



BRILL

Faulkner in France

Or How to Introduce a Peripheral Unknown Author in the Center of the World Republic of Letters

Gisèle Sapiro

CNRS and École des hautes études en sciences sociales

sapiro@ehess.fr

Abstract

In the early 1930s, when he started being translated into French, Faulkner was an unknown author in the transnational literary field. Questioning the role of intermediaries—publishers, translators, critics, authors—in the circulation of literary works and in the making of world literature, this article focuses on the role of the French publisher Gallimard in the symbolic recognition of Faulkner. Based on the publisher's archives, the study examines the editorial strategies implemented in order to introduce a foreign author in a country that occupied a central position in the transnational literary field, at a time American literature just began arising interest: selection and order of publication of the works, prefaces by famous French authors (Malraux), publication in literary journals. These prefaces as well as the first reviews of Faulkner's novels also reveal different strategies of importation, from transfer of symbolic capital to subverting the local literary field (Sartre).

Keywords

sociology of literature – world literature – reception – symbolic capital – literary field

To think historically about the world literary canon means understanding how this canon was constructed. Such a task requires a mental experiment which consists in “de-labelizing” or “unbranding” a canonized author such as Faulkner—reconstructing a conjuncture in which Faulkner was not yet Faulkner, and which preceded the modernist symbolic revolution he helped to foster in the transnational literary field (for a comparable experiment about Manet, see Bourdieu *Manet*). Reconstructing this conjuncture also requires to

take into account the power relations which structured the World Republic of Letters at that time (Casanova), in the 1930s, when Paris was its center and the United States was an emerging periphery just starting to gain visibility: in 1900, the critic Ferdinand Brunetière, member of the Académie française, asked in *La Revue des deux mondes* whether American literature even existed. Studying the first importation of Faulkner's works in France makes a crucial contribution to the understanding of how Faulkner *became* Faulkner, how he became part of the world literary canon. Apart from a paper by his translator Maurice-Edgar Coindreau and a broader analysis of the introduction of the American realist novel in the French literary field (Gouanvic), there is no systematic study of this importation.

Reception studies have emphasized the role of intermediaries (Bourdieu "Social"; Sapiro "Sociology"). Pascale Casanova (130–131) makes a radical statement in claiming that Faulkner was not recognized in the United States in the 1930s, and that it was in France that he first achieved consecration, thanks to writers such as André Malraux, Valéry Larbaud, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The archives of Gallimard, Faulkner's publisher in France, allow us to nuance and refine this statement, shedding light on the role of other intermediaries in the making of Faulkner's symbolic capital, in particular his agent, William Bradley, and Gaston Gallimard.¹ I will focus here on the role of the latter. In a context of the internationalization of the French literary field and of growing interest in American literature (I), his strategy for introducing Faulkner in France illustrates the methods for installing an unknown author from the periphery in the French literary field at that time (II). While this strategy encountered many obstacles deriving from geographical distance, cultural differences between the American and French publishing fields, the negotiation process, and the organization of the translation work, the competition among publishers, translators, preface authors, and reviewers over Faulkner's importation reflects the struggles over the accumulation of symbolic capital in this field (Bourdieu *Field; Rules*). The analysis of the first readings of Faulkner in France reveals different importation strategies (III): Malraux's preface to *Sanctuary* illustrates the transfer of symbolic capital from a famous local writer to an unknown foreign author, whereas Sartre's reviews are representative of the use of foreign authors to legitimize a symbolic revolution in the field of reception.

1 Thanks to Alban Cerisier and Pascal Fouché, who gave me access to these archives when they invited me to contribute to the catalogue of Gallimard's centenary with a chapter on Gallimard in international perspective.

The Internationalization of the French Literary Field

During the nineteenth century, the construction of national identities triggered publication in the languages that were adopted as national (Anderson). A wave of translations of works started filling the publishers' lists and contributed to the establishment of literary norms (Even-Zohar). Structured by unequal power relations between the older national literary fields that had already accumulated symbolic capital and the younger ones, the world market of translations that emerged as a result was ruled by a harsh competition among nation-states (Casanova). Yet after the experience of the devastating excesses of nationalism during the First World War, culture was included in the diplomatic effort as a tool of pacification. Founded in 1920, the League of Nations created an international committee for intellectual cooperation. In parallel way, the PEN Club was launched in 1921 in order to defend intellectual values against nationalism by bringing together writers devoted to peace and freedom. In France, periodicals such as *Le Mercure de France*, *La Nouvelle Revue française*, *La Revue européenne* and *Europe* opened an intercultural dialogue thanks to the contributors' linguistic skills and international networks. Publishers launched specific series of foreign literature and the number of anthologies dedicated to other national literatures multiplied.

In the 1930s, the number of titles translated into French increased significantly (Sapiro "l'internationalisation"). More than half the translations were literary works. Among the source languages of the translated literary works, English had the highest share (57% between 1932 and 1938 according to the UNESCO *Index Translationum*), followed by German (12.7%), Russian, Italian, and Spanish.² The rise in the translations from English was in large part due to the importation of American literature, which was the only non-European literature which became visible in the French public sphere as a national literature during this period: there were 87 American titles out of 231 translations from English into French published in France between 1932 and 1938 (against just one each from Canada, South Africa, and Australia; 117 came from Great Britain).

The introduction of American authors started in avant-garde journals, at the pole of small-scale production, to use Bourdieu's concept (Bourdieu *Rules*). In *La Revue européenne* launched in 1923, Philippe Soupault translated poems by Sherwood Andersen, e. e. cummings and William Carlos Williams. Two other small magazines, *Commerce* (1924–1932) and *Le Navire d'argent* (1925–1926),

² This source should be considered only as indicative, since the data may not be exhaustive.

whose director Adrienne Monnier was James Joyce's first publisher in French (her American friend Sylvia Beach published the English original version of *Ulysses* in 1922 in France), introduced unknown modernist authors such as T.S. Eliot (Murat; Jeanpierre). Adrienne Monnier would become the administrator of *Mesures*, which replaced *Commerce* in 1935, where she published Christopher Isherwood and Catherine Ann Porter besides Robert Musil and Franz Kafka. In 1928, Kra-Le Sagittaire published an *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie américaine* edited by the poet and translator Eugène Jolas, and which included poems by Ezra Pound and e. e. cummings among others. In 1931, the first volume of Denoël & Steel's series "Les romanciers étrangers contemporains" was dedicated to American novelists. Edited by the Peruvian novelist and translator Victor Llona, this anthology presented short stories by Sherwood Anderson, Louis Bromfield, James-Branch Cabell, John Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis, Ludwig Lewisohn, Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Gertrude Stein, Glenway Wescott.

One year earlier, the Nobel Prize of literature had been awarded for the first time to an American writer, Sinclair Lewis (while France had already five winners by that time). This prestigious award consecrated not only a single author but a national literary field. The Nobel Prize award triggered translations of the winners' works in other languages, and also aroused interest in their fellow countrymen (more than in their fellow countrywomen at that time). And as a matter of fact, many novels by Sinclair Lewis and by other American writers appeared in French after he won the prize. Conversely, translations, especially in a central language such as French, take a significant part in the accumulation of transnational symbolic capital of the authors who get to be considered by the Swedish Academy for the award. Significantly, Sinclair Lewis' successful novel *Babbitt* had been published in French translation by Stock, with a preface by the famous writer Paul Morand, the very year he won the prize. Three years earlier, *It Can't Happen Here* had been translated by Raymond Queneau who would soon become a representative of the young generation of innovative writers at the *Nouvelle Revue française*.

The Editorial Strategy of les Éditions de la NRF

Among the importers of American literature in France, the Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française played a major role. Founded in 1911 in close relation with the eponymous journal launched by André Gide and Jean Schlumberger, the young publishing house invested immediately in translations, mostly from English, with authors such as Conrad and Meredith, its two most translated

foreign authors (respectively 16 and 10 titles until 1935). In 1918, a collection of selected works by Walt Whitman was edited and introduced by Valéry Larbaud. In the 1930s, the Éditions de la NRF started diversifying their list of foreign literature, introducing more Russian, German, Spanish and Italian authors. While British literature remained the most translated, with D.H. Lawrence, the author of the best-selling *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, being now the leading figure (10 titles translated between 1932 and 1938), Gaston Gallimard, the head of the publishing house, started investing in American literature, which accounts for one out of five foreign literature titles in the 1936 catalogue: among them, *Manhattan Transfer* (1928) by John Dos Passos, *A Farewell to Arms* (1932) by Ernest Hemingway, with a preface by Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, and *The Sun also Rises* (1933), with a preface by Jean Prévost. In 1933, Gallimard also starts publishing translations of Faulkner, who will become its main American author.

This list is all the more striking considering the obstacles that hindered international literary exchanges at that time: the slow pace of transatlantic transportation (it sometimes took a couple of weeks until a book reached France from the United States), the lack of means of reprography, and the weak professionalization of translators, who often earned a living from another occupation, sometimes delaying the release of the translation for several years.

However, the growing competition over foreign literature and more specifically over American literature created an urge for accelerating the pace of translations from the side of the publishers. Importing foreign literature also required relying on specialists who were able to read in the original language and to identify the most interesting works. Maurice-Edgar Coindreau, who was a professor of French at Princeton and also a major translator of American literature, played this role for Gallimard. His letters to Gaston Gallimard, kept in the publisher's archives, are rich in suggestions, comments, arguments in favor or against certain works, thus revealing the issues at stake in this importation and the selection criteria: length of the works, interest of the topic for the French audience, translations in other languages, coherence of the publisher's list, author policy.

Author policy means that a publisher will continue publishing the work by a same writer after having invested in his first title. This norm had applied in the national literary field, where it was embodied in contracts by a clause giving the publisher a right on an author's next four titles; it was now extended to the transnational literary field, where it was implemented through the "option" a publisher acquired on subsequent works by a foreign writer. Agreeing on this principle was also a means for publishers to regulate the competition between themselves. A publisher could decide not to exert this right if the first title did not sell enough. This happened with Dos Passos: Gallimard refused *The 42nd*

Parallel, which he considered redundant with *Manhattan Transfer* and which sold only 2,600 copies, and he lost his option on Dos Passos' works. But small sales were not always a sufficient reason for abandoning an author. The case of Faulkner provides a counter-example. There were first of all literary reasons for abandoning Dos Passos and keeping Faulkner, but probably also ideological ones: despite the fact that the Éditions de la NRF had a "left wing," embodied by Malraux, and a "right wing," embodied by Drieu La Rochelle, Dos Passos was probably too "leftist" and not "literary" enough for the firm, in contradistinction to Faulkner, whose fictional ethics and politics were far more ambiguous. In the context of the politicization of the literary field, the choice of the authors of prefaces from different and even opposite political sides—like Malraux for Faulkner or Drieu for Hemingway—could be a way to distance or "neutralize" politics in favor of literature, a strategy that also prevailed in the journal *La Nouvelle Revue française* (Sapiro *French*).

In 1931, Coindreau recommended to the Éditions de la NRF three titles by this still unknown author, whose work he was the first to review in France in *La Nouvelle Revue française* (*La NRF*) that same year: *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and *Sanctuary* (1931). On June 23, 1931, Gaston Gallimard wrote to Faulkner's literary agent, William Bradley, who had represented American authors in France since 1923: he told him that he had seen Coindreau, who was translating a novel by Faulkner, and informed Bradley that he was willing to publish it with another title by Faulkner that was being translated by René-Noël Raimbault. This letter reveals some of the practices that prevailed at that time. Translators acted as intermediaries between authors and publishers and between the original publisher and the potential publisher of the translation, but they started to be challenged in these functions by professional literary agents like Bradley, who held the French rights of Faulkner's works. It was with Bradley that Gallimard had to negotiate a contract. He made an offer for *Sanctuary* and *As I Lay Dying* on June 30: 5% royalties on the first 5,000 copies, 7% up to 10,000, 10% beyond; the advance proposed for the two books was 3,000 francs: 500 on signing, 1,250 when the first volume was offered for sale, 1,250 when the second was. And he asked for an option on the next book that Faulkner would write. He justified the small advance by the economic crisis and by the observation that it wouldn't be fair not to fully remunerate the translator of *As I Lay Dying*, Coindreau, who was "an excellent translator who was praised by all critics for his translation of *Manhattan Transfer*," and who suggested that he publish Faulkner's works.

By that time, a competition had started between translators. On July the 5th, René-Noël Raimbault wrote to Gaston Gallimard that he wanted to translate *Sanctuary* and that he had priority rights. On July 16, he wrote him again that

he had been commissioned by Cape to translate Faulkner, and he was the translator of Upton Sinclair at Albin Michel and had contributed to the Anthology of American novelists at Denoël as well as to the Anglo-American section of the journal *Nouvel Age*. He was surprised to be asked to send a translation sample, as he considered that Faulkner's style, though presenting some peculiarities, was "infinitely easier to transcribe than that of Upton Sinclair." On August 6, Coindreau requested from Gallimard that *As I Lay Dying* be published prior to *Sanctuary*, following the chronological logic. Though Gallimard accepted, he changed his mind once Coindreau completed his translation, despite the fact that Raimbault was late and that Bradley was becoming impatient. The reason for this change was that Gallimard considered *Sanctuary* to be accessible to a broader audience, and that starting with this novel would help install Faulkner as an author in the French literary landscape. Coindreau was terribly disappointed.

In September 1931, Gallimard had offered Coindreau 3% royalties on the price of each copy sold up to 10,000, 2% beyond, and an advance of 2,000 francs. He justified this small advance by the fact that the American publisher demanded rights that were much higher than those paid for Hemingway, and by the financial crisis, which affected booksellers. Raimbault was offered a higher advance of 2,500 francs and the same conditions for royalties. In a letter to Gallimard dated November 29, he accepted these conditions despite the fact that the advance was "clearly lower than the usual conditions" but he asked for 3% beyond sales of 10,000 copies.

The competition between the translators didn't stop there. Asked to provide his opinion of Raimbault's translation sample, Coindreau sent a rather critical appraisal to Louis Chevasson, who was in charge of translations at Gallimard: he only found one major mistake, but there were too many "clumsy" expressions in French, and "under the French, one could too often feel the English". Coindreau formulates here the two main norms of translation, accuracy to the source text and fluency in the target language (Even-Zohar, Toury).

When he sent his own translation to Gallimard on January 1, 1932, he made some comments on it. He was satisfied with his work, on which he'd spent a lot of time, and which he discussed with the author. He felt that he succeeded in keeping the "folk flavor" and, "while not suppressing any obscurity, not having added any either." He also mentioned that despite Gallimard's habit of not using quotation marks for dialogues, he felt they were indispensable in this case since, "more often than not the replies turned into interior monologues and the reader would not be informed if we use, as usual, a dash where the line starts." He also noted that this novel was much shorter than *A Farewell to Arms*, explaining that he condensed his text as much as he could, knowing

Gallimard's "very legitimate desire to have short books and also knowing that Faulkner would not allow cuts." This letter illustrates some of the difficulties encountered by translators facing contradictory injunctions: respect of the integrity of the text as imposed by the author's moral right on one hand, constraints imposed by the French publisher, such as length and typographical norms, on the other.

The title aroused a discussion. Coindreau had translated it "Sur mon lit de mort" ("On my death bed"). Gallimard suggested "En Agonie". Coindreau was ready to change the title, since he didn't really like it himself, as he wrote to Gallimard on March 7: "this title lacked the evocative accuracy of the English title which clearly indicates that the novel is the narrative of what happens 'as I lay dying.'" However he was unsatisfied with Gallimard's suggestion, which "seems to announce someone's death rather than what happens during this death." Moreover, he pointed out, the absence of the pronoun suppressed "the harmony between the title and the rest of the novel which is a succession of interior monologues". He also thought "En Agonie" sounded "triter," reminding him of popular novels such as *En plongée*, *En bordée*. Instead, he suggested *Tandis que j'agonise*, which was the title he first thought of. He had abandoned it because the word "agoniser" sounded to him a little theatrical ("Grand Guignol"). And the critic and translator Benjamin Crémieux told him that the audience seemed to "instinctively keep away from macabre stories." But since Gaston Gallimard had himself proposed the term "Agony," he asked,

why not keep the faulknerian atmosphere given by *Tandis que j'agonise*? We find in it this idea of simultaneousness of action, this idea that it is already a character of the book who thinks, and finally this style of an unfinished sentence that characterizes the English title. As to originality, it seems to me as great in French as in English. Moreover the rhythm is truly the same, the sentence sounds well. If this form of title seems strange to you, think that the book is strange as well.

Gallimard accepted his proposal.

Gallimard decided to publish the book in the new deluxe series he had launched for foreign literature, "Du monde entier," a decision that delighted Coindreau. Started in 1931, the series already included works by D.H. Lawrence, Conrad, Hemingway, Remarque and Hašek. In 1933, it would publish *Sanctuary* and Kafka's *Trial*. Six titles by Faulkner were to appear in this series by 1939, making him the second most translated author after D.H. Lawrence (9 titles), and before Hemingway (5 titles). This regularity illustrates Gallimard's author policy.

Another strategy for introducing a new foreign author at that time was to order a preface from a famous French writer. This is a typical operation of transfer of symbolic capital from a well-known to an unknown author (the equivalent of which nowadays would be the “blurbs”). For *As I Lay Dying*, Coindreau first suggested the established writer and biographer André Maurois, who was regarded as a specialist in British culture: he had been an interpreter and a liaison officer with the British army during the First World War and had become famous with his fictionalized account of this experience, *The Silence of Colonel Bramble*. Maurois accepted but said he wasn’t very familiar with Faulkner’s work. After pondering other options (André Green, Paul Morand, André Gide), Gallimard settled on Valéry Larbaud, who had introduced James Joyce to the French public in *La NRF* in 1922. He wrote to Larbaud that Faulkner was “an author who should encounter great success in France and on whom [he] intended to make a big effort.” However, since he was still almost unknown in France, he thought “necessary to present him to the French public.” Larbaud accepted, after having read the English original.

Beyond the transfer of symbolic capital, the preface also provided an interpretation of the work (Genette), placing it in perspective for French readers. The prefaces for the series were first published in *La NRF*, Gallimard’s prestigious journal, thus introducing the work for the journal’s readers before its publication as a book. Coindreau had already published in June 1931 a review of Faulkner’s first novels in English, where he explained that Faulkner’s interest in sex and death expressed his puritanism rather than any kind of perversity. *La NRF* also published two short stories by Faulkner: “Dry September” in January 1932 and “There was Queen” in August 1933, while “A Rose for Emily” appeared in the small literary magazine *Commerce* co-edited by Larbaud in Winter 1932. At the end of October 1933, Jean Paulhan, the journal’s editor, had to tell Larbaud of Gallimard’s decision to postpone the publication of *As I Lay Dying* until after that of *Sanctuary*, which meant that Malraux’s preface would appear before Larbaud’s in *La NRF* (Paulhan 306). Larbaud was very upset, having hoped he would be the first to introduce Faulkner in France. This disappointment attests to the competition over symbolic capital among the importers of Faulkner in France, which as we can see wasn’t limited to the translators. Indeed, while the prefaces transferred symbolic capital from their authors to Faulkner, prefacing Faulkner also enhanced the symbolic capital of the commentators. This was probably truer of Larbaud, who was less well known as a writer than the already famous albeit younger Malraux, who had won the Goncourt Prize in December that year for *La Condition humaine*, published by Gallimard. And Malraux’ symbolic capital probably counted in Gallimard’s decision to reverse the order of publica-

tion of the two novels, in addition to the accessibility of *Sanctuary* to a broader audience.

Thus, even before his first novel was published in France, Faulkner had become a literary value. This observation is also evidenced by the measures Gallimard took after hearing from Coindreau that he was publishing a new novel, in order to secure for his house the translation rights in French. Faulkner had told Coindreau that this novel “would not be inferior in force and horror to his previous books,” as the translator wrote to Gallimard on March 7, 1932. On July 11, Gallimard wrote to Bradley to request an option on *Light in August*. On the same day, he asked his collaborator the critic Ramon Fernandez to write a letter to several editors in charge of foreign literature in other publishing houses, asking them: “*on behalf of our agreements* to reserve to the Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française the priority for the negotiation of this volume” (letter dated July 11, 1932). At the same time, he asked Coindreau to persuade Faulkner to grant Gallimard an option on the novel and to explain to him that “given the conditions of the French book market [la Librairie française], it was in his interest that all his books be regrouped with the same publisher” (letter dated July 12, 1932).

Bradley answered him on July 14 that he was willing to reserve the option for him, but he asked for a time limit, “since it is not in M. Faulkner’s interest, nor in yours, to put off for too long the publication of the new book of such an important author.” He had understood that *As I Lay Dying* would be published that summer and just learned that the publication of *Sanctuary* was postponed to the autumn. He also reminded Gallimard of the importance of respecting the time limit because of the need to pay the author’s advance. This letter displays the role of Faulkner’s agent in the enhancement of his symbolic capital.

Gallimard replied on July 18 that he thought “it would have been detrimental to offer for sale in July the book of an author who is still unknown in France, whatever his importance, which [he] was the first to recognize.” On the other hand, his collaborators considered that it would be better to have *Sanctuary* published before *As I Lay Dying*, which is “more difficult to read and less attractive.” But he had not yet received the translation from R.N. Raimbault. Regarding the choice of a translator for *Light in August*, he argued that Faulkner was “very confident” with Coindreau, with whom he had a personal relation, and that he wanted him to continue to be his translator. He also wrote that Faulkner preferred to have all his books regrouped with the same French publisher. Lastly, he asked Bradley whether he really thought that it was good idea to publish three books in a row by the same author. “A policy must be followed, like the one we followed with Conrad, and which was successful,” he concluded. On August 13, Bradley gave Gallimard an option until the end of 1933.

At the beginning of October 1932, Gallimard had still not received Raimbault's translation of *Sanctuary*. On November 26, Raimbault consulted Gallimard on the question of the title, which was problematic in his eyes: "The American title is very enigmatic, and there is a risk it won't be understood by the French audience." He thought of different titles such as "Le viol de Temple Drake," which would be a counterpart of *L'Amant de Lady Chatterley*, or *Temple violé*, or *Le Temple violé*. The discussions of the titles with the two translators reveal two different translating strategies, faithfulness and domestication corresponding to the above-mentioned translation norms of accuracy and fluency. Whereas Coindreau tried to be as faithful as possible to the source text, Raimbault was ready to adapt the title to make it sound familiar to the target audience; but he finally decided to keep the original title and translated it "Sanctuaire" rather than "Le Sanctuaire," a choice that was closer to Faulkner's "symbolic and voluntarily vague title." After Gallimard threatened to ask Coindreau to complete the translation, Raimbault finally finished his work. *Sanctuaire* came out in November 1933, and *Tandis que j'agonise* in March 1934.

On October 14, 1932, Faulkner's new publisher Harrison Smith, who had bought Cape & Smith, wrote to Gallimard that he had seen Coindreau, who expressed his "great enthusiasm" for *Light in August*, which had just come out, and his eagerness to translate it. To convince Gallimard to acquire the translation rights, Smith added a commercial argument: "it now appears that it will sell far better here than anything of Faulkner's that has yet been published." Coindreau wrote to Gallimard the following day to tell him that he'd obtained from Smith the right to translate the book and that he hoped Gallimard would want to publish it. He included a review which attested to the enthusiastic reception of the novel in the American newspapers—"there were only some reservations regarding the morbidity and cruelty of certain scenes, but it won't stop you," he specified. The only thing that could worry Gallimard was the length of the volume: 480 pages, which meant it would have to appear in two volumes (like *Manhattan Transfer*). Coindreau considered that there were only 10–12 pages in the end that could be cut, but Faulkner would not agree, and it would be "a pity not to publish in its entirety a book which in some passages reaches Dostoevsky's grandeur." He announced he would send soon a review for *La NRF*. However, it was Marcel Arland who was asked to review *Light in August* for the journal. His review appeared three years later, in October 1935.

Three weeks after its publication in English, *Light in August* had already been reprinted for the fourth time in 5,000 copies, according to his agent, who wanted to urge Gallimard to make a decision (letter dated October 28, 1932). In the contract, Bradley added a term stipulating that if Gallimard didn't exercise his option on one of the three books mentioned, he would lose this right for the

next ones. He also asked that half of the advance be paid when the manuscript was handed over, but Gallimard refused. In a letter dated November 9, he argued that though Faulkner received only 500 francs as an advance, he was paid more than a year before, at a moment when the date of publication of the translation was unknown. He was happy to deal now with the third volume, only because of the “literary value of M. Faulkner’s works, and without knowing yet how the sales of his books w[ould] compensate [his] efforts.” If a higher advance was requested, it would prevent the publishers who were the most eager to publish the young American literature from investing in it. The conditions for the translator were the same as for *As I Lay Dying*, though the book was three times longer. Coindreau accepted but asked for an advance from the beginning, like in the case of Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, and not at the publication (letter dated April 11, 1933).

Gallimard will also acquire the translation rights for *These 13* and *Sartoris* in 1933. The negotiations had become harder, despite the fact that one was a collection of short stories and the other an older book. The contract for *The Sound and the Fury* was signed in 1934, for *Pylon* in 1935, for *The Unvanquished* in 1938. *Sartoris* appeared in French in 1937, translated by Raimbault, *The Sound and the Fury* in 1938, translated by Coindreau, *These 13* in 1939, translated by both. Despite this division of labor, the competition between the two translators didn’t cease. Raimbault for instance refused to publish a review by an American critic as a preface to *These 13* because he praised more specifically the stories of the second part, which had been translated by his rival, as he explained to Chevasson on December 26, 1938. The suggestion to introduce the volume by a famous American critic came from Gallimard after he renounced a preface by Morand: all the former translations had been prefaced, and another preface would not bring anything new. He thus preferred to give the French audience “a better idea of Faulkner’s significance in America,” as Chevasson explained to Raimbault on October 25. But Raimbault wanted to write his own preface, as Coindreau did for *The Sound and the Fury*: he argued it was the most logical solution, “since no critic knows Faulkner better and is more qualified to talk about him than his translators themselves.” Thus the symbolic competition between translators wasn’t limited to the translation itself: they claimed the authority to speak about the work on behalf of their intimate knowledge of it and to earn the symbolic profits associated with this authority.

A note in the archives indicates the sales of Faulkner’s works in June 1938. They were much lower than expected, compared to the print-runs. *Sanctuary* had done the best, with close to 4,000 copies (7150 copies had been printed). *As I Lay Dying* sold 1,008 (5000), *Light in August* 1,637 (5000), *Sartoris* 1,936 during its first year (3500). Nevertheless, Gallimard didn’t give up publishing

Faulkner. He acquired *Absalom, Absalom!* in February 1937. However, in a letter to Raimbault dated November 1937, he used this argument to justify the fact that he couldn't pay him a higher advance: Faulkner's books didn't sell well, and it was a "heavy burden" for the NRF to continue to publish them. "However," he added, "I am entirely ready to persevere in this effort to introduce in France this new American literature that I admire, and this despite the public's indifference, but if I had to raise the already considerable costs for our house, I would have to give up, however painful it would be."

This investment is representative of the long-term author policy that brought symbolic profits but could be financially risky, a strategy that is typical of the pole of small-scale production of the publishing field (Bourdieu *Field* 97, 115). This investment, which would become profitable only in the long run, was compensated for in 1939 by the huge success of the translation of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, which sold more than 800,000 copies. That year, Gallimard asked Mrs Omtvedt for an option on Faulkner's first novel, *Soldier's Pay* (letter date July 4, 1939). Three titles (*Absalom, Absalom!*; *Pylon* and *The Unvanquished*) were still being translated and would be published only after the war and the German occupation, during which publishers could not release translations from English anymore.

Reception, Appropriations and Uses: Legitimizing a Symbolic Revolution

The prefaces and then the early reviews inscribed Faulkner in the French literary field. In this section, I will delineate the space of interpretation of Faulkner's work in the French context of the 1930s, first through the four first prefaces, which framed this space, and then through two reviews by Jean-Paul Sartre, which illustrate a subversive use of a foreign author to promote a symbolic revolution in the literary field.

Malraux's preface ended on this famous statement: "*Sanctuary* is the intrusion of Greek tragedy into the detective novel." He first analyzed the way Faulkner subverted the popular genre of the detective novel, a rising genre in France at that time (in 1934, Gallimard launched a series titled "Détective"): Faulkner wrote "a detective-story atmosphere but without detectives," proving that the plot wasn't the essential part of a detective story. Malraux then pointed out the intimate relationship between Faulkner's universe and the worlds of Edgar Allan Poe and E.T.A. Hoffmann: "The same psychological material, the same hatreds, horses, coffins, and obsessions." But while Poe's main objective was to achieve an artistic work, Faulkner was closer to Picasso, whose paintings

were “ever less a canvas” [“une toile”], and more and more “the indication of a discovery, a landmark left for the passage of tormented genius.” Instead of dominating his craft, the novelist was dominated by it, as Balzac and Dostoïevsky were by *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Illusions perdues*. The tragic dimension of the work was grounded in “irreparable absurdity,” just as D.H. Lawrence “wraps himself in sexuality.” Rather than the struggle against one’s own values that characterizes Baudelaire or Nietzsche, it is the tragic poet’s fascination that leads him to express horror, not in order to free himself from it but as a way to encompass it in the universe of things that can be conceived and thus mastered. More than in a specific Anglo-American tradition, Malraux thus situated Faulkner’s work in relation to authors belonging to the canon of world literature (Dickens, Balzac, Dostoïevsky, and Poe)—as well as to the most consecrated contemporary British author (Lawrence)—all the while demonstrating how his work departed from this canon by mixing the classical genre of the tragedy with the popular genre of the detective novel purified from the plot, and comparing the novel to a piece of modern art (Picasso).

Written before Malraux’s though published after it, Larbaud’s preface to *As I Lay Dying* also started with the genre: in this case, it was the rural novel, which had been developing in France since the beginning of the century, in close relation with the regionalist movement (Thiesse). However, Larbaud emphasized the fact that this novel had a “higher aesthetic value” than the great majority of the books that were ranged in the category “Peasant novel” in France. Didactically, Larbaud first situated the world Faulkner described geographically. This world was unknown to French people, and thus exotic, he argued. But the “merit” of the novel resided much more in the painting of the characters who, descending from European émigrés, would seem familiar to the readers. He then focused on the novel’s epic dimension, summarizing the plot around which “anecdotal situations” were organized, comparing them to a tale by Boccaccio or La Fontaine. He also highlighted the dramatic dimension, identifying characters functioning as a kind of chorus. He then turned to analyze the form of the novel. Warning the audience, he claimed that this work required two very careful readings, “even from a reader familiar with Robert Browning’s dramatic monologue and the interior monologue of Édouard Dujardin, Arthur Schnitzler and James Joyce.” He noted that Faulkner made a very personal use of the latter device, which was rather new in the French literary field: it evoked the idea of a “machine able to read and project thoughts, a kind of reflector, that the novelist would turn on each of his characters alternately.” Regarding the translation itself, to which he paid more attention than Malraux, being a translator himself (and having apparently read the novel in English as well), Larbaud praised Coindreau’s work, and approved him for not trying to render the characters’

dialect in French. He explained the contrast between the highly literary parts of the interior monologues and the simple and often gawky language that translated the characters' thoughts by saying that Faulkner's peasants did have a very basic literary culture drawn from bits of the Old and New Testaments, hymns based on the Psalms and the Protestant clerical commentary. This raw literacy "sometimes helped them find, spontaneously, the tone of epic or of prophecy," he concluded. Larbaud thus distinguished *As I Lay Dying* from the rural novel because of its modernist form.

Answering attacks on Faulkner's erotic morbidity and cruelty, especially by the American literary critic Harry Hartwick, Coindreau's preface to his translation of *Light in August* emphasized, on the contrary, what he saw as an expression of the author's puritanism. He also contested the accusation of obscurity: whereas Hartwick reproached Faulkner as being even more incoherent than James Joyce, whose influence could be felt in this novel, Coindreau demonstrated that *Light in August* was organized around very clear principles. What could seem incoherent was due to Faulkner's original technique, which resided in his conception of reality and time: Faulkner's realism is subjective, events exist through their representations in our minds, in our subconscious. His systematic use of interior monologues resulted from this conception.

While Malraux imagined *Sanctuary* as a painting, Coindreau read *The Sound and the Fury* as a symphony. Having explained the compositional principles, which blur the chronology of the story—the reader learns about the events only through the memory of the characters—he used musical indications to analyze each part: first movement, "Moderato": Benjy's sensorial perception of the world, deprived of logical connections; second movement, "Adagio": the painful interior monologue of Quentin Compson on the day he commits suicide; third movement, "Allegro": Jason's interior monologue; fourth movement, "Allegro furioso" with Quentin's running away, followed by an "Andante religioso" at the black people's church, then by an "Allegro barbaro" which ends in a peaceful "Lento." The unity is provided by Benjy's screams, which play the role of batteries giving a haunting rhythm, and by the figure of Dilsey, whom Coindreau compared to Félicité in Flaubert's short story "Un Coeur simple." She is in his eyes Faulkner's most successful creation, although not idealized at all. He went on to discuss Faulkner's complex style—his uses of unspecified pronouns or of muddled symbols, his "daring ellipses" that reproduce the "swift movements of the mind" or the juxtaposition of ideas with no transitions, identical names given to two characters—and his own contribution as translator, explaining that he had respected the written form of the novel and that he didn't add any obscurity. On the contrary: constrained by the precision of the French language, and having consulted the author, he hoped he had clarified the text in some

places. However, he abandoned any attempt to transpose the black dialect, considering this issue as an unsolvable problem. Coindreau felt no need to make extended comparisons to other famous writers apart from Flaubert (and an explanation of the Shakespearean reference in Faulkner's title); Faulkner no longer needed to be introduced to the French readership, and the preface was only a guide to the unfamiliar reader to help him navigate in this difficult and demanding novel.

Reviewing *Sartoris* on September 17, 1938, the well-established writer and critic Edmond Jaloux wrote unequivocally in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*: "William Faulkner is a great novelist, and undoubtedly the most original post-war writer after Kafka and Virginia Woolf." We can thus consider that by that time, Faulkner was a consecrated writer in France.

If these reviewers used their prefaces to establish the author in a new literary field, Sartre used his reviews of Faulkner to renew the space of possibilities in the literary field itself. During the year 1931–1932, Sartre had given a series of talks in Le Havre, where he was teaching, on Faulkner, Dos Passos, Virginia Woolf, Joyce, Huxley, and the interior monologue, asking for instance why this device appeared in 1887, in Dujardin's *Les Lauriers sont coupés*, "why not in 1870 or in 1900?" He related the emergence of this device to the symbolist movement and its "cult of inner life," its discovery of the unconscious. He also mentioned the Wagnerian influence to explain how this device, which stemmed from an idealist trend, was transferred to the English neo-realist writers, and, having been first "limited to reveal to us a consciousness, [it] finally came to embed the whole world ... to serve the ends of an absolute realism" (quoted by Cohen-Solal 94). His first novel, *La Nausée*, published in 1938, was imbued with the model of the American novelists. However, he criticized them from a philosophical standpoint.

His review of *Sartoris*, published in *La NRF* in February 1938, was critical. In his view, this novel revealed Faulkner's tricks. He blamed Faulkner for his technique, which he considered as disloyal, and for his conception of man. The two were linked: Faulkner focused on the description of insignificant acts, not in order to teach the reader about some aspects of life, as in the realist tradition, but to hide his characters' consciousness. Boredom resulted from the social order itself, an order disturbed by terrible actions that Faulkner didn't describe but that had consequences displayed in the novel and that were turned into stories. In sum, what Sartre reproached Faulkner for was both his technique of ellipsis, which matched the secret in which his characters locked themselves, and his conception of the unconscious as orienting acts like a "nature" that has solidified as a "thing" (Sartre "William"). Such a conception didn't fit Sartre's idea of the transparency of consciousness to itself and his

philosophy of freedom, that he would develop in *Being and Nothingness* (1943). One can recognize in his analysis what he will define later as an inertia that prevents human beings from fully materializing their freedom in choices.

He made this argument more explicit in his review of *The Sound and the Fury* the following year (*La NRF*, June–July 1939), linking it to Faulkner's conception of time. All the modern writers had tried to distort time. He mentioned Proust, Joyce, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Gide, and Virginia Woolf. Sartre saw a close relation between Faulkner's narrative technique and his metaphysics of time: deprived of any future, that is of "deeds and freedom," as in Proust, the present is embedded in the past. "Faulkner's monologues are reminiscent of aeroplane journeys with lots of air-pockets. With each new pocket, the hero's consciousness 'sinks back into the past.'" Though he admired Faulkner's craft, Sartre disagreed with his metaphysics of time. He contrasted it with Heidegger's idea that "consciousness can 'be in time' only on condition that it becomes time in the very movement that makes it consciousness. It must 'temporalize itself', as Heidegger says." According to Sartre, there is no such human being "deprived of possibilities, explained solely by what he was" (Sartre "On *Sound*" 109, 117). As he wrote to Paulhan about Faulkner the same year, Sartre considered the modern writers to be "late," compared to philosophers, in their conception of time, which was closer to Descartes or Hume than to Heidegger (Cohen-Solal 93).

Thus Sartre's studies on Faulkner not only helped him redefine the space of narrative possibilities in the literary field, but also to refine his philosophical concepts. While praising the modern American writers for their innovative narrative technique, against dominant French writers like François Mauriac who were still using the device of the omniscient narrator and rather classical rules of composition (Sartre "François"), he criticized them from a philosophical standpoint. His use of philosophy in literary criticism was a "coup de force" which placed him in a superior position, despite his being a newcomer in the field. However, his criticism didn't do any damage to Faulkner's symbolic capital in the French literary field: on the contrary, it reinforced it, placing him at the heart of the symbolic revolution that Sartre was starting and that would be followed by Camus and later on by the authors of the *nouveau roman*, a symbolic revolution that was interrupted by the war but that Sartre's success after the world accelerated.

Conclusion

Faulkner's French reception played a major role in making him part of the world literary canon. The archives show that it was not so much that he was unrecognized in the United States beyond the success of scandal of *Sanctuary*, as Casanova (130) argues: writing to Gallimard already in July 1932, Bradley mentioned the "importance" of this author, and *Light in August* was reprinted four times in the first month; in 1938, the MGM acquired the rights to *The Unvanquished*. Bradley certainly contributed to the building of his reputation abroad. But it was Gallimard who had the power to allow him access to international consecration, with the help of well-known writers and critics like Malraux and Larbaud, endowed with a high consecrating power. This French consecration was certainly decisive in the decision of the Swedish Academy to award him the Nobel Prize in 1949. In 1977, Faulkner was the second modern foreign author to enter the very prestigious "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade" series of complete works at Gallimard, after Kafka (1976) and before Conrad (1982).³

Many writers abroad, including Juan Benet, Rachid Boujeda, Gabriel García Márquez, and Mario Vargas Llosa read Faulkner in French (Casanova 336–345). We could add Kateb Yacine. He became a reference through the use that modern French authors such as Sartre and Camus—who prefaced the French translation of *Requiem for a Nun* and adapted it to the theater in 1956—made of Faulkner, as of Kafka, to achieve a symbolic revolution in the literary field. Sartre's role in this process was prominent. In autumn 1944, he gave a talk titled "Une technique sociale du roman" at the Maison des Lettres de la rue Saint-Jacques, which was dedicated to American novelists. Among the audience was the young Michel Butor, who would become a key figure of the "nouveau roman" by the end of the 1950s. He recounted later that he heard there for the first time of Woolf, Dos Passos, Faulkner, and that "a large part of the problematic of my own novels developed from the reflections that came to my mind during this talk" (quoted by Cohen-Solal 222). Sartre republished his essays on Faulkner in 1947, in the first volume of *Situations*. By that time, Sartre had become a dominant writer, the leader of the "existentialist" movement, which renewed the options in the literary field (Boschetti). Sartre legitimized Nathalie Sarraute, whose work was unknown at that time, by prefacing her second novel, *Portrait d'un inconnu*. In the 1950s, Sarraute will become one of the

3 This chronology should not be regarded as a hierarchy: the projects were probably launched at the same time, but the work of editing and annotating may take more or less time according to the teams.

theoreticians of the *nouveau roman*, alongside Alain Robbe-Grillet. In “L'Ère du soupçon,” an essay she published in 1956, she defends Faulkner’s choice of giving the same name to two different characters against critics who consider it as a “perverse and childish need to bemuse the reader,” in that it forces the reader to stay alert and recognize the characters through their inner life (Sarraute 75). In the meantime, Samuel Beckett had staged this technique in *Malone Dies* (first published in French in 1951). These are only some landmarks indicating the instrumental role that Faulkner played in the symbolic revolution that occurred in the French literary field, together with Joyce, Woolf, and Kafka. In 1961, Robbe-Grillet will cite *The Sound and the Fury* together with *Ulysses* and *The Castle* as the first manifestations of this revolution in narrative technique (Robbe-Grillet 26). And even a postcolonial author as the Caribbean poet Edouard Glissant will acclaim him as “the greatest writer of our epoch” (Glissant). Introduced to the wider world by French publishers, translators, and writers, Faulkner’s work contributed in the long term to the reversal of power relations between the French and the American literary fields.

Works Cited

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Boschetti, Anna. *The Intellectual Enterprise: Sartre and Les Temps Modernes*. Trans. Richard C. McCleary. Chicago: Northwestern UP, (1985)1988.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Trans., ed. R. Johnson. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Trans. Susan Emanuel. Cambridge-Stanford: Polity/Stanford UP, (1992)1996.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. “The Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas.” In *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Shusterman. Oxford and Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, (1989)1999, 220–228.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Manet, une révolution symbolique. Cours au Collège de France (1998–2000)*. Paris: Seuil, 2013.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Trans. M.B. DeBevoise. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, (1999) 2004.
- Cohen-Solal, Annie. *Sartre: A Life* (1985). Trans. Anna Cangogni. New York: Random House, 1987.
- Coindreau, Maurice-Edgar, “William Faulkner.” *La Nouvelle Revue française* 19 (June 1931), 926–31.

- Coindreau, Maurice-Edgar. "Préface." In William Faulkner, *Le Bruit et la Fureur*. Paris: Gallimard, (1939) 1949.
- Coindreau, Maurice-Edgar. "William Faulkner in France." *Yale French Studies* 10 (1952), 85–91.
- Coindreau, Maurice-Edgar. *Mémoires d'un traducteur. Entretiens avec Christian Giudicelli*. Paris: Gallimard, 1974.
- Even-Zohar, Itamar. "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem." *Poetics Today* 11: 1 (1990), 45–52.
- Genette, Gérard. *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Glissant, Édouard. "Le vertige Faulkner." *Le Nouvel Observateur* 3 Feb. 2011. Web. 22 May 2016.
- Gouanvic, Jean-Marc. *Pratique sociale de la traduction. Le roman réaliste américain dans le champ littéraire français (1920–1960)*. Artois: Artois Presses université, 2007.
- Larbaud, Valéry. "Préface." In *Tandis que j'agonise* de William Faulkner (1934). Paris: Gallimard, 1949.
- Jeanpierre, Laurent. "Modernisme 'américain' et espace littéraire français: réseaux et raisons d'un rendez-vous différé." In *L'Espace culturel transnational*, ed. Anna Boschetti. Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2010, 385–426.
- Malraux, André. "Préface." *Sanctuaire* de William Faulkner (1933). Paris: Gallimard, 1949. Trans. "A Preface for Faulkner's *Sanctuary*." *Yale French Studies* 10 (1962), 92–94.
- Murat, Laure. *Passage de l'Odéon: Sylvia Beach, Adrienne Monnier et la vie littéraire à Paris dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (2003), Paris: Gallimard "Folio", 2005.
- Paulhan, Jean. *Choix de lettres*, vol. 1, 1917–1936. Paris: Gallimard, 1986.
- Robbe-Grillet, Alain. *For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction*. Trans. R. Howard. Chicago: Northwestern UP, (1961) 1992.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. *The French Writers' War, 1940–1953*. Trans. Vanessa Doriott Anderson and Dorrit Cohn. Durham and London: Duke UP, (1999) 2014.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. "Strategies of Importation of Foreign Literature in France in the 20th Century: The Case of Gallimard, or the Making of an International Publisher." In *Institutions of World Literature: Writing, Translation, Markets*, eds. Stefan Helgesson and Peter Vermeulen. London: Routledge, 2015, 143–159.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. "The Sociology of Reception." In *Receptions: Reading the Past across Space and Time*, eds. Brenda Schildgen and Archana Venkatesan. London: Palgrave MacMillan, in press.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. "De l'internationalisation à la mondialisation: les grandes tendances du marché de la traduction en France au xxe siècle." In *Histoire de la traduction en langue française, xxe siècle*, Yves Chevrel, Jean-Yves Masson, and Bernard Banoun, eds. Paris: Verdier, forthcoming.

- Sarraute, Nathalie. *The Age of Suspicion: Essays on the Novel*. Trans. Maria Jolas. New York: George Braziller, (1956)1990.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "William Faulkner's *Sartoris*." Trans. *Yale French Studies* 10 (1947) 1952, 95–99.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "On *the Sound and the Fury*: Time in the Work of Faulkner." In *Critical Essays (Situations I)*. Trans. Chris Turner. London and New York: Seagull, 2010, 122–147.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Monsieur Mauriac and Freedom." In *Critical Essays (Situations I)*. Trans. Chris Turner. London and New York: Seagull, 2010, 85–90.
- Thiesse, Anne-Marie. *Écrire la France. Le mouvement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la Belle époque et la Libération*. Paris: PUF, 1991.
- Toury, Gideon. "The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation." In *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1995, 53–69.