

Intensity and Conciseness in David Malouf's *Jane Eyre*

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Intensity and Conciseness in David Malouf's *Jane Eyre*

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I still thank Madame VANDAMME for her patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and valuable critical comments during the planning and development of this master's thesis. Her willingness to give her time so generously has also been very much appreciated.

Contents

Introduction	1
Part 1 - David Malouf's <i>Jane Eyre</i>: French Translation	2
ACTE I	3
ACTE II	14
Part 2 - David Malouf's <i>Jane Eyre</i>: critical analysis of the libretto and its translation ..	21
Chapter 1 - Conciseness and "increase in tension" in David Malouf's <i>Jane Eyre</i> : a literary analysis	22
1.1 Choices made by Malouf in his rewriting and foreshortening of Brontë's <i>Jane Eyre</i>	22
1.1.1 A constraining frame	22
1.1.2 Main themes developed	22
1.2 A multi-layered piece of work	24
1.2.1 The process of naming: when identity is at stake	24
1.2.2 An interdisciplinary piece of work	25
1.2.3 Intertextuality	25
1.3 Intensity	26
1.3.1 A concise and evocative writing	26
1.3.2 Immediacy of perception	27
1.3.3 A "Taut chamber psychodrama"	27
Chapter 2 - Contrastive linguistics of French and English	28
2.1 Syntactic level	28
2.1.1 Zero-marking	28
2.1.2 Repetitions	29
2.1.3 Converting verbs into nouns	30
2.2 Grammatical level	31
2.2.1 Determiners	31
2.2.2 Ellipsis of the pronoun	32
2.2.3 Genitive	32
Conclusion	34
Bibliography	35

Introduction

Jane Eyre, the opera, stems from the collaboration of the Australian writer David Malouf and the British composer Michael Berkeley. It is Malouf who initiated the idea of adapting the 1847 novel by Charlotte Brönte for the stage and, once he had written the libretto, Berkeley agreed to put the words to music. Consequently, the opera was premiered in England on 30th June 2000 by the Music Theatre Wales Ensemble at the Cheltenham International Festival of Music.

My aim, throughout this thesis, is to focus on the translation into French of the libretto produced by David Malouf and to comment on the translation I wrote.

Claude and Jean Demanuelli, in the introduction to the handbook *Lire et Traduire*, explain that the translator needs to *read* the source text in order to translate it. In other words, he first needs to decipher it, to identify its specificities and prominent features before faithfully reproducing it into another language. Thus, his task is two-fold as he needs to both decode a source text and encode a target text.

In keeping with Claude and Jean Demanuelli's approach, I chose to base my thesis on one of the specificities of the source text, namely its conciseness. What is then at stake is the way in which the conciseness of the source text can be rendered in a translation into French while remaining faithful to the original, and, in particular, keeping its conciseness which goes hand in hand with the tense emotional landscape that underlies the opera.

My translation is to be found in the first part of the thesis. As to the second part, it is divided into two chapters. The first one corresponds to the first step prescribed by Claude and Jean Demanuelli, that is reading and deciphering, and thus revolves around the source text solely. It offers a literary analysis of Malouf's text which puts forward its conciseness and subsequent "increase in tension". Then, it is only in the second chapter that I have confronted my translation with the source text and explained, from a linguistic point of view, by what means I had rendered the conciseness of the source text in the target text.

Part 1 - David Malouf's *Jane Eyre*: French Translation

ACTE I

p. 3¹

Jane porte une robe noire toute simple et est en train de coudre, assise sur le devant de la scène.

JANE

Silence. Quiétude.

Certains d'entre nous choisisent,
quand les tempêtes agitent l'air,
et le vent dehors sur la lande fait trembler
les lambris, secoue les carreaux, un lieu
où le cœur s'arrête, à
l'abri des regards du monde et du martelage
perpétuel du ciel.

VOIX (MR ROCHESTER)

Jane ! Jane !

JANE

À l'abri du vent, le nid
est sur sa branche en lieu sûr.
Nulle empreinte ne tache la neige,
nulle terreur n'opprime
la poitrine sereine,
nul fantôme ne soulève le loquet, ne laisse
de creux sur l'oreiller.

VOIX (*soprano, alto et voix d'enfant créent le bruit du vent sur la lande et évoquent Thornfield et ses mystères*)

JANE

Nous nous bouchons les oreilles
Pour ne pas entendre les voix qui nous appellent
à revenir –

ROCHESTER

Jane ! Jane !

p. 4

JANE

... Claquons et fermons
la porte de notre âme
en un lieu sans vent,
sans bruit, loin

¹ The page numbers indicated correspond to the pages as they are numbered in the libretto by David Malouf, *Jane Eyre*, in the edition published by Vintage in 2000.

du naufrage du monde, où les jours
sont paisibles, nulle tempête ne trouble
le nid, nulle rafale hivernale
ne fait trembler le perce-neige.

Jane met sa couture de côté.

Voilà un an, tout juste un an
que j'ai mis de côté mon travail,
mis tout en ordre,
rassemblé mes affaires, mis mon bonnet

Elle se lève, met son manteau, son bonnet, prend son sac.

et abandonné ce moi que je ne suis plus, assis là,
pour aller, débordante d'enthousiasme,
la poitrine en émoi, à la rencontre de la
vie, du destin, de mon seul
et véritable amour.

MR ROCHESTER

Jane ! Jane !

JANE

Oui, peut-être
mon seul et véritable amour
en ce monde et tous les autres,
et j'arrivai alors au crépuscule, sous la neige

p. 5

VOIX (*évoquant Thornfield*)

à l'immense porte de l'immense
demeure isolée là-bas sur la lande,
Thornfield, Thornfield,
et frappai à la porte – et attendis là
dans la neige, mon cœur de jeune fille
battant la chamade.

*La porte s'ouvre sur Mrs Fairfax, la gouvernante de Thornfield, personne soignée et raffinée
qui a à peine plus de cinquante ans.*

JANE

Je suis attendue, il me semble.

ROCHESTER

Jane. Jane.

MRS FAIRFAX

Miss Eyre ?

JANE

Jane Eyre.

ROCHESTER

Jane. Jane.

MRS FAIRFAX

Bienvenue à Thornfield,

Miss Eyre. Au nom

du maître de cette maison,

Mr Rochester, bienvenue.

Je suis sa cousine, Mrs Fairfax. Je tiens

sa maison. En son nom,

bienvenue, ma chère.

p. 6

ADELE (*tout d'abord en coulisse*)

Est-ce Miss Eyre ? Est-ce elle,

enfin ? Est-elle venue ? Est-ce

Miss Eyre ?

MRS FAIRFAX

Et voici, Adèle, Miss Eyre,

la pupille de Mr Rochester –

dont vous avez la charge.

Jane et l'enfant s'approchent l'une de l'autre, timidement. Jane avance la main, Adèle court jusqu'à elle. Main dans la main, elles se dirigent vers le devant de la scène. Mrs Fairfax les observe un moment puis s'éloigne.

ADELE

Je sais chanter, vous savez,
Miss Eyre. Mais aussi danser. Regardez ! (*elle danse*)
Ma mère était danseuse
à l'opéra de Paris.
Mr Rochester, voyez-vous, était amoureux
d'elle. Connaissez-vous, Miss Eyre,
la scène de la folie dans *Lucia* ?

Alors qu'Adèle commence à chanter, elle est rejointe en coulisse par la voix de Mrs Rochester qui chante sa propre version de la folie.

JANE

Quelle maison fort étrange !
Aujourd'hui, alors que je marchais avec Mrs Fairfax
dans le long corridor sous les toits
j'ai entendu, venant d'une des chambres fermées à clef,
un rire, un rire étouffé de femme,
un rire noir mélasse –
Y a-t-il des fantômes
dans cette maison ?
J'ai entendu quelqu'un rire derrière
cette porte – un rire
de femme noir mélasse.

Adèle s'arrête brusquement de chanter, Mrs Rochester continue.

ADELE

Pauvre Lucia. Elle a tué
son mari, vous savez,
lors de la première nuit, dans leur lit de mariage,
et s'en est allée
en chantant tel un fantôme
dans sa robe maculée de sang – folle !

JANE

Dis-moi, Adèle -
Mr Rochester, est-il aimable envers toi ?

ADELE

Oh oui, il est très aimable. Il m'offre
des cadeaux. Mais il est triste, très triste,
vous savez. Il est toujours
triste, et en colère parfois.

JANE

Contre toi ?

ADELE

Oh non. Juste en colère. Il s'assied seul
dans sa chambre et fronce les sourcils – comme cela.
Il m'offre des cadeaux et je l'aime,
mais il est blessé, là
dans son cœur.

JANE

Son cœur ?

ADELE

Oh oui, il a bel et bien un cœur, je sais
qu'il en a un, mais il est blessé.
C'est pour cela qu'il ne peut pas rester avec nous,
qu'un jour il est
là, le lendemain parti.

Adèle se remet à chanter, cette fois-ci en français, une petite valse. Lentement, elle quitte la scène.

JANE (*seule*)

Je me suis demandée des milliers de fois,
À quoi peut-il bien ressembler, cet homme
dans la maison duquel je vis, dont les affaires
nous entourent –
cette chaise sur laquelle il s'assied, ces livres
qu'il lit. Qu'est-ce qui le pousse
à errer vers des lieux lointains
distants de sa propre demeure ?
Y a-t-il quelque chose ici

p. 9

à Thornfield qui le tourmente,
qui hante et tourmente pour qu'ainsi son cœur
toujours s'agite
et ne sache trouver le repos ?

Soudain parvient le hennissement d'un cheval et Jane est surprise par l'ombre d'un cheval qui se cabre. Elle chute, regarde autour d'elle. Les voix de Thornfield incluent désormais la voix d'un homme. Elle se lève, retrouve son calme, se dirige vers le fond de la scène, là où Mr Rochester se tient debout face à la cheminée. Il se retourne et dévoile un bras en écharpe.

ROCHESTER

Ah, Miss Eyre, vous voilà.
Alors c'était vous
là bas, sur le verglas, qui avez effrayé
mon cheval et m'avez fait tomber.
C'est à vous que je dois
cette blessure. Bien, comment me trouvez-vous,
à présent que je suis enfin là ?
Suis-je – beau ?

JANE

Non, Sir, vous ne l'êtes pas. Je veux dire que –

ROCHESTER

Alors, je vous déçois.
Je n'arrive pas à être à la hauteur
de vos rêves de jeune fille.

JANE

Je ne vis pas dans les rêves, Sir.

ROCHESTER

Ah non ? Vraiment ?
Oh Miss Eyre, ne vous a-t-on pas dit que je suis
D'humeur changeante, que ma nature
est sombre, que j'ai gâché
ma jeunesse par dissipation ? Ne vous a-t-on pas dit
quel ogre je suis ?

JANE

Sir, je me suis montrée trop directe. Je voulais juste dire,
Mr Rochester, que la beauté
n'a aucune importance.

ROCHESTER

Bien sûr que si ! –
Ah, quels yeux vous avez,
Miss Eyre. Pour sonder les pensées
les plus secrètes d'un homme.

JANE

Je veux dire, Sir, que vous êtes sévère,
très sévère, et que votre sévérité a
un pouvoir qui dépasse celui de la beauté.
Je pense que vous aimez
voir en vous un ogre.
Par fierté. À cause d'une certaine

blessure infligée à vos affections.

ROCHESTER

Et que savez-vous,
Miss Eyre, Jane Eyre, de mes
affections ? Vous n'avez aucune connaissance
du monde et de ses maux.

JANE

Je sais, Sir, que vous êtes malheureux.
Je sais qu'il y a quelque chose dans cet endroit –

ROCHESTER

Vous voulez dire le monde ?

JANE

Dans cette maison, ici, à Thornfield –
(DES VOIX)
qui vous hante, qui vous pousse à fuir
foyer et maison et ceux ici
qui vous aiment.

ROCHESTER

Et existent-ils, ceux-là qui dans cette maison
m'aiment ? Soyez sûre,
Miss Eyre, soyez sûre,
Jane, Jane, que j'aime cette maison,
ses aubépines, sa vieille façade,
ses fenêtres à l'obscur et éblouissante clarté,
mais, pour moi, c'est une maison maudite
à fuir à tout prix. Il y a toujours, toujours sur le seuil
de Thornfield

p. 12

une silhouette qui me barre la route
une vieille sorcière, le doigt pointé
vers le haut, un doigt qui écrit dans
l'air

*Aime-la si tu le peux, Edward Rochester,
Rentre chez toi si tu l'oses –
et elle rit!*

Vers la fin de cette scène, la silhouette de Mrs Rochester fait son apparition. Elle est échevelée et porte une robe de chambre. Elle lève le doigt et écrit. Elle rit d'un rire hystérique sur un fond de musique qui va crescendo : il y a des flammes et une note caribéenne dans l'air. Jane et Mr Rochester reculent. Mrs Rochester danse. Flammes. Mr Rochester réapparaît. Elle se rue sur lui et le fait entrer dans sa danse, il se débat, parvient à lui échapper, mais son visage est balafgré. Il s'attaque aux flammes. Jane apparaît en robe de chambre.

JANE

Mr Rochester, vous êtes blessé.

ROCHESTER

Non, ce n'est rien. Juste un peu de sang.

JANE

Vous saignez. Qui a fait ça ?
Votre visage est balafuré comme si
une bête sauvage –

ROCHESTER

Et vous Jane, vous –

JANE

Intacte, indemne.
Mais qui donc vous a fait cela ?
Qui a répandu ces flammes ? Qui s'en est pris
à votre visage ? Quelle bête sauvage –

ROCHESTER

N'avez-vous vu personne,
Jane ? N'avez-vous entendu personne ?

JANE

Non, Sir, personne. Mais j'ai entendu
un rire. Un rire
déjà entendu. Un rire traversant
une porte fermée à clef, un rire
de femme noir mélasse.

ROCHESTER

Jane, Jane, que cette horrible nuit
reste un secret entre nous. Stoppez vos questions.
Venez ici, Jane, venez là
où il y a de l'air
frais, loin de l'odeur
des cendres. Cette maison est comme un cachot,
ne le sentez-vous pas ?

JANE

J'ai entendu un rire. Un rire déjà
entendu, un rire
de femme noir mélasse.

ROCHESTER

Dites, Jane, accepteriez-vous une fleur ?

Oublions cette nuit, toute cette folie
de fureur et de flammes. Voilà une fleur,
tellement pure, voyez comme elle est
ordonnée, en toute simplicité.
Et écoutez. Les oiseaux
se réveillent, apportent à leurs petits
des vivres. Après nuit pareille,
Jane, le jour revient !
Regardez-moi, Jane –
ah, quels yeux vous avez,
Jane, Jane Eyre, pour sonder les pensées
les plus secrètes d'un homme.
Écoutez-moi à présent, je vais vous raconter
une histoire. Imaginez
un garçon, d'une nature indisciplinée,
depuis le plus jeune âge gâté.
Représentez-vous un jeune homme d'à peine vingt ans,
seul au milieu d'étrangers, loin
de sa patrie sur une île
aux journées chaudes, aux nuits plus chaudes encore, aux Antilles.
Concevez qu'il y commette
une erreur fatale – pas un crime,
non, pas un crime mais une erreur
telle que la vie entière d'un homme
puisse être souillée
par l'effroi et la boue – Oh que d'années, de longues
années de souffrance, le soleil de midi
à jamais noirci et sur l'âme
un poids jamais soulagé.

JANE

A qui appartient cette histoire ? Pourquoi mon cœur

p. 15

s'emballe-t-il ainsi et éprouve-il crainte et
compassion ? Est-ce l'histoire
que je cherchais ? Est-ce ma vie que l'histoire
exige à présent pour atteindre son terme ?
Est-ce là la porte
qui s'est ouverte à mon arrivée, mon
cœur
de jeune fille
battant la chamade, quand j'ai frappé à la porte
de l'immense maison sur la lande,
à Thornfield ?

ROCHESTER

Le cœur las, l'âme aigrie, il
revient chez lui après une longue absence,
dans l'immense maison sur la lande,
Thornfield, et là, dans ce lieu

sombre jaillit la lumière, la promesse
d'une vie nouvelle.

JANE

Mais je connais cette histoire.
Je l'ai entendue au plus profond de mon âme. C'est ma propre
histoire. C'est l'histoire
que ma vie entière n'a cessé de conter !

ROCHESTER

Vingt ans après, un moment
sans tache ni souillure. L'aurore !
Oh Jane, Jane, vous, créature presque surnaturelle,
je vous aime. Serez-vous mienne ? Dites oui
vite, avant que les ombres
ne me cernent à nouveau.

JANE

Calme. Quiétude.
Certains d'entre nous choisissent,
quand les tempêtes agitent l'air,
et le vent dehors sur la lande fait trembler
les lambris, secoue les carreaux, un lieu

p. 16

où le cœur s'arrête –

ROCHESTER

Jane, Jane,
dites-le. Dites Edward – donnez-moi mon nom –
Dites, Edward, oui,
oui, je vous épouserai.

JANE

Oui, Edward, oui, je vous épouserai.

ROCHESTER

(se détournant et dirigeant son regard vers la maison)
Qui osera me le refuser, désormais ? Qui osera dire
que je n'ai pas le droit ?
De passer outre les vieux usages
et les conventions ! D'enfin,
mener la vie d'un immortel !
(Rire de femme)

Jane doit le rappeler à la réalité.

JANE

Sir, Mr Rochester, Edward, j'ai dit
oui.

ROCHESTER

Jane, Jane. Laissez-moi-vous étreindre, Jane,
vous tremblez. Mais nous sommes hors de danger. Regardez,
il fait jour. Il n'y a rien
à craindre.

ACTE II

p. 19

Jane assise sur son lit. Un miroir en pied. Mrs Fairfax et Adèle entrent. Mrs Fairfax porte le voile nuptial de Jane. La robe pend déjà, d'une manière plutôt fantomatique, sur un mannequin juste à côté.

MRS FAIRFAX

Jane, ma chère, il est arrivé.
Votre voile.

ADELE

(Le prenant et le tenant à hauteur des yeux)
Il est si beau. Regardez.
(Elle danse en tournoyant avec le voile)

MRS FAIRFAX

L'enfant veut vous chanter
une petite chanson, ma chère. Pour vous souhaiter
santé et bonheur
dans cette nouvelle vie. *(Adèle commence à chanter)*
Vous nous avez apporté tant de joie,
Jane – à nous, et à Thornfield
et à lui, Mr Rochester.

ADELE

(Tout en chantant, elle couronne Jane du voile. Jane va devant le miroir et examine son image)
Si pur, blanc comme l'eau,
doux comme la brume, pâle
comme la lumière, ce voile nuptial
protégera la mariée de Thornfield
cette nuit. Qu'aucune force maléfique
ne s'approche. Qu'aucun souhait n'échoue.
Que la santé et la fortune,
pour toujours l'accompagnent doucement.

p. 20

JANE

J'ai peine à y croire.
C'est un rêve. J'ai peine à croire
que c'est moi. La mariée
de Thornfield. Jane
Eyre. Demain destinée à devenir
autre. Sa femme. Mrs Rochester.

Plus loin, à l'arrière de la scène, Mrs Rochester apparaît alors que Jane se tourne vers le miroir.

MRS ROCHESTER

Elle, la mariée de Thornfield ?
Mrs Rochester ? Qui suis-je
alors ? Qui suis-je ? Un fantôme
dans cette maison ? Oh Edward, Edward –
pourquoi m'as-tu mise
à l'écart ? Pourquoi m'as-tu envoyée
vivante dans la tombe ? Condamnée
à arpenter les couloirs
de cette maison, en vivant
fantôme ? Mrs Edward Rochester, le fantôme
de Thornfield.

Jane enlève le voile, le suspend à côté de la robe. Mrs Fairfax et Adèle se préparent à la quitter.

MRS FAIRFAX / ADELE
Bonne nuit, ma chère. Bonne nuit,
Miss Eyre, pour la dernière fois,
Miss Eyre. Jane, Dieu vous bénisse.
Qu'aucune force maléfique
ne s'approche. Bonne nuit. Bonne nuit.

Jane dort. Mrs Rochester s'avance. Elle prend le voile, le place sur sa tête. Elle reste ainsi un moment, à se regarder calmement dans le miroir. Doucement, elle commence à danser, au début

p. 21

d'un pas léger, puis plus sensuellement et enfin follement. Elle entonne un chant sans paroles. Finalement, elle crie et commence à arracher le voile. Jane se réveille. Mrs Rochester et Jane se font face un instant, en silence. Mrs Rochester lève la main. Un couteau. Les deux femmes se figent. Jane crie. Mr Rochester entre en scène, sans que Jane ne le voie. Lui aussi est parfaitement immobile. Mrs Rochester, le couteau toujours levé dans une main et le voile déchiré bien haut dans l'autre. Doucement, elle abaisse le couteau sous l'œil de Mr Rochester.

JANE
Qui êtes-vous ?

MRS ROCHESTER
(à Jane) Qui suis-je ? Qui suis-je, Edward ?

JANE
(qui comprend alors que Mr Rochester est également présent)
Edward, Edward, qui est cette femme ?

MRS ROCHESTER
Edward. Qui suis-je ?
Mrs Rochester ! Je suis Mrs
Edward Rochester,
la mariée de Thornfield.

Avec majesté, elle se détourne, en faisant glisser le voile autour d'elle, et s'éloigne.

JANE

Oh Sir, est-ce vrai ?

Cette femme malheureuse est-elle
celle que je devais devenir demain –
votre femme, Mrs Rochester ?

p. 22

ROCHESTER

Oh Jane, Jane, donnez moi mon nom
une fois encore, appelez-moi Edward. Vous ne pouvez pas vous douter
du démon qu'elle est !
Vous avez vu comment elle a balaféré mon visage –
une bête sauvage vous l'avez appelée.

JANE

Je ne l'avais pas vue alors.
À présent, je l'ai vue.
Votre femme, Edward :
dans ce monde et le prochain
votre seule et unique femme,
Edward.

ROCHESTER

Et vous, Jane ?

JANE

Moi, Sir ?
Je suis Jane Eyre. Je
suis Jane Eyre, Jane Eyre.

ROCHESTER

Jane, vous devez m'écouter.
N'avez-vous aucune pitié ?

JANE

J'ai de la pitié, oui, j'en ai –
envers votre épouse, cette femme tombée dans la folie.
Et envers moi-même qui devais devenir
votre femme et qui resterai
moi-même désormais, Jane Eyre, puisque je vous aime,
vous et vous seul.

ROCHESTER

Et moi, Jane, n'avez-vous pas de pitié
pour *moi* ? Vous seule pouvez me sauver,
Jane. Voudriez-vous que je reste lié

p. 23

pour toujours à cette femme devenue folle, ce démon,
lié, à jamais, chair contre chair,
sans joie, sans amour, sans un seul mot
de réconfort, et ce pour l'éternité ?

JANE

Elle est votre femme.
Que puis-je être
Pour vous ? Je dois partir d'ici –
et vite. M'éloigner de vous,
Edward, et de Thornfield—

ROCHESTER

Jane, je n'ai jamais eu l'intention
de vous nuire. Je voulais juste
vous apporter du bonheur,
ce modeste présent. Et après
vingt ans de tourments me saisir
d'un peu de réconfort.

JANE

Et elle alors ? Et votre femme,
Edward ? Elle n'y peut rien si elle est folle.

ROCHESTER

Jane, Jane, ce n'est pas sa folie
que je déteste. Croyez-vous, Jane, que si vous
étiez folle, je vous détesterais ?
Écoutez, Jane. Entendez le reste
de mon histoire. J'avais vingt ans, j'étais fougueux,
imprudent, un enfant gâté
de vingt ans.

(Derrière on voit Mrs Rochester jeune. Danse séductrice, qui progressivement devient dévergondée – elle fait glisser sa robe sur ses épaules, découvre finalement sa poitrine. Elle fait des gestes incontrôlés, agite ses cheveux. Une femme folle.)

Tout Spanish Town connaissait son état.
J'étais ensorcelé

p. 24

par sa beauté. Tous mes sens sur cette île
aux journées chaudes, aux nuits plus chaudes encore,
enflammés par sa peau, ses yeux, ses lèvres impures,
son rire noir mélasse.
Ils se jouaient de moi ! Ce n'est que plus tard que j'ai appris
que mon père était dans le secret.
Il m'avait vendu pour la dot !
Trente mille
livres nous avons été vendus, elle et moi,
moi et cette pauvre fille, aujourd'hui une femme
folle, liés, chair contre chair
elle dans son monde

de délire et d'infamie,
moi dans la longue
pénitence de ma passion, condamné à vivre
lié à cette femme folle,
dans la honte et le secret.
Et puis, Jane, et puis, un après-midi, je chevauchai
à nouveau en direction de Thornfield,
comme toujours redoutant ce que je devais y trouver,
et vous trouvai
vous, Jane, mon ange gardien—

JANE
Sir, c'est de la folie. Je dois partir—

ROCHESTER
Vous avez l'intention de me quitter ?

JANE
Oui. Oh, oui.

ROCHESTER
(la serre dans ses bras) Et maintenant, en avez-vous toujours l'intention ?

JANE
Oui.

p. 25

ROCHESTER
(l'embrassant) Et maintenant ? Jane ! Jane !

JANE
(se détachant de lui)
Pardonnez-moi. Nous nous retrouverons,
Edward, j'en suis convaincue, et je me languis de cet instant,
mais pas
dans ce monde—

ROCHESTER
Jane, Jane, l'intensité de mon amour,
mon infortune plus intense encore ne vous touchent-ils pas ?

JANE
Mon bien aimé, mon cher et tendre, jamais plus, non,
jamais
en ce monde. Je m'en vais. Ne brisez pas
mon cœur en m'appelant.

Elle commence à s'approcher du devant de la scène. Il marche lentement, à reculons, et plonge dans la pénombre.

Jane atteint le devant de la scène, là où nous l'avons vue pour la première fois. Elle s'assied.

MR ROCHESTER

Jane. Jane.

Jane reprend ses travaux d'aiguille.

MRS ROCHESTER

(fait son apparition) Edward

Mr Rochester et la femme folle s'affrontent en une lutte à mort éclairée par les flammes. Voix de Rochester, Mrs Rochester, Mrs Fairfax, Adèle, les voix de Thornfield, mais transformées et chaotiques.

p. 26

MR ROCHESTER

Jane, Jane, où êtes-vous, Jane ?

JANE

(les mêmes mots qu'au début, mais pressants à présent, hystériques)

Silence. Quiétude.

Certains d'entre nous choisissent,
quand les tempêtes agitent l'air,
la tranquillité. La quiétude.

La musique du feu atteint son paroxysme alors que Mrs Rochester tombe au milieu des flammes. Rochester, le visage noir de suie, essaie de la sauver en étouffant les flammes du pied.

JANE

Nous nous bouchons les oreilles
pour ne pas entendre les voix qui nous crient
de revenir. Mon bien aimé, mon cher et tendre, jamais plus,
non, jamais
en ce monde. Je suis Jane
Eyre. Je suis Jane Eyre.
Jane Eyre.

Mr Rochester s'extirpe des ruines, aveugle, tendant les mains devant lui.

ROCHESTER

Jane ! Jane ! Où êtes-vous,
mon ange ? Je suis dans les ténèbres !
Libre mais seul et emprisonné dans les ténèbres.
Jane ! Jane !

Jane pose son travail, écoute. Tourbillonnement du vent. Thornfield. La voix de Rochester au loin l'appelle.

ROCHESTER

Jane !

p. 27

La musique retombe. Jane se lève. Elle écoute. Lentement, alors que débute la musique pour la scène finale, elle se dirige vers le fond de la scène, là où Mr Rochester attend, les bras grand ouverts. Elle court sur les derniers mètres. Ils s'étreignent.

ROCHESTER

Jane. Jane. Est-ce réellement vous ?

Êtes-vous réelle ? Je vous ai appelée depuis les ténèbres.

Je suis aveugle, Jane. Êtes-vous réelle ?

Est-ce vous ? M'avez vous répondu depuis les ténèbres et êtes-vous venue à moi ?

Jane, Jane, vous ne devez jamais me quitter.

JANE

C'est Jane, Edward. C'est Jane.

Je suis venue, je vous ai répondu depuis les ténèbres, je suis venue

à vous, mon bien aimé, mon cher et tendre.

Je ne vous quitterai

plus, mon bien aimé, mon cher et tendre.

Jamais plus, non jamais,

en ce monde. Jamais. Jamais.

Part 2 - David Malouf's *Jane Eyre*: critical analysis of the libretto and its translation

Chapter 1 - Conciseness and “increase in tension” in David Malouf’s *Jane Eyre*: a literary analysis

1.1 Choices made by Malouf in his rewriting and foreshortening of Brontë’s Jane Eyre

1.1.1 A constraining frame

“How do you compress so familiar a story as *Jane Eyre* into a drama suitably concentrated for the operatic stage, yet maintain its central features?” (Service, 6). Rewriting Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* for the operatic stage while preserving its most powerful features is indeed the challenge that Malouf has taken up.

On the one hand, Malouf had to adapt to the constraints imposed by the people in charge of producing the opera – and mostly to the fact that he had a limitation of five characters. On the other hand, as it was meant to be staged, there was also a time-constraint and, to some extent, a space-constraint. Besides, the opera fits in seventy-two minutes while the novel is over five-hundred pages long. So Malouf chose to focus on the events at Thornfield and to concentrate on five voices which stand for Mr Rochester and for those who evolve in his circle, that is his ward Adele, his housekeeper Mrs Fairfax, his wife always referred to as Mrs Rochester and Jane, the woman he loves. The opera is all the more intimate as there is a “concentration on the novel’s psychological core: the relationships among Jane, Rochester and Mrs Rochester” (Service, 6). Besides, these three characters constitute the quintessential trio composed of the two lovers and the rival staged by many an opera.

The events take place a year after Jane left Thornfield in a single place – Thornfield – and there is also a single action which is the unfolding of Jane’s memories paralleled by the voice of her lover calling her: “Jane. Jane.” – a voice that she at first associates with her own imagination until she realises that it is actually real.

1.1.2 Main themes developed

According to Héberlé,² Malouf kept the novel’s key moments such as the first encounter between Jane and Rochester, the confrontation between Jane and Mrs Rochester and three out of the four passages illustrating the madness of Mrs Rochester. These key moments go along with the main themes that he chose to develop, and which are the passion between Jane and Rochester, the characterization of Mrs Rochester and the idea of being locked up.

² In Jean-Philippe Héberlé. “*Jane Eyre* de Michael Berkeley et de David Malouf : la transposition opératique d’un grand classique de la littérature anglaise.” *Revue LISA*. Vol. IV - n°4 (2006): paragraph 7.

I am first going to examine this last idea and show that the three main characters are all concerned by this idea of imprisonment. In his article,³ Tom Rosenthal comments on the Bluebeardian characteristics of Malouf's work saying that "there is a lot of talk about doors." He adds that Thornfield Hall is like the Blue-Bearded Duke's castle in the sense that they are both "hermetically full of hidden dangers and claustrophobic". When Jane says: "Swing shut the door of our soul" (Malouf, 4), it indicates that, for her, seclusion is a kind of refuge that serves to protect her from external threats. This passage, for instance, alludes to the fact that she fled away from Rochester in order to conserve her proud autonomy of spirit, and she therefore refused to be his mistress. Another example would be that, at first, Jane does not show her feelings to Rochester because she is prisoner of the social conventions of her time and also because she is trapped in her regarded-as-inferior role as a governess and a woman. Jane thus represses her feelings which culminate in an "inner turmoil of frustrated desires" (Berkeley in Service, 7) and the story that she tells is actually interiorised. As to Rochester, Thornfield is "like a dungeon" to him (13) and he is prisoner of his past which prevents him from living freely and marrying Jane. Finally, Mrs Rochester is literally locked up in the attic. When she visits Jane's room to tear the wedding veil, she is "wordlessly singing" (21) and this might point to her failure to articulate her feelings – her imprisonment being also metaphorical.

This leads us to the characterisation of Mrs Rochester which is regarded as one of the most significant rethinkings of the novel in Malouf and Berkeley's work.⁴ The theme of madness is still present and culminates when Mrs Rochester sets fire first to Rochester's room and later to the house itself and when she tears the veil to pieces. She is still and most obviously a sanguinary character originating a fantastic, gothic and fiendish atmosphere.⁵ And yet, Mrs Rochester is humanised. In that respect, Malouf is taking after Jean Rhys who, in her 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, treats Bertha with understanding and sympathy. Both authors chose to give Mrs Rochester a voice while Brontë did not make her utter any articulate sound in her novel. In Malouf's work, Mrs Rochester's presence is manifest and even haunting. Adele singing about the mad scene in Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* acts as a forerunner of Mrs Rochester's vocal and then physical appearance. In addition, the fact that she repeatedly asks questions about her own identity and shows consciousness of her condition contributes to give her a human status. For instance, she asks Edward why he has

³ Tom Rosenthal. "Recapturing the heart of *Jane Eyre*". *The Telegraph* (20.05.2000).

⁴ According to Service, p. 7.

⁵ Adapted from Héberlé, op. cit., paragraph 15.

condemned her to walk the corridors of Thornfield like “a living ghost” (20). She is, in Berkeley’s words, “a tragic figure, somebody you sympathise with” (in Service, 6), although, according to Da Sousa Correa, some argue that Mrs Rochester is eventually “sacrificed in the interests of the romantic resolution that the opera privileges” (Da Sousa Correa, 158).

“Far from being a reduced version of *Jane Eyre*, this adaptation magnifies and illuminates previous hidden corners of the story, thereby creating a strongly independent operatic work” (Service, 7). Malouf’s writing back to *Jane Eyre* reflects his creative engagement. He is seeing things with fresh eyes and his work, based on a 19th century novel, relates to contemporary society. Jane repressing her feelings and longings, the exposition of Brontë’s racial undertones through the recurrent “dark as molasses” which is repeated over and over again are some of the contemporary issues dealt with. Thus, Malouf’s version, which is characterised by a conciseness of style and formulation, comes as an enrichment of both the original text and its many rewritings.

1.2 A multi-layered piece of work

1.2.1 The process of naming: when identity is at stake.

In both the novel and Malouf’s rewriting, Jane takes on several names which reflect the different stages of her progression in life. Similarly, the way Rochester calls Jane reflects the progression of their relationship. On their first encounter, Rochester already shifts from the distant “Miss Eyre” to the more intimate “Jane Eyre”, when the latter speaks boldly to him about beauty and about “some hurt to [his] affection” (11), and immediately after he uses “Miss Eyre” again before switching to “Jane” for good. The way Jane calls Rochester is not as linear though. She calls him “Sir” until he entreats her to both call him Edward and marry him: “Say Edward – give me my name – / Say Edward, yes / yes, I will marry you” (16). However, when the existence of Mrs Rochester is revealed, Jane switches back to “Sir” before calling him Edward again and for good from the moment when she says that they “shall meet again” (25). In short, the greater the intimacy between them, the more stripped down the names they give each other. As to Jane, at first she regards herself as “Jane Eyre”, then as “Mrs Rochester” before eventually asserting thrice in a row: “I’m Jane Eyre” (22). In other words, she is not Mrs Rochester, she is not “another” (20) but herself and still a free independent being. Identity is also at stake through Mrs Rochester’s repeated question: “Who

am I?” (21). She is the real Mrs Rochester and Bride of Thornfield and yet, somebody else claims the same titles, her new identity then being “the ghost of Thornfield” (20).

1.2.2 An interdisciplinary piece of work

Malouf and Berkeley’s work presents a multimedia form as they resort to words as well as visual effects – on stage and paper – and music. Meaning put aside, the printed text and the words sung to music have, each one, their own modes of emphasis. On paper, it depends on the way the sentences are divided up from one line to the next and, in the libretto, there are many run-on-lines. They are near to systematic when, for instance, Mrs Rochester asks questions about her identity and this reflects her chaotic state of mind. However, and as far as the run-on lines are concerned, the phrasing of the opera does not always correspond to the layout of the text. The opera tends to play on the way the words are uttered. Still in the same example, Jane’s and Mrs Rochester’s voices mingle when they say “The bride of Thornfield” as well as “Mrs Rochester” (20) and that mirrors their overlapping identities. What’s more, in Mrs Rochester’s questions, the emphasis is laid on the interrogative word “why” (20) which is repeated over and over again in the opera to show that Mrs Rochester cannot find a satisfying answer to her existential questions and to express how unjust her condition is.

Thus, “Berkeley’s orchestration enables the music to comment on the action and dramatise psychological undercurrents running through the novel” (Da Sousa Correa, 156). To this, Berkeley adds that there is a constant worried music going on in the bass” (Service, 7). Thus, the setting to music and the staging of Malouf’s *Jane Eyre* take words a step further. To some extent, when words fail to express the inexpressible, what lies beyond the surface, music and dance take over and add new layers of signification. The combination of the three media tends towards something very dense and poignant, in which emotions are intensified, and most obviously this enriches the interpretation of both the novel and the libretto.

1.2.3 Intertextuality

In *Jane Eyre*, the opera, intertextuality is not limited to the sphere of Brontë’s novel. As mentioned above, the mad scene in Donizetti’s opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* is taken up by Malouf through the character of Adele who sings about “poor Lucia” (7) who killed her husband on their wedding night and then went mad. Besides, Donizetti’s opera is also the transposition of a 19th century novel, namely the 1819 *Bride of Lammermoor* by Walter Scott, one of Brontë’s favourite authors. There is obviously a parallel between

the *Bride of Lammermoor* and the “*Bride of Thornfield*” (20) – Malouf and Berkeley having actually thought of calling their opera “*Jane or the Bride of Thornfield*”. This reference to the mad scene is thus part of textual as well as musical intertextuality, as it also becomes a leitmotiv in Berkeley’s adaptation for the stage.

Musical intertextuality is furthered in the opera by the waltz on which Adele and Jane dance and which celebrates French culture and by music reminiscent of Britten’s opera *The Turn of the Screw*, premiered in 1954. The latter reference both pays a tribute to the illustrious man – Berkeley’s godfather – and celebrates the British tradition of opera. So, to some extent, Malouf and Berkeley’s work has some metatextual elements in it in the sense that they engage in a reflexion about the transposition – either into words or music – of celebrated pieces of art.

All of the above – overlapping identities, interdisciplinarity and intertextuality – tend towards an increase in density, richness and intensity.

1.3 Intensity

1.3.1 A concise and evocative writing

There seem to be no superfluous words in Malouf’s work. This is best illustrated by the recurring cry “Jane. Jane.” Malouf describes this passage as the “strangest”, “the most romantic memory” for readers of the novel (Malouf in Da Sousa Correa, 156). It is indeed a very powerful moment when we hear Rochester calling Jane “out of the dark” (27), out of the ether. This cry is very evocative: it says a lot about Rochester’s longings, about the sense of unity and understanding that exists between the lovers, and that in spite of the fact that they are miles apart.

Jane and Rochester utter many one-word sentences or, more generally, short sentences, which reflects their own natures as well as the strong link that unites them. Indeed, the degree of fusion between Rochester and Jane is so high that they hardly need to resort to words and even less to clarifications as they intuitively understand each other.

The conciseness achieved by the librettist makes the action flowing and swift and the stripping down of the novel in order to expose its most powerful features is best illustrated by

Berkeley who describes their work as the “medical cross-section of the central core of the novel” to take out “the beating heart”.⁶

1.3.2 Immediacy of perception

In the introduction to the libretto, Malouf presents the opera as “the unfolding in Jane’s memory of the events at Thornfield, but, as we see it, in real space and real time” (x). Contrary to the novel, in which the story is told in retrospect and information is filtered by Jane the adult and narrator, there is no such mediation between the characters and the audience in Malouf’s work. Indeed, the spectator is directly confronted with what is going on on stage and, thus, he can draw his own conclusions, while, in the original novel based on a second-, sometimes third-hand report, Jane, the narrator, can manipulate the reader much more easily and thus lead him to believe what she wishes. For instance, in the novel, Jane tells Rochester about her confrontation with Mrs Rochester in broad daylight while walking in the park, whereas in the opera the audience sees in real space and real time the encounter of the two women. While in the novel Mrs Rochester – whose identity is not known of Jane yet – is first associated with something intangible such as a “ghost” in a nightmare and then with something “malignant” (Brontë, 328) which clearly represents a threat in the reader’s mind, in Malouf’s version, Mrs Rochester becomes a tragic figure able to utter her griefs, so that the audience is likely to feel sorry for her.

1.3.3 A “Taut chamber psychodrama”

Here is another comparison by Berkeley: “It’s as though you’ve taken a telescope and folded it up inside itself, and so all these layers are compressed, and that adds a kind of almost fevered nightmarish quality to it, and the music I think.”⁷ As seen before, *Jane Eyre*, the opera, is a multi-layered work whose density contributes to the creation of an atmosphere of its own. Berkeley also describes their work as a “taut chamber psychodrama”⁸ in the sense that the feelings of the characters are put forward and that, as a result, the tension is palpable. This atmosphere is based on echoes, reverberations and sonorities and the result is both haunting and mysterious.

⁶ Berkeley in Rosenthal, op. cit.

⁷ Berkeley in an interview by Andrew Ford (presenter) and Penny Lomax and Maureen Cooney, (producers). “*David Malouf and Michael Berkeley on 'Jane Eyre'*”. Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2005).

⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 2 - Contrastive linguistics of French and English

This second chapter aims at showing how, in my translation, I tried to remain as faithful as possible to the conciseness and emotional intensity of the original text. Besides, this conciseness is due to the will of the author as well as the characteristics of the English language. The French language being in general less concise, for a given group of words or sentence, it has not always been possible to remain as concise as the original. Indeed, it is not always obvious to respect both the original text and the structures imposed by the French language. So, in my translation, either I could keep the same concise structure or I could, to some extent, keep the conciseness of the original but through different means. In the latter case, the phenomenon of conciseness could be either located at the same place as before or displaced somewhere else within the same group of words or, failing that, within the same sentence or paragraph. On the whole, out of a concern for fidelity towards the original text, I tried, while translating from English into French, to trim down the syntax and the turns of phrase.

Obviously, this comparative study is not meant to be comprehensive. It is rather a selection of some of the most significant expressions of conciseness in both the source text and the target text. The points I defend either come under the syntactic level, in which case they are developed in my first section, or, the grammatical level, and then they are treated in my second section. In addition, it should be noted that the cases developed are often recurrent throughout the text and that the objective of conciseness that they illustrate is in keeping with the building of a tense emotional landscape.

2.1 Syntactic level

2.1.1 Zero-marking

According to Marre and Demanuelli, the \emptyset operator, which is specific to the English language, stands for compatibility, convergence and welding.⁹ In other words, this operator usually brings two elements into close association or union. The most common types of zero-marking involve the relative pronoun \emptyset , the subordinating conjunction \emptyset and the \emptyset article (the latter will be dealt with later on). For the time being, I will dwell on zero that-clauses, which are introduced by the subordinating conjunction \emptyset , and here is one taken from the libretto:

⁹ \emptyset = “Marqueur par excellence de la “compatibilité, du rapprochement, de la soudure” in Claude Demanuelli and Claire Marre, *Réussir l'analyse grammaticale et la version*, p. 109.

“(Who will say) \emptyset I have no right to this?” (16). In this example, the use of the conjunction THAT would have been grammatically correct. Consequently, the use of \emptyset corresponds to a strategy carried out by the utterer. Lapaire and Rotgé argue that, when both are possible, \emptyset is preferred to THAT when the utterance is brief because it enables the fusion of the verb and its object.¹⁰ In addition, THAT signals anteriority, that is something that has already been considered by the utterer while \emptyset lays stress on the piece of information contained within the subordinate clause.¹¹ So, in my example, with the use of \emptyset , the audience is directly confronted to the thoughts of Rochester and to the spontaneous outpouring of his rhetorical question. As a result, the distance between the audience and Rochester is reduced and the atmosphere gains in intimacy. Thus, the relief of Rochester, stemming from the conviction that he is going to marry Jane, is all the more palpable. In the same way that there is no syntactic element between the main clause and the subordinate clause, there seems to be no obstacle “to this”, that is to his marrying Jane. For that matter, what comes after \emptyset is strongly asserted and presented as ineluctable: no one can possibly say he has no right to this.

In French, we do not have the distinction that exists in English as regards the use or the omission of the subordinating conjunction THAT. So, to keep the sense of immediacy of the source text, we need to resort to different strategies. Here I chose to omit the precision “to this” in my translation as in French we do not need to specify to what Rochester might not have right as this piece of information is obvious because mentioned in the previous sentence. Hence the translation I suggest: “Qui osera dire que je n’ai pas le droit ?”. In short, I compensated a loss in conciseness and intensity by a gain of the same ilk.

2.1.2 Repetitions

Although English is known for its conciseness, the source text contains repetitions which stress such-and-such facet. For instance, Jane wonders about Rochester’s appearance and personality saying: “(I have asked myself a thousand times,) what is he like, what is he like” (8). What happens in Jane’s head, this constant repetition of a question that torments her, is paralleled by the structure of the source text. In French, a repetition of the same structure would be awkward, all the more so as the idea of repetition is already present in “I have asked myself a thousand times”. So, I preferred using the adverb “bien” to avoid the repetition while keeping the emphasis. The translation I suggest is: “à quoi peut-il bien ressembler”. According to Vinay and Darbelnet, “generally, it can be said that French words function at a

¹⁰ Adapted from Wilfrid Rotgé and Jean-Rémi Lapaire, *Réussir le commentaire grammatical de textes*, p. 277.

¹¹ Adapted from Wilfrid Rotgé and Jean-Rémi Lapaire, *Linguistique et grammaire de l’anglais*, p. 617.

higher degree of abstraction than the corresponding English words” (52). In my example, English seems indeed more concrete in the sense that this “linguistic realisation mirrors concrete reality” (51): the act of repeating is mirrored in the text by a repetition of the same utterance. This is why Claude and Jean Demanuelli associate the English language with impressionism because it delivers the facts just as they are perceived.¹²

2.1.3 Converting verbs into nouns

In the target text, sometimes conciseness is also achieved by means of a transposition. This implies that the same meaning is thus conveyed by different word classes. Here are the first words that Rochester says to Jane: “Ah, Miss Eyre, there you are.” (10) that I translated as follow: “Ah, Miss Eyre, vous voilà.” Thus, there is no verb in my translation. Besides, Claude and Jean Demanuelli notice that French often resorts to nominalisation while English tends to actualise.¹³ For instance, in my translation of “All Spanish town knew what she was” (26), the subordinate clause “what she was” is converted into a noun phrase: “Tout Spanish Town connaissait son état”. In this example, while the original sentence is complex as it contains a main clause and a subordinate clause, the French translation consists in only one clause. Thus, here, the French sentence puts all the elements on the same plane while the English sentence introduces a relation of dependence between its two clauses. For once, French seems to be more direct and straightforward than English.

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, resorting to analysis to report on something tangible and describing events as if they were substances “are optimal characterizations of the way French, mentally and linguistically, faces reality”.¹⁴ The two features alluded to, that is the need for analysis and the key role of the French noun, have both been illustrated, in this section, by examples which also put forward the conciseness of the French translation.

I am now going to move from the syntactic level to the grammatical level, and more especially to the sphere of the noun phrase.

¹² « L'impressionnisme livre les faits tels que les lui fournit une perception immédiate. » in Claude and Jean Demanuelli, op. cit., p. 23.

¹³ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁴ “the two expressions ‘traduire les coupures imposées au réel par l’analyse’ and ‘présenter les événements comme des substances’ are optimal characterizations of the way French, mentally and linguistically, faces reality” in Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*, p. 100.

2.2 Grammatical level

2.2.1 Determiners

Zero-marking has already been mentioned above. Our focus is now on the \emptyset article, which already appears in the very first line of the libretto: “ \emptyset Silence. \emptyset Quietness.” My translation keeps the same structure: “ \emptyset Silence. \emptyset Quiétude”. It should be noted that the \emptyset article that appears before the uncountable nouns “silence” and “quietness” cannot be replaced by the definite article THE here, while the definite article LE/LA could have been used in the French translation. However, I chose to keep the \emptyset article in my translation to keep as close as possible to the emotional density of the original. Indeed, in both languages, the \emptyset article refers to the notion, the concept of silence and quietness. The words are bare and as a result their semantic properties are put forward. Thus, the impact is maximal. Lapaire and Rotgé even say that the use of \emptyset + NOUN is a way to make silence speak.¹⁵

However, often, the use of the \emptyset article is not possible in French. Thus, when Jane says “But I heard \emptyset laughter. I heard that laughter before” (Malouf, 2000, 13), the \emptyset article of the source text needs to be replaced by the indefinite article UN in French: “Mais j’ai entendu un rire. Un rire déjà entendu”. Here again, I compensated a loss in conciseness by a gain in conciseness somewhere else within the same sentence – as I chose to omit the repetition of “I heard” which is not necessary in French, as explained above. It should also be noted that here, both the \emptyset article and the indefinite article A were acceptable in English. So, with \emptyset , the emphasis is laid on the semantic content of the word “laughter” and, actually, here, with “ \emptyset laughter”, the sheer power of the noun is manifest and this contributes to the suggestion of something rather uncanny.

In contrast to that, sometimes, the indefinite article in English is translated by the \emptyset article as illustrated in the following example: “after such a night” (14) which becomes “après \emptyset nuit pareille”. In English, we have the sequence: intensifier SUCH + indefinite article A + noun, while in French we use: the \emptyset article + noun + adjective. The structure used to emphasize the great degree of what happened during the night is thus different from one language to the other and it is in French that the greatest conciseness is achieved.

¹⁵ « Faire parler le silence » in Wilfrid Rotgé and Jean-Rémi Lapaire, *Linguistique et Grammaire de L’Anglais* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1991), p. 93.

Still in the class of the determiners, although not an article but a quantifier, NO is often used in the libretto. At the very beginning of the opera, Jane says: “No print marks the snow / no terror affrights / the still breast, / no ghost lifts the latch” (3). The anaphora, which gives to this passage a rhythm of its own, is easily kept in the translation: “Nulle empreinte ne tache la neige, / nulle terreur n'opresse / la poitrine sereine, / nul fantôme ne soulève le loquet”. Thus, “in the wind’s lee” (3), there is not the slightest danger. The place is “safe” (3) and Jane’s words, whether sung in English or French, are very musical. Here, both languages only need a few words to convey this sense of quietness.

2.2.2 Ellipsis of the pronoun

In the source text, the subject pronoun is sometimes omitted. For instance, Jane says: “and came in snowy twilight / [...] / and knocked – and stood there” (4-5) that I translated by “et j'arrivai alors au crépuscule, sous la neige / [...] / et frappai à la porte – et attendis là.” Unlike what happens in English, in French, when the subject pronoun is in initial position, it cannot be omitted. However, when a pronoun is the subject of several verbs, once it has been mentioned, there is no need to repeat it. The ellipsis of the pronouns puts the verbs in the spotlight and as we read, or listen, we actually visualise the series of actions mentioned. In addition, it reinforces the compactness of the utterance. Thus, in both the source text and the target text, this passage seems as flowing as Jane’s memories.

2.2.3 Genitive

In English, we frequently have the choice between a premodifying genitive (N1’S N2) and a postmodifying prepositional phrase with OF (N of N), while in French we only have a prepositional phrase with DE. After the episode of the fire in Rochester’s room, the latter entreats Jane to stop talking about “this night’s horrors” (13). Had it been “the horrors of the night”, the relation between “horrors” and “night” would have been presented as new, while, with the genitive, this relation is taken for granted – this is in keeping with the use of THIS which is also the sign of an anteriority. So, in French, we cannot directly render the distinction between the two structures as there is only one possibility, that is, “les atrocités de cette nuit”. However, I preferred resorting to a transposition in which the English noun “horror” was converted into the French adjective “horrible” and I thus translated by “cette horrible nuit”. I opted for this translation because the adjective “horrible” and the noun “nuit” are thus in closer contact, in the same way that the relation between “horrors” and “night” is tighter with a genitive.

Last but not least in this section, the allusion to “a woman’s laugh, dark as molasses” (7, 13), also found in the form of “her laugh, dark as molasses” (24), is a leitmotiv throughout the libretto. Its origin is mysterious, the way it is defined too, and, as such, this laugh is haunting. I translated this passage by “un rire de femme noir mélasse”. As explained above, the relation between “rire” and “femme” is weaker than in the original genitive form “a woman’s laugh”, but this is compensated by the dropping of the adverb AS. Thus, in my translation there is no explicit comparison, as “dark” and “molasses” are in direct contact and the degree of fusion and identification between these two words becomes even greater than in the original text. In addition, I chose to omit the comma, so that “un rire de femme noir mélasse” becomes an indissociable whole.

What Vinay and Darbelnet call “economy” is conveyed by “a tightening up of the utterance”. They add that “an utterance is economic when the same content is carried by a reduced signifier” (193). This “tightening up of the utterance” is striking in the source text. Indeed, the omission of grammatical markers, such as the subordinating conjunction \emptyset , the \emptyset article and the subject pronoun, lightens the structure. In addition, other devices of the English language, such as the genitive, also increase the density of it. Vinay and Darbelnet further argue that “each language has its own cases of comparatively greater economy” (193) and this is indeed what has been observed throughout this chapter. In my attempt to render the conciseness of Malouf’s *Jane Eyre*, I have been confronted with questions of options and constraints. Indeed, the translator has to submit to constraints, that is to the requirements that the grammar of the target language impose and, in that respect, his leeway is extremely limited. But, when it comes to options, when two or more solutions are grammatically acceptable, his leeway expands and whenever I could think of an alternative which “tightened up the utterance”, I made the most of it.

Conclusion

Throughout the libretto, it is striking to observe how the compactness of the utterance mirrors the sense of fusion that unites the lovers, the flow of the many events and the sense of immediacy that pervades the whole opera.

To translate Malouf's *Jane Eyre* as faithfully as possible, my approach has been to first identify what forces were at stake in the source text and only then have I looked into the tools that the French language possesses to render the two main forces which are at work in the libretto, namely conciseness and, as a matter of consequence, "increase in tension". Besides, in the libretto, these two forces are not contradictory but complementary and, as a result, the opera is dramatically effective, as illustrated in the following quote by Malouf: "My task as a librettist was to produce a piece with a single action and for no more than five voices, though I might add that the increase in tension that this produces seems to me to be an advantage rather than a limitation" (x).

Similarly, my task as a translator was to compose with the constraints of the target language while respecting the characteristics of the source text, these two requirements often being contradictory as I was often divided between the risk of distorting Malouf's words to respect the target language and the risk of forcing the target language to respect the source language.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the French version that I wrote is actually the translation of a translation insofar as Malouf's *Jane Eyre* is already the translation of Charlotte Brontë's novel into another medium, that is opera, and into another period too.

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Mots-clés :

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Summary:

This master's thesis is about conciseness and increase in tension in David Malouf's *Jane Eyre*, a libretto which is an adaptation for the contemporary operatic stage of the 1847 novel by Charlotte Brontë. The thesis is based on the translation of the libretto into French, and the development focuses on one of the specificities of the source text, namely its conciseness, which goes along with the building up of a tense emotional landscape. After a careful examination of how these two forces operate in Malouf's work, the issue of how to render the compactness and the subsequent tense emotional landscape of the source text in a translation into French is being dealt with.