littéraire*, *Le Magazine littéraire*, *Le Matricule des anges* (published in Montpellier) and *Transfuge*), generalist magazines with arts pages such as *Le Nouvel Observateur*, and the four daily newspapers with literary supplements, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *La Croix* and *Libération*.

He used the treatment in the press of the philosopher Marcela Iacub's novel, *Belle et Bête* (2013), based on her affair with Dominique Strauss-Kahn, as a case study. *Le Nouvel Observateur* published extracts in advance of publication, and the focus here was on a publicity coup for the author, the publisher and the arts pages of the magazine. *Libération* and *Le Monde* also covered the book, the first positively, the second, in reaction, negatively, but in both cases, the book had been read and reviewed honestly and critically.

Patrick then looked at the changes in literary criticism in the press in recent years. The focus was less on in-depth authoritative analysis and more on providing lively, varied, but more superficial angles such as author profiles and interviews. Book reviews now consisted mostly of a retelling of the story followed by a brief, pithy, often formulaic evaluation, as opposed to a proper critical analysis. *Le Monde des livres* was symptomatic. The newspaper used to have a regular lead reviewer (*feuilletoniste*), a position of considerable authority and prestige, until 2001; in the last two years, the column (*feuilleton*) has been resurrected but in a different guise as it is currently written by an author, Eric Chevillard, whose authority comes from his status as a writer, not his critical acumen, and the focus is on his subjective choices.

Patrick contrasted the practice of the writer Philippe Sollers, who regularly publishes book reviews primarily to confirm his own stature as a major author, with that of a literary critic such as Jean Starobinski who would see his role more modestly as serving literature and readers.

Session 2: Publishing translated fiction in the UK: selection, translation, reception.

Chaired by Hélène Fiamma (Head of the Book Department, Institut français). With Kerry Glencorse (of literary agency Susanna Lea Associates); Peter Bush (translator and ex-director of the British Centre for Literary Translation, University of East Anglia); Ros Schwartz (translator and Chair of English PEN's Writers in Translation committee); Rachel van Riel (Director of Opening the Book). Round Table Q&A session.

HF: Why is the proportion of translated material in the UK so low when compared with Europe?

PB: The figure given is 3% of what is published. Reasons include:

- the huge quantity and diversity of fiction produced in the English-speaking world;
- the problem of translation itself, in that suitable material has to be selected, the translation paid for and edited, and the end product then has to be sold to the UK market as the work of an unknown author.

English and US publishers have no difficulty selling their books for translation: translation from English into other languages is not a problem; the problem is with the translation of material in other languages into English.

RS: We are seeing small publishing houses producing translated material, and successfully, as this material is appearing on prize lists - genre publishing e.g. crime fiction being particularly successful.

Publishers must produce books that sell. They cannot possibly read every language they are presented with and have to rely on the opinions of other people, especially translators. There is now much more respect for translators, who also act as advisors to publishers, and translation is on the increase.

PB: Part of a translator's work is to produce reports for publishers, which can take two-three days to do. 40% of the books that PB translates are ones that he has brought to publishers, and 60% consist of books he has been commissioned to translate.

On publishers and their knowledge of languages: he had recently translated two books from Catalan, one for Serpent's Tail, and the other for Virago, and in both cases the publishers were familiar with Catalan. This was by no means always the case.

HF: How do you work to sell books?

KG: Editors have a hard time buying books in languages they do not read. They are therefore taking a risk, at their own expense, when they commission a translation. One particular Swedish agency had adopted the practice of paying up-front for translations, and had been doing very well.

As a success story, she cited the example of Marie de Hennezel's *The warmth of the heart prevents the body from rusting*, the manuscript of which - in French- had been submitted to her agency: the agency had had it translated, at its own expense, and had then submitted the translation to publishers in the UK and Australia. The Australian publisher had paid part of the translation costs and went on to produce a wonderful end product which went on to be a best- seller, and which eventually sold for 6 figures in the US.

Their recent translation of Helena Rubinstein's biography by Michèle Fitoussi was auctioned in Australia, which is an important export market for UK publishing. It is published by Gallic Books.

Ingrid Betancourt was also handled by her agency. Her book was submitted to them as a handwritten manuscript in French. This had to be typed up, and was then translated, simultaneously, into English and Spanish.

This particular agency was fortunate to have French-, Spanish-, Italian-, and German-speaking staff.

HF noted that it was rare for similar French agencies to pay for translation and to have so much linguistic expertise among their staff.

KG: In the initial selection for translation process, it helped if a book had already won a literary prize in its home country.

HF: Can you elaborate on the role of translators? Preparing reports for publishers involves assessing the market standing and commercial potential of a book.

RS: The translator community is working very hard to train/mentor translators, many of whom are freelance. Translators need to know how publishers think, so they get publishers to talk to translators, to say what they look for in a report. Translators also need to be able to communicate to publishers their passion for a book, but have to put this into a commercial context.

KG: Small presses have proved highly successful in the translation market.

RS: As a translator, she started her career taking books to publishers but does not do this now, as she is being approached by publishers, and has had to turn down contracts on occasion.

PB: There were occasions where a work was of outstanding quality and potential, but had low sales figures in its country of origin. He quoted the example of a Moroccan-Catalan author, Najat El Hachmi, who had migrated to Catalunya, writes in Catalan, and who is an example of a migrant author breaking through and achieving success.

HF: Her impression was that South American literature in translation was more popular in the UK than material translated from French.

PB: One had only to look at the "Independent Foreign Fiction Award" - there were so many countries in South America, and so many authors (quite a few of whom now lived in Barcelona).

The discussion moved to the costs of and funding for producing books in translation.

There was the Institut français's Burgess Fund, to which British publishers can apply once a year for a subsidy towards translation costs. There was the European Commission programme, which funded approximately 500 books per annum. It was unfortunate that UK translators tended not to apply for European funding.

There was also the ***PEN Translates!*** Programme: this is funded by the Arts Council England, and awards grants to fund the translation costs of literature into English.

<http://www.englishpen.org/translation/pen-translates/>

PEN also funded publishers to provide an innovative marketing strategy, 'Pen Promotes!', so that when the translation broke through, it did not disappear into oblivion.

<http://www.englishpen.org/translation/writers-in-translation/>

Such schemes helped produce good quality books, properly paid translators producing good quality translations, and appropriate marketing.

HF added that the Institut français had its own promotion programme.

[Other schemes include those listed on the French Book News. From the homepage at <http://www.frenchbooknews.com> click on the link 'Grants' from the menu at the left of the page.]

HF invited comments on the issue of readership and the low % of translated books in the UK.

Readers in Scotland and Wales had a more European outlook, when compared to England, which seemed to have a certain anti-intellectualism within its culture. Readers here were more likely to read English-language material written by, say, Indian authors than something translated from French. However, the 'Scandinavian Crime Wave' had produced a 'way in' to the market, added to the fact that more English-subtitled foreign language series and films were being broadcast.

Public library budgets had declined, but even before this, the level of translated material acquired was very low. We now had the rise of the 'reading group' in public libraries, and these groups do read translations.

HF asked the floor if academics had a connection to the world of translation.

RS: sensed a disconnection between what was going on in academia and what was going on on the ground. Why did publishers not talk with academics and vice versa, as the resulting discourse could be a valuable source of information e.g. academics could suggest material to be translated.

PB: felt there was a resistance in certain academic quarters to translations, especially in academic departments, as students were encouraged to read books in the languages they were written in and that they were studying. He mentioned the two RAEs in which he had participated. In the first one, translation had been virtually ignored, not viewed as critical scholarship, notwithstanding the amount of critical scholarship that went into each translation. As a contrast, during the second RAE, UEA's English department had submitted his translations as part of the Creative Writing sector, and this time they were allowed through as innovative research.

There followed questions from the floor.

On models of commission for translators, did translators get a flat fee?

KG: Her agency proceeded on a case-by-case basis. The agency chose a flexible, collaborative approach, and was mindful that some translations would achieve massive sales, and others less. Not many UK agencies sold foreign-language material.

On the press, and press reactions to translations?

PB: noted that there were very few reviews of literary translations. Comments on the actual translation were often to be found at the end of a review. The internet provided a multiplicity of literary reviews of excellent quality, so perhaps this was a way forward.

RS: the translator is often 'invisible'. Comments on a particular translation not being very good probably related more to the reviewer's reaction to the idiom used, as the reviewers might not be familiar with the language translated. Some translators might take 'creative writing' too much to heart. She personally would like to see translated novels reviewed as novels, rather than translations.

There followed a question from the floor on crime writing and translation.

PB: has been involved in the "Bloody Foreigners" book tour, and did not like the title, attention-grabbing though it might be. He noted that the Crime Writers Association had awarded a prize to Arnaldur Indriðason's translated work (*Silence of the Grave*) in 2005, the same work having won a prize in 2003 under its original title.

He mentioned that UK writers had proved supportive e.g. the crime writer Ann Cleeves had taken part in a book launch at Daunt Books with PB's wife, Teresa Solana, the Catalan crime writer whose work he translates, and this had been a big success.

RS: pointed out that Ann Cleeves had worked with *Opening The Book* and had championed crime writing in translation, including the work of Fred Vargas.

There followed a question to RS. There could be a potential overlap of professions, with academics keen to promote translations. Was there an existing forum for views to be exchanged in which academics could be invited to participate?

RS: was not aware of any such formal arrangement for a cross-professional exchange (there might be informal networks), but she would like to see more formal structures where this dialogue could take place.

Session 3: Libraries, collection and reception: the library of the Institut français in London. *Ophélie Ramonatxo, Head Librarian, Mélissa Mayer, Manager of Culturethèque, and Albane Lejeune, Intern, all at the Institut français, London.*

Ophélie Ramonatxo and Mélissa Mayer presented an overview of current collecting and uses of the Médiathèque (the physical library) and Culturethèque (the digital library (<http://www.culturetheque.org.uk/>)). The Médiathèque holds about 7 000 French fiction

titles, mostly in the original French, but current policy is to acquire more contemporary fiction, and more titles in English. The Culturethèque sources fiction from French supplier Numilog who supply books published for the 'rentrée littéraire' in advance, though new titles are otherwise more easily available as audiobooks than as e-books. The top ten loans consist of a mixture of classics (Sagan, Maupassant, Proust, Pagnol) and contemporary fiction (Amélie Nothomb, Anna Gavalda, Fred Vargas, Daniel Pennac, Emmanuel Carrère and Eric-Emmanuel Schmidt). The library now partners with nearby French bookshop Librairie La Page who supply, on a monthly basis and in roughly equal measure, a mixture of translations, bilingual texts or 'easy classics', and contemporary fiction (the literary prize-winners). Mélissa runs the successful reading group which meets monthly over a glass of wine and nibbles to discuss French texts in English or 'easy French'. The sessions are chaired by an invited UK academic. The library is currently undergoing a major renovation of its physical space. This entails a rethink of its collecting policy. Albane spoke about her related project to chart French collections in libraries in London, which she estimates total about 2 million books.

Session 4: Translation and reception: Fred Vargas.

Reading Minds - Fred Vargas and fiction

Professor David Platten (School of Modern Languages & Cultures, University of Leeds):

Translating and publishing Fred Vargas in the UK

Siân Reynolds (translator) and Geoffrey Mulligan (Editorial Director, Harvill Secker). Chair: David Platten

David Platten opened with an academic paper taking an avowedly non-academic approach. Starting from the hypothesis that translation is intellectually superior to literary criticism, he compared the fiction of Vargas, Poe and others, focusing on similarities between literature and life, and the presence or absence – and the importance – of empathy, the degree to which the reader immerses him/herself in the world of the text. Like Poe, Vargas is preoccupied with the workings of the mind and uses magic, myth and legend as a displacement of mental turbulence. Returning to his opening hypothesis he suggested that Adamsberg, the outsider who lives in the world of detail without introspection, can be seen as a critic, while Danglard, who is deeply concerned with understanding, as a translator.

There followed a discussion between Siân Reynolds and Geoffrey Mulligan, chaired by David Platten and with questions from the floor. The main questions addressed were:

- Does the translator have to like the book? (The panellists' opinions differed.) How is the translator chosen?
- How was Vargas chosen as an author to translate for the UK market?
- Why has she taken off in the UK? Why do some authors cross cultures more successfully than others? Is it a matter of cultural references?
- How and why were the translations positioned for the UK market? As a literary writer; she was translated at a time when generic boundaries were under discussion and crime writing seen as less downmarket.

- There was much discussion of the style of the translation. Mid-Atlantic elements came from the publisher. Vargas is not generally hard to translate except in certain specifics: e.g. the character who speaks in alexandrines, the one who speaks words backwards, formulae which reappear elsewhere in the text in different uses, and (the hardest of all) regionalisms and dialect.
- The relationship between translator and author, the general situation concerning the translation of fiction into English, its paucity - though it is vital to understand how people think in other countries.
- Contrary to Vargas' first translator (David Bellos), Siân Reynolds believes the reader needs to know s/he is reading a translation, a recreation, a work from another culture, and therefore pulls the translation more towards the author than the reader.

Session 5: Opening the Book; and a report on a new project from the European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC)

Rachel van Riel (Director, Opening the Book Ltd)

Translating, publishing and supporting contemporary fiction from French in the UK book market: social conditions and obstacles

Marcella Frisani (Research Postgraduate, CESSP-EHESS, Paris):

Session 5 was opened by Rachel van Riel. Rachel spoke about a new EUNIC project. EUNIC (www.eunic-online.eu) is a network of international cultural relations institutes from the member states of the European Union. Formed in 2006, it has 29 members from 24 countries and seeks to facilitate cultural co-operation and to create lasting partnerships between professionals, and to foster greater understanding and awareness of the diverse European cultures for example by encouraging greater language learning. The group *Language Rich Europe* is led by the British Council and promises to be a valuable tool for policy makers in the use of languages within the EU. The new initiative that Rachel introduced will be a European readers' project which aims to work with readers across Europe by initiating transnational reader to reader discussion and will use online tools and games.

After introducing the various organizations that share a reader-centred approach across the world to promote reading, Rachel focused on the strategic direction of *Opening the Book*, the organisation that she founded and leads (www.openingthebook.com). *Opening the Book* inverts the traditional model of audience development by moving the focus onto readers with the objective to tempt them into experimentation and thereby developing and building their confidence. As the founder of the *Reader Development Movement* Rachel has shaped and changed the status of reading in the UK and has influenced public libraries. Her approach is, in her opinion, easily transferable to academic libraries and particularly suitable to increase the uptake of foreign fiction by keeping the focus of the enterprise firmly on fun and the enjoyment of reading. She reminded the audience that personal recommendations are still the most successful way of promoting books, as evidenced by the 'staff picks' programmes in bookshops and the success of 'whisper books' which all serve as evidence

that for the majority of readers quality matters above topicality and the glamour of reading the winners of contemporary prizes.

She warned that the reader-centred approach can only succeed in building new audiences if librarians assume the role of the promoter of experimental reading who assists the readers to broaden their horizons. *Opening the Book's* model of engagement has built up a large number of more confident and adventurous readers. A number of the most successful slogans used in the promotion of reading projects, such as *Read your way around the world* have increased the uptake of foreign fiction in public libraries and slogans such as *Free Spirit, Free Library; Take a risk on a book; Get lost* and *Textual Intercourse* have all prompted a greater number of readers to try translated fiction. This has been supported by readers' websites such as www.whichbook.net, run by the National Literacy Trust, which suggests books to readers based on their needs and interests.

Session 5's second speaker was Marcella Frisani who tailored aspects of her PhD thesis into a research report of the logic of circulation and an analysis of translating, publishing and supporting contemporary fiction. Marcella's thesis concerns itself with the circulation of symbolic goods and cultural diplomacy policies to support the dissemination and influence of French books in the UK. She is based at the European Centre for Sociology and Political Science at the University Paris-Sorbonne (Paris-CESSP) a centre born from a merger of the Centre de Sociologie Européenne (CSE) and the Centre de recherches politiques de la Sorbonne (CRPS). Marcella's PhD supervisor is Gisèle Sapiro.

Marcella briefly introduced the theoretical framework of her research report as being based on Pierre Bourdieu's public sociology, a theory that Bourdieu developed by synthesizing traditional anthropology and sociology into his own theory of fields and by connecting his theoretical ideas to empirical research grounded in everyday life, a "theory of practice". His key terms were 'habitus', 'capital' and 'field'. Bourdieu extended the idea of capital to categories such as social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. This notion of capital includes the value of social networks which Bourdieu showed could be used to produce or reproduce inequality. Ultimately, each relatively autonomous field of modern life, such as economy, politics, arts, journalism, bureaucracy, science or education engenders a specific complex of social relations where the agents will engage their everyday practice. It is this particular aspect of Bourdieu's theory that Marcella used as her starting point. Basing her research on Bourdieu's theories of habitus, capital and field, she went on to examine the commercial strategies employed to publish French fiction in the UK.

As far as commercial value is concerned, she demonstrated that three important events in the UK industry, namely the scrapping of the Net Book Agreement in 1997; the transformation of the retail chains; and the mergers of large firms, have accelerated the book chain, frozen out slow-moving books and have led to an increased risk averseness among publishers. The latter has led to the near invisibility of "small" books. This trend has caused literary translation to be seen as difficult to sell and as appealing only to an upmarket audience, thereby imbuing literary translations with a symbolic accumulation of value. Unfortunately, this also means that translations are relegated into a niche. A number of independent publishers have explored these niches in the market. Marcella chose six

examples of so-called New Founders who have explored and exploited this niche with varying success.

Marcella ended her presentation by examining the role of the translator as cultural mediators. Her theory is that the literary production of any country also serves as an act of making its national character visible and thereby the literary translator acts as a cultural mediator who is in possession of social recognition and social capital. The increased recognition given to translators was acknowledged and welcomed. Over time the increased recognition of translators will, it is hoped, enhance the conditions for translators in general. Her contribution ended on the high note that translation is a growing part of Britain's cultural diversity.

La place de la critique littéraire dans la presse française

Patrick Kéchichian, literary critic, writer, formerly deputy editor, 'Le Monde des livres'

(Une partie de cette intervention reprend le texte d'une conférence que j'avais prononcée à l'Université de Lille le 18 novembre 2011, au cours d'un colloque dirigé par Dominique Viart et Laurent Demanze et consacré aux 'Fins de la littérature? Historicité de la littérature contemporaine'. Mon texte, 'La littérature est un événement sans habitude' a été publié dans les actes de ce colloque, aux éditions Armand Colin, 2012, p.259-267)

Parler de la critique littéraire dans la presse française, c'est devoir traiter de sujets différents, situés à des niveaux de réalité divers. Pour tenter de rendre mon propos un peu cohérent, je commencerai par une typologie assez sommaire, pour bifurquer ensuite assez vite vers un sujet qui me semble plus intéressant, moins *sociologique*: la nature, le sens et la valeur de la critique littéraire, telle qu'elle est pratiquée par les journalistes...

D'abord, il faut s'entendre sur le type de presse. On peut diviser le domaine en trois secteurs: la presse spécialisée, la presse magazine, la presse quotidienne, surtout parisienne, puisque les journaux de province n'accordent qu'une place limitée aux livres et ont un écho par définition d'abord local. D'ailleurs, ils n'ont généralement pas de suppléments littéraires à part entière.

Dans ma répartition, j'ai laissé de côté, à dessein, un secteur en pleine expansion, donc plus difficile à cerner et à étudier, un peu anarchique, avec cependant des réalisations remarquables: je veux parler de la toile, des sites et des blogs, qui se sont considérablement développés ces dernières années. A ce propos, je signale celui qui est sans doute le meilleur des sites de critique, la *Lettre de la Magdelaine*, créé en 2006. Il se trouve que son animateur unique, Ronald Klapka, homme remarquable d'ouverture, de générosité et d'intelligence, est mort brusquement le 31 mars dernier. Je voulais le citer pour mémoire et saluer son remarquable travail.

Mais je reviens à ce qu'on nomme, pour quelque temps encore, la presse papier. Les journaux spécialisés d'abord. En France aujourd'hui, les titres se comptent sur les doigts d'une main – et même d'une main qui n'a pas beaucoup de doigts:

Le plus vénérable, encore revêtu d'un grand prestige: *La Quinzaine littéraire*, créée par Maurice Nadeau (102 ans aujourd'hui) en 1966.* Bimensuel, le millième numéro est sorti à la fin de 2009. C'est une publication de grande qualité, qui n'obéit pas aux injonctions de la mode ou de l'air du temps. Y collaborent des universitaires, des écrivains. Les articles sont généralement longs, argumentés, sérieux. Pas de publicité, ou presque. Mise en page austère, minimaliste, intangible. Diffusion réduite.

Le *Magazine littéraire* est un mensuel, créé lui aussi en 1966, mais qui, à l'inverse de la *Quinzaine*, a souvent changé de formule, sans pourtant modifier son principe de base. Plus

de 500 numéros à ce jour. D'abord dirigé par Jean-Jacques Brochier, il est animé aujourd'hui par Joseph Macé-Scaron. L'essentiel de chaque numéro, depuis le premier, est constitué par un dossier sur un thème, un courant, un pays, souvent un écrivain. La partie à proprement parler critique est réduite, même si on a essayé de la mettre mieux en valeur ces dernières années.

On doit citer également le *Matricule des anges*, crée dans le sud de la France fin 1992 par Thierry Guichard, d'abord trimestriel puis bimensuel. Ce magazine se donne pour le plus indépendant de la presse littéraire. Et de fait, il l'est, prêtant une attention à des secteurs généralement négligés de la petite édition, à l'histoire littéraire ou à la poésie, quasiment absente des autres titres. Le *Matricule* peut se targuer d'aller à contre-courant des modes, de négliger avec superbe les livres et les auteurs que d'autres supports se précipitent un peu trop visiblement à défendre et à promouvoir.

Créé en 2004, le mensuel *Transfuge* s'ouvre plus que ses confrères à la littérature internationale. Il accorde également une large place au cinéma. A l'austérité un peu intemporelle de la *Quinzaine* et du *Matricule*, il oppose une présentation moderne, jeune, qui se veut attrayante.

Je passe maintenant aux magazines généralistes qui accordent dans chaque numéro quelques pages à la littérature. Pour ces supports, la question qui se pose beaucoup plus urgemment que pour les suppléments des quotidiens nationaux, c'est, selon l'expression consacrée: comment *faire événement*? Le but est moins de sélectionner et de hiérarchiser les livres qui paraissent que de trouver le sujet, l'affaire ou au moins l'angle qui mettra les pages culturelles en valeur, et donc le magazine lui-même. Mon propos n'est pas polémique. Il serait trop simple, du haut de quelque suprématie morale ou intellectuelle, de moquer des pratiques qui ont leur cohérence et leur nécessité, qui ne sont pas des *coups* isolés mais s'inscrivent dans des logiques culturelles et aussi, on ne peut l'ignorer, économiques. Cependant, ces pratiques, il faut aussi les analyser sans complaisance. Il y a quelques semaines, un cas que l'on peut presque dire d'école est venu à point nommé pour illustrer mon propos. Il s'agit de la sortie d'un livre – un roman – de la juriste et philosophe Marcela Iacub sur Dominique Strauss-Khan, tirant des conclusions audacieuses d'une liaison entretenue avec l'intéressé quelques mois plus tôt. Je ne vais pas relater dans le détail cette histoire un peu trouble ou porter sur celle-ci un jugement moralisateur. Ni me prononcer sur le caractère ou non littéraire de l'ouvrage. Ce que l'on peut remarquer en revanche, c'est le montage éditorial et journalistique dans lequel, par lequel, cette affaire a pu prendre toute son ampleur – au bénéfice du livre, et donc de l'éditeur, et du magazine qui s'était assuré une exclusivité. La sortie dans le *Nouvel Observateur* des bonnes feuilles du livre, accompagnées d'un entretien exclusif (et donné pour tel) avec l'auteur, une couverture avec un titre tapageur, tout cela sur un sujet brûlant qui attire, légitimement ou non, la curiosité du public, a été bien sûr dûment programmé, prévu par les trois instances: éditeur, auteur et journal. L'auteur, pourtant sujet principal, pouvant se payer le luxe de rester à l'écart de ce tapage médiatique. La part de jugement qui est généralement mise au crédit de la critique fut fortement relativisée par le souci de promouvoir le livre et de faire en sorte que l'auteur, l'éditeur, mais aussi le magazine, sortent bénéficiaires de l'épisode.

Encore une fois, je ne veux pas réduire tout le travail des magazines dans le domaine littéraire à cette anecdote. Mais elle a au moins le mérite de souligner des exigences et des contraintes par lesquelles la critique proprement dite est laminée, réduite à sa plus sommaire expression.

Quatre suppléments littéraires existent encore dans la presse quotidienne parisienne: au *Monde*, au *Figaro*, à *La Croix* et à *Libération*. Il peut se faire, dans chacun de ces quatre journaux, que la littérature sorte de son cadre et occupe d'autres pages, ou fasse même la *Une*. Cela est vrai surtout pour *Libération*. Par exemple, au moment de l'affaire Iacub dont je parlais à l'instant, ce journal consacra au livre et au scandale qui l'accompagnait, sa couverture et les premières pages de l'édition du jour (au lendemain de la sortie du *Nouvel Observateur*). A la différence de l'hebdomadaire, ce fut, de la part du quotidien un choix délibéré, une option critique en faveur de l'ouvrage. En réaction, *Le Monde* fut beaucoup plus réservé, et même franchement hostile, tout en accordant lui aussi, une très large place, une place disproportionnée, au livre bien sûr, mais d'abord au scandale qu'il avait suscité. Mais, à la différence du magazine, le livre en question fut lu et traité selon les critères de l'exercice critique dans les deux quotidiens.

Chacun des suppléments de ces quatre quotidiens a son histoire, ses traditions, que je n'ai pas le temps, ici de détailler. Tous différents, ils gardent un lien de dépendance légitime avec le journal qui les accueille. Simplement, on peut dire que l'existence a priori garantie de pages fixes chaque semaine permet aux journalistes en charge du secteur littéraire de réfléchir sur l'offre critique, sur les méthodes et les hiérarchies à adopter. Mais il faut noter également que la critique, au sens traditionnel du mot, est souvent, et de plus en plus, recouverte ou reléguée par des approches journalistiques différentes, réputées plus attrayantes, comme le portrait, l'entretien, l'enquête, le reportage. On peut d'ailleurs constater la même évolution, la même méfiance grandissante à l'égard de la critique à proprement parler, dans les autres secteurs de la création artistique, cinéma, théâtre, musique. A titre d'exemple, et puisque je suis issu de ce journal, je prendrai le cas du *Monde des livres*. Jusqu'en 2001, il existait un feuilleton littéraire, vieille institution qui remonte, sous des formes différentes, au XIXe siècle et qui exista au *Monde* dès la création du journal, avant donc celle du 'Monde des livres' en 1967. La suppression brutale de cette institution de la critique, au sens le plus traditionnel du terme, marqua, à mon avis, une date funeste, la fin d'une certaine histoire. Pour l'anecdote, je souligne qu'à l'exception des deux deniers, tous les feuilletonistes du *Monde* entrèrent à l'Académie française. Ce n'est certes pas une garantie de valeur mais tout de même une vraie reconnaissance. Depuis deux ans environ, un feuilleton a été rétabli dans le *Monde des livres*, mais sous une forme radicalement différente, modernisée, confiée à un écrivain (Eric Chevillard), dont le rôle n'est plus d'exercer un magistère critique, mais de faire valoir, d'abord, sa propre subjectivité.

Après ces généralités sur la presse, je voudrais prendre un peu de recul et proposer quelques idées sur la nature même du geste critique. Pour entrer dans le vif de mon sujet, je reprends le mot d'événement cité tout à l'heure, mais dans un sens moins élémentaire. Jean Paulhan, écrivain et éditeur qui avait longuement réfléchi sur la critique en même temps qu'il l'avait pratiqué – il est bon, et pas si fréquent, d'associer les deux activités – , a écrit un jour ceci: *La littérature est un événement tout à fait à part. C'est un événement qui recommence chaque fois de toute pièce, c'est un événement sans habitude.*

Quand je suis tombé sur cette pensée, j'ai été frappé, comme souvent avec cet écrivain, par l'évidence presque simpliste de l'affirmation. Mais il n'empêche: chez Paulhan, les évidences, parce qu'elles sont envisagées sous un certain angle, parce qu'elles nous invitent à prêter attention à des choses réputées négligeables, ont quelque chose de dérangent – et même, parfois, de vertigineux. De plus, ici, la banalité est aggravée par le pléonasme: comment un événement pourrait-il être autre chose qu'inhabituel? Ce n'est donc pas une découverte, pas une sentence qui va révolutionner notre vision de la littérature. Cependant, comme son auteur m'y incitait par tout ce qu'il est lui-même, tout ce qu'il a écrit et pensé, je déportais vite mon attention sur l'envers, ou l'autre rive, ou le complément, ou le concurrent de la littérature: la critique. Cela me parlait davantage. Me semblait plus abordable. Je pouvais m'embarquer. La question étant dès lors: qu'est-ce que la critique peut faire ou dire d'un tel événement? Est-il assez armé pour le repérer, le débusquer? Plus généralement, qu'elle est son rôle par rapport ou face à la littérature? Rappelons d'un mot la vieille tradition de l'histoire littéraire, qui consiste à opposer, d'une manière irréconciliable, l'écrivain et le critique, le créateur et le suiveur, l'artiste et le tâcheron. Depuis longtemps, les correspondances d'écrivains – celle de Flaubert par exemple – sont pleines de ces jugements, plaintes et récriminations. Diderot déjà définissait ainsi la *sothe occupation* du critique: *nous empêcher sans cesse de prendre du plaisir, ou (...) nous faire rougir de celui que nous avons pris. Nous* désignant les écrivains évoluant dans une sorte d'Eden littéraire interdit aux critiques. La métaphore érotique reviendra souvent, sous la plume de plusieurs auteurs. Mais laissons cela...

Rappelons que la critique littéraire, classiquement, se range en différentes catégories, selon qu'elle se pratique à l'université, dans un salon, devant son bureau d'écrivain ou dans les colonnes d'un journal. Albert Thibaudet, en son temps, avait fort bien analysé les différents types de critique et leurs conséquences, inventant même la critique moderne, en réaction à l'académisme lourd et compassé d'un Ferdinand Brunetière. En 1923, il constatait d'ailleurs ceci, qui relativise le procès trop commode intenté régulièrement à la presse: *Le journaliste se place dans l'optique propre à une œuvre d'action instantanée. Il en recueille le bénéfice et il en subit la diminution.* Pour Thibaudet, la *critique des professeurs* tend à l'*inventaire du passé* alors que celle des journalistes aspire au *discernement du présent*. Et, se retournant vers la littérature elle-même, il ajoutait que le romancier, lui, *écrit pour courir une chance de durer (peu importe s'il se trompe, l'illusion est toujours là)*. Retenons ce mot, pour définir le type de critique qui nous occupe: *œuvre d'action instantanée*. On comprend d'emblée quelles contraintes et obligations une telle œuvre aura à subir, du fait même de devoir s'inscrire dans cette immédiateté. On devine, aussi très vite, un peu effrayé, à quels impératifs elle devra s'affronter, à quelles pressions elle devra résister, pour conserver son intégrité et sa liberté de jugement.

Plusieurs théoriciens de la littérature ont tenté d'autres catégorisations. Ainsi Michel Charles qui distingue la *critique professionnelle*, universitaire, visant à *élaborer un discours de savoir*, et une *critique non professionnelle* ou *mondaine* qui comprend la critique des journalistes et aussi celle des auteurs. Cette critique *mondaine veut dire un plaisir – ou un déplaisir*, précise encore Michel Charles. Thibaudet avait voulu substituer le verbe familier *goûter* au verbe *juger*, trop solennel, pour différencier les deux types de critique. La première, savante donc, professorale, répond à la question: "Avez-vous bien lu?" et la

seconde, journalistique, à la question plus sommaire et circonstancielle, soumise à l'humeur de l'instant: "Avez-vous lu?" Dans cette critique-là, celle des journalistes, on *traite le texte comme un événement*. Nous retombons donc sur ce mot d'*événement*, même si son sens a, encore une fois, subtilement évolué. Par ailleurs, il faut contester fortement, je crois, cette notion, appliquée aux journalistes, de *critique non professionnelle*. Etant entendu que la profession première exercée aujourd'hui dans les journaux n'est pas celle de critique mais de journaliste. On pourrait prolonger encore longtemps ces tentatives de catégorisation. Je veux en citer une dernière, significative à plus d'un titre. Elle émane d'une romancière contemporaine, Marie Darrieussecq et reprend, à sa manière, la vieille tradition de dévalorisation dont je parlais tout à l'heure. L'auteur de *Truismes* affirmait, au cours d'un colloque en 2004, avoir découvert, *déroutée*, que *le même mot de "critique" s'appliquait à deux activités radicalement différentes, l'une, pour aller vite, intelligente, honnête, ambitieuse et systémique (du côté de Roland Barthes), l'autre idiote, malhonnête, cynique et brouillonne (du côté des journalistes)*. Inutile de se montrer susceptible face à un jugement aussi péremptoire, ou de se livrer à une défense corporatiste. Inutile également d'épiloguer sur la perpétuation, un peu volage, de cette tradition de détestation de la critique, ou d'une certaine forme de la critique...

Je reviens à présent dans le camp des *idiots*, selon la terminologie de Darrieussecq... La critique dont on parle aujourd'hui, qui se pratique dans les journaux et les magazines, accompagne, soutient, promeut, évalue – ou ignore – la littérature en train de s'écrire et de se publier. Ce qu'on désigne d'un nom un peu vulgaire mais significatif: la production littéraire, plus exactement ce que Thibaudet nommait plus élégamment *l'au-jour le jour de la production littéraire*. D'emblée, on se trouve donc dans un espace hybride, social d'une certaine manière, mondain ou culturel, autant que littéraire... Et c'est bien cette confusion des genres qui est problématique. En elle, il est très difficile de dégager cette nature de l'acte critique que j'évoquais. Traiter de la critique dans les journaux, c'est forcément évoquer ses entours, ses contraintes, ne pas perdre de vue tout ce qui vient la compliquer, brouiller sa destination initiale. L'exemple, cité tout à l'heure, de l'opération journalistique sur le livre de lacub peut être, en cette direction, considéré comme un cas d'école.

Mais il serait à l'inverse trop commode de présenter la question de la critique comme intemporelle, suspendue au-dessus de nos têtes, telle une étoile qui nous guiderait. A chaque moment, il faut poser cette question en fonction d'un contexte, d'une réalité concrète, économique. Qui est aujourd'hui, depuis plus de dix ans, celle de la crise profonde de la presse écrite, de la menace permanente qui pèse quant à son existence même. Les lecteurs des journaux, les fidèles du papier journal, statistiquement vieillissent, ne se renouvellent pas. Certes d'autres supports, immatériels se développent. Une mutation a lieu. Cependant, quelques principes restent d'actualité ; ils doivent même faire de la résistance, jusque dans les milieux les plus hostiles, jusque dans les circonstances les plus difficiles, et cela au-delà même du genre critique.

A lire systématiquement les suppléments littéraires et les pages culturelles des magazines, on mesure rapidement une chose : la difficulté qu'ont les signataires des articles à rendre vraiment compte de *l'événement*, à mesurer le degré de rupture de *l'habitude*, pour reprendre les mots de Paulhan cités tout à l'heure. Etant entendu que cet événement, s'il se produit quelque part, ce ne peut être que dans la personne, dans la conscience, du lecteur.

Un critique doit donc, comme tout homme, comme le premier venu, avoir accès à sa conscience. Le repérage, il est vrai est rendu encore plus malaisé par la confusion sémantique, et l'appauvrissement du mot *événement*: j'en parlais à l'instant. Victime de cette confusion, l'événement ne vient pas, ne vient plus d'abord du livre lui-même, de l'œuvre, de la tentative littéraire d'un écrivain, mais de son environnement: le monde des Lettres, au sens large – édition, presse, jurys des prix réputés prestigieux – a un irrésistible besoin de prévoir, de programmer, de cadrer, d'évaluer, de mesurer les événements. Le mot lui-même de *surprise* s'inscrit de plus en plus dans une logique et une terminologie promotionnelles. De même, parce qu'il faut varier les approches, les journaux créeront des rubriques *coups de cœur*, attribueront des étoiles, de petites figurines plus ou moins souriantes... Ils seront, pour cela, secondés par les directions artistiques des journaux, dont le rôle, est aussi important que celui des critiques. Sans le savoir, ou avec cynisme, les journaux se calent, dissimulés sous de plus nobles motifs, sur le souci publicitaire, pas illégitime d'ailleurs, des éditeurs: publier des livres, c'est vouloir les vendre. Rien de plus normal! Ce qui l'est moins, c'est l'embrigadement non avoué, et même souvent dénié, de la critique. Dès lors, celle-ci obéit davantage aux lois du marché qu'à celles, beaucoup plus fragiles, impalpables, des libres affinités.

Mais venons-en à une question plus générale, à la fois théorique et pratique : Comment, dans ce contexte, écrit-on des articles critiques ? Comment fait-on, dignement et avec indépendance, de la critique? Je ne me suis pas livré à une lecture systématique ou statistique, qui n'aurait pas beaucoup de sens, tant la matière est fluide, instable. J'ai préféré procéder par coups de sonde et prélèvements de fragments dans les proses critiques.

D'emblée, une chose m'a frappé : l'envahissement de la part descriptive – un journaliste parlera peut-être d'information, mais le mot est inadapté. Or, la description se divise en deux chapitres d'inégale importance, la seconde mettant en branle la subjectivité. Force est de constater que la part d'appréciation stylistique ou de description du *jeu précis* des phrases, de l'écriture, de son rythme, de sa respiration – part indispensable à l'intelligence d'un texte – n'occupe, dans la plupart des articles, qu'une place restreinte, ou stéréotypée . On peut même dire qu'elle est souvent carrément absente.

D'abord, on raconte ce que contient le livre. Plus ce livre est roman, ou mieux encore témoignage ou récit de vie, avec toutes les variantes et modulations possibles, plus il encourage et installe ce que l'écrivain espagnol Enrique Vila-Matas appelle *la vénération du narratif*. L'intrigue est reine, les personnages sont des princes, tout ce qui leur arrive a sens et portée, demande à être détaillé, répété. Dès lors, la critique emprunte la voie mimétique: ce que le roman a dit (plus ou moins) longuement, elle le redira brièvement, sommairement, en quelques paragraphes.

Ensuite, beaucoup plus brièvement, parfois en une phrase ou en quelques mots, on délivre son sentiment intime. Mais l'adjectif est excessif... L'intimité, la complexité (peut-être l'ambivalence) d'une lecture sont ici bridées par la nécessité de faire bref et percutant: au mieux la formule, au pire le slogan... qui sera d'ailleurs opportunément repris dans les extraits de presse dont la publicité éditoriale fait son bien. L'épreuve de la publicité est

connue par tous les intéressés. Chaque journaliste l'affronte avec l'expérience des années: il sait, devine, ce qui pourra être repris, mettant son propre nom de prescripteur en lumière.

Le journaliste dit, mais pas à la première personne, comme s'il n'était pas vraiment là, ce qu'il a ressenti à cette lecture. J'aimerais pouvoir dire qu'il *universalise* sa lecture... Il faut simplifier, faire bref, toujours plus bref, ne pas impatienter le lecteur supposé pressé de lire une opinion ferme, puis, dans les meilleurs des cas, d'obéir à la prescription. D'ailleurs, le critique généralise ce ressenti, le décrète presque à venir chez le futur lecteur... L'expression très sommaire de cette émotion prend valeur de jugement. Le problème, c'est que tout cela est terriblement restreint, étroit, simplificateur, codifié. La complexité, peut-être même l'ambivalence d'une lecture, de la réception singulière d'un texte sont gommées. Elles n'ont aucune place. Dans cette restriction, le lieu commun, la formule toute faite, évidemment, fleurissent...

Voici quelques exemples de jugements stéréotypés que je n'ai eu aucun mal à trouver en feuilletant les pages littéraires des journaux... *Intense et poignant; le récit d'un envouté; attention, livre inflammable; sidération garantie; plus qu'une biographie, une épopée; un récit lumineux, un livre lumière; un roman saisissant, qui impose son originalité et sa puissance d'écrivain; la trajectoire d'une vie dans l'écriture; le mérite et l'émouvante beauté de ces pages [est] de montrer la fragilité infinie, le tremblement, de toute relation au monde...* Ou encore, un peu plus recherché et pointu: *un petit livre paranoïaque, plein d'épines.*

Dans la majorité des cas, ces mots forment conclusion des articles, mais pas toujours: le journaliste plus aguerri cherchera à échapper à des schémas trop communs et repérés en glissant ces appréciations à d'autres endroits de son article. Des plis désolants de pensée que je pointe ici, je ne suis pas moi-même à l'abri... D'ailleurs, parmi les exemples que j'ai cités, j'ai tenu à glisser une formule empruntée à l'un de mes propres articles. Il s'agit donc moins de dénoncer les carences des personnes que celles d'un système, qui favorise la paresse de pensée et d'expression.

Encore une remarque. Je ne fais que signaler un chapitre qui mériterait à lui seul un long développement... Je veux parler de la présence, dans les colonnes des journaux, d'écrivains en tant que signataires, s'ajoutant ou se substituant aux critiques, journalistes de profession. Dans 'Le Monde des livres' par exemple, depuis deux ans, faire intervenir des écrivains es qualité est devenu une choix rédactionnel délibéré. La question est alors la suivante: un écrivain faisant de la critique se trouve-t-il dans une position différente, privilégiée, par rapport à un critique qui ne fait que de la critique? Prolongement à partir de quel moment un critique, à qui il peut arriver d'écrire des livres, devient-il lui aussi écrivain? Question vertigineuse mais de peu d'intérêt.

Prenons un exemple. Philippe Sollers, d'abord au *Monde* puis au *Nouvel Observateur* écrit depuis des décennies dans les pages littéraires des journaux. Ce faisant il met en œuvre une très consciente et réfléchie logique littéraire. Logique selon laquelle, la critique littéraire est ravalée à un rang secondaire, subalterne, au nom d'une autre valeur: le commerce des écrivains, et si possible des grands écrivains, entre eux. De fait, ce n'est pas Sollers, l'écrivain, qui fait de la critique, qui s'efface pour laisser apparaître, au travers de sa propre

parole, l'œuvre singulière d'un autre, c'est l'écrivain Sollers qui fait de la littérature, qui cherche confirmation de sa propre pensée, c'est-à-dire de lui-même, au travers de l'œuvre d'un de ses pairs. La reprise de ses articles (dans quatre gros volumes, à partir de *La Guerre du goût*, en 1994), confirme cette vision et a valeur de manifeste. Une voix unique rassemble en elle toutes les voix des auteurs du passé, en une polyphonie dirigée et voulue par un seul homme: l'écrivain, et non le critique.

Mais quittons l'exception pour revenir à la règle. Peut-être avons-nous atteint aujourd'hui un autre âge de cette fructueuse collaboration des auteurs, avec d'autres justifications... L'écrivain, pour le dire vite, est celui qui a la liberté, le privilège, de penser et d'écrire à la première personne, de dire *je*. Donc, son émotion, donc son jugement intime sur le livre dont il rend compte prennent une autre couleur, peut-être même une autorité, une valeur aristocratique qui manque au critique de base. L'événement littéraire en est-il devenu pour autant plus repérable? Le lecteur est-il mieux éclairé? Rien n'est moins sûr.

On peut concevoir sans difficulté la distance qu'il y a entre un critique universitaire pourvu de compétences approfondies et spécialisées, et un critique journaliste, par vocation, généraliste. De fait, le premier peut a priori jouer davantage que le second du registre comparatif et ainsi approfondir ses analyses critiques... Mais comment spécifier l'apport singulier de l'écrivain? Comment être convaincu de sa compétence particulière, et surtout de sa liberté de jugement, à l'intérieur d'un *milieu* dont il est, davantage encore que le critique de profession, un acteur? Par ailleurs, où commence et où s'arrête l'identité de l'écrivain?

Le feuilletoniste du *Monde* dont je parlais tout à l'heure avait, de par la place qu'on lui avait accordée, une autorité réelle, ou au moins vérifiable. Devenu feuilletoniste, le critique franchissait un cran dans sa carrière, il se voyait consacré, adoubé par son journal. En retour, il devait se montrer digne de son titre et de sa prérogative... Tous les feuilletonistes du *Monde* ne le furent pas, ou ne le furent pas toujours. De plus, sa qualité d'écrivain, s'il l'était, restait indépendante de sa qualité de critique. A présent, les choses sont inversées : c'est par sa notoriété, sa qualité d'écrivain, que le signataire est revêtu d'une supposée autorité et que son propos, comme par enchantement, se distingue de la prose critique courante...

Je me suis contenté d'un survol, d'une impression générale. Je n'ai fait qu'évoquer des faits, ou plutôt des effets. Il faudrait remonter aux causes et pour cela, se livrer à une étude plus précise que les quelques rapides sondages auxquels je me livrais à l'instant. Faire la critique de la critique en somme, comme on pu le faire, Blanchot, Starobinski, Barthes ou Todorov. Ce n'est pas ici le lieu.

Un critique peut-il admettre qu'un courant d'air soit le centre d'un livre? se demanda un jour Vila-Matas. A cet étrange mais pertinente question, il est clair à présent qu'il faut répondre non, trois fois non. Le critique, personnage fragile et incertain de lui-même, mal dans sa peau, mal (souvent) dans son ego, égaré dans des *révérences niaises*, comme disait Jean Paulhan, craint les courants d'air, il a besoin d'une écharpe et d'un manteau, d'une capuche, je veux dire de la protection d'un certain nombre d'habitudes, d'usages. Ce n'est pas tant, je

crois, sa liberté qui fait problème... Peut-être juste sa liberté intérieure – mais c'est déjà beaucoup.

Le critique journaliste de profession doit, pour gagner cette liberté, se tenir, autant qu'il lui est permis (car il doit aussi remplir les exigences de sa charge professionnelle) à l'écart du milieu littéraire qui, certes l'informe, mais surtout le séduit, l'attire et l'absorbe, qui tend à devenir son milieu naturel. Il doit s'écarter de cette extension mondaine pour parler enfin en son propre nom. Et c'est un plus grand sacrifice qu'on ne l'imagine...

La difficulté psychologique, je dirais même spirituelle, serait alors la suivante: parler en son nom, ce n'est pas chercher à se faire un nom, ce n'est pas aspirer à devenir un *acteur* du Milieu littéraire. Etant entendu que cette tentation, ou vanité, fige, durcit ce qui devrait être la souplesse de la conscience critique: son humilité, pas d'abord au sens moral mais au sens opératoire. Le critique, dans sa conscience la plus intérieure, doit être convaincu que son geste est et demeure, intégralement littéraire – même si il ne recueille pas les lauriers d'une gloire d'écrivain.

Si, comme le dit Paulhan, la littérature veut rester *un événement tout à fait à part, sans habitude*, elle doit avoir en face d'elle – en fait en elle – une critique qui *recommence chaque fois de toute pièce* son travail d'approche, d'élucidation, de jugement, d'empathie – ou de rejet. Qui, à chaque fois, réinvente les notions de lucidité, d'empathie, de sévérité ou de bienveillance, qui accepte que sa parole demeure seconde, qu'elle s'inscrive dans les marges de l'œuvre considérée.

**Maurice Nadeau died on 16 June 2013.*

Qu'appelle-t-on *La petite édition* en France?

Claire Paulhan, Founder, Editions Claire Paulhan

D'abord, quelques données objectives et chiffrées:

Structure

Ce sont des maisons d'édition qui mobilisent 1 à 5 personnes, qui travaillent plus ou moins bénévolement, plus ou moins à temps plein, parfois en *free-lance* et sont en tout cas fort peu payées eu égard aux responsabilités qu'elles ont en charge. Ces maisons publient entre 1 à 20 titres par an, tirés pour moitié à moins de 2000 exemplaires. Peu nombreuses sont les petites maisons d'éditions qui survivent au-delà de 10 ans, mais ce n'est pas par manque d'idées, mais plutôt parce que leur chiffre d'affaires reste souvent très faible et que le découragement gagne...

Si l'on fait un focus sur Paris ou sur l'Île de France (qui concentre un peu plus de 1000 éditeurs, soit un bon tiers des maisons d'éditions françaises en activité¹), on voit que l'on peut y distinguer la *petite édition* et la *micro-édition*:

- La petite édition (36% des éditeurs franciliens) est souvent indépendante, mais peut être rattachée à un groupe² (comme Joelle Losfeld/Sodis); son chiffre d'affaires se situe entre 100 000 euros et 1 million d'euros. 70 % d'entre elles sont diffusées et distribuées en librairie par un des 5 grands organismes spécifiques³.
- La micro-édition (qui représente 30,5 % des éditeurs de l'Île de France) est essentiellement indépendante de tous groupes, leur chiffre d'affaires annuel se situe en-deçà de 100 000 euros, leur effectif moyen est de 1 salarié et parfois de 0 salarié, et le nombre de leurs publications annuelles va jusqu'à 7 titres. Plus de la moitié de ces éditeurs s'auto-diffusent et s'auto-distribuent. (J'appartiens à ce dernier groupe.)

Les deux catégories ont tendance à se spécialiser dans un secteur ou un autre...

Quel domaine?

En France, depuis des décennies, ce qu'on appelle généralement la petite édition concerne essentiellement la littérature (15,3%, y compris théâtre et poésie, en 2010), les sciences humaines et sociales (10,2%) et les essais, documents (11,7%) (mais la petite édition se spécialise rarement dans la vie pratique, les beaux-arts, les sciences et techniques, le scolaire, les dictionnaires et encyclopédies, les livres pour la jeunesse, le tourisme). Mais dans les trois domaines dont j'ai parlé, l'on peut penser que la petite et la micro-édition

¹ Problème de chiffres: L'organisme Dilicom, par la voie de son fondateur, Bernard de Fréminville, annonçait 10 000 éditeurs en France en 2005. Le Motif, organisme francilien d'études du marché du livre, a comptabilisé entre 4 000 et 60 000 éditeurs en France en 2009. La BNF a enregistré, via son dépôt légal, 3 500 éditeurs en 2009. Tablons sur une moyenne de 3 000-3 500 éditeurs, ayant publié au moins un titre en France, en 2012, année de crise et de mise en sommeil d'un certain nombre des maisons d'éditions.

² Il existe une vingtaine de groupes d'édition, actuellement.

³ Hachette, Interforum (Flammarion puis Gallimard), Sodis (Gallimard), Volumen (Seuil), Union de Diffusion sont les 5 gros diffuseurs-distributeur, face à 120 petites structures de diffusion, dont une quinzaine seulement s'occupe de diffuser la petite édition de littérature ou des sciences humaines et sociales: Belles Lettres (2,9%), Dilisco (4,4 %) Harmonia Mundi (2,6 %), Pollen-Littéral (1,6 %), Sofedis (3,3%).

jouent un indispensable rôle de *laboratoire* pour la grande édition. Et ce, dans un registre intellectuel qui continue d'être le plus important, en nombre de titres, de la production éditoriale: 37 % de la production de 2010, par exemple, était constituée de livres littéraires, d'essais et de livres de sciences humaines et sociales.

Alors que la grande édition continue sa course folle (toujours plus de titres, malgré un chiffre d'affaires en érosion), la petite édition prospecte tant et plus, défriche, découvre, relit, réédite. Fonction qui lui est d'ailleurs généralement reconnue, dans la presse papier, comme sur internet.

Que représente la petite édition dans le paysage commercial français?

Selon Bertrand Legendre, *l'évolution des techniques rend plus facile l'accès en amont à la position d'éditeur mais les obstacles à l'entrée sur le marché sont renforcés*.⁴ En effet, professionnalisation technique, commerciale, esthétique des petits éditeurs est perceptible à l'œil nu depuis une quinzaine d'années, mais pour autant elle ne garantit pas la durabilité. Ainsi, en terme de chiffre d'affaires, la petite et la micro-édition – tous domaines et zones géographiques confondus – ne génèrent que 1% du chiffre d'affaire global de l'édition en France.

Malgré ces perspectives étriquées, la petite édition se renouvelle constamment, meurt et renaît dans un mouvement incessant: ainsi, 22% des maisons d'éditions indépendantes actuelles ont été créées depuis 2006. Et plus de la moitié d'entre elles sont spécialisées en littérature, essais et sciences humaines... Ce qui dénote une vitalité assez extraordinaire de ce secteur (très parallèle en cela au monde des revues littéraires ou de sciences humaines). D'un point de vue purement économique, l'on considère que le marché de l'édition offre le paysage suivant: un noyau dur d'un petit nombre de grosses firmes (les grandes maisons d'édition⁵) se partage l'essentiel du marché, tandis qu'une nébuleuse de petites et micro entreprises arrivent à travailler, à se maintenir ou à se renouveler à la périphérie de ce noyau...

Enfin, en ces temps de marché du livre plutôt morose, la littérature, les sciences humaines et les essais, produits par les petites maisons d'éditions résistent assez correctement à la crise financière et au marché du livre numérique, qui vient plutôt se positionner en complément... On peut même dire que l'apport de la petite édition à ce secteur intellectuel progresse doucement depuis 2005. Par ailleurs, les ventes en librairie (en moyenne 65 % des ventes des petites maisons d'édition) s'érodent de manière perceptible (mais c'est le cas aussi pour les grands firmes). Alors que les ventes directes (salons, marchés) progressent (ce qui n'est pas du tout le cas des grandes maisons).

On le voit, le paysage économique et intellectuel de la petite édition est tout entier résumable en quelques paradoxes: beaucoup d'idées, très peu de moyens; beaucoup de travail, pas ou peu de bénéfices; des projets plus qu'il n'en faut, mais une espérance de vie très limitée⁶; des choix de qualité, mais qui n'intéressent guère les prescripteurs

⁴ B. Legendre, *Regards sur les petits éditeurs*, Culture-études, DEPS, 2007.

⁵ Les trente plus grosses maisons d'édition génèrent 97 % du chiffre d'affaires de l'édition française annuelle.

⁶ La moitié des petites maisons d'éditions indépendante arrête toute activité dans les 10-15 ans suivant leur fondation.

d'aujourd'hui, qui ne motivent que peu les critiques et les libraires, et sont donc peu diffusés...

Mais le capital symbolique de la petite édition française est bon, excellent même: devenue tout à fait professionnelle dans ses choix, ses maquettes, sa commercialisation, elle profite d'un public de lecteurs attentifs, lettrés, de réseaux efficaces de diffusions alternatives (marchés et salons régionaux du livre, internet, etc.), et continue une sorte de tradition éditoriale en France, qui remonte aux ateliers d'imprimerie du XVIe siècle, et à l'esprit de compagnonnage du XIXe siècle. On attribue aussi à la petite édition une forme de résistance morale et intellectuelle, car sa manière de fabriquer et de défendre chacun de ses livres n'en fait pas un produit de consommation périssable comme un autre, bon à retourner à l'éditeur au bout de 3 mois et un jour...

Mon parcours

J'en viens à mon propre parcours, qui est certainement assez représentatif de la petite édition française depuis les années 90:

J'ai été libraire longtemps, puis j'ai eu envie de créer une collection d'écrits autobiographiques inédits. J'ai proposé ce projet à Paul Fournel, écrivain et alors directeur des éditions Ramsay, maison d'édition de taille moyenne qui connaissait une flambée de succès avec le best-seller de Régine Deforges, *la Bicyclette bleue* (sorti en 1982): j'ai donc appris le métier d'éditeur dans de bonnes conditions: d'abord chez Ramsay (1985-1991), puis chez Seghers (1991-1994) et enfin chez Verdier (1995). Il faut dire que c'était une époque où, pour peu que l'on n'ait pas peur de travailler beaucoup en étant peu payé, on arrivait à intégrer assez facilement une maison d'éditions, qui avait toujours besoin de petite main et ne rechignait pas à former quelqu'un.

Pour les séances du comité de lecture de Ramsay et Seghers, j'ai lu, en manuscrit, beaucoup de romans contemporains, ce qui m'a confirmé dans mon choix (difficile) d'éditer des autobiographies littéraires du XXe siècle...

Car pour moi, être éditeur, c'est d'abord

- lire toutes sortes d'ouvrages anciens,
- pister des textes qui dorment en bibliothèque ou chez les héritiers,
- travailler avec les chercheurs qui veulent bien s'engager avec moi dans un projet,
- concevoir et réaliser la mise en page en étroite corrélation avec le sens du texte,
- corriger les épreuves, choisir et numériser les illustrations et les fac-similés, les caractères et les papiers,
- composer la maquette, y compris de couverture,
- surveiller l'impression,
- transporter de lourds cartons de livres et en être envahie,
- m'occuper moi-même du service de presse et des commandes des libraires,
- faire les paquets et les factures,
- tenir à jour la comptabilité et les stocks...

Et j'en passe... Mais tous les aspirants-éditeurs, qui rêvent de compagnonnage avec les écrivains du moment, devraient d'abord en passer par là, par cette pratique éditoriale, avant de s'offrir le luxe de fréquenter ce milieu intéressant et privilégié.

Tous ces aspects du travail éditorial, je ne pouvais pas les exercer dans des maisons d'éditions classiques, où règne le travail découpé en tranches horizontales. C'est pourquoi, après avoir traîné dans tous les services et enrégé à chaque comité de lecture quand les manuscrits que je soutenais n'étaient pas pris, j'ai fondé en 1996 ma propre maison d'édition indépendante. Bien que ce choix d'autonomie complète me permette d'échapper aux contraintes qui commandent d'ordinaire la vie des entreprises éditoriales, mon activité n'en demeure pas moins lourde à gérer et délicate à maintenir.

Aujourd'hui, cela fait 17 ans que ma micro-maison d'éditions existe, j'ai une quarantaine de titres au catalogue, j'ai pu récupérer le stock de quelques-uns que j'avais édités ailleurs, d'autres sont épuisés malheureusement; je continue à avoir beaucoup de projets, j'essaye de demander le moins de subventions possibles, mais me félicite encore chaque jour d'avoir un travail à temps partiel à côté. Je suis en effet chargée de mission à l'IMEC, l'institut Mémoires de l'Édition contemporaine, à Caen: j'y classe des fonds d'archives, et y cherche des documents pour des expositions thématiques, comme cette grande exposition sur les *Archives de la vie littéraire sous l'Occupation*, que j'ai organisée à l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris en 2011...

Mes choix littéraires...

Je me suis spécialisée dans le registre autobiographique, que j'aime lire depuis toujours et qui m'apprend des choses du point de vue de l'histoire littéraire: je publie, à raison de 3 ou 4 nouveautés par an seulement, des journaux intimes, des correspondances littéraires, des Mémoires inédits, et même des romans autobiographiques, rédigés par des écrivains français du XXe siècle, couvrant la période comprise entre l'Affaire Dreyfus et Mai 1968...

Les livres que je publie — qu'ils soient déjà à mon catalogue ou à venir — ont quelques points communs entre eux, outre le fait d'appartenir au domaine de la littérature autobiographique: ils couvrent une période qui est essentiellement celle de l'entre-deux-guerres, et ils concernent en gros un même milieu intellectuel: celui qui gravite autour de *La Nouvelle Revue française*.

Comme je ne m'intéresse qu'à des écrivains disparus, j'occupe, presque seule, un terrain désertifié par ma génération d'éditeurs et surtout par la précédente. Combien de titres ai-je publié qui avaient été refusés par Gallimard (Pozzi, Grenier, Follain)... Je préfère maintenir, contre vents et marées, cette *spécialisation* dans les *autobiographies inédites du XXe siècle*, plutôt que d'ouvrir ma ligne éditoriale au contemporain, à la fiction, ou aux rééditions. Il y a d'ailleurs de nombreuses maisons d'édition qui occupent ce registre et permettent de lire les écrits contemporains les plus divers...

Mais il faut comprendre pourquoi les éditeurs ont souvent reculé avec embarras devant ces travaux longs et lourds à réaliser: à part les universitaires pour lesquels ces publications peuvent représenter une étape de carrière, il n'y a quasiment personne pour savoir mener à bien ces travaux — et d'ailleurs, on ne pourrait les rémunérer que très misérablement (en proportion du travail réel que cela demande).

Ce marché éditorial est cependant de plus en plus réduit (la banquise fond...), malgré l'engouement du public pour les biographies, qui remonte aux années 80... Cependant, il se crée continuellement des collections d'écrits autobiographiques, ou des collections où les écrits autobiographiques ont une petite place; mais elles s'arrêtent souvent rapidement, car le long terme ne leur est pas accordé. Et sans long terme, sans beaucoup de travail, ce genre d'édition ne peut pas survivre.

Au-delà des problèmes de production et de réception critique, ces livres ont pour vertu essentielle de remédier à l'oubli, mais aussi au déni de culture qui ne cesse de s'étendre et d'étouffer toute réflexion, ou comparaison, au prisme de l'histoire... Ces textes si hasardeux à découvrir, si ardu à établir, ces volumes si difficiles à faire connaître sont autant de stèles qui rappellent ce qu'il y eut de plus vivant chez certains écrivains, dans tel groupe d'idées ou mouvements littéraires. Sans cette attention posthume désintéressée, ces auteurs seraient peut-être en passe d'être oubliés, et donc doublement morts. Et on ne pourrait pas se rendre compte que les écrivains, et même les poètes, sont souvent des éclaireurs de l'histoire, des vigies à l'avant-garde de ce que les sociétés vivent et subissent...

En donnant à lire les autobiographies de ces écrivains qui témoignent d'un passé que nous n'avons pas fini d'analyser et de comprendre, mon but est de livrer non seulement de donner ses lettres de noblesse à la littérature autobiographique, mais aussi des clés de compréhension, des éléments d'information, des témoignages directs mais rédigés, qui permettent de nuancer les analyses, de former d'autres perspectives, de voir autrement les liens entre biographies intellectuelles et histoire...

La question des traductions

Jusqu'ici, un seul de mes titres a été traduit à l'étranger: le *Journal 1913-1934* de Catherine Pozzi, en allemand (Insel Verlag, qui fut son éditeur en 1927 et toujours son éditeur en 1998). Et encore cet éditeur n'a-t-il repris que la part de son *Journal* qui correspondait à sa scandaleuse liaison avec le poète Paul Valéry.

Pourquoi ce genre de livre est-il si peu traduit? C'est certainement parce que mes livres sont épais, se développent parfois en plusieurs tomes et sont pleins de notes; ils sont donc non seulement difficiles mais chers à traduire. Je suis de temps en temps contactée par des agents d'éditeurs étrangers, sensibles aux parcours de vie racontés dans mes livres (surtout ceux des femmes diaristes: Catherine Pozzi, Mireille Havet ou Hélène Hoppenot), mais ils se rétractent dès qu'ils comprennent l'ampleur du travail de traduction qu'il faudrait réaliser. Non seulement de traduction, mais d'adaptation de l'appareil critique à un nouveau public, qui nécessite un réagréage, une réorganisation des informations données...

Cependant, j'ai publié deux romans autobiographiques, qui forment des ouvrages plus modestes, certainement plus accessibles, et qui pourraient donc être traduits: *Carnaval* de Mireille Havet et *La Jeunesse morte* de Jean Guéhenno. Mais j'avoue que j'en ai tiré l'édition vers l'autobiographie. Dans *Carnaval*, j'ai mis en relation des passages entiers du roman de Mireille Havet avec les mêmes passages vécus de son *Journal*. Pour *la Jeunesse morte*, l'appareil critique permet de voir que la situation qu'il décrit – 3 jeunes étudiants brillants broyés par la Guerre de 14-18: un juif, un catholique, un laïque – est la copie

conforme (seuls les noms sont cryptés) de ce que le jeune Guéhenno a vécu comme un drame absolu.

Ceci dit, je vois que mes amis de la petite édition, qui publient, eux, de la littérature contemporaine, des romans, des œuvres de fiction, sont également très mal repérés par les traducteurs étrangers. J'y vois quelques raisons: ne serait-ce que par la difficulté qu'il y a à nous trouver en pile en librairies traditionnelles, mais aussi le peu de visibilité de nos productions dans les médias diffusés au-delà des frontières françaises, sans compter le manque de temps chronique qui nous empêche – en l'absence d'un département de droits étrangers, si important pour les grands éditeurs – de prospecter, de trouver à l'étranger les éditeurs qui nous correspondraient. Et enfin, la prudence, peut-être justifiée, des traducteurs et des éditeurs étrangers: ce n'est bien que lorsqu'un auteur, découvert par un petit éditeur, finit par passer chez un éditeur ayant pignon sur rue, qui lui offre alors certainement une plus grande visibilité, que les agents et les traducteurs se déclarent, et que la machine éditoriale classique opère le cycle pour lequel elle est, elle, tout à fait bien organisée : négociation des droits, traduction, publication, mise en place chez les libraires, opérations de presse, promotion de l'auteur, etc.

Il faut dire que nous autres, petits éditeurs, ne savons guère faire cela, dans ce sens-là. Alors que nombre de ces petits éditeurs (pas moi, qui n'ai pas l'argent pour payer une traduction et me cantonne donc au domaine français) savent très bien repérer à l'étranger des œuvres de fiction à traduire, d'auteurs morts ou vivants, et les mettre en valeur... La littérature anglo-saxonne reste assurément la plus prisée, quoiqu'il y ait une montée en force des romans espagnols, portugais et sud-américains.

Parmi ces petits éditeurs⁷, je voudrais signaler par exemple, les éditions Quidam, Interférences, Le Bruit du Temps, La Cause des Livres, Alma, Cambourakis, L'Éclat, Non Lieu, Michel Chandeigne, Viviane Hamy, Sabine Wespieser, Serge Safran, Tristram, Jacqueline Chambon, Joseph K., Phébus, les éditions de l'Aube, de la Différence... Toutes restent attentives à la production des maisons d'éditions étrangères, chacune dans son registre, mais prospectent, cherchent, lisent. Souvent créées par de fortes personnalités ayant travaillé dans l'édition traditionnelle, et s'étant épuisées en désillusions et frustrations, ces petites maisons d'édition leur donnent l'occasion de s'épuiser encore et toujours, mais au service de ce qu'ils aiment lire et faire savoir.

C'est Valéry Larbaud qui a créé dans les années vingt l'expression suivante: des *livres que c'est pas la peine* (autrement dit: des livres qui ne devraient pas être publiés, ni achetés, ni lus, qui ne sont là que pour justifier l'activité économique d'une maison d'éditions, faire de la cavalerie, remplir les programmes). Bien qu'il me paraisse difficile (et redoutablement censurant) de définir où passerait la ligne de démarcation entre bonne et mauvaise littérature, l'on peut admettre qu'à notre époque qui produit chaque année une masse toujours plus énorme de titres, (en 2012, on en est toujours là: d'un côté des *livres que c'est pas la peine* mais qui occupent l'espace des librairies, les colonnes des journaux,

⁷ Et du côté des grands éditeurs: Actes Sud, Christian Bourgois, Denoël, Liana Levi, Flammarion,

d'innombrables pages mises en ligne⁸; de l'autre des *livres que c'est la peine*, dont une appréciable partie est choisie, produite, défendue, année après année, par la petite et la micro-édition.

⁸ 646 nouveaux romans ont été publiés à la rentrée d'automne 2012. Seuls, une trentaine ont *percé* dans la presse, une cinquantaine en librairie. Quant à la production de nouveaux livres, elle a été:
en 1985, de 29.068 titres,
15 ans plus tard, en 2010 de plus du double, c'est-à-dire 67.278 titres,
en 2011 de 70.109 titres
et en 2012 de 76 205 titres: c'est-à-dire qu'en 2012 on est revenu au chiffre de 2007, d'avant la crise et comme si les lecteurs ne se raréfiaient pas.

Translating, publishing and supporting contemporary fiction from French in the UK book market. Social conditions and obstacles.

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Introduction

Book translation is not *tout-court* a neutral process consisting in transferring a text from one language to another. Pascale Casanova¹ has pointed at translation as an unequal exchange, through which relations of domination, deriving from an unequal distribution of symbolic capital, can be revealed. Sociologists Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro² have showed how literary translation is a socially driven process shaped by the fields in which it is embedded, namely global publishing markets, political relations among countries, as well as cultural exchanges.

In this same critical perspective and from a sociological standpoint, I will focus in this paper on the social conditions under which French contemporary fiction reaches the UK translation market. Willing to break with the illusion of cultural production being either a neutral, peaceful process, or exclusively regulated by market forces, I will make the argument, by using sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field³, that this space is structured by the struggles taking place among a range of agents or organisations, who compete for gaining forms of social, financial or symbolic capitals, in an effort to secure their positions in the field. Therefore, I will examine with a particular attention the role played by agents of intermediation involved in the international circulation of books. I will look at their social characteristics, their work practices and their trajectories as key to understand the social conditions of production, circulation and reception of literary works. I will also refer to books as both material and symbolic goods.

I shall start by reconstructing the logic of publishing contemporary fiction in the UK book market today. I shall then move on to tackle the issue of translation from French through a case-study analysing a population of six independent publishers. I will give an account of the resources they held at the moment of their access to the industry between 2000 and 2008,

¹ Pascale CASANOVA, « Consécration et accumulation de capital littéraire », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 144, 2002, pp.7-20.

² Johan HEILBRON, Gisèle SAPIRO, "Outline for a sociology of translation: Current issues and future prospects", in Michaela Wolf, Alexandra Fukari (eds.), *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2007, pp. 93-107.

³ Concerning the concept of « field », see Pierre BOURDIEU, *Les Règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Seuil, Paris, 1992; see also P. BOURDIEU, *Homo Academicus*, Minuit, Paris, 1984. Concerning the publishing field, see P. BOURDIEU, « Une révolution conservatrice dans l'édition », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°126-127, mars 1999, p. 3-28. Concerning circulation issues, see P. BOURDIEU, « Les conditions sociales de la circulation internationale des idées », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 2002, n°145, pp. 3-8.

together with their strategies for attracting and retaining translators. Finally, I shall draw a few conclusions, highlighting how nation-states, but also non-profit organisations contribute to create an economy of translations and how they produce value and legitimacy for some of the agents involved in literary exchanges.

My corpus is restricted to the novel and its articulations in crime fiction, chick-lit, novellas etc. Therefore classics, poetry, theatre, children's literature and graphic novels have been excluded. Empirical evidence is based on 27 in-depth interviews with agents within the book chain, on both sides of the Channel: in Britain I talked to publishers, junior and senior editors, literary agents, translators, literary scouts, booksellers and literary editors of major national newspapers; in both France and the UK I interviewed a number of representatives of professional bodies and administrative agents.

Translation and the UK publishing field: an overview

While I focus primarily on the last decade of the twenty-first century, I trace my outline back to the nineties, when the UK publishing field underwent some major changes, contributing to its reconfiguration. I will leave out of this discussion the so-called digital revolution and highlight three events in particular:

1. In the first place, the demise of the Net Book Agreement in 1995, changing the legislation regulating book prices;
2. Second, the growth of the retail chain and the interest in the book market from supermarkets and on-line operators competing on price;
3. Third, the wave of mergers of firms into large corporations, involving the acquisitions of independent and often family-owned publishing houses⁴.

As a result of this, in a market increasingly front-list driven, some new practices have emerged and have been adopted by the agents. On the retail chains' side, they involve: the acceleration of the books' 'shelf life', the progressive elimination at a short term of the 'slowmovers', that is to say, books which 'don't work' (meaning that don't sell quickly, usually within six weeks), the support of new titles over the backlist, a competitive pricing policy giving way to aggressive discounts (up to 65%) and the 'three for two' campaigns financed by the publishers.

On the publishers' side, acquisition policies have become less risky: the golden rule is maximizing the sales of a smaller number of books and investing in a single title with large print runs in place of conducting an editorial policy oriented to discovering new talents. The 'big hits', or the 'big books'⁵, as the industry calls them, or books that ought to become mainstream successes in commercial terms, get noticed and get purchased, at the expense of the 'small books' which are less and less visible. Most translations would fit into this last category and they would be usually defended either by small independent publishers or by a few editors within imprints belonging to large conglomerates.

⁴ Eric DE BELLAIGUE, *British Book Publishing as a Business since the 1960s: Selected Essays*, London, The British Library, coll. "The British Library Studies in the History of the Book", 2004.

⁵ Interviews with a male small independent publisher and a female representative of a professional body. See also John B. THOMPSON, *Merchants of Culture, The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, Polity, 2010, pp. 187-222.

Now, in the UK, books originating from non-Anglophone areas are considered ‘difficult’, ‘upmarket’ and targeting a small dedicated readership endowed with the indispensable cultural competencies needed to appreciate them. Rather than a fact, I will argue that this is a collective belief, a *doxa*, something that goes without saying. In fact, if we look closer, this is contradicted by the commercial success of international best-sellers of the likes of Carlos Ruiz Zafon, Muriel Barbery and Stieg Larsson, replicating the impact of Milan Kundera or Umberto Eco in the eighties. Also, as to corporate players, *they do* recognize the value of literary translation, *they are* driven by an interest in exploiting the prestigious back-lists of those small upmarket firms they acquire, thus converting symbolic capital into an economic and financial one. However, they are more inclined to publish a book from the Anglophone world rather than one from a different language market. As a consequence, the risk involved in the long term investment required by translation, together with the process of symbolic accumulation it involves, is, as a matter of fact, transferred to small independent publishers, thus creating the conditions for the relegation of translation to a *niche*, under the pretext that readers are not interested.

On the other hand, recent financial figures produced by non-Anglophone international best sellers, have re-launched the debate about fiction in translation. Always seeking to be reassured by numbers and looking for devices to help them form a judgment, mainstream publishers seem to have reached a consensus over what they call a ‘universal’ foreign literature, carrying ‘universal values’, not written to please a converted elite of readers, but instead that has a wide appeal, touches a global audience and is “able to speak to the world”⁶.

Publishing French contemporary fiction in the UK: a case-study of six newcomers

In the last 10 years, a new breed of ‘corporate refugees’, or displaced editors made redundant under new management as a consequence of mergers and acquisitions, have become some of the major players in the UK translation market. Rejected by the financial sector within large conglomerates, they have founded or co-founded their own businesses⁷. These, together with a number of new players arriving in the UK as a result of an increased European mobility, have found in the translation market an opportunity to convert forms of capital accumulated during their personal and professional trajectories. An analysis of a population of six newcomers, having invested in publishing literature from French and having created their enterprises between 2003 and 2008, is consistent with these trends. They are:

- Bitter Lemon Press (founded in 2003)
- Alma Books, Gallic Books, MacLehose Press imprint of Quercus and Portobello Books (set up in 2005)
- Peirene Press (created in 2008)

Five of these companies have a legal status of Limited Liability, whereas Quercus, a Public Limited company, represents an exception. The age of the companies’ founders ranged, in 2011, from 40 to 50 years old, except for one over 50. In this respect, independent translation publishing does not seem to appeal to young people, despite the encouragement of an entrepreneurial spirit in the UK market. On the other hand the start-

⁶ Interview with a female publisher at an imprint within a conglomerate.

⁷ Danuta KEAN, “Blast the Bean Counters”, *The Times*, 3 September 2005.

up model seems to suit women, who lead these publishing houses, either solely or in partnership with men through friendship connections or marriage, in four of these six examples. The founders' education shows a common background in the humanities, particularly literature and history, whereas foreign languages come in third. A degree in commerce is represented in only one case. Two of these founders had no previous experience in publishing, while the other four started their own press after having worked in UK publishing for between seven and twenty-one years.

Two of these houses have been created, or co-founded, by corporate refugees: Christopher MacLehose, editorial director for twenty-one years (since 1984) at Harvill Press, a prestigious literary imprint of foreign literature, set up his own company in 2005 after the merging of Harvill Press with Secker & Warburg into Harvill Secker, an imprint of the CCP division of the conglomerate Random House.

Philip Gwyn Jones is one of the co-founders of Portobello; after a career as editorial director at Flamingo, a literary imprint of Harper Collins (part of News Corporation), he left this publisher when, following a managerial strategy of rationalization, its backlist was transferred to Fourth Estate in 2004.

The Italian couple Minervini-Gallenzi founded Alma Books after losing editorial independence within Hesperus Press, a company they had created in 2001, when the new owners refused to support them in their desire to publish more contemporary fiction from other languages.

Half of the six firms were set up by women. Jane Aitken, a "committed Francophile" previously with Random House, created Gallic Books in 2005, positioning herself "on the commercial end of literary fiction" and developing a strategy based mainly on French popular novels and historical fiction.

Laurence Colchester, co-founder in 2003 of Bitter Lemon Press, targets a readership interested in upmarket crime fiction in translation (she has published notably Tonino Benacquista and Jacques Chessex).

Meike Ziervogel is the founder of Peirene Press, focusing on a specific genre, the modern European novella. Although she published only three titles in the first year of her business, among which *Beside The Sea / Bord de mer* by Véronique Olmi, she has been able to attract prize-winning translators and she received the 'Newcomer of the Year' award in 2011, from the Independent Publishers Guild three years after its foundation.

Only one of these women had previous experience in publishing, while the other two converted skills acquired in other sectors. For instance, one of them entered the field after more than a decade in business and public relations; another one worked for several years in a press agency, suggesting that skills in communication and in dealing with the press and the media are assets facilitating transition towards the publishing field.

But publishing translations is not just part of a generic 'industry of the word'; it also is a business where language competences are key. Four of these publishers are foreign

nationals and all of them have the ability to speak and read two or more languages, a skill which they invest in the translation market, ensuring in-house linguistic resources, thus cutting the costs of a specialist reader and of a translator. French, the language these six newcomers have in common, is followed by German (2), Italian (2) and Spanish (1). They also possess international connections, accumulated through bi-national and bilingual marriages, travels and international experiences, European mobility and so forth. These resources incline them towards foreign cultures. They also constitute a form of capital that publishers convert in the field, allowing them to approach with ease some 'territories' which publishers working on Anglophone literature consider difficult; to be familiar with other book markets and foreign catalogues; and to gather information to help them to elaborate a strategy and giving them more direct control of their editorial acquisitions.

Publishing also involves financial capital and investment plans. Some enterprises, like Peirene or Bitter Lemon Press both set up with limited resources, can employ two or three full-time employees and are run from the founders' homes thanks to basic communication equipment. Others, like Gallic Books and Alma Books, benefiting from longer previous experience in the UK book market, compensate for the financial precariousness of independents, with a mix of institutional support and strategies of market adaptation. Christopher MacLehose, a charismatic figure in international literature in Britain, enjoys wide editorial independence within Quercus and the distribution and visibility of his books is secured by the Independent Alliance⁸, an organization of independent publishers to which Portobello also belongs. And finally, Portobello can support « *slow sellers* », thanks to the co-founder's personal wealth, Swedish Tetra Pak heiress and philanthropist Sigrid Rausing.

Translators: an asset for the publisher

Translators are an important asset for publishers investing in foreign literature. Attracting the right ones is vital. Ensuring appropriate working conditions for translators is equally essential⁹. Translators from French I have interviewed describe their self-employed status in terms of "the ups and downs of workload"; "not always having the right amount of work (...) either too much or not enough". However, being freelance and part time workers is compensated for, by what they call "the amazing freedom of making your own working hours". This is particularly valued by women who can either combine this activity with family obligations, or who are financially autonomous and do not strictly depend on translations as a stable income. 42 women have been employed by these six newcomers, against 22 men.

A closer analysis of translators, employed particularly by Gallic Books and MacLehose Press, provides some interesting information¹⁰. Gallic Books founder, Jane Aitken, has translated

⁸ The Independent Alliance is formed of the following independent publishing houses: Atlantic, Canongate, Faber, Granta, Icon Books, Potobello, Profile, Serpent's Tail and Short Books. Constable and Robinson will join it by September 2013. In June 2013 Quercus (of which MacLehose Press is an imprint) has left the Alliance, after eight years, having brought its home and export sales in-house. See *The Bookseller*, 18 June 2013 and 5 August 2013.

⁹ Isabelle KALINOWSKI, 'La vocation au travail de traduction', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°144, septembre 2002, pp. 47-54. See also Nathalie HEINICH, 'Les traducteurs littéraires: l'art et la profession', *Revue française de sociologie*, n° 25, 1984, pp. 264-280.

¹⁰ I will leave out of this discussion translators coming from academia and will concentrate on a population of "professional translators".

some books herself, thus cutting translation costs. From the foundation of her publishing house until 2011, under the pen name of Isabel Reid, she translated three titles and co-translated three more with Lorenza Garcia, who has also contributed five books in her own name. Together they have copyrighted eleven titles, from a total of 39 published by Gallic between 2007 and 2013. Gallic's current in-house translator is Emily Boyce, who was awarded the "New Talents in Translation Prize" by the French Book Office (Bureau du livre, French Embassy in London) in 2008. After 2011 Gallic Books developed its own strategy for recruiting new translators, through a mentoring scheme, under which *Eat Him If You Like* by Jean Teulé was published, followed by two novels by Pascal Garnier in 2012. This scheme has been created in conjunction with award winning translator Ros Schwartz. Another contract, for the third Pascal Garnier novel, was given to Melanie Florence as winner of the competition organised by the Translators Association of the Society of Authors along with Department of European Cultures and Languages, Birkbeck College; University of Westminster; and, from November 2012, City University.

Prizes gained by translators constitute a symbolic capital for both publishers and translators. Christopher MacLehose has employed ten translators, three of whom have been awarded the Scott Moncrieff Prize and one the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in 2010, whereas Gallic Books has employed fifteen translators but, despite the reputation of one in particular, none has yet been awarded a prize for translation from French.

Supporting contemporary fiction in translation

Finally, while discussing the social conditions under which books in translation circulate and are produced, attention must be paid to agents in the political field. I will provide an overview of the main sources of state support for translation of contemporary fiction available in the UK.

Contemporary fiction is a more visible genre than poetry or theatre, thus playing a strategic role in the field of international cultural relations. The circulation of this production in the global translation market constitutes one criterion against which a specific national culture is perceived, together with being an indicator of its rising or falling rank. National agencies in charge of cultural cooperation develop strategies for the languages and literatures of the countries they represent, in order to achieve a balance in their struggle for visibility. Action taken by London branches of organizations such as the Goethe Institut or the Instituto Cervantes testify to this effort.

In the specific case of the Institut Français, grants to support literature from French in the UK market are given to publishers in recognition of their commitment to translation on a long term basis: the Anthony Burgess programme, (Burgess translated *Cyrano de Bergerac*), started in 1993, celebrates 20 years this year. These grants do not just enable small publishers to finance their operations but they also give them the chance to gain access to the book industry, to become legitimate players and to create a space of possibility for an activity usually perceived as "risky".

The Institut français, along with other foreign cultural services, also supports translators, thus recognising their work. The more a translator is awarded the most prestigious translation prizes, gained for books by the most renowned authors, the more the volume of

his or her symbolic capital grows, together with that of the language translated and the culture it carries. Programmes offered include bursaries to accomplish a particular translation project, to exchange experiences with other translators and to allow immersion in a specific culture.

However, supporting translation programmes or creating favourable working conditions for translators are not the only way of enhancing the status of literary translation. Other forms of value production might also include developing a readership through book clubs;, involving librarians; creating opportunities for stakeholders to congregate and discuss during public events; ensuring the presence of translated books in literary festivals; or promoting and supporting book launches. An example of support aiming to increase the visibility of translated books by means of a marketing campaign is provided by the 'Writers in Translation' programme, created in 2005, co-funded by Arts Council England (which covers the staff costs) and Bloomberg (which funds the grants program) but operated by English PEN. These are all equally important factors enhancing the conditions of possibility for translation to thrive.

Translation is also a measure of cultural diversity. The question of the UK market indifference to literatures other than Anglophone has caused an impact in the UK national field as well. UK arts funding bodies have been called to renegotiate the image of Britain at a global scale. A strategy aiming to support independent publishing has been developed and led by Arts Council England.

I will conclude by referring to sociologist Johan Heilbron¹¹. According to him translation is an issue on which nation-states compete not only for the visibility of their own literary production in a specific market, but also to gain symbolic profit in allowing transition from a third market. This is an interesting perspective from which the circulation process of contemporary literature can be investigated.

Marcella Frisani is currently completing a doctoral thesis in sociology of international cultural relations under the supervision of Gisèle Sapiro, at the Centre Européen de Sociologie et de Sciences Politiques (CESSP), a research centre attached to the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, the CNRS and the University of Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne¹². She is interested in understanding how translation issues can reveal asymmetries in power relations among languages, cultures and countries on a global scale.

¹¹ Johan HEILBRON, 'Towards a Sociology of Translation. Book Translations as Cultural World-System', *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol.2, 1999, p. 429- 444.

¹² Her thesis inscribes itself within the framework of a broader investigation on translation and international cultural exchanges issues, which the CESSP has conducted since 2002, producing a rich body of works. For reference see *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°144 et n°145, 2002. Also see Johan HEILBRON and Gisèle SAPIRO's works on the subject : Johan HEILBRON, 'Towards a Sociology of Translation: Book Translations as a Cultural World System', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 1999, n°2, pp.429-444; Johan HEILBRON, 'Echanges culturels transnationaux et mondialisation: quelques réflexions', *Regards sociologiques*, n°22, 2001, pp.141-154; Gisèle SAPIRO (ed.): *Les contradictions de la globalisation éditoriales*, Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2009. Moreover, other collective research projects have been conducted by the CESSP under the supervision of Gisèle Sapiro for the Ministère de la Recherche (2008) and for the Institut français (forthcoming); see Gisèle SAPIRO (ed.), *Translatio. Le marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la mondialisation*, Paris: CNRS Editions, 2008. For further reference in English see also Gisèle SAPIRO,

*Some of the conclusions she has delivered in her talk have been achieved during a research project conducted by the CESSP (EHESS-CNRS-Paris I Sorbonne) for the Département des études, de la prospective et des statistiques, French Ministry of Culture and held between 2010 and 2011. Directed by Gisèle Sapiro, the project has involved five research teams in Brazil, France, the Netherlands, the UK and the US and analysed the modalities by which literary works from French circulate in those markets. Marcella Frisani was responsible of the UK part, for which she has conducted 41 semi-structured in-depth interviews in both the UK and France. The results of this investigation have been included in the following sociological report: Gisèle SAPIRO (ed.), *Rapports de force et échelles de grandeur sur le marché de la traduction. Les obstacles à la circulation des œuvres de littérature et de sciences humaines à l'ère de la mondialisation*, Centre Européen de Sociologie et de Science Politique, Juillet 2011, pp. 93-122.*

*An earlier version of her paper was published in 2012. See Marcella Frisani, 'L'invisibilité de la "contemporary fiction" en langue française dans le marché britannique de la traduction', in *Traduire la littérature et les sciences humaines. Conditions et obstacles*, ed by Gisèle Sapiro. (Paris: Ministère de la Culture, 2012), pp.109-136.*

'Translation and the field of publishing. A commentary on Pierre Bourdieu's "A conservative revolution in publishing" from a translation perspective', *Translation Studies*, vol. 1, n°2, 2008, pp.154-167; "The Literary Field Between the State and the Market", *Poetics*, n°31, 2003, pp.442-464; 'French Literature in the World System of Translation', in Christie McDonald and Susan Suleiman (eds.), *French Literary History: A Global Approach*, New York: Columbia UP, 2010, pp. 298-319; 'Globalization and Cultural Diversity in the Book Market: the Case of Translations in the US and in France', *Poetics*, 38/4, 2010, pp. 419-439.

Resource Description and Access (RDA) at the British Library: Implementing a New Standard for Resource Description and Discovery

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This article deals with the implementation of RDA (Resource Description and Access) at the British Library in April 2013. It describes this new cataloguing standard and emphasizes how the BL is applying it to describe and give access to its collections.

What exactly is RDA?

RDA was developed to respond to an evolving cataloguing environment. Catalogues do not exist in isolation anymore. Bibliographic data is present in the wider Internet environment, which contains a wide range of information carriers. Metadata (information about information) is created by a broader range of staff and is now expressed through element-based metadata schemas such as Dublin Core and Onix. All these changes entailed the necessity to develop a cataloguing standard to support this new cataloguing environment, and AACR2 (Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules) was deemed insufficient for current cataloguing needs.

Over time AACR2 had become increasingly complicated. It lacks a logical structure, mixes content and carrier data and is unable to show hierarchical relationships. Furthermore it has a strong Anglo-American bias and doesn't give enough support for collocation. Most importantly, it was developed before the Internet and pre-dates FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Data) which is a conceptual entity-relationship model that describes user tasks of retrieval and access in online library catalogues and bibliographic databases from a user's perspective. FRBR represents a more comprehensive approach to retrieval and access as the relationships between the entities provide links to navigate through the hierarchy of relationships. Consequently moving to a form of "AACR3" did not seem appropriate, and the international library community decided that a new cataloguing standard, better geared to the ever evolving online cataloguing environment should be developed. Hence RDA.

The Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA consisted of representatives from the American Library Association, The Australian Committee on Cataloguing, the British Library, the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek and the Library of Congress.

RDA is a tool for the digital world, and can be consulted online via the RDA Toolkit which is an integrated browser-based online product enabling users to access a wide range of

cataloguing-related documents and resources in addition to RDA. RDA's goal is to provide description and access of all resources in all types of content and media. It aims to produce records usable in the digital environment and adaptable to newly emerging database structures. RDA strives to be easy to understand and apply, and encourages use beyond the library world. It aims to be compatible with other similar cataloguing standards and provide a strong, logical structure based on international agreements and cataloguing principles. Contrary to AACR2, it separates content from carrier data, and content from display. Another major difference is that RDA is based on FRBR, the entities and elements of which are translated into RDA data elements. So RDA combines the FRBR model with cataloguing principles.

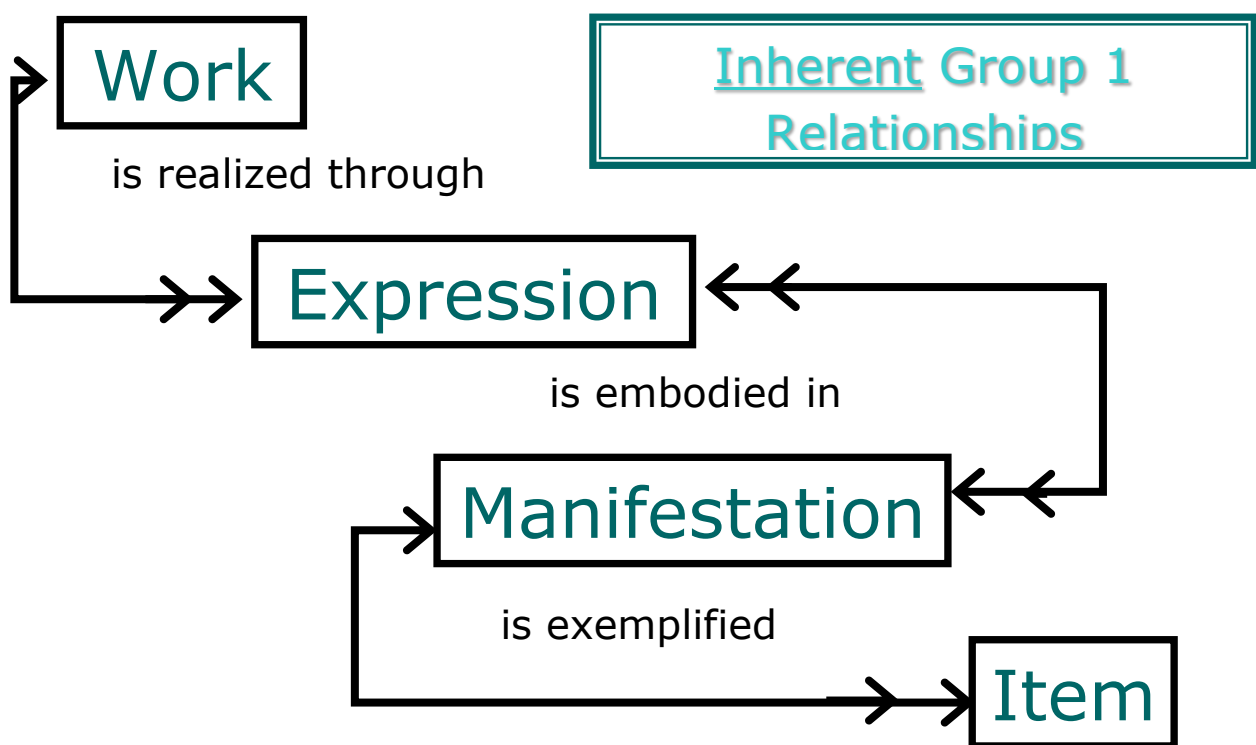


Diagram created by the Library of Congress

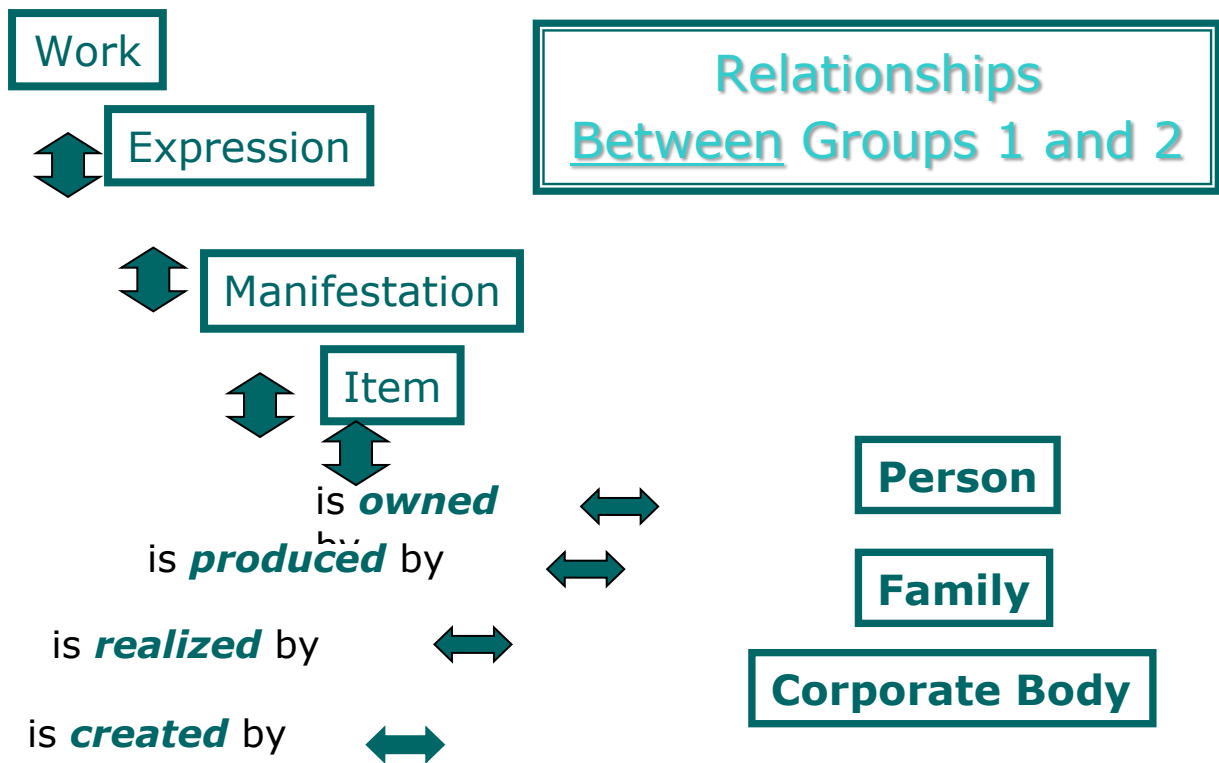


Diagram created by the Library of Congress

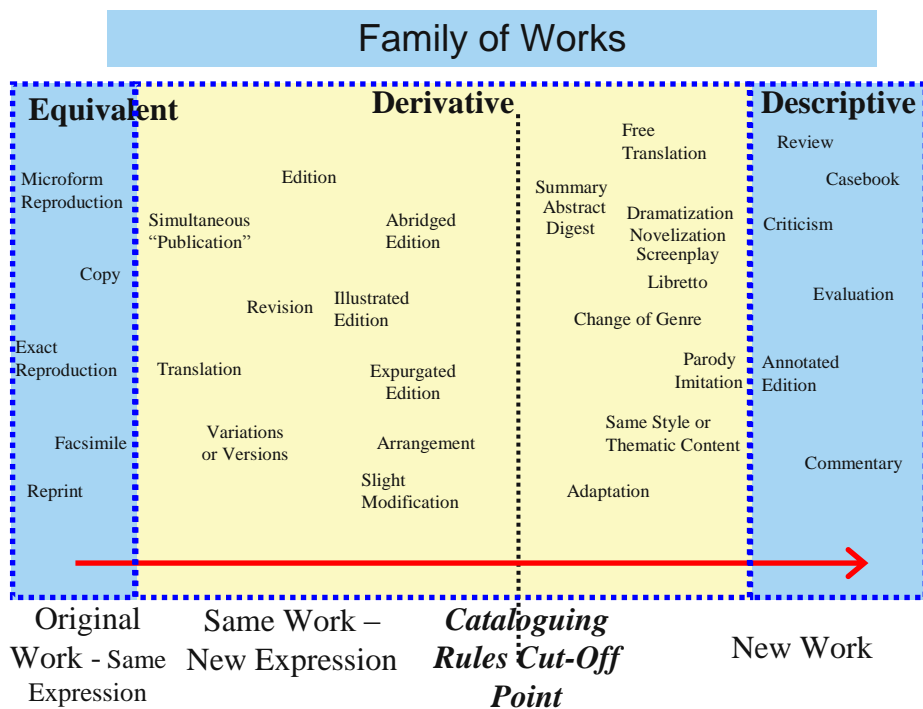


Diagram created by Barbara Tillett, Library of Congress.

What is the British Library doing?

The British Library decided in 2011 that it would be among the Libraries implementing RDA when the new standard was ready. It officially began to apply it to all records created by professional cataloguers from 1st April 2013.

Between the decision to implement and official implementation date lay many months of planning, discussion, trialling of workflows, writing of documentation, and training of cataloguers and associated paraprofessional staff. The slides used for training the paraprofessionals were developed locally, focusing on helping staff to recognize rather than create records, but equipping them also to make minor amendments to these records. In the BL, the paraprofessionals are divided between those whose focus is copy cataloguing of items for which a record is available from an agency, publisher or library, and those who do mainly acquisition work, and use records for ordering or receipting an item. The common principle is that all records selected for these different purposes should always be the best ones available. As with their previous AACR workflows, the RDA training for paraprofessionals is supplemented and ingrained by flowcharts which take the relevant staff step by step through the decisions needed in their daily processes.

The BL used the Library of Congress's training slides as the basis for its own programme for the professional cataloguers, but re-ordered and adapted these as dry runs seemed to indicate necessary. At the same time, a team of cataloguers and managers began to develop and document the workflows which are now publicly available through the RDA Toolkit and are known as the BL "WEMI" (Work, Expression, Manifestation, Item) Workflows for monographs, music, serials and so on. There is also a British Library Guide to Authority Records in RDA, developed by authority cataloguers. Together, these workflows are intended to provide guidance to cataloguers accustomed to think in MARC terms, but to prompt them gently into thinking differently at the same time. They explain which optional additions, alternatives or exceptions to RDA guidance the British Library is adopting, referring to the Library of Congress-Program for Cooperative Cataloging Policy Statements (LC-PCC PSs) to specify which ones are being followed by the BL.

Without these workflows to assist them, the cataloguers would have found the unaccustomed language of RDA itself vague and impenetrable; but the guidance does not aim to answer every question or provide black and white rules to cover every situation. RDA provides a lot of room for personal discretion in making cataloguing decisions, analytical added entries, related added entries, preferred titles and general notes. There is more scope for the choice and number of access points. The knowledge that the bibliographic information can be used independently and for different purposes in the digital environment enables cataloguers to use their judgement as to how much information can or should be added to the core data needed to describe the item in hand.

Within the workflows, separate policy documents are attached assisting cataloguers with dealing with specific situations and types of material. Such documents were also used in earlier versions with AACR, and include guidance on conference proceedings, compilations and translations, new editions, reprints, and exhibition catalogues. The BL Policy Groups for monographs, serials and so forth have regular meetings to discuss and update policy decisions.

All libraries with access to the Toolkit are able and welcome to use these BL workflows, and to contact Alan Danskin (alan.danskin@bl.uk) for copies of the local documentation.

What changes can we expect to see?

Libraries and others who consult the BL's catalogue will notice some significant differences in the appearance of parts of our newest records. All RDA records will now contain MARC fields 336, 337 and 338, which hold information about the format and carrier of the material catalogued. This reflects the fact that RDA does not treat paper-based monographs as the "norm", but requires cataloguers to specify type of publication and carrier in all cases.

Another visually striking if largely insignificant difference is that AACR2 used such abbreviations as "ill." for illustrations, "pbk." for "paperback", whereas RDA does not, and RDA also dispenses with such Latin phrases as "et. al." and "*sine nomine*" in cataloguing language. Instead, the natural language of the cataloguing agency is preferred.

Since RDA offers the ability to express relationships between the different entities, most records will also carry "relationship designators" on the names of authors or of corporate bodies considered responsible for a work. These are held in MARC subfield \$e on 1xx and 7xx fields, and specify the role the individual played in the work (rather than their role in life). These relationship designators are listed in an RDA Appendix, but the BL has taken the local decision to use only about six of them. The six are not listed prescriptively anywhere; it is simply the judgment of managers that cataloguers cannot afford the time to be drawing arcane distinctions between the meaning of various designators, and should find that a small number are fit for most purposes.

Despite this, and although AACR2 and RDA are structurally very different, the resulting records do look fairly and reassuringly similar to the users overall. In fact many RDA rules have been based on AACR2 directives and reworked within the FRBR conceptual framework using a new vocabulary. But essentially the same bibliographic data is recorded.

One example of an RDA record from the British Library: -

```
LDR L ^^^^^nam^a22^^^^^i^4500
001 016276150
003 Uk
005 20130612104540.0
008 130213s2012^^^^enkab^^^^b^^^^|0|0^0|fre^^
015 $$aGBB318483$$2bnb
020 $$a9781407310619 (paperback)
020 $$a1407310615 (paperback)
040 $$aUk$$beng$$cUk$$erda
0410 $$afre$$beng$$bfre$$bger$$bspa
042 $$aukblsr
08204 $$a936.401$$223
1001 $$aBaron, Anne$$c(Archaeologist),$$eauthor.
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24510 \$\$aProvenance et circulation des objets en roches noires («lignite») à l'âge du Fer en Europe celtique :\$\$b(VIIIème-ler s. av. J.-C.) /\$\$cAnne Baron.
 264 1 \$\$aOxford, England :\$\$bArchaeopress,\$\$c[2012]
 300 \$\$a589 pages :\$\$billustrations (black and white, and colour), maps (black and white) ;\$\$c30 cm.
 336 \$\$atext\$\$2rdacontent
 337 \$\$aunmediated\$\$2rdamedia
 338 \$\$avolume\$\$2rdacarrier
 4900 \$\$aBAR international series ;\$\$v2453
 546 \$\$aIncludes abstracts in English, French, German and Spanish.
 500 \$\$a"BAR S2453"--Title page verso.
 500 \$\$aOriginally presented as the author's thesis (doctoral)--Université de Strasbourg, 2009.
 504 \$\$aIncludes bibliographical references.
 540 \$\$aCurrent Copyright Fee: GBP12.00\$\$c0\$\$5Uk
 650 0 \$\$aLignite industry\$\$zEurope\$\$xHistory.
 650 0 \$\$aJet (Precious stone)
 650 0 \$\$alron Age\$\$zEurope.
 650 0 \$\$aCelts\$\$zEurope.
 650 0 \$\$aExcavations (Archaeology)\$\$zEurope.
 651 0 \$\$aEurope\$\$xAntiquities, Celtic.

Users will also see records which look like “hybrids” of AACR and RDA. These are the product of the deriving process, when a good AACR record is available and only minor amendments such as tweaks to the 300 field have been made according to RDA by acquisition or copy cataloguing staff.

Using RDA for foreign-language materials

The first section of the online RDA Toolkit consists of RDA guidance and examples in English. However, several European libraries plan to implement RDA, or are already doing so, and translations in French and German are already available, while the Spanish version is in preparation.

The French version of RDA is the fruit of the work of the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation (ASTED), the Bibliothèque et Archives Canada (BAC), the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) and the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). The middle section entitled Tools (Outils in the French version) gives access to some additional documents helping with the application of RDA. These comprise definitions and descriptions of the RDA element sets such as FRBR entities, RDA maps and mappings (to MARC bibliographic fields for instance), examples of RDA records, entity relationship diagrams and workflows. The last section is called Resources (Ressources) and gives links to AACR2, the Library of Congress-Program for Cooperative Cataloging Policy Statements and finally external resources such as the Library of Congress Cataloger's Desktop which combines a large variety of cataloguing documentation resources into an integrated online system. In the French translation some documents of the last two sections have been translated but the majority of the documents appear in English.

The BL's workflows and local guidance always appear in English whichever language interface is selected.

Conclusion

RDA has been well received at the British Library. Training went smoothly and cataloguers have very quickly felt the benefit of this new cataloguing standard, which engaged their attention and interest better than anyone had hoped. Even people accustomed to work for many years with AACR's printed guidelines have quickly become used to the online tools and are enjoying the challenge of the work.

Chair's report to the FSLG, 2011-2012

Teresa Vernon, Lead Curator, French Collections, British Library, London

This year's AGM sees the departure of two members of the Committee. Following a restructuring at the University of Manchester, Helen Dobson, who now has a new role as a Research Services Librarian, resigned from the Committee in June. Sarah Brain will be standing down from the Committee since French is no longer taught at UWE: the final year of the degree finished this summer. Sarah has, however, kindly agreed to continue in office until the end of the calendar year.

Sarah has made an outstanding contribution to the FSLG. She assumed the editorship of the *Annual Review* in 2009, first as sole editor, then as co-editor with Damien McManus, and brought huge professionalism and efficiency to this role. In 2012, Sarah volunteered to explore transferring the FSLG website to WordPress.

In practice, Sarah designed a complete new website, and even transferred all the files from the old site to the new one. Sara also acted as list owner of the WESLINE mailing list. We extend our warmest thanks to both Helen and Sarah and wish them the very best for the future.

This year's AGM and Study Day sees the launch of the new FSLG website on WordPress which Sarah will demonstrate to us later this morning. I would like to express a very big thank you to Anne Worden, Sylvia Gannon, the technician, and the University of Portsmouth for hosting and maintaining the FSLG website since its creation.

We also launch the new issue (issue 8) of the FSLG *Annual Review*. This is a bumper issue with a good mixture of topics. We have articles on collections (caricatures, pataphysics), an exhibition (Rousseau), e-resources (Cairn, MLA, IBSS), a topical bibliography (African independence), and a subject librarian based in a US library describes her working week. Grateful thanks are due to all the contributors, many of whom are in this room, and to our two editors, Damien McManus and Sarah Brain.

Colin and Nick have jointly initiated and prepared a questionnaire to identify librarians working with languages and their responsibilities, and also what use they made of WESLINE and the languages studies library groups. Earlier drafts have been discussed at our two committee meetings. The survey will now be launched under the WESLINE banner.

This year also saw fruitful collaboration with the Society for French Studies as we jointly organised a one-day seminar 'Constructing 21st Century Literature in French: Publication, Translation, Collection' held at the Institut français on 2 December 2011. The event was a great success and augurs well for future collaboration with the SFS. The presentations from the librarians' panel on collecting may be found in this year's *Annual Review*.

Finally, on behalf of the FSLG, I should like to say a big thank you to all on the Committee for their work during the year, most especially to Nick, Anne, Sarah, Damien and Colin.

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