

Abstract

Although much has been written on time representation in fiction, most of this has been from a narratological perspective. The present work argues that stylistics equally contributes to this phenomenon, and investigates the stylistic aspects of time representation. The thesis begins with an overview of theoretical writings about time representation, necessarily focusing mostly on narratology. A number of existing analyses in the literature of time representation in fiction are then discussed, again mostly from a narratological perspective, with one exception. Then follows a general look at Virginia Woolf and her novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927), which serves as the work of analysis for this thesis. An original analysis is then given of time representation in "Time Passes", one of the three parts of this novel.

Included is a translation into Dutch of the first eight chapters of "Time Passes". The process of and problems associated with translation, specifically with regard to the phenomenon of time representation, are discussed throughout the work. The main conclusion here relates to the difficulty in balancing a natural, idiomatic translation with faithfulness to the stylistic idiosyncrasies of the original. A comparison is also made to the sole existing Dutch translation of *To the Lighthouse* by Jo Fiedeldij Dop, which was made in 1981.

The present work aims to show that stylistics has been underemphasized in favor of narratology when it comes to time representation in fiction. Indeed, a stylistic analysis can be quite informative in this regard. Additional stylistic analyses and investigations of different works of fiction would be quite welcome, would help to address the current lack of such analyses in the literature, and might lead to new insights into the manner in which authors can manipulate the phenomenon of time representation in fiction.

Contents

Introduction	4
Theoretical Framework	6
— Narratology	6
— Stylistics	9
Existing Analyses of Time Representation in Fiction	11
Woolf and <i>To the Lighthouse</i>	17
— <i>To the Lighthouse</i> in Translation	24
Discussion	27
Annotated translation	30
Appendix A: Source Text	41
Appendix B: Fragments from the Existing Dutch Translation	50
Bibliography	52

Introduction

"There it had stood all these years without a soul in it." – Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), née Adelina Virginia Stephen, was one of the most influential writers of the early twentieth century, and contributed greatly not only to modernism, but to the emancipation of women and sexuality (*The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, 2010). She promoted various societal philosophies, such as pacifism and anti-imperialism (*ibid*). She was a member of the so-called Bloomsbury Group, an influential group of friends and associates in and around Bloomsbury in London who came together to discuss matters of philosophy and the arts (*ibid*; Banfield, 2003). Woolf also contributed to the development of the technique of stream of consciousness in writing, and created a unique style in which external events are given much less significance than the exploration of the inner lives of a novel's characters (Auerbach, 1946). As it turns out, this style lends itself well to investigation for other aspects of writing, such as time representation in fiction.

The description of time and its passage in a piece of writing, such as a novel, is one of the major aims of narratology and, less obviously, stylistics¹. The process of reading a novel is sequential and the reader naturally has a sense that time passes as events are described. Various strategies employed by the author can modulate this impression to make the reader feel that more time is passing or less, to break the chronology of the story, to entice the reader to slow down or read faster, and so on. This is quite obvious in narratology, of which a major part is the order, duration and frequency with which events are described, as defined by Genette (1980) and further described by Herman and Vervaeck (2001) and Shen (2005). However, stylistics – notably word choice and syntactic structure – may also contribute to this manipulation of time in fiction.

This concept of a sense of time passing on the side of the reader seems rather vague, but in fact much has been written about it in an attempt to clarify the methods authors have at their disposal in this regard. Although writing on this matter necessarily remains very qualitative and at best intersubjective, such works do contribute to making these fuzzy concepts a little more concrete. Therefore, I will discuss several such works in the first section of this thesis, which will deal with the theoretical background. In this section, the works referenced above will be discussed further, as will the seminal books on time in narratology by Ricoeur from the 1980's, a more modern extension to these ideas by Grethlein (2010), and other sources.

1 I follow the distinction between stylistics and narratology given by Shen (2005), which I will describe further in the first section of this thesis.

I hope to shed further light still by the discussion of a number of examples of the use of these concepts in analyzing works of fiction. These relatively brief examples will be found in the second section and focus specifically on classical works by Homer and modernist works by James Joyce.

All this serves also to introduce my own analysis of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, in particular the second, middle part of that novel, "Time Passes". The name of this part clearly shows the relevance it has for the current investigation. It is an apt name, too, as a good deal of time does pass in the narrative in this part of the novel. This is stated explicitly, but more interestingly, the style and narration both add to this effect, as I will show in the third section. This section will start with a discussion of other writing on Virginia Woolf and this work in particular, so as to give a proper foundation upon which to build my analysis and upon which the reader may understand my subsequent argumentation. Following this, I will give my own analysis, and in so doing illustrate parts of my process and the reasoning behind certain choices I made for my own translation of the text into Dutch, available at the end of the thesis, especially insofar as these choices relate to the notion of time passing in a novel.

To the Lighthouse was chosen mainly because of the relevance of its middle part for the current investigation, which is the main point of this thesis. However, it might as well have been chosen for another reason entirely: the surprising paucity of translations of this work into Dutch, considering Woolf's canonical status. There has been only one so far², which was first published in 1981 by translator Jo Fiedeldij Dop, now almost four decades ago. More surprising than the lack of recent translations, perhaps, is the lack of older translations, as the original stems from 1927, so that even more than four decades separate that year and the publication of its first and only Dutch translation. The reason for this perhaps is that her modern fame began mainly in the 1970s, when she became an important figure to the feminist movement (*The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, 2010). Regardless, today, *To the Lighthouse* is one of the better-known titles produced by Virginia Woolf. It has been extensively studied, but at least as far as the Dutch language is concerned, its translation history is rather limited in scope. This seems as good a reason as any to attempt another translation of at least part of this classic work.

² This one Dutch translation of the book has, however, seen multiple reprints, most recently in February of 2015.

Theoretical Framework

Much has been written about time representation in fiction from a narratological perspective; far less from a stylistic one. This section will begin with a non-exhaustive overview of the literature from the narratological point of view, and then move on to the stylistic side of things, which will, by necessity, be more general in scope.

The distinction between narrative and style followed in this thesis is taken from Shen (2005), who summarizes narratology's "discourse" as "how the story is told" and stylistics' "style" as "how the content is presented". In other words, "discourse is primarily concerned with modes of presentation that go beyond strictly linguistic matters, and style is in general concerned more narrowly with choices of language" (p. 136).

Narratology

In describing the field of narratology, Shen makes use of the classification made by Gérard Genette in *Narrative Discourse* (1980). Going by Genette, narratology is concerned with three broad topics: mood, voice, and tense. Mood, described by Genette as the "regulation of narrative information", of course covers grammatical mood, but also such matters as the amount of information shared, for example the amount of detail in the description of a scene. Voice concerns the choice of narrator and the relation this narrator has to the story and to the reader. Tense, of course, has to do with our main topic, time, and it is itself split up into three components: order, duration, and frequency.

Order determines the sequence of events described, notably whether these are put in chronological order or involve some form of anachrony, Genette's term for a break from chronology by use of flashback (analepsis) or flashforward (prolepsis) (ibid).

Duration is about the amount of words, pages, or chapters devoted to a given event being described (narrated time)³, and this is of particular interest when compared to the duration of the event in real (fictitious) time (story time) or against the significance of the event to the story (ibid). In this regard, Genette writes, "a narrative can do without anachronies, but not without *anisochronies*, or, if one prefers (as one probably does), effects of *rhythm*" (p. 88, emphasis in original). There are three logical relationships between narrated time and story time: narrated time can be longer than story time (stretch), they can progress at approximately the same rate (scene),

³ Actually, as Herman & Vervaeck (2005) point out, duration is meant to be about the amount of time it takes to read about a given event. However, as readers vary in reading speed, it is more straightforward to consider the metric of word or page count.

or narrated time can be shorter (summary). The extremes are also possible, where either form is reduced to zero. If story time passes with no corresponding narrative treatment, this is called ellipsis; if story time freezes while the narrative continues, this is called pause. These relationships between narrative and story time are taken from Genette, with the exception of stretch, which was added later by Prince (1982).

Frequency, finally, relates to the amount of times a given event, or series of events, is described in separate instances in the text (Genette, 1980). For a more detailed summary of Genette's components of narratology, see Herman and Vervaeck (2005).

For each of these three components of narrative tense, the description above makes reference to a comparison between the way this element of time is represented in the text, that is, in the narrative itself, and the way it is configured in the underlying story. The order of events in a narrative is compared to the chronological order of these and other events in the story. Duration is particularly salient when its portrayal in the narrative deviates greatly from the relative duration of the relevant parts of the story, in other words, when there are major accelerations or decelerations. The frequency is most interesting where singular events are described many times, or many events are thrown together in a single catch-all description. In narratology, this can be seen as a structuralist approach, as Herman and Vervaeck explain in their *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* (2005). Structuralism here refers to the division of a text into various interrelated structures that occur at different levels. In particular, there is a "surface structure" that is the text as it is made readily apparent to the reader, and the "deep structure" that is the underlying logic and sequence of the story (p. 41ff). The story itself is held together both chronologically and in logical causative order, whereas the narrative may deviate from this in various ways. The more such deviations pile up, the more complicated the narrative becomes. Since the deep structure cannot be directly observed, it remains somewhat speculative, especially (at least where it concerns the chronology of the deep structure) in the absence of clear markers of order, duration, and frequency on the level of the surface structure; that is, the actual text.

While the classification by Genette is most important to the present investigation, we will briefly consider two other works that contribute interesting ideas about narratology and time. The three-volume work by Paul Ricoeur written in the eighties entitled *Time and Narrative* (Ricoeur, 1984, 1985, 1988) is frequently cited and remains an important point of comparison for more recent texts. The work is highly philosophical, dealing perhaps more with time itself, as illustrated by the forms it takes in narration, than with narration itself.

For the purpose of the present thesis, the most relevant aspect of *Time and Narrative* is the distinction that is made between subjective and objective time, which is described by various terms in the three volumes. Subjective time, also known as "human time", "lived time", or "phenomenological time", is the experience of time typical to human beings (ibid). Objective time, which further goes by the names of "cosmic time", "chronological time", or "historic time"⁴, is the time of reality, of the outer world, independent of a specific observer. Time in fiction, "narrative time", can in some sense be seen as a mean between the two: it starts from human time, but can diverge from it in various ways to achieve a certain effect on the reader (ibid).

Jonas Grethlein critiques Ricoeur's theory in *The Narrative Reconfiguration of Time beyond Ricoeur* (2010). He too notes that "Ricoeur's description of the reconfiguration of time remains rather vague and does not deal with narrative qua narrative." Grethlein certainly focuses more heavily on narration, but he in fact no longer deals very much with time itself, at least not in the sense that I consider it here. To Grethlein, the relevant elements of time in narration are expectation and experience, and the contrast between the two. Like people in real life, fictitious characters have expectations based on past experience, and those expectations are either met or disappointed. For this, Grethlein draws not only on Ricoeur, but also on earlier writings by Husserl (1928), Heidegger (1988), and Kosseleck (1985). Each of these authors frames it in a different way, but in all cases, the concepts of expectation and experience are at the heart of the matter.

Grethlein focuses heavily on expectations and experiences not only in the characters in a narrative, but also in the receivers of said narrative. Various permutations are considered whereby the author allows the characters to be better informed than the reader, or vice versa, or where the author aligns both parties together so that the reader follows the character closely.

Whereas Ricoeur seemed to be writing about what time is (helped somewhat by a focus on the narrative), Grethlein writes about what time does to the narrative. This thesis, however, aims to investigate what the narrative, and style, do to time.

4 Strictly speaking, there is a subtle difference between historic time and cosmic time, where historic time is the sort of intersubjectively agreed-upon figuration of time common to human societies, that is, the time about which history is written. However, the distinction is not relevant to the present purpose.

Stylistics

Time in fiction is typically described from a narratological perspective, as is apparent from the texts discussed so far. However, Shen (2005) emphasizes the need for a combined approach, making use of narratology as well as stylistics.⁵ Giving an analysis in terms of only one or the other, he argues, "will result in a partial picture of 'how the story is presented'" (p. 142). Unfortunately, most sources that discuss time in fiction take an exclusively narratological perspective, with relatively few considering stylistics. Some sources that cover stylistics generally, notably Leech and Short's *Style in Fiction* (2007), do mention stylistic elements that can be used to impact time in a work of fiction, but these elements are typically described in very generic terms, not specific to this topic. In part, this is understandable, as many elements that can vary in such a way as to produce an effect on time can also affect many other aspects of a text. For example, a sentence structure involving repetition of phrases can mark a sequence of events in time, but can also indicate a list of objects or a set of actions not in any particular temporal sequence. More broadly, sentence structure can bring across tone, emphasis, tension, a certain character, or any number of textual effects. Language being so rich and style being so broad, it is perhaps to be expected that any one possible effect of stylistics, or even a related set of effects, is not explored very extensively. All the same, in light of Shen's warning not to investigate narratology in ignorance of stylistics, or vice versa, it is worth attempting to fill this gap.

In the checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories that is at the center of their third chapter, Leech and Short do mention tense in their discussion of verb phrases as part of the section on grammatical categories (just before the amusing dictum, "Look out for phrasal verbs", pp. 62–63). The list merely briefly lists possible things to keep an eye out for, and so does not go into this much further or give examples either of usage or of possible higher-order effects that variations of this element can have on a text, so I mention it here only for the sake of completeness.

Leech and Short also discuss the distinction between loose and periodic sentence structure. A periodic sentence is a sentence in which the important information in the sentence comes at the end, and the sentence is not syntactically complete until the very end, when a phrase that was missing for the interpretation to be complete is finally given; a loose sentence structure, by contrast, is syntactically completed early on, and later parts of the sentence merely add to a sentence that could have already stood on its own. Since the correct interpretation of a periodic

⁵ This point is made about analyses of texts generally, and is thus not specific to time. However, it certainly does apply to an analysis of time in fiction, specifically.

sentence requires earlier parts of the sentence to stay in the reader's working memory until the end, and only at that point does the message become a coherent whole, there is a tension inherent in this type of sentence. This pause in interpretation can function as a sort of pause in the flow of time experienced by the reader that does not take place for a loose sentence.

One rare example of the study of time in the context of fiction in stylistic terms is the recent study by Nesterik, Issina, Pecherskikh and Belikova (2016), who focus on visual images in a text and how these influence subjective perception of time on the side of the text's characters. It is heartening, at least, that some effort is made to perform a linguistic and stylistic analysis of time in fiction as opposed to the more typical narratological analyses⁶, but it is unfortunate that the analyses in this work are rather brief, and do not always make the case for the particular literary effects they describe very convincingly. In addition, the scope of the linguistic means described remains limited to word choice, particularly on the level of adjectives of brightness and color. No reference is made to the potential effect of syntactic structure, for example, on the subjective experience of time in a work of fiction on the side of the characters or the readers. Yet, the authors make the bold claim that in their model "the main lines of studying the content and expression planes of text time are revealed".

We have seen many ways to think about time in fiction, but a few elements have shown up multiple times. Firstly, the need to compare the particular temporal figuration in a text to some unchanging, objective standard, be it in terms of the inherent temporal qualities of the real world itself, in terms of a chronological, neutral ordering of the underlying structure that is the story, or in terms of time as it exists in the experience of the reader. Secondly, we have seen a convenient way to split up time, or tense, into three component parts: order, duration, and frequency. While this division has its roots in the study of narratology, it is equally helpful to the discussion of time as an effect of the style of a text. Thirdly, we have seen a striking lack of focus on stylistic influences on time representation in fiction, with academics preferring to focus on narratology to inform this area of investigation. Narratology may well be the more obvious starting point for an analysis of time in a literary work of fiction, but as I hope to show in my own analysis of *To the Lighthouse*, stylistics certainly has its contributions to make in this regard.

6 Nesterik e.a. (2016) also confirm this tendency in the discussion section of their article: "However, none [of the many papers on literary time] are concerned with the expression plane of these representations, types and models, i.e. the set of the linguistic means modeling them in a literary text, their analysis and classification."

Existing Analyses of Time Representation in Fiction

This section contains descriptions of several analyses of fictional texts that can be found in the literature and that focus on the handling of time in these texts. As we have come to expect on the basis of the theoretical framework discussed in the previous section, these analyses by and large focus on narration, rather than style, to determine the temporal nature of the stories considered. After three analyses that show various approaches to a narratological analysis of time in fiction, there will be one brief analysis that is more stylistic in nature, and as such more directly relevant to the translation process, to wrap up the section.

Grethlein (2010) performs an interesting analysis of Homer's *Iliad*, which he compares against a number of postmodern novels, especially Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. His approach to the concept of time in fiction relates mainly to experience and expectation: expectations toward the future come from experiences in the past. This holds true both for characters in works of fiction and readers of those works. He makes the argument that the epic tends to place the readers at an advantage relative to the characters, as readers tend already to know where the story goes on the basis of the familiarity of the story told in the epic.

Taking the example of the *Iliad*, it is fair to say that both classical and modern readers tend to know the main plot of the Trojan war and the characters involved in it. The readers thus have clear expectations of the progression of the story. The characters, on the other hand, live it directly, as it were, with little to no means of knowing what the future holds for them. This creates an effect of tragic irony that is further strengthened by the use of foreshadowing in the narrative itself, whereby the narrator hints at what is to come. Grethlein discusses the deaths of characters Patroclus and Achilles, and shows that these are both introduced – vaguely at first, then increasingly explicitly – many books in advance of the actual event.

By contrast, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is described as a novel involving so-called "sideshadowing", a term taken from Gary Saul Morson (1994): the introduction of various elements into a story, be they characters or story lines or, as in the case of *War and Peace*, both, so that it is not obvious to the reader which elements will be of importance later in the story. As Grethlein points out, this leads to various misdirections, where readers' expectations are triggered but not fulfilled. He gives the example of Andrei saying of Prince Adam Czartoryski, "It is such men as he who decide the fate of nations" (p. 310), which falsely causes the reader to expect that Czartoryski will play a decisive part further on in the story.

Grethlein concludes that in the modern novel, unlike in the epic, the reader is frequently put on a level with the characters in terms of experience and expectation. This is true especially in "consciousness novels" such as those by Virginia Woolf, where the narration closely follows the thoughts and expectations of the characters, with little omniscient narration taking place outside the heads of the characters. A further conclusion is that, whereas epics and novels allow both "enactment", the immersion of the reader into the story and her or his empathetic alignment with the characters, and a third-person experience that is more distant from the reader, the novel focuses on the former (the enactment), and the epic, on the latter (the distancing).

It may be argued that this sort of analysis aids translators in making them aware of the importance of certain textual elements to the text as a whole. Frequently, in the search for natural and idiomatic sentences in the target language, the translator may be required to subtly alter some elements of the contents⁷ of the source text, especially if also restricted, as in the case of many classics, such as the epic, by rhyme and meter. An understanding of the importance of foreshadowing, and of how (in the case of the *Iliad*) this foreshadowing is to become progressively clearer and more explicit as the story goes on, helps the translator identify those parts of the text where such rephrasing might be more restricted in certain ways.

The analysis by Grethlein (2010) of the epic and the postmodern novel is convincing and the conclusions are sound. However, rather than investigating time in fiction broadly, Grethlein limits himself to experience and expectation, which causes him to look almost exclusively at narratological order. Within this scope, his analysis is impressive, and can serve as an inspiration for other analyses, but it pays to look a little further.

Amerian, Ahmadian and Jorfi (2016) also perform a narratological analysis, but theirs is broader than Grethlein's. The work they discuss is James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (*A Portrait*). Their approach is to cover all aspects of Genette's classification of narratology into order, duration, and frequency, and the individual components thereof. For order, analepsis and prolepsis are discussed; for duration, the five possible relations of narrative time to story time (pause, stretch, scene, summary, and ellipsis)⁸; and for frequency, the cases of singulative, repetitive, and iterative frequency. For each of these sub-types, counts are made in three twenty-page fragments

7 By "contents", here, I mean approximately the ideational function in the functional model of language by Halliday (1973), as described by Leech and Short (2007).

8 Genette (1980) originally gave only four terms here, with stretch being added later by Prince (1982) as the logical counter to summary.

throughout the book. For frequency, the whole book is considered, as it is rather a global element of tense: a repetition of an event can occur anywhere in the novel.

The main conclusions, aside from those that relate to the relative occurrence of the various forms of order, duration, and frequency, are that this novel involves many cases of divergence from what can be seen as the 'default' or unmarked case, which would involve chronological ordering with no anachrony, largely scenic or perhaps summary or elliptic duration⁹, and singulative frequency. The fact that *A Portrait* is a postmodern work that can be viewed – as it is by Amerian et al. – as a consciousness novel, explains why stretch and, especially, pause have a relatively high occurrence: the action is frequently slowed down or paused while the main character's thoughts are explored in the narration.

Of particular interest is not just the occurrence of these deviations from some default, but rather the reasons behind such deviations. The authors suggest, for example, that variations in speed in the narrative may be illustrative of the relative importance of a particular story event, so that slower narrative speeds might correspond with more significant elements, and vice versa. Similarly, an event that is covered more than once in the narrative (cases of repetition, in the terminology of Genette, 1980) might be more relevant to the overall story or to character development. An example of this is the fact that the narrator comes back frequently to the main character's childhood experience of being pushed into a ditch by a schoolmate.

In this case, the relevance of the analysis to a translator looking to translate this work is not very obvious, as most of what is described involves elements that would be taken over by the translator almost by default. If an event is described several times, for example, then the translator is likely to also describe it several times just going through the source text sequentially (or, indeed, in any other order, of the translator would be so inclined). Frequently, this is the case for narratological elements of the story in particular, more so than for stylistic aspects.

The analysis by Amerian et al. runs the gamut of the narratological concept of tense as defined by Genette, and their conclusions clearly show the amount of insight that can be gained from this approach. The idea of focusing on parts of the story for order and duration, but to look at the whole for frequency, is admirable as well. However, the fact that they spend approximately equal space on each of the concepts within this field, regardless of their prevalence or importance in *A*

9 The most obvious case of a default in terms of duration might indeed be just scene, but as Amerian et al. (2016) themselves point out, a fully scenic representation of most any appreciable amount of story time to cover would involve an overly lengthy novel that would probably not be able to retain a reader's interest very well. Therefore, the default case would probably involve deviations that speed up the action at times, either by summary or by ellipsis.

Portrait, shows that these authors take narratology itself as a starting point, not their work of fiction. The analysis might have been even more successful if the authors had let the text, rather than the theory behind their analysis, lead them in their investigation. It is this text, after all, that the authors hope to understand better by means of this analysis.

An exception to the general rule that analyses of time in fiction tend to be done from a narratological perspective is the investigation done by Nesterik, Issina, Pecherskikh and Belikova (2016). Their analysis of various novels of English and American nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors is mainly stylistic in nature, with a focus on visual images as determined particularly by adjectives of brightness, color, and speed. The argument is made that "[d]eceleration or full stop of psychological time causes visual perception either to stop functioning or become overly bright and clear" (p. 2833).

An example of a case where visual perception "stops functioning" is given (pp. 2833–2834):

When I opened the window just now a draught of wet, cold air gushed into the room and sent my loose pages whirling. Yet the wind had sunk to a gentle southing, and the heavy rain had diminished to a chill drizzle as the huge skirts of the storm swept northward. Looking from the lighted room into the darkness, I could see nothing and hear nothing but the muted wind. The darkness seemed to press close up to the house and to isolate it, as if there had been an unthinkable lapse of time and the earth were slowly turning in sunless and starless space where movement and non-movement are the same. I shivered; and shut and curtained the window. (Aldington, 1967)

In this fragment, Nesterik et al. argue, the descriptions of dark visuals and muted sounds have the effect of the story time slowing down as the narrative focuses on the inner world of the first-person character. The same effect is claimed to result from the bright, lively description in this other example (p. 2834):

The grass whispered under his body. He put his arm down, feeling the sheath of fuzz on it, and, far away, below, his toes creaking in his shoes. The wind sighed over his shelled ears. The world slipped bright over the glassy round of his eyeballs, like images sparked in a crystal sphere. Flowers were sun and fiery spots of sky strewn through the woodland. Birds flickered like skipped stones across the vast inverted pond of heaven. His breath raked over his teeth, going in ice, coming out

fire. Insects shocked the air with electric clearness. Ten thousand individual hairs grew a millionth of an inch on his head. He heard the twin hearts beating in each ear, the third heart beating in his throat, the two hearts throbbing his wrists, the real heart pounding his chest. The million pores on his body opened. (Bradbury, 1975)

The notion that two types of descriptions that are nearly opposite in many ways should result in the same effect on story time might seem unconvincing. Indeed, especially the fragment from Aldington's *Now Lies She There* does not seem to produce a strong effect of slowing down, stylistically. Note that the fragment does explicitly mention a tremendous, imagined passing of time; probably most of the stretch that occurs in this text derives directly from that. However, the second example really does seem to effect a sense of time slowing based on stylistic, rather than narratological elements.

Perhaps the mere narratological fact of several sentences being devoted to a small amount of time might seem more relevant, here. However, it is not very clear exactly how much time passes, so a straightforward comparison of story time and narrative time is difficult. I would argue the perceived slowdown really does result from stylistic features, such as the focus on highly detailed observations using vibrant, intense words (both adjectives and verbs), such as "bright", "fiery", "flickered", "raked", "shocked".¹⁰

Although not always persuasive in its individual judgments, the usage of stylistic features, or, as the authors themselves write, linguistic means, to analyze time in fiction makes the article by Nesterik et al. both interesting and helpful for future analyses.

Furthermore, the focus on stylistic features such as the choice of individual words is highly relevant for a translator, who acts first and foremost on the words themselves, which must after all be replaced with words in a different language. If individual words produce some effect, then the translator is constantly confronted with the difficulty of retaining this effect in spite of the fact that she or he has to change the words. To put it differently, the coherence between larger elements of the text is more likely to survive translation than are smaller elements, such as sentence structures or individual words. Therefore, stylistic analyses tend to be more helpful to a translator than

10 Of course, the fragment also contains "whispered" and "sighed", which might not seem all that vibrant or intense. However, since these are sounds from the grass and the wind, respectively, the fact that such an observation can be made at all does become suggestive of a great perceptual intensity. This may seem to belabor the point, but it is relevant here, because it illustrates that in an analysis like this, it is important not to pick and choose elements that support a particular point. Instead, the whole of a text (or at least fragment) must be investigated, even parts that might seem to contradict that point.

narratological ones. This provides a further reason¹¹ that my analysis focuses on stylistic rather than narratological facets of *To the Lighthouse*.

11 Another reason is the relative lack of stylistic analyses of time representation. Even aside from the relevance to the translator, it is interesting to show that stylistics has something to say about this phenomenon, more generally.

Woolf and *To the Lighthouse*

"It was impossible not to reflect—the reflection whatever it may have been was cut short. The clock struck. It was time to find one's way to luncheon." – Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929)

To the Lighthouse (1927) by Virginia Woolf is a novel that is, as Woolf herself wrote in a notebook, "all character—not a view of the world". Indeed, as is typical of Woolf's writing, the inner lives of the novel's characters play a far greater part, and are given much more space in the text, than the external events that shape the plot, such as it is. The novel is made up of three distinct parts, each with a number of chapters widely varying in length. In order, these parts are "The Window", "Time Passes", and "The Lighthouse". It is the second part that is the focus of the present investigation.

The first and third parts can be seen as snapshots in time: they each cover a short amount of time and are characterized by an emphasis on the inner lives of characters, or, as Vuaden and Indrusiak (2017) call it, "consciousness representation". The parts are set ten years apart in time, and the middle part bridges this gap. Unlike the other parts, "Time Passes" lacks characters whose thoughts to explore, with only few chapters even featuring a single human character beyond the occasional single-sentence reference to a major event in the life of one of the characters known from the previous part. Instead, "Time Passes" has as its topic the passing of time itself, and its main character, as it were, is the house that the first part is set in and around. This house, looked after by only a single elderly lady, Mrs. McNab, who cannot manage this large task by herself, begins slowly to fall into decay at the hands of time and nature. At the end of the section, as word comes in that the family will return to the house after all, Mrs. McNab, with the help of a friend, Mrs. Bast, scrambles to get the house back in order just in time for the arrival, after many years, of new guests at the house. Then follows the final section, in which the expectation inherent in the novel's title is finally met, and several characters make the journey, by sailboat, from the house to the lighthouse.

Starting with an overview of impressionism, post-impressionism, and philosophical thinking on time from the Cambridge Apostles and other Cambridge philosophers who influenced Virginia Woolf, Banfield (2003) subsequently describes how this relates to *To the Lighthouse*. According to Banfield, the short story is typical of impressionism, as it tends to explore a moment in time. What is captured in the visual arts using "splashes in the outer air in every direction" (as it is phrased in a letter by the painter Jacques Raverat to Woolf, cited by Bell, 1972) is captured by words in a short story with the same goal: to attempt to bring across an experience or impression. According to

Woolf's friend, the painter and fellow Bloomsbury Group member Roger Fry, the vision inherent in impressionism lacked design to hold it together; combining the two is the main idea of post-impressionism. If in *To the Lighthouse* "The Window" and "The Lighthouse", the first and third parts respectively, can be seen as impressionistic short stories, the idea of bringing them together with a "corridor" bridging the gap between them¹² is the design that moves *To the Lighthouse* from the realm of impressionism into post-impressionism, and turns it from a short story into a novel (Banfield, 2003). In the words of Banfield, "Within the moment, all is still, suspended. Change and motion lie between the unchanging moments, invisible, imperceptible; between them, time passes" (p. 496–497).

Most of what has been written about Virginia Woolf and *To the Lighthouse* specifically in stylistic terms has dealt with the concepts of free indirect discourse and stream of consciousness or interior monologue, which she advanced greatly. Although not exactly equivalent to the topic of the present investigation, these concepts are certainly related to the treatment of time in fiction. The investigation of characters' inner lives through free indirect discourse and especially through a stream-of-consciousness style of writing greatly impacts reader interpretation of the narrative flow of time.

Erich Auerbach, who wrote about *To the Lighthouse* in "The Brown Stocking", the final chapter of his book *Mimesis: The representation of reality in Western literature* (2003), makes explicit reference to this impact. In this regard, he references specifically two notions from structural narratology: duration and order. Duration, because "the road taken by consciousness is sometimes traversed far more quickly than language is able to render it, if we want to make ourselves intelligible to a third person" (p. 537), so that any detailed description of a character's thought process necessarily slows down the action and thus constitutes a case of stretch or even pause. Order, because the rather freely associative path the mind often takes does involve both remembrances of the past and predictions or hopes for the future.

Another Virginia Woolf novel whose representation of time has been investigated is *The Years*, which is discussed by Masselink (2011). Specifically, she describes the use of the gerund-participle in that work and how this influences time representation, focusing on the problem of translation into Dutch, where this verbal structure is used far less productively than in English. In *To the Lighthouse*, too, the gerund-participle is often used in a way that is significant to the concept of time, especially with regards to consciousness representation. Thoughts are frequently interrupted

12 This is how Woolf conceived of her novel in a notebook: "two blocks, joined by a corridor".

mid-sentence with a description of an action taken by the thinking character, which would typically be written as a gerund. To give just one of many possible examples of this in the book: "It partook, she felt, carefully helping Mr Bankes to a specially tender piece, of eternity" (Woolf, 1926, p. 76). As Vuaden and Indrusiak (2017) point out, this emphasizes the simultaneity of these thoughts and often wholly unrelated actions that serve merely as an entry point into a character's inner world.

Vuaden and Indrusiak also investigate time representation in *To the Lighthouse*. Their analysis is not restricted to "Time Passes", but instead focuses on each section of the book in order. In their view, the first part, "The Window", looks toward the future, "Time Passes" looks to the present, and the final part, "The Lighthouse", is concerned with the past. Thus the parts form a coherent whole.

"Time Passes" is special also because it focuses on external events rather than internal processes of thought and consciousness. Thus, it might seem that time is more straightforward in this part, as it is exactly these internal processes that involve a great amount of flashback and flashforward, whereas for external events one is free to stick to a strictly chronological order. However, the section differs from the others in that it covers a period of ten years, rather than just parts of one or two days. Thus, rather than effects of order, there is a predominance of effects of duration, in particular acceleration. Where both other sections of the text are rich in stretch, slowing down the action inside characters' minds, here we have summary and ellipsis, speeding up the action in the text world itself.

Indeed, this acceleration is progressive throughout "Time Passes". The first chapter describes only a few characters arriving at the house in the evening and locking up. The second chapter describes the night to follow. The third chapter talks about how "Night, however, succeeds to night" (p. 94) and so covers somewhat longer of a period. By the fourth chapter, all characters have left the house except for the housekeeper Mrs McNab, who comes by now and again. Indeed, the fifth chapter is a break – one of three that occur throughout "Time Passes" – in the acceleration present throughout the section, an interlude that focuses on Mrs McNab cleaning the house. The sixth chapter covers (at least) two whole seasons, spring and summer. The brief seventh chapter marks the height of the speed of narration, such that "night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together" (p. 100).¹³ The eighth chapter is another interlude focusing on Mrs McNab,

13 This shapeless running together is already indicated iconically in Chapter 7, when reference is made in order to spring, summer, spring, summer, spring, and summer again, to finally end with one last reference to spring. This makes it always unclear to the reader at what point in time the narration is. Are we going back and forth, or are several years passing by, with only the summers and springs being mentioned?

who now gives up on the house, thinking it abandoned for good. The ninth chapter starts with a description of the house beginning to fall to ruin, yielding to time and nature; however, as news comes in that the house will have visitors after all, Mrs McNab, with help from several other previously unknown characters, scrambles to get the house back in order and restore it to its former glory. The final tenth chapter, which is the third break in the acceleration, then describes several earlier characters' return to the house after these ten years. I translated the first eight chapters of "Time Passes". The source text is available in Appendix A.

Aside from the obvious narratological signals of this acceleration – mainly explicit references to time passing, such as the quotes given above – there are several other textual elements that contribute to this phenomenon. To explore this further, let us consider the first two paragraphs of the second chapter (pp. 93–94). I will number each sentence in this fragment for ease of reference, as inspired by Leech and Short (2007).

So with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof, a downpouring of immense darkness began (I). Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms, swallowed up here a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias, there the sharp edges and firm bulk of a chest of drawers (II). Not only was furniture confounded; there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say, 'This is he,' or, 'This is she (III).' Sometimes a hand was raised as if to clutch something or ward off something, or somebody groaned, or somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness (IV).

Nothing stirred in the drawing-room or in the dining-room or on the staircase (V). Only through the rusty hinges and swollen sea-moistened woodwork certain airs, detached from the body of the wind (the house was ramshackle after all), crept round corners and ventured indoors (VI). Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing-room, questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wallpaper, asking, would it hang much longer, when would it fall (VII)? Then smoothly brushing the walls, they passed on musingly as if asking the red and yellow roses on the wallpaper whether they would fade, and questioning (gently, for there was time at their disposal) the torn letters in the wastepaper basket, the flowers, the books, all

of which were now open to them and asking: Were they allies (VIII)? Were they enemies (IX)? How long would they endure (X)?

In this section, the author made sure that the reader would get a clear image of the scene by the use of various sensory descriptions. This includes not only sight (*darkness* (I, II), *red and yellow* (II, VIII), *sharp edges and firm bulk* (II), *stirred* (V)) and sound (*drumming* (I), *groaned* (IV), *laughed* (IV)), but also touch (*rusty* (VI), *swollen sea-moistened woodwork* (VI), *smoothly brushing* (VIII)), to make the scene that much more tangible and real.

The text makes extensive use of indefinite pronouns (*all* (I), *nothing* (II), *anything* (III), *one* (III), *something* (IV), *something* (IV), *somebody* (IV), *somebody* (IV), *nothing* (V), *one* (VII)), adverbs (*sometimes* (IV)), nouns (*nothingness* (IV)), and determiners (especially in the first of these two paragraphs). The reader is given a sense of indistinctness and uncertainty: the text is stripped of clear human characters and points of reference. Location is described uncertainly, too: "here a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias" (II). There is some modulation of this, when in the second paragraph most determiners are again definite. However, the effect does continue to some extent even in this paragraph, because all of these definite determiners are considered from the perspective of "certain airs" (VI), themselves rather indefinitely named, which "one might almost imagine" (VII).

Throughout the section, lists of items or events are frequent. A prime example of this is in (II), where a list of actions is given that are taken by the "profusion of darkness". If we ignore the shift in syntactic structure, it is said that the darkness "[crept] in at keyholes and crevices", "stole round window blinds", "came into bedrooms", and "swallowed up" several things, which themselves become a list of items. Sentence (IV), too, gives a list, this time of possible small disturbances to the silence and stillness inside the house. Much of the second paragraph takes the form of a sequence of events that involve the "certain airs" (VI), and this too culminates in first a list of items near the end of sentence (VIII), then a series of questions at the very end of that same sentence and in the two short sentences after that (IX and X). Such lists often present difficulties in translation, as the translator risks creating a stilted, halting text if the correct pace and rhythm is not struck in this regard. Especially in cases where the English text makes excessive use of semicolons to, as it were, string sentences together – a strategy one generally wants to avoid in Dutch – creative solutions are sometimes required to ensure that the Dutch reader experience remains fluent, while still maintaining cohesion between the relevant parts of the text.

The main sense a reader gets while reading this part of the novel is one of silence, emptiness, and indistinctness. This adds to the blending, or running together, of time that is explicitly signaled in the seventh chapter. The sense that nothing of importance happens and next to nothing moves or is seen or heard creates the impression of being outside time, as it were, to lose one's sense of time passing, so that it feels like any amount of time might actually have passed. The indefinite phrasing discussed above is one way in which this happens. Yet, it is not true that nothing happens exactly. The first paragraph describes occasional unclear sounds and movements, and the second paragraph shows some such events more explicitly. While everything becomes vague and uncertain, the reader gets the impression that in this lull that is described, time does still pass, and nature has its way. Sequences (lists) of events reinforce a progression of time even inside this apparent standstill, so that the reader is reminded that the stillness is only an illusion, and in reality the progression of time is destructive. Indeed, speculative prolepses to destruction ("whether they would fade" (VIII), "How long would they endure?" (X)) may be found near the end of this fragment. At a high level, time seems to freeze, but upon closer inspection, it is quite clear that things do take place.

This effect is further strengthened by the alternation in sentence types. The first paragraph contains four sentences, which alternate between periodic sentences (I and III) and loose sentences (II and IV). The second paragraph, too, has both loose (V, VII) and periodic sentences (VI), as well as sentences that fall somewhere in-between (VIII). The alternation of these sentences creates a kind of rhythm for the reader, lulling her or him into a sense of uncomfortable stillness. The stillness comes from the apparent nothingness; the discomfort, from the constant reminders that this nothingness is but an illusion. Similarly, the periodic sentences give the impression of largeness of scale and simultaneity of everything (as interpretation is stalled to the end of the sentence), whereas loose sentence structure gives the impression of relative detail and of sequence. Indeed, within this piece, the sentences that describe the sequences of relatively tangible events tend to be loose sentences.

We have taken a detailed look at the stylistic elements that contribute to the temporal structure of the main parts of this text; as mentioned previously, the text continues to build on these elements by continuing to accelerate the time frame from chapter to chapter. Let us now consider one of the interludes to this general pattern of acceleration by looking at the first paragraph of chapter eight, near the end of "Time Passes", where Mrs. McNab goes through the

house a final time before deciding it is abandoned and there is no point in her trying in vain to keep up with her housekeeping duties (pp. 100–101).

Thinking no harm, for the family would not come, never again, some said, and the house would be sold at Michaelmas perhaps, Mrs McNab stooped and picked a bunch of flowers to take home with her (I). She laid them on the table while she dusted (II). She was fond of flowers (III). It was a pity to let them waste (IV). Suppose the house were sold (she stood arms akimbo in front of the looking-glass) it would want seeing to – it would (V). There it had stood all these years without a soul in it (VI). The books and things were mouldy, for, what with the war and help being hard to get, the house had not been cleaned as she could have wished (VII). It was beyond one person's strength to get it straight now (VIII). She was too old (IX). Her legs pained her (X). All those books needed to be laid out on the grass in the sun; there was plaster fallen in the hall; the rain-pipe had blocked over the study window and let the water in; the carpet was ruined quite (XI). But people should come themselves; they should have sent somebody down to see (XII). For there were clothes in the cupboards; they had left clothes in all the bedrooms (XIII). What was she to do with them (XIV)? They had the moth in them – Mrs Ramsay's things (XV). Poor lady (XVI)! She would never want *them* again (XXII). She was dead, they said; years ago, in London (XVIII). There was the old grey cloak she wore gardening (Mrs McNab fingered it) (XIX). She could see her, as she came up the drive with the washing, stooping over her flowers (the garden was a pitiful sight now, all run to riot, and rabbits scuttling at you out of the beds) – she could see her with one of the children by her in that grey cloak (XX). There were boots and shoes; and a brush and comb left on the dressing-table, for all the world as if she expected to come back tomorrow (XXI). (She had died very sudden at the end, they said (XXII).) And once they had been coming, but had put off coming, what with the war, and travel being so difficult these days; they had never come all these years; just sent her money; but never wrote, never came, and expected to find things as they had left them, ah dear (XXIII)! Why, the dressing-table drawers were full of things (she pulled them open), handkerchiefs, bits of ribbon (XXIV). Yes, she could see Mrs Ramsay as she came up the drive with the washing (XXV).

The first thing that is apparent in this passage as compared to the previously discussed part is that sentences are much shorter in this second excerpt, at an average of just under fourteen words per sentence, rather than about the double at almost 27 in the other. There are also far fewer periodic sentences in this section: only (I) and (V), and arguably part of (VII) and, more subtly, (XV). Both of these observations may be explained by the simple fact that here again we have a clear case of stream-of-consciousness writing. The text again features a human character, the protagonist of this chapter, and involves the relatively direct representation of her thoughts, which are of course casual and often in direct response to what she observes around her, not to mention restricted by the limits of a human being's working memory. Given this fact, the description here is far more in line with what Auerbach (1946) wrote about time representation in *To the Lighthouse* already, involving liberal use of analepsis and (speculative) prolepsis when a character thinks back or ahead from her or his present moment. Objective time is rather slow, and the whole scene represents a case of deceleration or stretch, perhaps with some implicit cuts or ellipsis when Mrs McNab moves inside (as she starts the scene picking flowers and later is fingering Mrs Ramsay's dress); most of the temporal action takes place inside the character's head.

Another difference is that the environment is painted rather less clearly in terms of sensory descriptions; Mrs McNab observes objects, but mostly names rather than describes them, and any further details on them take the form of associations she has with regard to the objects, like when the "brush and comb left on the dressing-table" make her think it seems as though Mrs Ramsay could return at any moment (XXI).

There are similarities as well, however: here too, the text involves various lists of items or events in sequence. Sentence (XI) is a list of tasks, for example, or problems with the house, and sentences (XXI) and (XXIV) each feature brief lists (of two items), as well. These, however, do not so much function here to give a sense of time passing, but have a different effect, namely that of showing that Mrs McNab is overwhelmed by her work, and is on the verge of giving up, as indeed she does at the end of the chapter.

To the Lighthouse in Translation

The main difficulties in translating "Time Passes", and perhaps the novel as a whole, come from its stylistic idiosyncrasies, some of which are wed rather closely to the English language. The case of lists, especially when connected using syntactic structures and punctuation whose direct equivalent in Dutch is atypical, was already mentioned previously. The extensive use of gerund-

participles, as discussed by Masselink (2011), is another prime example. This middle part in particular is also extremely rich in personification: since there are next to no human characters in it (excepting the interludes of the fifth chapter and the last three chapters), it was natural for the author to make various inanimate objects into quasi-characters. Personification, however, is another stylistic feature that is far less commonplace in Dutch than it is in English.

My solution to these difficulties often takes the form of some kind of compromise: some relatively atypical punctuation, syntactic structure, and gerund-participles remain in my translation, but many have been reworked in order to fit better in a Dutch text. As for the case of personification, since it is so integral to this part of the novel in particular, I decided to fully incorporate it into my Dutch translation. This element of the text is therefore more marked in Dutch now than it was in the source text, but if anything, this markedness adds to the impression of the destructive workings of nature and of time.

The one Dutch translation of this novel already in existence is *Naar de vuurtoren*, a translation from 1981 by Jo Fiedeldij Dop. I will look at the same two brief sections I have analyzed above for the source text to investigate whether this translation is faithful to the stylistic elements I have identified. These sections are included in Appendix B.

For the first fragment, let us consider the distinction in the source text between indefinites in the first paragraph and definites in the second. This distinction is respected for the most part in Fiedeldij Dop's translation, with a few exceptions. For one, "furniture" becomes not simply "meubilair" but "het meubilair". It is worth noting that in Dutch, articles are more frequently included than in English, so in this light this choice can be understood. All the same, considering the overall tendency for indefinites in this section, it is preferable to search for a construction in Dutch where the article is not necessary. A similar case can be made for the final part of the paragraph, "somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness", where the translation has introduced the pronoun "hij" ("he"). Although the person still is not identified (except by gender), the reference becomes somewhat more explicit with the inclusion of this pronoun. The passive construction I have chosen in my translation avoids this and adds to the indefiniteness of the scene.

The alternation between loose and periodic sentence structure seen particularly clearly in the very first paragraph of the first fragment is honored in the translation. In the absence of major shifts in the sentence structure, probably the default is to stay true to such distinctions in the source text. There are no major exceptions in this part of the translation; the only shift that occurs

in this regard is the fact that (VIII) is split up into two sentences, both of which get loose structure in the translation. The mild periodicity in the beginning part of the source-text sentence was removed when the gerund was translated as a finite verb.

Fiedeldij Dop, like myself, chose to retain the personification in the text. To get rid of it here would have required major rewrites of whole chapters perhaps outside the scope of what is generally considered translation.

In the second fragment, in the translation as in the source text, loose sentence structure dominates; for the most part, again, the same sentences are periodic, with only minor, subtle shifts. Sentence (VIII), for example, has become periodic in translation, but it is a short sentence where such a decision hardly stands out. No sentences are split up or joined together, and overall the line of the narrative is followed quite closely from sentence to sentence.

It is difficult to say how much the translator explicitly took time representation and its associated elements into account. There are no major divergences from those aspects of the text important to this phenomenon, but this might here have occurred by chance or as a side effect of different considerations, rather than due to a conscious consideration of time. Indeed, certain differences in time representation, however minor, do seem to suggest other concerns drove the translator in her choices. Of course, time representation is only one aspect of a rather multifaceted text, and other features too must be considered. However, in a part of the novel that was given the title of "Time Passes", time certainly does deserve close attention.

Discussion

To date, time representation in fiction has mostly been considered from a narratological perspective. For example, tense is an important component of narratology as outlined by Genette (1980), whose overview of narratology was used in various literary analyses of time in fiction, such as Grethlein (2010) and Amerian et al. (2016). Nelson (2018) did not draw directly on this particular work by Genette, but she does use similar concepts that are narratological in nature, notably prolepsis and analepsis, as well as effects of duration. However, as I have attempted to show here, stylistics can also be relevant to the phenomenon of time representation in fiction. My analysis was performed mostly in stylistic terms, but was informed by a brief narratological overview of the text. Probably Shen (2005) is correct that an analysis that takes into account both stylistics and narratology would be most informative.

The present analysis has focused on a few specific elements in the very broad field of stylistics: sensory descriptions, indefinite words, lists, and the distinction between loose and periodic sentence structure. Of course, stylistics includes a great many more possible choices to be made by an author, that have had to remain unconsidered here for reasons of length. As Leech and Short (2015) clearly show when they provide an extensive (yet still not exhaustive, by their own admission) list of "linguistic and stylistic categories" (p. 61ff), the field of stylistics is incredibly rich. Combinations of stylistic choices can produce a tremendous range of possible effects, and probably possible effects can be produced by a range of stylistic choices, as well. Add to this the somewhat subjective nature of the determination of the effect of a given text, and we have a rather intricate field of investigation.

Given this, several avenues for future investigation clearly present themselves. To begin with, if it is true that stylistics can have great bearing on time representation in fiction, then there is a need for many more stylistic analyses of this phenomenon. Within *To the Lighthouse*, the first and third parts, "The Window" and "The Lighthouse", probably merit such an investigation, as these parts are different rather markedly from "Time Passes" in terms of time representation, and are more typical of the so-called consciousness novel, involving a great deal of stream-of-consciousness writing. Auerbach (1946) analyzed this in detail, but the stylistic aspects were again kept mostly out of this analysis. Of course, different works by different authors would also be interesting, as Virginia Woolf was hardly the only author to ever explore the representation of time in a work of fiction. Different works would also be even more likely to yield interesting results on the basis of stylistic categories different from the ones I have investigated here.

The discussion so far has focused mostly on literary analysis for its own sake, that is, to attain a more thorough understanding of the qualities and effects of a given work of fiction. Let us consider the specific application for the translator and the field of translation, as well. The relevance of these sorts of analyses may seem somewhat limited if whatever translation choices seem desirable on the basis of such analyses turn out to be choices the translator would already be likely to make, regardless. I would argue this is the case mainly for analyses that focus on narratology. Narratology being generally about the larger-scale flow of a text rather than the level of individual words and sentences, the translator is less likely to deviate in any significant way from the source text author in her or his narratological choices. To do so would require relatively extensive shifts that a typical translator is probably unwilling to make – in most cases. Even for stylistic choices, the most typical or default choices a translator makes may often result in the translation being quite faithful to the source text, but if there are divergences, they are more likely to take place on the level of style than that of narration. Here again, then, we see a reason to argue in favor of stylistic analyses.

For my own translation, the main issue I ran into several times was the difficulty in both respecting the stylistic value of the original in all its nuance and intricacy, and producing a translation that reads naturally in the target language of Dutch. Virginia Woolf's style, certainly insofar as it relates to the representation of time, often involves specific textual features and structures that do not work as well in Dutch as they do in English. Many times, I had to give up either some of the elements I had identified in my analysis, or the natural flow of the target text. In some instances, I chose to sacrifice the latter, since the representation of time was the focus of this thesis. However, for a translation made with the purpose of publication in the form of a novel, I do not believe it right to sacrifice the naturalness of language, as this is the first level of interaction between the text and the reader. Sadly, some of the more intricate aspects of time representation might therefore need to be sacrificed. This conclusion then mimics that given by Masselink (2011), who translated part of Woolf's novel *The Years*: it may be impossible, or close to it, to respect all the nuances and complexities of the source text in translation (pp. 38–39).

Thank You

Lette Vos, for guiding me through the process of writing this thesis, for giving very helpful advice, for always being available for any questions I had, and for making the whole project more pleasant overall than I had anticipated. Gandolfo Cascio, for being my second reader, and the first to introduce me to the rich field of translation studies. Cees Koster, for helping me find the topic of this thesis, regarding both the focus on stylistics and the choice for Virginia Woolf as a case study. My fellow students, for providing relief and support on those rare days when I was less than excited to continue working.

De tijd verstrijkt

I

'We moeten de toekomst maar afwachten,' zei Mr Bankes, die van het terras terug naar binnen kwam.

'Het is bijna te donker om iets te zien,' zei Andrew, die terugkwam van het strand.

'De zee is nauwelijks van het land te onderscheiden,' zei Prue.

'Moeten we dat licht laten branden?' zei Lily terwijl ze binnen hun jassen uittrokken.

'Nee,' zei Prue, 'niet als iedereen al binnen is.'

'Andrew,' riep ze terug, 'doe het licht in de hal maar uit.'

Eén voor één werden alle lichten gedoofd, ware het niet dat Mr Carmichael, die graag nog even wakker bleef om Vergilius te lezen, zijn kaars wat langer liet branden dan de rest.

II

Nu de lichten allemaal waren gedoofd en de maan was ondergegaan begon er, onder het geroffel van motregen op het dak, een stroom van immense duisternis.¹⁴ Niets leek de vloed te overleven, de overdaad aan duisternis die binnenkwam door kiertjes en sleutelgaten, die rond gordijnen gleeed, slaapkamers binnenkroop, hier een kannetje en een kommetje verslond, daar een vaas met rode en gele dahlia's, de harde randen en zware romp van een ladekast. Niet alleen het meubilair werd verhuuld: er bleef van lichaam of geest nauwelijks nog iets over om aan te kunnen zien: 'Dit is hij' of 'Dit is zij'. Soms werd er een hand opgetild als om iets vast te grijpen of af te weren, of er kreunde iemand, of er lachte iemand hardop alsof er een grap werd gedeeld met het niets.

Niets kwam in de zitkamer of in de eetkamer of op de trap in beweging. Wel kropen door de roestige scharnieren en het door het zeevocht opgezette hout (het huis was immers vervallen)

14 An attempt to begin with "aldus", my translation of the English word "so" that starts this sentence in the source text, led to a discontinuous structure that stretched across the whole sentence. Although the source text does make use of such structures occasionally, this case was rather interruptive to the flow of the translation. Inserting the word at a later point in the sentence would have rather changed its effect, so I decided to remove it outright. A discontinuous structure does remain in the translation at a smaller scale, but this one is far less intrusive.

bepaalde briesjes, losgeraakt van de buitenwind, de hoek om en het huis in. Het is bijna voorstelbaar hoe ze de zitkamer binnengaan, zoekend en polsend¹⁵, hoe ze spelen met de loshangende reep behang en vragen: blijft hij nog lang hangen, wanneer laat hij los? Dan tastten ze soepel de muren af, alsof ze de rode en gele rozen op het behang peinzend vroegen of ze vaal zouden worden en (voorzichtig, want ze hadden tijd genoeg) de verscheurde brieven in de prullenbak onderzochten, de bloemen, de boeken, die nu allemaal voor hen open lagen en vroegen: waren het vrienden? Waren het vijanden? Hoe lang zouden zij standhouden?

Gestuurd door een of ander licht met zijn doffe afdruk op de trap en de mat, afkomstig van een onthulde ster of dwalend schip of zelfs van de Vuurtoren, met zijn doffe afdruk op de trap en de mat, klommen de briesjes de trap op en spiekten ze om slaapkamerdeuren heen. Maar hier moesten ze toch zeker stoppen. Wat er verder ook mag sneuvelen en verdwijnen, wat hier ligt is standvastig. Hier horen die schuivende lichtjes, die tastende briesjes die over het bed ademen en buigen, hier kun je noch aanraken noch vernietigen. Waarna ze vermoeid, spookachtig, alsof ze vederlichte vingers hebben en de lichte hardnekkigheid van veren, één blik zouden werpen op de gesloten ogen en de zwak grijpende vingers, hun gewaad vermoeid om zich heen sloegen en verdwenen. En zo gingen ze wrijvend en snuffelend naar het trapraam, naar de slaapkamers van de bedienden, naar de dozen op zolder; ze daalden af, verbleekten de appels op de eettafel, voelden de rozenblaadjes, testten het schilderij op de ezel, veegden de mat en bliezen wat zand over de vloer. Ten langen leste hielden zij allemaal op, verzamelden ze zich, zuchtten ze allemaal; allemaal stootten ze een zinloze smartvlaag uit waarop een deur in de keuken antwoordde, openzwaaide, niets doorliet, en dichtsloeg.

[Hier blies Mr Carmichael, die Vergilius aan het lezen was, zijn kaars uit. Het was na middernacht.]

15 Famously, Dutch is less inclined to make use of progressive verb forms (gerund-participles) than English. However, Virginia Woolf makes use of so many of these forms in her text, that it often becomes difficult to replace them all with alternative structures in a Dutch translation that yet retain some acceptable degree of stylistic equivalence. Masselink (2010), who investigated this syntactic phenomenon specifically in the case of Dutch translation of another Virginia Woolf novel (*The Years*), argued that "wherever a Dutch gerund-participle can be put in without standing out it should" (p. 35). I have followed this advice, at the risk that while at the micro-level of individual gerund-participles my choices will not stand out, a relative abundance of gerund-participles in the overall translation might yet appear odd to the Dutch reader of the text. I have attempted to strike the right balance here, such that the translation does have rather more gerund-participles than the average Dutch text, but not so many as to become glaring.

Maar wat is immers één nacht? Van kleine omvang, zeker als het duister weer zo snel oplost en er zo snel een vogel zingt, een haan kraait, of iets vaag groens flitst, zoals een blad dat draait in de holte van de golf. Maar nacht volgt op nacht. De winter heeft nachten te over en bedeeft ze gelijk, regelmatig toe, met onvermoeibare vingers. Ze worden langer, ze worden donkerder.¹⁶ Sommige nachten houden heldere planeten omhoog, platen van verlichting. De herfstbomen geven, togetakeld als ze zijn, de indruk van verscheurde vlaggen in de grauwe gloed van koele kathedralen als grotten waar gouden letters op marmeren vellen de dood door strijd beschrijven en hoe botten bleken en branden in het verre Indische zand.¹⁷ De herfstbomen gloeien in het gele maanlicht, in het licht van Oogstmanen, het licht dat de energie van het werk tempert en wat scherp is zacht maakt en de golven blauw kabbelend naar de kust brengt.

Nu leek het alsof, ontroerd door de boetedoening van de mens en al zijn arbeid, de goddelijke barmhartigheid het gordijn had opengetrokken en daarachter, uniek, onmiskenbaar, de opstaande haas had getoond, net als de neerslaande golf en de deinende boot, die, als we ze verdienden, altijd de onzen zouden zijn. Maar helaas, de goddelijke barmhartigheid trekt aan het koord en sluit het gordijn; het behaagt hem niet. Hij bedekt zijn rijkdommen met een hevige hagelbui en breekt ze zo, beroert ze zo, dat het onmogelijk lijkt dat we hun kalmte ooit terug zullen vinden, of in de verstrooide resten nog een heldere waarheid kunnen lezen.¹⁸ Want onze boetedoening verdient slechts een glimp van die rijkdom, onze arbeid slechts respijt.

Nu zijn de nachten vol van wind en vernietiging. De bomen duiken en buigen en hun bladeren vliegen her en der tot het gazon ermee bezaaid is en ze opgehoopt in de goot liggen en regenpijpen verstoppert en zompige paadjes bedekken. Ook de zee bruist en kolkert, en mocht een

16 In the source text, these two statements are separated by a semicolon, rather than a comma: "They lengthen; they darken." The semicolon is another example of a textual element that is less prevalent in modern Dutch than in English. In some cases, however, the semicolon cannot be straightforwardly replaced with a comma in the absence of additional changes. In many cases, this would result in a run-on sentence, as indeed seems to be the case in this particular four-word sentence. However, in a brief sentence with a repeated structure like this one, this did not strike me as particularly problematic. Generally, I have attempted to strike a balance with regard to this phenomenon, too.

17 This sentence in the source text is rich in alliteration, assonance, and rhythm: "take on the flash of tattered flags", "kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves", "bones bleach and burn". Naturally, this presents a challenge to the translator, as this forms an extra layer in the text she or he has to respect. My translation here involved a number of minor alterations of the informational content of the source text, such as "grauwe gloed" for "gloom" (which at the same time is a form of compensation for other alliteration I lost in "take on the flash of tattered flags" when I translated that as "geven de indruk van verscheurde vlaggen").

18 This marks one of the few cases that I split one of Virginia Woolf's characteristically long sentences up into two separate sentences. The source text here makes use of an additional semicolon, but the repetition of two semicolons in rapid succession would have been overdone in Dutch. The sentence naturally splits into two at the point of the second semicolon, so that this was deemed preferable here.

slaper het idee krijgen dat hij op het strand een antwoord zal vinden op zijn vertwijfeling, een metgezel in zijn eenzaamheid, zijn beddengoed afslaan en er alleen op uitgaan om het zand te bewandelen, dan komt er niet zomaar een beeltenis naar boven van dienstbaarheid en goddelijk weerwoord dat de nacht op orde brengt en de wereld het kompas van de ziel laat reflecteren. De hand in zijn hand lost op, de stem buldert in zijn oor. Bijna lijkt het nutteloos om de nacht in zulke consternatie vragen te stellen over het wat en waarom en waarvoor die de slaper uit zijn bed lokken op zoek naar een antwoord.

[Mr Ramsay, die op een donkere morgen door een gang stommelde, strekte zijn armen uit, maar omdat Mrs Ramsay de nacht tevoren nogal plotseling was overleden, bleven zijn armen, al waren ze uitgestrekt, leeg.]

IV

Zo raasden die verdwaalde briesjes, voorbodes van grote legermachten, het lege huis binnen met de deuren op slot en de matrassen opgerold; ze streken langs kale planken, knabbelden en bliezen, en kwamen in slaapkamer noch zitkamer iets tegen wat werkelijk weerstand bood, alleen flapperende lappen, krakend hout, blote tafelpoten, steelpannen en servies die al beslagen, verkleurd en gebarsten waren. Wat mensen hadden uitgedaan en achtergelaten – een paar schoenen, een jachtpet, vale rokken en jassen in kledingkasten – alleen dat behield de menselijke vorm en gaf in de leegte aan hoe het ooit gevuld en in beweging was geweest, hoe handen zich ooit met de haakjes en knoopjes hadden beziggehouden, hoe de spiegel ooit een gezicht had getoond, een uitgeholde wereld had getoond waarin zich een figuur keerde, een hand voorbij flitste, de deur opende, kinderen zich tuimelend naar binnen haastten en weer naar buiten gingen. Nu kroop dag na dag, als een in water weerspiegelde bloem, de scherpe afdruk van het licht over de tegenoverliggende muur. Slechts de schaduwen van de bomen die zwierden in de wind huldigden de muur en verduisterden een ogenblik de plas waarin het licht werd weerspiegeld; of vogels in vlucht lieten een zachte vlek langzaam over de slaapkamervloer fladderen.

Zo heersten de schoonheid en de rust¹⁹, en deze samen vormden de schoonheid zelf, een vorm waar het leven zich aan had onttrokken; eenzaam als een plas in de avond, op grote afstand, gezien uit het raampje van een trein, zo snel weer verdwenen dat de plas, zo flets in de avond, hoewel eenmaal gezien, nauwelijks wordt ontdaan van zijn eenzaamheid. De schoonheid en de rust sloegen in de slaapkamer de handen ineen, zodat te midden van de beschaduwde kannen en de bedekte stoelen zelfs het prangen van de wind en de zachte neuzen van de klamme zeeluchtjes met hun gewrijf, gesnuffel en het steeds opnieuw herhalen van hun vragen – 'Gaan jullie vervagen? Gaan jullie aftakelen?' – de vrede, de onverschilligheid en de sfeer van pure integriteit nauwelijks verstoorden, alsof de vraag die ze stelden nauwelijks behoefde dat ze antwoordden: wij houden stand.

Niets leek dat beeld te kunnen doorbreken, die onschuld te kunnen bezoedelen, of die wiegende mantel van stilte te kunnen verstoren die, week na week, in de leegte van de kamer, de vallende roepen van vogels in zich verweefde, evenals sloopshoorns, het zoemen en ruisen van de velden, het blaffen van een hond, het schreeuwen van een man, en dit alles in stilte om het huis vouwde. Slechts eenmaal barstte een plank op de steiger; eenmaal midden in de nacht met gebulder, met een breuk, zoals zich na eeuwen vredigheid een rots uit de berg scheurt en ruw in de vallei werpt, maakte zich één plooi van de sjaal los en zwaaide deze heen en weer. Toen keerde de rust weder; de schaduw trilde; vol bewondering boog het licht voor zijn eigen beeltenis op de slaapkamermuur en Mrs McNab, die de sluier van stilte doorbrak met handen die in de waskuip waren gehouden en schuurde met laarzen die op de kiezels knarsten, kwam langs volgens afspraak om alle ramen open te zetten en de slaapkamers af te stoffen.

V

Al hellende (want ze deinde als een schip op zee) en loerende (want haar ogen landden nergens direct op, maar met een zijdelingse blik langs de woede en minachting van de wereld – ze was onnozel en dat wist ze ook), terwijl ze de leuning vastgreep, zich naar boven hees en van kamer

19 This is one of many cases of personifications present also in the source text, that are given so much emphasis, explication, and expanse, that it seems difficult at best to remove them in Dutch, a language which is otherwise far less welcoming to them. Other examples are the certain airs ("zekere briesjes") throughout the whole of "Time Passes" and the winter nights in the first paragraph of the third chapter. This thus being an inextricable part of the style of the author, especially in this second part where these inanimate objects and concepts are almost the sole 'characters' of the text, I have chosen to embrace it in full in my translation.

naar kamer deinde, zong ze. Ze boende het glas van de staande spiegel en loerde zijdelings naar haar schommelende gedaante en aan haar lippen ontsprong een geluid – iets wat twintig jaar geleden op het podium misschien vrolijk was geweest, wat tot neuriën en dansen had uitgenodigd, maar nu, uit de tandeloze mond van de huisbewaarster met haar bonnet, ontdaan was van betekenis, net de stem was van de onnozelheid, geestigheid, volharding zelve, platgetrapt maar weer opgesprongen, zodat ze tijdens het hellen, afstoffen, afvegen leek te zeggen dat het een onophoudelijke zorg en treurnis was, dat het opstaan was en weer naar bed gaan, en dingen oppakken en weer wegzetten. Hij was niet makkelijk of knus, deze wereld die ze al bijna zeventig jaar kende. Ze was door vermoeidheid neergedrukt. Hoe lang, vroeg ze, terwijl ze krakend en kreunend op haar knieën onder het bed de houten vloer afstofte, hoe lang gaat het nog duren? maar ze krabbelde weer overeind, trok zich omhoog, en stond weer met haar zijdelingse geloer, dat zich zelfs van haar eigen gezicht, en van haar eigen zorgen, afkeerde en weggleed, te turen in de spiegel met een onbestemde glimlach en begon weer aan dat eeuwige hompelen en strompelen, matten oppakken, servies neerzetten, zijdelings in de spiegel kijken alsof ze toch nog een eigen troost had, alsof ergens achter haar klaagzang nog een onverbeterlijke hoop schuilging. Er moeten visioenen van geluk zijn geweest in de waskuip, bijvoorbeeld van haar kinderen (maar twee waren buitenechtelijk en één had haar verlaten), van drinken in de pub; ze schoof spulletjes heen en weer in haar lades. Er moet een kloof zijn geweest in de duisternis, een leiding in de krochten van de vergetelheid waar genoeg licht doorheen sijpelde om haar gezicht tot die grijns in de spiegel te verwringen en haar ertoe te brengen, wanneer ze zich weer tot haar werk keerde, het oude liedje van de muziekzaal te murmelen. De mysticus, de visionair, die op het strand op een mooie nacht, als hij een poeltje verstoorde, een steen bekeek, zich afvroeg: 'Wat ben ik', 'Wat is dit?' kreeg zich ineens een antwoord toevertrouwd (hij kon niet zeggen wat het was),²⁰ zodat hij warm bleef in de vrieskou en beschut in de woestijn. Maar Mrs McNab bleef drinken en roddelen als voorheen.

20 In this sentence, the parentheses, on the face of it, fit better before the comma than after, where they are in the source text (although there the comma is, in fact, a colon). I interpreted this position in the source text as a stylistic signal of a stream of consciousness, as though the sentence in the parentheses is given as an afterthought, but still decided not to make the same choice here, since at least for modern, Dutch readers, I expect this would be too much of a distraction to the reading process. The parentheses, at any rate, already suggest this is an afterthought.

De lente werd zonder een blad om te werpen, klaar en kaal als een maagd met felle kuisheid, puurheid en minachting²¹, uitgespreid over de velden en hield met grote ogen de wacht, zonder erom te geven wat er gedaan of gedacht werd door de toeschouwers.

[Prue Ramsay leunde op haar vaders arm toen ze werd weggegeven op haar bruiloft. Wat toepasselijk, vond men. En, voegden ze toe, wat zag ze er beeldschoon uit!]

In de aanloop op de zomer, bij het lengen van de avonden, stelden attente, hoopvolle strandwandelaars die de plas verstoorden zich de vreemdsoortigste beelden voor – van vlees dat in atomen opgaat die door de wind worden voortgedreven, van sterren die in hun harten voorbijflitsen, van klif, zee, wolk en lucht doelbewust bijeengebracht om de verspreide delen van het innerlijke visioen van buiten te verzamelen. In die spiegels, de menselijke geesten, in die rusteloze waterplassen, waarin wolken voor eeuwig rondwaren en zich schaduwen vormen, hielden dromen stand. Het was onmogelijk weerstand te bieden aan de vreemde aankondiging die van elke meeuw, bloem, boom, man en vrouw en van de witte aarde zelf leek uit te gaan (maar die bij nadere beschouwing meteen werd teruggetrokken) dat het goede triomfeert, het geluk overwint en de orde overheerst, of om weerstand te bieden aan de buitengewone prikkel om her en der te dolen op zoek naar een absolute vorm van goedheid, een kristal van intensiteit, ver van de bekende geneugten en de vertrouwde deugden, iets waarmee de processen van het huiselijk bestaan onbekend waren, enkelvoudig, hard, helder, als een diamant in het zand, die de bezitter veilig zou stellen. Bovendien sloeg de lente, verzacht en toegeeflijk, met haar zoemende bijen en dansende muggen haar mantel om zich heen: ze sluisde haar ogen, wendde haar hoofd af en leek tussen voorbijsnellende schaduwen en vluchtige regenbuitjes kennis te hebben genomen van het leed van de mens.

[Prue Ramsay stierf die zomer aan een ziekte bij de bevalling, wat zonder meer tragisch was, zeiden de mensen. Ze zeiden dat niemand meer geluk had verdiend.]

En nu stuurde in de zomerhitte de wind zijn spionnen weer door het huis. De vliegen sponnen een web in de zonnige kamers; onkruid dat tot dichtbij het glas was opgeklommen tikte 's nachts met regelmaat tegen de ruit. Na het vallen van het duister volgde het schijnsel van de Vuurtoren, dat zich in het duister met zoveel gezag op het tapijt had laten vallen en het patroon had gevolgd,

21 The source text here has "scornful in her purity", a more literal translation of which might be "met minachtende puurheid". This, however, sounds forced in Dutch, and so this revised translation was required. The interpretation is, however, slightly different.

nu in het tedere lentelicht en maanlicht, zacht glijdend, alsof het streeelde, steeds bleef schuilen, rondkeek en liefdevol terugkwam. Maar juist in de rust na deze liefdevolle streling, toen de lange lichtstraal op het bed viel, werd de rots losgescheurd: nog een plooi van de sjaal maakte zich los: daar hing hij, daar zwaaide hij. In de korte zomernachten en de lange zomerdagen leken de lege ruimtes te suizen met de echo's uit de velden en het zoemen van de vliegen en zwaaide het lange lint rustig, zwierde het doelloos heen en weer, terwijl de zon de kamers zo tekende met strepen en repen en zo vulde met een gele waas dat Mrs McNab, als ze naar binnen drong en heen en weer helde, afstofte, veegde, eruitzag als een tropische vis die zich door zondoorschenen wateren bewoog.

Maar hoe hij ook sliep en sluimerde, later in de zomer kwamen er dreigende geluiden als gelijkmatige hamerslagen op vilt die met hun herhaalde schokken de sjaal nog verder losmaakten en de theekopjes deden barsten. Nu en dan rinkelde er een glas in de kast alsof de stem van een reus zo hard had gekrijst van afzien dat zelfs kelken in kastjes meetrilden. Dan was er opnieuw stilte, en dan leek er nacht na nacht en soms ook midden op de dag, als de rozen helder waren en het licht zijn vorm duidelijk zichtbaar over de muur liet draaien, in deze stilte, deze onverschilligheid, deze integriteit, de bons te klinken van een vallend voorwerp.

[Er ontplofte een granaat. In Frankrijk werden twintig of dertig jonge mannen opgeblazen, onder wie Andrew Ramsay, wiens dood gelukkig zeer snel was.]

In dat seizoen moesten zij die waren uitgegaan om het strand te bewandelen en de zee en de hemel te vragen welke boodschap ze hadden of welk visioen ze bekrachtigden onder de gebruikelijke tekenen van goddelijke rijkdom – zonsondergang aan zee, de bleke kleur van de morgenstond, de opgaande maan, vissersbootjes afgetekend tegen de maan en kinderen die zandtaartjes maken of elkaar met handenvol gras bekogelen – iets scharen wat niet in harmonie was met deze vrolijkheid en deze sereniteit. Zo waren er de stille verschijning van een askleurig schip, gekomen en weer gegaan, en de paarse vlek op het matte wateroppervlak alsof daar beneden onzichtbaar iets kolkte en bloedde. Deze inbreuk in een tafereel dat bestemd was voor de meest sublieme overwegingen en de prettigste conclusies hield deze af. Het was moeilijk ze over het hoofd te zien, om af te doen aan hun betekenis voor het landschap, om, bij een wandeling langs de zee, zich erover te blijven verwonderen hoe de schoonheid van buiten een weerspiegeling is van de schoonheid van binnen.

Voegde de natuur toe aan wat de mens aanbood? Maakte zij af wat hij begon? Steeds even onbekommerd aanschouwde ze zijn misère, keurde ze zijn armzaligheid goed en stemde ze

zwijgend in met zijn marteling. Was die droom van delen, van vervolmaken, van op het strand in eenzaamheid een antwoord vinden, dan slechts de reflectie in een spiegel, en de spiegel zelf slechts de oppervlakkige glazigheid die zich in de vredigheid vormt terwijl daaronder edelere machten rusten?²² Ongeduldig, wanhopig, maar ongeneigd te vertrekken (want schoonheid blijft aantrekkelijk en blijft troost bieden): het was onmogelijk het strand te bewandelen, overpeinzing was onhoudbaar, de spiegel was gebroken.

[Mr Carmichael bracht die lente een dichtbundel uit die een onverwacht succes behaalde. De oorlog, zeiden de mensen, had de interesse in poëzie weer opgewekt.]

VII

Nacht na nacht, in de zomer en de winter, maakten zowel de kwelling van onweer als mooi weer, stil als een pijl, zich ononderbroken kenbaar. Van de bovenste kamers van het lege huis zou een luisteraar (als er die een was geweest) alleen een gigantische chaos doorkliefd met bliksem hebben horen razen en rommelen, wanneer wind en golven zich vermaakten, zoals de amorfe massa van watermonsters in wier ogen geen teken van rede te lezen is, en zich op elkaar stapelden, en in de duisternis of het daglicht (want dag en nacht, maand en jaar gingen vormeloos in elkaar over) stootten en duwden bij idiote spelletjes, tot het leek alsof het universum in brute verwarring en ongebreidelde lust worstelde en tuimelde, doelloos en alleen.

In de lente waren de vazen in de tuin, achteloos gevuld met verwaaide planten, even vrolijk als altijd. Er kwamen viooltjes en narcissen. Maar de stilte en de helderheid van de dag waren even vreemd als de chaos en de wanorde van de nacht, zoals de bomen daar stonden, en zoals de bloemen daar stonden, zoals ze vooruit keken, omhoog keken, maar niets zagen, oogloos en dus verschrikkelijk.

22 This sentence in the English source text is formed as a declarative question, i.e. a question with the word order of a declarative sentence. My Dutch translation turned this into a more typical question with subject and verb reversed, so that to the reader it is obvious from the start of the sentence, rather than only at the end (upon encountering the question mark), that she or he is reading a question. For a long sentence such as this one, I thought this a good change to make, especially as the structure of this question does not seem to play an important stylistic part here.

De familie zou niet komen, nooit meer, zeiden ze, en het huis zou in de nazomer misschien verkocht worden, dus Mrs McNab zag er geen kwaad in toen ze bukde en wat bloemen plukte om mee naar huis te nemen. Ze legde ze op tafel terwijl ze het stof afnam. Ze hield van bloemen. Het was zonde ze te laten verwelken. Stel dat het huis verkocht werd (ze stond voor de spiegel met haar armen over elkaar), dan moest het worden onderhouden, dat zeker. Al die jaren had het daar gestaan, met geen ziel erin. De boeken en spullen waren beschimmeld, want door de oorlog en de moeilijkheid hulp te vinden was het huis niet zo schoongemaakt als ze had gewild. Eén persoon was niet meer genoeg om het op orde te brengen. Ze was te oud. Haar benen deden pijn. Al die boeken moesten buiten op het gras in de zon worden gelegd, in de hal was het gips los aan het laten, de gootpijp boven de studeerkamer was verstopt en lekte water naar binnen, het tapijt was helemaal geruïneerd. Maar mensen moesten zelf komen, ze hadden iemand moeten laten langskomen om te komen kijken. Want er lagen kleren in de kasten; in alle slaapkamers hadden ze kleren laten liggen. Wat moest ze daarmee beginnen? Er zat de mot in – de spullen van Mrs Ramsay. Arme vrouw! Die zou ze niet meer nodig hebben. Ze was dood, zeiden ze, jaren geleden al, in Londen. De oude grijze mantel was er nog die ze bij het tuinieren droeg (Mrs McNab ging er met haar vingers langs). Ze kon haar bijna voor zich zien, hoe ze op het huis afliep, over haar bloemen bukde (de tuin was nu een mistroostig gezicht, een puinhoop; de konijnen vluchtten voor je weg uit de bloembedden) – ze zag haar voor zich met één van de kinderen in die grijze mantel. Er waren laarzen en schoenen en op de kaptafel lagen nog een borstel en een kam, net alsof ze verwachtte morgen terug te komen. (Ze was uiteindelijk heel plotseling overleden, zeiden ze.) En op een dag zouden ze komen, maar ze hadden het uitgesteld door de oorlog en omdat reizen de laatste tijd zo moeilijk was; al die jaren waren ze nooit gekomen, ze hadden haar alleen geld gestuurd, maar ze schreven nooit, kwamen nooit langs, en verwachtten wel alles terug te vinden zoals ze het hadden achtergelaten, ach, lieve hemel! Maar de lades van de kaptafel zaten nog vol met spulletjes (ze trok ze open), zakdoeken, stukjes lint. Ja, ze zag Mrs Ramsay zo voor zich als ze op het huis afliep met de was.

'Goedenavond, Mrs McNab²³,' zei ze dan.

23 I chose to keep the English form of address for Mrs Ramsay and Mrs McNab and other characters in my translation to help place the text in the British context in which its story is based. However, in a direct quotation such as this one, where the words are meant to be taken literally as spoken by the characters, one might think this problematic. I still consider this part of the unspoken covenant between reader and translator, however, by which the reader accepts certain incongruities in the language use of the text necessitated by the act of translation.

Ze had iets heel vriendelijks. De meisjes mochten haar allemaal. Maar, hemel, sindsdien was er zoveel veranderd (ze deed de lade dicht): veel families hadden hun lieveling verloren. Ze was dus dood, en Mr Andrew was omgekomen, en Miss Prue ook dood, zeiden ze, met haar eerste baby, maar iedereen was wel iemand verloren. De prijzen waren schandalig verhoogd, en ook niet meer omlaag gegaan. Ze herinnerde zich haar nog goed in haar grijze mantel.

'Goedenavond, Mrs McNab,' zei ze en tegen de kokkin zei ze nog een bordje melksoep voor haar te bewaren – daar had ze wel behoefte aan, na die zware mand dat hele eind te hebben gedragen. Ze zag haar nu, gebukt over haar bloemen, in een valse flikkering, zoals een gele straal of de cirkel aan het eind van een telescoop, een dame in een grijze mantel, gebukt over haar bloemen, in kuiergang langs de slaapkamermuur, naar de kaptafel, langs de wastafel, terwijl Mrs McNab hompelde en strompelde, het stof afnam, dingen rechtzette.

En de naam van de kokkin? Mildred? Marian? – iets in die richting. Ach, dat was ze vergeten – ze vergat wel meer dingen. Vurig, zoals alle vrouwen met rood haar. Wat hadden ze veel gelachen samen. Ze was altijd welkom geweest in de keuken. Ze maakte ze aan het lachen, zij. Toen was alles beter dan nu.

Ze zuchtte: er was te veel werk voor één vrouw. Ze wiebelde haar hoofd naar de ene kant en naar de andere. Dit was de kinderkamer geweest. Maar hier was het helemaal nat: het gips liet los. Waarom hadden ze hier toch de schedel van een beest opgehangen? Ook al beschimmeld. En ratten op alle zolders. De regen kwam naar binnen. Maar ze stuurden nooit bericht, kwamen nooit langs. Sommige sloten waren versleten, dus de deuren gingen open en sloegen weer dicht. Het was hier bij zonsondergang alleen ook niet prettig. Het was te veel voor één vrouw, te veel, te veel. Ze kraakte, ze kreunde. Ze sloeg de deur dicht. Ze draaide de sleutel in het slot en liet het huis alleen achter, afgesloten, op slot.

Appendix A: Source Text

I

'Well, we must wait for the future to show,' said Mr Bankes, coming in from the terrace.

'It's almost too dark to see,' said Andrew, coming up from the beach.

'One can hardly tell which is the sea and which is the land,' said Prue.

'Do we leave that light burning?' said Lily as they took their coats off indoors.

'No,' said Prue, 'not if everyone's in.'

'Andrew,' she called back, 'just put out the light in the hall.'

One by one the lamps were all extinguished, except that Mr Carmichael, who liked to lie awake a little reading Virgil, kept his candle burning rather longer than the rest.

II

So with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof, a downpouring of immense darkness began. Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms, swallowed up here a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias, there the sharp edges and firm bulk of a chest of drawers. Not only was furniture confounded; there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say, 'This is he,' or, 'This is she.' Sometimes a hand was raised as if to clutch something or ward off something, or somebody groaned, or somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness.

Nothing stirred in the drawing-room or in the dining-room or on the staircase. Only through the rusty hinges and swollen sea-moistened woodwork certain airs, detached from the body of the wind (the house was ramshackle after all), crept round corners and ventured indoors. Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing-room, questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wallpaper, asking, would it hang much longer, when would it fall? Then smoothly brushing the walls, they passed on musingly as if asking the red and yellow roses on the wallpaper whether they would fade, and questioning (gently, for there was time at their disposal)

the torn letter in the wastepaper basket, the flowers, the books, all of which were now open to them and asking: Were they allies? Were they enemies? How long would they endure?

So some random light directing them from an uncovered star, or wandering ship, or the Lighthouse even, with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, the little airs mounted the staircase and nosed round bedroom doors. But here surely, they must cease. Whatever else may perish and disappear what lies here is steadfast. Here one might say to those sliding lights, those fumbling airs, that breathe and bend over the bed itself, here you can neither touch nor destroy. Upon which, wearily, ghostlily, as if they had feather-light fingers and the light persistency of feathers, they would look, once, on the shut eyes and the loosely clasping fingers, and fold their garments wearily and disappear. And so, nosing, rubbing, they went to the window on the staircase, to the servants' bedrooms, to the boxes in the attics; descending, blanched the apples on the dining-room table, fumbled the petals of roses, tried the picture on the easel, brushed the mat and blew a little sand along the floor. At length, desisting, all ceased together, gathered together, all sighed together; all together gave off an aimless gust of lamentation to which some door in the kitchen replied; swung wide; admitted nothing; and slammed to.

[Here Mr Carmichael, who was reading Virgil, blew out his candle. It was past midnight.]

III

But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings, a cock crows, or a faint green quickens, like a turning leaf, in the hollow of the wave. Night, however, succeeds to night. The winter holds a pack of them in store and deals them equally, evenly, with indefatigable fingers. They lengthen; they darken. Some of them hold aloft clear planets, plates of brightness. The autumn trees, ravaged as they are, take on the flash of tattered flags kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves where gold letters on marble pages describe death in battle and how bones bleach and burn far away in Indian sands. The autumn trees gleam in the yellow moonlight, in the light of harvest moons, the light which mellows the energy of labour, and smooths the stubble, and brings the wave lapping blue to the shore.

It seemed now as if, touched by human penitence and all its toil, divine goodness had parted the curtain and displayed behind it, single, distinct, the hare erect; the wave falling; the boat rocking, which, did we deserve them, should be ours always. But alas, divine goodness, twitching

the cord, draws the curtain; it does not please him; he covers his treasure in a drench of hail, and so breaks them, so confuses them that it seems impossible that their calm should ever return or that we should ever compose from their fragments a perfect whole or read in the littered pieces the clear words of truth. For our penitence deserves a glimpse only; our toil respite only.

The nights now are full of wind and destruction; the trees plunge and bend and their leaves fly helter skelter until the lawn is plastered with them and they lie packed in gutters and choke rain-pipes and scatter damp paths. Also the sea tosses itself and breaks itself, and should any sleeper, fancying that he might find on the beach an answer to his doubts, a sharer of his solitude, throw off his bed-clothes and go down by himself to walk on the sand, no image with semblance of serving and divine promptitude comes readily to hand bringing the night to order and making the world reflect the compass of the soul. The hand dwindles in his hand; the voice bellows in his ear. Almost it would appear that it is useless in such confusion to ask the night those questions as to what, and why, and wherefore, which tempt the sleeper from his bed to seek an answer.

[Mr Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but, Mrs Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.]

IV

So with the house empty and the doors locked and the mattresses rolled round, those stray airs, advance guards of great armies, blustered in, brushed bare boards, nibbled and fanned, met nothing in bedroom or drawing-room that wholly resisted them but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked, the bare legs of tables, saucepans and china already furred, tarnished, cracked. What people had shed and left – a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes – those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated; how once hands were busy with hooks and buttons; how once the looking-glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened, in came children rushing and tumbling; and went out again. Now, day after day, light turned, like a flower reflected in water, its clear image on the wall opposite. Only the shadows of the trees, flourishing in the wind, made obeisance on the wall, and for a moment

darkened the pool in which light reflected itself; or birds, flying, made a soft spot flutter slowly across the bedroom floor.

So loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted; solitary like a pool at evening, far distant, seen from a train window, vanishing so quickly that the pool, pale in the evening, is scarcely robbed of its solitude, though once seen. Loveliness and stillness clasped hands in the bedroom, and among the shrouded jugs and sheeted chairs even the prying of the wind, and the soft nose of the clammy sea airs, rubbing, snuffling, iterating, and reiterating their questions – 'Will you fade? Will you perish?' – scarcely disturbed the peace, the indifference, the air of pure integrity, as if the question they asked scarcely needed that they should answer: we remain.

Nothing it seemed could break that image, corrupt that innocence, or disturb the swaying mantle of silence which, week after week, in the empty room, wove into itself the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout, and folded them round the house in silence. Once only a board sprang on the landing; once in the middle of the night with a roar, with a rupture, as after centuries of quiescence a rock rends itself from the mountain and hurtles crashing into the valley, one fold of the shawl loosened and swung to and fro. Then again peace descended; and the shadow wavered; light bent to its own image in adoration on the bedroom wall; when Mrs McNab, tearing the veil of silence with hands that had stood in the wash-tub, grinding it with boots that had crunched the shingle, came as directed to open all windows and dust the bedrooms.

V

As she lurched (for she rolled like a ship at sea) and leered (for her eyes fell on nothing directly, but with a sidelong glance that deprecated the scorn and anger of the world – she was witless, she knew it), as she clutched the banisters and hauled herself upstairs and rolled from room to room, she sang. Rubbing the glass of the long looking-glass and leering sideways at her swinging figure a sound issued from her lips – something that had been gay twenty years before on the stage perhaps, had been hummed and danced to, but now, coming from the toothless, bonneted, caretaking woman, was robbed of meaning, was like the voice of witlessness, humour, persistency itself, trodden down but springing up again, so that as she lurched, dusting, wiping, she seemed to

say how it was one long sorrow and trouble, how it was getting up and going to bed again, and bringing things out and putting them away again. It was not easy or snug this world she had known for close on seventy years. Bowed down she was with weariness. How long, she asked, creaking and groaning on her knees under the bed, dusting the boards, how long shall it endure? but hobbled to her feet again, pulled herself up, and again with her sidelong leer which slipped and turned aside even from her own face, and her own sorrows, stood and gaped in the glass, aimlessly smiling, and began again the old amble and hobble, taking up mats, putting down china, looking sideways in the glass, as if, after all, she had her consolations, as if indeed there twined about her dirge some incorrigible hope. Visions of joy there must have been at the wash-tub, say with her children (yet two had been base-born and one had deserted her); at the public-house, drinking; turning over scraps in her drawers. Some cleavage of the dark there must have been, some channel in the depths of obscurity through which light enough issued to twist her face grinning in the glass and make her, turning to her job again, mumble out the old music-hall song. Meanwhile the mystic, the visionary, walked the beach, stirred a puddle, looked at a stone, and asked themselves: 'What am I?' 'What is this?' and suddenly an answer was vouchsafed them (what it was they could not say): so that they were warm in the frost and had comfort in the desert. But Mrs McNab continued to drink and gossip as before.

VI

The spring without a leaf to toss, bare and bright like a virgin fierce in her chastity, scornful in her purity, was laid out on fields wide-eyed and watchful and entirely careless of what was done or thought by the beholders.

[Prue Ramsay, leaning on her father's arm, was given in marriage that May. What, people said, could have been more fitting? And, they added, how beautiful she looked!]

As summer neared, as the evenings lengthened, there came to the wakeful, the hopeful, walking the beach, stirring the pool, imaginations of the strangest kind – of flesh turned to atoms which drove before the wind, of stars flashing in their hearts, of cliff, sea, cloud and sky brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the scattered parts of the vision within. In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools of uneasy water, in which clouds forever turn and shadows form, dreams persisted, and it was impossible to resist the strange intimation which every

gull, flower, tree, man and woman and the white earth itself seemed to declare (but if questioned at once to withdraw), that good triumphs, happiness prevails, order rules; or to resist the extraordinary stimulus to range hither and thither in search of some absolute good, some crystal of intensity, remote from the known pleasures and familiar virtues, something alien to the processes of domestic life, single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure. Moreover, softened and acquiescent, the spring with her bees humming and gnats dancing threw her cloak about her, veiled her eyes, averted her head, and among passing shadows and flights of small rain seemed to have taken upon her a knowledge of the sorrows of mankind.

[Prue Ramsay died that summer in some illness connected with childbirth, which was indeed a tragedy, people said. They said nobody deserved happiness more.]

And now in the heat of summer the wind sent its spies about the house again. Flies wove a web in the sunny rooms; weeds that had grown close to the glass in the night tapped methodically at the window pane. When darkness fell, the stroke of the Lighthouse, which had laid itself with such authority upon the carpet in the darkness, tracing its pattern, came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight gliding gently as if it laid its caress and lingered stealthily and looked and came lovingly again. But in the very lull of this loving caress, as the long stroke leant upon the bed, the rock was rent asunder; another fold of the shawl loosened; there it hung, and swayed. Through the short summer nights and the long summer days, when the empty rooms seemed to murmur with the echoes of the fields and the hum of flies, the long streamer waved gently, swayed aimlessly; while the sun so striped and barred the rooms and filled them with yellow haze that Mrs McNab, when she broke in and lurched about, dusting, sweeping, looked like a tropical fish oaring its way through sun-lanced waters.

But slumber and sleep though it might there came later in the summer ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammer dulled on felt, which, with their repeated shocks still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups. Now and again some glass tinkled in the cupboard as if a giant voice had shrieked so loud in its agony that tumblers stood inside a cupboard vibrated too. Then again silence fell; and then, night after night, and sometimes in plain midday when the roses were bright and light turned on the wall, its shape clearly there seemed to drop into this silence, this indifference, this integrity, the thud of something falling.

[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.]

At that season those who had gone down to pace the beach and ask of the sea and sky what message they reported or what vision they affirmed had to consider among the usual tokens of divine bounty – the sunset on the sea, the pallor of dawn, the moon rising, fishing-boats against the moon and children pelting each other with handfuls of grass – something out of harmony with this jocundity, this serenity. There was the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship for instance, come, gone; there was a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath. This intrusion into a scene calculated to stir the most sublime reflections and lead to the most comfortable conclusions stayed their pacing. It was difficult blandly to overlook them, to abolish their significance in the landscape; to continue, as one walked by the sea, to marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within.

Did nature supplement what man advanced? Did she complete what he began? With equal complacency she saw his misery, condoned his meanness and acquiesced in his torture. That dream, then, of sharing, completing, finding in solitude on the beach an answer, was but a reflection in a mirror, and the mirror itself was but the surface glassiness which forms in quiescence when the nobler powers sleep beneath? Impatient, despairing yet loth to go (for beauty offers her lures, has her consolations), to pace the beach was impossible; contemplation was unendurable; the mirror was broken.

[Mr Carmichael brought out a volume of poems that spring, which had an unexpected success. The war, people said, had revived their interest in poetry.]

VII

Night after night, summer and winter, the torment of storms, the arrow-like stillness of fine weather, held their court without interference. Listening (had there been anyone to listen) from the upper rooms of the empty house only gigantic chaos streaked with lightning could have been heard tumbling and tossing, as the winds and waves disported themselves, like the amorphous bulks of leviathans whose brows are pierced by no light of reason, and mounted one on top of another, and lunged and plunged in the darkness or the daylight (for night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together) in idiot games, until it seemed as if the universe were battling and tumbling, in brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself.

In spring the garden urns, casually filled with wind-blown plants, were gay as ever. Violets came and daffodils. But the stillness and the brightness of the day were as strange as the chaos and tumult of night, with the trees standing there, and the flowers standing there, looking before them, looking up, yet beholding nothing, eyeless, and thus terrible.

VIII

Thinking no harm, for the family would not come, never again, some said, and the house would be sold at Michaelmas perhaps, Mrs McNab stooped and picked a bunch of flowers to take home with her. She laid them on the table while she dusted. She was fond of flowers. It was a pity to let them waste. Suppose the house were sold (she stood arms akimbo in front of the looking-glass) it would want seeing to – it would. There it had stood all these years without a soul in it. The books and things were mouldy, for, what with the war and help being hard to get, the house had not been cleaned as she could have wished. It was beyond one person's strength to get it straight now. She was too old. Her legs pained her. All those books needed to be laid out on the grass in the sun; there was plaster fallen in the hall; the rain-pipe had blocked over the study window and let the water in; the carpet was ruined quite. But people should come themselves; they should have sent somebody down to see. For there were clothes in the cupboards; they had left clothes in all the bedrooms. What was she to do with them? They had the moth in them – Mrs Ramsay's things. Poor lady! She would never want *them* again. She was dead, they said; years ago, in London. There was the old grey cloak she wore gardening (Mrs McNab fingered it). She could see her, as she came up the drive with the washing, stooping over her flowers (the garden was a pitiful sight now, all run to riot, and rabbits scuttling at you out of the beds) – she could see her with one of the children by her in that grey cloak. There were boots and shoes; and a brush and comb left on the dressing-table, for all the world as if she expected to come back tomorrow. (She had died very sudden at the end, they said.) And once they had been coming, but had put off coming, what with the war, and travel being so difficult these days; they had never come all these years; just sent her money; but never wrote, never came, and expected to find things as they had left them, ah dear! Why, the dressing-table drawers were full of things (she pulled them open), handkerchiefs, bits of ribbon. Yes, she could see Mrs Ramsay as she came up the drive with the washing.

'Good-evening, Mrs McNab,' she would say.

She had a pleasant way with her. The girls all liked her. But dear, many things had changed since then (she shut the drawer); many families had lost their dearest. So she was dead; and Mr Andrew killed; and Miss Prue dead too, they said, with her first baby; but everyone had lost someone these years. Prices had gone up shamefully, and didn't come down again neither. She could well remember her in her grey cloak.

'Good-evening, Mrs McNab,' she said, and told cook to keep a plate of milk soup for her – quite thought she wanted it, carrying that heavy basket all the way up from town. She could see her now, stooping over her flowers (and faint and flickering, like a yellow beam or the circle at the end of a telescope, a lady in a grey cloak, stooping over her flowers, went wandering over the bedroom wall, up the dressing-table, across the washstand, as Mrs McNab hobbled and ambled, dusting, straightening).

And cook's name now? Mildred? Marian? – some name like that. Ah, she had forgotten – she did forget things. Fiery, like all red-haired women. Many a laugh they had had. She was always welcome in the kitchen. She made them laugh, she did. Things were better then than now.

She sighed; there was too much work for one woman. She wagged her head this side and that. This had been the nursery. Why, it was all damp in here; the plaster was falling. Whatever did they want to hang a beast's skull there for? gone mouldy too. And rats in all the attics. The rain came in. But they never sent; never came. Some of the locks had gone, so the doors banged. She didn't like to be up here at dusk alone neither. It was too much for one woman, too much, too much. She creaked, she moaned. She banged the door. She turned the key in the lock, and left the house shut up, locked, alone.

Appendix B: Fragments from the Existing Dutch Translation

The first fragment (I) covers the first two paragraphs of the second chapter of "Time Passes" ("De tijd gaat voorbij") (Woolf, 1981, pp. 131–132); the second fragment (II), the first paragraph of the eighth chapter (ibid, pp. 141–142).

I

Toen alle lichten gedoofd waren en de maan was ondergegaan daalde met een fijne regen die op het dak trommelde een immense duisternis neer. Niets, zo leek het, was bestand tegen de vloed, de golf van duisternis, die door sleutelgaten en kieren naar binnen kroop, om gordijnen heen sloop, in slaapkamers binnendrong, hier een kan en waskom, daar een pul met rode en gele dahlia's of de scherpe kanten en de stevige romp van een ladenkast verzwolg. Niet alleen was het meubilair niet meer te onderscheiden, er was nauwelijks iets over van lichaam of geest waardoor je kon zeggen: 'Dit is hij,' of 'Dit is zij.' Soms ging een hand omhoog als om iets te grijpen of iets af te weren of iemand kreunde of iemand lachte hardop alsof hij een grap deelde met het luchtledige.

Niets bewoog in de zitkamer, in de eetkamer of op de trap. Door de roestige scharnieren en het door de vochtige zeelucht gezwollen houtwerk (het huis was nu eenmaal gammel) kropen slechts wat briesjes die, losgeraakt van het hoofdlichaam van de wind, zich om hoeken naar binnen waagden. Je zou je bijna kunnen voorstellen hoe ze, binnengekomen in de zitkamer, nieuwsgierig en verbaasd met de afhangende lap behangselpapier speelden en vroegen: Zou het nog veel langer blijven hangen, wanneer zou het er af vallen? Vervolgens streken ze luchtig langs de muren en gingen peinzend verder, alsof ze de rode en gele rozen op het behang vroegen wanneer ze zouden verbleken. Rustig, want ze hadden alle tijd, stelden ze een onderzoek in naar de verscheurde brieven in de prullenmand, de bloemen, de boeken die nu allemaal voor hen toegankelijk waren, en vroegen: Waren ze bondgenoten? Waren ze vijanden? Hoe lang zouden ze het uithouden?

II

Daar ze er geen kwaad in zag, want de familie zou niet komen, nooit meer, zeiden sommigen en het huis zou eind september misschien verkocht worden, plukte Mrs. McNab bukkend een bos bloemen om mee naar huis te nemen. Ze liet ze op de tafel liggen terwijl ze aan het stoffen was. Ze was dol op bloemen. Het was zonde ze te laten verleppe. Stel dat het huis verkocht werd (ze stond voor de spiegel met haar handen in de zij), dan moest er toch voor gezorgd worden – in ieder geval. Het had al die jaren leeg gestaan. De boeken en zo waren beschimmeld, want gezien de oorlog en hulp die moeilijk te krijgen was, was het huis niet zo goed schoongemaakt als ze wel had gewild. Om het nu op orde te krijgen ging de macht van één mens te boven. Ze was te oud. Ze had last van haar benen. Al die boeken moesten op het gras in de zon worden gelegd; in de gang was kalk naar beneden gevallen; boven het raam van de studeerkamer was de regenpijp verstopt geraakt zodat het water naar binnen was gelekt; het vloerkleed was totaal bedorven. Maar de mensen moesten zelf komen; ze hadden iemand hierheen moeten sturen om de boel in ogenschouw te nemen. Want er waren nog kleren in de kasten, ze hadden in alle slaapkamers kleren achtergelaten. Wat moest ze ermee doen? Er zat de mot in – in Mrs. Ramsay's spullen. Arme mevrouw! Zij zou ze nooit meer nodig hebben. Ze was gestorven, zeiden ze; jaren geleden, in Londen. Daar was de oude grijze jas die ze droeg wanneer ze in de tuin werkte (Mrs. McNab nam de stof tussen haar vingers). Ze zag haar nóg voor zich, zoals ze met het wasgoed de oprijlaan opkwam en over haar bloemen heen boog (de tuin zag er nu treurig uit, één grote wildernis, en de konijnen renden uit de bloembedden voor je uit) – ze zag haar nóg voor zich in die grijze jas met een van de kinderen bij zich. Er stonden nog laarzen en schoenen; en er lagen nog een kam en borstel op de kaptafel, net alsof ze verwachtte morgen terug te komen. (Ze was ten slotte heel onverwachts gestorven, zeiden ze.) En op een keer zouden ze gekomen zijn, maar ze hadden afgezegd in verband met de oorlog en omdat het reizen in die tijd zo moeilijk was; ze waren er in al die jaren nooit geweest; hadden haar alleen maar geld gestuurd; maar ze hadden nooit geschreven, waren nooit gekomen en nu verwachtten ze alles terug te vinden zoals ze het hadden achtergelaten, och jé! Moest je zien, er lag nog van alles in de laden van de kaptafel (ze trok ze open), zakdoeken, stukjes lint. Ja, ze zag Mrs. Ramsay nóg voor zich zoals ze met het wasgoed de oprijlaan opkwam.

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