

‘LE TRADUCTEUR E. M. (UNE FEMME)’: CONRAD, THE HUEFFERS AND THE 1903 MAUPASSANT TRANSLATIONS

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Abstract

In 1903, Duckworth’s Greenback Library published Elsie Hueffer’s translations of nine Maupassant short stories, with a preface by Ford and with Conrad’s encouragement, editorial input and subsequent promotion in Paris and London. This slender volume was one of the earliest collections of English translations of Maupassant’s short stories, works which overall were considered unsuitable for Anglo-Saxon sensitivities. The stories, conservatively chosen, had originally appeared between 1882 and 1890 in the Paris periodicals *Gil Blas*, *Le Gaulois* and *Le Figaro*, with a subsequent convoluted publication history. The following essay examines the significance of this minor literary collaboration, using evidence from Conrad’s letters and from the corrected typescript, to argue that these translations are of interest in a number of ways. They reveal the gendered and idiomatic ‘voice’ of Elsie Hueffer’s translation and her fidelity and sensitivity to Maupassant’s style and meaning. They also enable an assessment of Elsie’s, Ford’s and Conrad’s shared reading, past and present, of Maupassant, reveal something of the two men’s public and private views on this translation project, and reflect the triangular friendship between the three during the early 1900s.

In 1913, almost twenty years after Joseph Conrad left the sea, Lady Ottoline Morrell told the elderly Henry James that she was planning to visit the Conrads for lunch at their home at Capel House near Ashford in Kent. She reported that James held up his hands in horror, saying,

But dear lady. . . . He has lived his life at sea – dear lady, he has never met ‘civilized’ women. Yes, he is interesting, but he would not understand you [...] No, dear lady, he has lived a rough life.¹

Muted versions of this judgment have been part of the image of Conrad ever since, including among Conrad’s modern biographers.² It was barely challenged until Susan Jones pointed out that:

The evidence of his biography, correspondence, and fiction suggests a very different conclusion, a complex and intriguing relationship between Conrad, the women in his life, his female characters and the readers of his work.³

In this chapter I analyse the function of Elsie Hueffer's Maupassant translations as a way of reflecting on the position of this writer within the gendered relationship between Ford, Elsie Hueffer and Conrad. I thus further challenge the received notion of how Conrad related to women. After reviewing the context from which this initiative emerged, I will focus on two aspects of the translation project. First, how did the availability of the various Paris editions of Maupassant's short stories, as well as Conrad's and Ford's previous exposure to Maupassant's works, determine, or at least influence the choice of stories? Second, I examine some features of the translation process, particularly Conrad's personal input into, and his privately expressed opinions of, Elsie Hueffer's work, and compare these with his and Ford's public voices as revealed in Ford's preface, and Conrad's correspondence⁴ with his Paris-based translator, Henry-Durand Davray, one of the literary editors of the *Mercure de France*.⁵

Before discussing the relationship between Conrad and Elsie Hueffer as expressed through Conrad's letters, I first locate this friendship in the context of Conrad's epistolary relations with women. While only about 500 (approximately 10%) of Conrad's extant letters are addressed to women, it is clearly apparent from these, read alongside complementary biographical information, that Conrad had meaningful intellectual relations with at least ten talented, multilingual, well-read women, a number of whom were translators and/or published authors.⁶ Among these were his much admired distant relative by marriage, the Belgian-born writer Marguerite Poradowska *née* Gachet (1848-1937), and his rather overlooked relatives in Poland, Aniela Zagórska (c.1861-?), a translator, and her elder daughter, also Aniela (1881-1943) who was responsible after the war for the early translations into Polish of Conrad's works. There were other women of various ages and social backgrounds with whom Conrad exchanged letters and shared discussions, not only about both his own and at times their own literary output, but also about writers and reading. These included, among others, the Hon. Mrs. Elizabeth Bontine (1828-1925), the mother of R. B. Cunninghame Graham, in whose London salon Conrad met artists and other writers; there was also Helen Watson (1874-1967), the fiancée and then wife of his friend Ted Sanderson, and an early and appreciative Scottish reader of Conrad's work; the children's writer Harriet Mary Capes (1849-1936), and the American poet and translator Agnes Tobin (1864-1939), who was part

of the Paris literary circle of Valéry Larbaud and André Gide and whom Conrad addressed as 'chère Inez', dedicating *Under Western Eyes* (1911) to her 'genius for friendship'. Conrad also had a deep and longstanding respect for Constance Garnett and her translations from Russian, though he mostly communicated this in letters to her husband. With some of his women friends Conrad discussed or actively collaborated on translation projects. These included not only the Zagórskas, mother and daughter, but also Ada Galsworthy and Elsie Hueffer. With most of these women friends, correspondence is visible only one way, since until late in his life Conrad routinely destroyed his incoming letters once he had replied. Of course we know little of his face-to-face discussions with those women correspondents whom he saw fairly often, such as Elsie Hueffer between 1899 and 1904.

Conrad's intellectual relationship with Elsie Hueffer included an apparently appreciative reading of, and thoughtful commentary on, a draft of her novel *Margaret Hever*, eventually published by Duckworth in 1909 (*CLJC* II, 443). Conversely she did not hesitate to criticize Conrad's own work. In a good-natured response to her unsolicited 'attack on my pet *Heart of Darkness*' (in which she had objected to the 'too symbolic' representation of Kurtz), Conrad acknowledged that this was deliberate, and in a rather self-effacing (or disingenuous) manner claimed that the story was 'mainly a vehicle for conveying a batch of personal impressions', and praised her 'intelligible' criticism, 'which must have some truth in it' (*CLJC* II, 460). The most significant part of their literary relationship was however the 1902-03 collaboration which resulted in the slim volume *Stories from de Maupassant* (1903), translations of nine short stories, with editorial input from Conrad and a preface by Ford.⁷ This was first published by Gerald Duckworth as number 8 in the short-lived Greenback Library, very modestly priced at 1/6d in paper and 2/- in cloth, and which consisted of what Duckworth and Edward Garnett, his recently appointed reader, saw as distinguished shorter works. By 1903 the series included among its titles: Maxim Gorky's *Twenty-six Men and a Girl* (though not in a Garnett translation), W. H. Hudson's *El Ombú*, R. B. Cunninghame Graham's *Success*, the Australian writer Barbara Baynton's *Bush Stories* and a collection of essays by Hilaire Belloc variably entitled *Aftermath* or *Gleanings from a Busy Life* or *Caliban's Guide to Letters*. Edward Garnett's influence is here already apparent with the inclusion of the works of two of his personal friends, Graham

and Hudson.⁸

Conrad had first met Elsie Hueffer in 1898 when she and Ford were renting Grace's Cottage, at Limpsfield Chart, Surrey. Conrad, in order to work peacefully away from his domestic environment at Ivy Walls Farm, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, was staying for two weeks at the Cearne with Edward and Constance Garnett, half a mile away from Ford and Elsie Hueffer. Collaboration between Ford and Conrad began late in 1898. Between 1899 and the end of 1902, when Conrad and Ford were working on *The Inheritors* and on *Romance*, the two families were in frequent contact at the Pent or Winchelsea, though Conrad's Polish biographer Zdzisław Najder suggests that the 'artistic and intellectual atmosphere cultivated by Ford and Elsie' may have led to Conrad's wife Jessie feeling rather excluded (Najder 338). There are thirty published letters from Conrad to Elsie Hueffer, many dealing in a light-hearted manner with domestic matters such as the frequent visits, and memorably, with the elaborate arrangements by Conrad for Christina Hueffer and Borys Conrad's joint birthday party at the Pent in January 1903.⁹ The tone of the letters to Elsie Hueffer over this period is affectionate, playful, humorous, and slightly avuncular, suggesting an established, relaxed relationship. Conrad addresses her variably as 'Dear and gracious Senora', 'Cara e Illustrissima Padrona' or simply 'My dear Elsie'; when writing about literary matters, however, he sometimes calls her 'chère Confrère', echoing the way in which Henry James (responding to Conrad's 'cher Maître') addressed him.

The translation project began in July 1902, before any extant correspondence with Elsie Hueffer. Conrad wrote to Ford: 'The Maupassant idea is good. Pardon me for not being able to send the titles just yet. I've a wretched memory and am most desperately unhappy and harrowed'.¹⁰ With a nod to Turgenev,¹¹ Conrad then wrote, 'I say "enchanté" to Mme. Elsie. She shall tackle *M*. I consider her by temperament eminently fit for the task and her appreciation of the author guarantees success', and that she could "do it on her 'ead'". He added:

And I am always at her disposition with pleasure and pride – if I may be allowed to take upon myself the office of an intelligent dictionary. We must get into a closer heap together when she is ready to commence – if not sooner! [...] Let her bear in mind that there are three requisites for a good translation of *M*. Imprimis she must be idiomatic, secundo she must be idiomatic, and lastly she must be idiomatic. For in the idiom is the *clearness* of a language [...] It

will be a splendid thing for her and not a bad thing for us – for it's clear that while such a work is going on we shall all *think* Maupassant. (CLJC II, 435-6)

In this letter Conrad makes a number of significant points. He implies that it was he who initially suggested at least some of the stories she might include. He affirms his confidence in her mastery of French and in her appreciation of Maupassant, one of Conrad's and Ford's most respected authors and stylistic mentors, at the same time laying out his criteria for a successful translation. Conrad proposes early face-to-face communication to discuss the project, and the collateral benefit to both men of re-immersing themselves in Maupassant's language and style while collaborating on *Romance*. In November 1902, Conrad promised to read the drafts of the translation of nine stories which Elsie had just sent him (CLJC II, 450). There is no other mention of the project in the next three extant letters, until Elsie Hueffer sent Conrad the proofs early in August 1903; there was however plenty of social contact between the two families that year, and thus many opportunities to discuss the translations.¹² That both Conrad and Elsie Hueffer corrected and emended the typescript is clearly apparent from at least two distinct handwriting styles in the Yale document.

But why did Elsie Hueffer propose to translate stories of Maupassant (and whether this was her own idea or Ford's is not entirely clear)? The works of Maupassant were a strong and pervasive influence on all those at the heart of Conrad's circle.¹³ They occupied a privileged position among the shared reading of Conrad and Ford, as well as Galsworthy and Cunninghame Graham, who were all very familiar with Maupassant's works in French and were all under his spell, particularly early in their writing careers. W. B. Hutchings has already examined Ford's literary debt to Maupassant. The influence of Maupassant on Conrad's work has been extensively analyzed by Yves Hervouet, with numerous intertextual examples. Graham's biographers have remarked on Maupassant's influence, echoes and possibly overt borrowings, in some of his short stories. Galsworthy refers to Maupassant as one of those writers (the other was Turgenev) 'under whom I served that spiritual and technical apprenticeship which every young writer serves, guided by some deep kinship in spirit to one or other of the old past masters of his craft'.¹⁴ The journalist, essayist and biographer Edward V. Lucas, a longstanding acquaintance and quiet supporter of Conrad, had also been heavily influenced by Maupassant when young.¹⁵

Conrad's letters contain a greater number of indexed references to Maupassant (23 entries) than to any other French writer apart from Flaubert (24 entries); Anatole France comes next (17).¹⁶ Maupassant's works, like those of Flaubert and Turgenev, are nostalgically recalled in letters among Conrad's 'archipelago' of friends. They all felt that Maupassant was unjustly neglected in England. Max Saunders has suggested that Ford saw this neglect as a direct result of Maupassant's undistorted approach to writing about sexuality, though there is no direct evidence that Conrad himself shared this particular view.¹⁷

We do not know when Conrad, Ford or Elsie Hueffer first began to read Maupassant. The first reference in Conrad's letters is in 1894 to Marguerite Poradowska: 'je lis Maupassant avec delices [*sic*]' (*CLJC* I, 169). One can reasonably assume that the 'row of French novels' which Edward Garnett noticed on his first visit in 1895 to Conrad's 'snug bachelor quarters' at 17 Gillingham Street near Victoria Station in London, included several works of Maupassant, since Conrad had, late in 1894, been reading *Pierre et Jean* and lamenting that he was too much under its influence (Najder 201; *CLJC* I, 184). For five weeks in winter, between 4 December 1893 and 10 January 1894, Conrad had been in port at Rouen, as second mate living aboard the SS *Adowa*, and waiting in vain for the order to sail immigrants to Canada. It was here, moored close to the town centre, and according to Ford and to Conrad's own memoir, that Conrad re-read *Madame Bovary*, and worked on *Almayer's Folly*, 'under the shade of old Flaubert'.¹⁸ It is tempting to imagine that it was here during his first prolonged stay in France for twenty years, that he first acquired his own Maupassant volumes. He visited the town centre from time to time and is likely to have frequented bookshops, along with cafés and the postal service.¹⁹

When Ford first read Maupassant is not clear. The lists of books which Cathy Hueffer and/or Ford Madox Brown recommended as reading for the young Ford and his siblings included *Madame Bovary*, but there is no mention of Maupassant.²⁰ However by 1893 Ford had already made several prolonged visits to France and Germany. He read widely in Bonn, not only expanding his cultural and political horizons but also proof-reading some 'pornographic books of young Germany' (Saunders I, 49). As he also spent three winters in Paris around this period it seems likely that there he would have encountered for the first time the untranslated works of Maupassant. That Ford in later essays refers twice to 'the original *Yvette*' collection or volume

suggests his familiarity with this work in its 1884 Victor Havard edition.²¹ Of Elsie Hueffer's youthful exposure to Maupassant we know nothing, but it seems probable that earlier in their marriage the couple would have both read these works in French and at some stage discussed them.

Let us first ask though what factors may have influenced the choice of stories for the Martindale collection, starting by working out which French editions were circulating among Conrad, Ford and Elsie Hueffer and were therefore most likely to have been read or re-read by them before the translation project got underway. The publication history of Maupassant's short works is complex. His prolific output (over 300 stories, at times at the rate of several a week) all first appeared in Parisian periodicals between 1875 and 1895, notably in *Gil Blas*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Gaulois*, and latterly in *L'Écho de Paris*. The stories were then re-published between 1881 and 1890, in fifteen volumes, mostly by Victor Havard and by Ollendorf, with two more volumes appearing posthumously.²² A more complete illustrated set of 29 volumes, with the short stories arranged in the same selections, then appeared from Ollendorf between 1899 and 1904. Given the precarious finances of both families, there is no reason to think that Elsie Hueffer, Ford or Conrad specifically bought new volumes from this more expensive series to use as source texts. There were no cheap railway editions of Maupassant's works available at the time: *La Maison Tellier* (1881) and *Une Vie* (1883) were at first banned by Hachette as unsuitable for sale at railway stations and only later with the commercial success of *Une Vie*, did Hachette lift the ban.²³ I also discount the possibility, given the peripatetic lifestyle and small houses of both families, that Ford, Conrad or Elsie Hueffer had hoarded ten- to fifteen-year-old Paris periodicals which contained the originals. It is therefore likely that between them they already owned and/or circulated among themselves at least seven volumes of the earlier book editions, and it was these, with which they were most familiar and to which they had ready access, that influenced the choice of stories for translation. This proposition is supported by the clustering of the stories selected, and the references by Ford in his preface to others in the same collections, as well as collateral evidence from allusions in Conrad's fiction.

The nine stories (three set in Paris and six elsewhere in France) in the Martindale edition are, in order: 'The Field of Olives' – 'Le Champ d'oliviers' (the violent and fatal encounter in Provence

between a Parisian aristocrat turned village priest, and his illegitimate son); 'The Chair-Mender' – 'La Rempailleuse' (a woman's fifty years of steadfast but unrequited love in a small market town); 'Saint-Antoine' – 'Saint Antoine' (a fierce black comedy set during the Franco-Prussian war); 'The Minuet' – 'Menuet' (a dream-like encounter in the Luxembourg Gardens); 'The Return' – 'Le Retour' (a reworking of Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden' in a coastal fishing community); 'The Holy Relic' – 'La Relique' (a cynical deception which led to a broken engagement); 'Mademoiselle Perle' (a husband's hidden lifelong and unconsummated love for his adoptive sister); 'The Wreck' – 'L'Épave' (a young English girl and her family rescued from a vessel grounded on a sandbank near La Rochelle); and finally 'Night: A Bad Dream' – 'La Nuit: Cauchemar' (a surreal nocturnal walk through Paris). The originals are to be found in six of the seventeen book volumes, namely *Mademoiselle Fifi* (1883), *Contes de la bécasse* (1883), *Clair de lune* (1888 edn.), *Yvette* (1884), *La Petite Roque* (1888) and *L'Inutile beauté* (1890).²⁴ In these collections are other stories which Ford mentioned in his preface, regretting that they had not been included, such as 'Le Père Amable', and 'Yvette' and 'half a hundred more' (EM 21). Ford also reasonably commented that 'it isn't in anyway practicable to wish for translations of "La Petite Roque" or of such a masterpiece of pleasant and ferocious irony as "Ce Cochon de Morin"' (EM 22). 'La Petite Roque', (the unsolved crime of the rape and killing of an adolescent girl in a close-knit village) would have been far too shocking for Anglophone sensitivities. The choice of stories was therefore, at least by today's standards, cautious and conservative. All three readers (Elsie Hueffer, Conrad and Ford) would have realized the still low public awareness of, and thus limited general demand in England for, the works of Maupassant in English. Conrad steered the choice towards a selection of the milder stories, a decision which Ford seems to have accepted. Edward Garnett, in his capacity as Duckworth's reader, may have had input into the choice, though I could find no direct evidence for this.

Of the six Maupassant volumes from which Elsie Hueffer took the original stories which she then translated, the two volumes with the most impact among the three were *La Petite Roque* (1886) and *Contes de la bécasse* (1883). In addition to the two stories from *La Petite Roque* which were translated ('L'Épave' and 'Mademoiselle Perle'), textual borrowings from 'L'Épave' have been identified in

Conrad's *Lord Jim* (Hervouet 73-4). In same collection is 'Rosalie Prudent', a moving story about the trial of a young servant acquitted of smothering her illegitimate twin boys at birth. Not only has John Stape found that Conrad, in *The Secret Agent* (1907), borrowed from this story²⁵ but Ford in *No Enemy* (1929) was to recall and use the name 'Rosalie Prudent' for the widowed and bereaved French housewife, who, like the girl of the same name in the Maupassant story, sewed compulsively, and mourned the loss (in war) of her two sons as well as their father. Echoing Maupassant's Rosalie, who delivered her babies secretly and alone in great pain, and in desperation suffocated them, realising she could not afford to raise them alone, Ford's Rosalie asks 'For what purpose is it that one brings men children into the world if this is to be their end? They cause great pain in their entry [...] It is difficult to keep them alive'.²⁶

The collection *Contes de la bécasse*, as well as containing three stories which were included in the Martindale volume ('Menuet', 'La Rempailleuse' and 'Saint Antoine'), also contains 'Ce cochon de Morin', one of the works which Ford claims he and Conrad knew by heart (JC 36). All the other stories mentioned by Ford in his preface first appeared in one or other of these six volumes. These were 'Yvette', which Ford described as 'a story that in its way is matchless', while he described 'L'Inutile beauté' in the eponymous collection as a work 'of an appalling badness, because it is of an appalling dullness' (EM 21). In addition Ford referred to the posthumous volume *Le Père Milon* (1899) with its precursor of 'Yvette', a story called 'Yveline Samoris' indicating that he owned or had ready access to this volume as well. It is therefore likely that Conrad, and/or Ford, and/or Elsie Hueffer, owned or borrowed at least seven volumes of the first book editions, and used six of these as the source texts for the translations.

Maupassant's biographer Francis Steegmuller pointed out that while some of Maupassant's novels such as *Une Vie* (1883), *Bel Ami* (1885) and *Pierre et Jean* (1887-8) had been translated into English during their author's lifetime, 'English and American prudery delayed large scale translation'.²⁷ Henry James's friend Jonathan Sturges (1864-1911) had already translated a collection of Maupassant short stories, with a preface by James.²⁸ It is not clear whether Ford or Conrad were aware of Sturges' translation, which at the time had appeared only in North America as neither mention it. The volume includes one story ('L'Épave') later re-translated in the Martindale

collection, and two stories 'La Mère Sauvage' ('Old Mother Savage') and 'Une Ficelle' ('A Piece of String') which were soon afterwards translated by Ada Galsworthy,²⁹ all three stories rendered in an arguably stylistically more authentic manner than those by Sturges whose translations are rather flat and lack the combination of colloquialism and precision so characteristic of Maupassant. By 1903, Walter Dunne in New York had begun to issue a prestigious and extremely expensive, limited, subscription-only series of Maupassant stories with 'translations [...] of appalling crudity' (Steegmüller 321), eventually running to seventeen volumes.³⁰

It is unclear how the final Martindale selection was made, and to what extent Ford had input. In 1924 he called the long opening story 'The Field of Olives' ('Le Champ d'oliviers') 'the most wonderful of all Maupassant's stories' (JC 180). By then his judgement was perhaps influenced by his own romantic longing to return to the Provençal colours, light, warmth, food and landscapes which Maupassant so vividly depicted in this story.³¹

Moving now to the details of the translation project and its reception, I ask: what were Conrad's and Ford's reactions, in private and in public, to Elsie Hueffer's translation? This brings us to a letter of August 1903 in which Conrad commented privately to Elsie Hueffer on the proofs, declaring that 'Your work and Your corrections are *all right*' and that Ford's Preface was '*extremely good*'. In the same letter Conrad also suggested several instances where she might discreetly edit out or change some of Ford's expressions, such as 'roturier' to 'bourgeois' or 'businessman' (Yale xv), which she did. Conrad rather coyly added 'the French reporter did not write *baisait* he wrote *embrassait* and for reasons I am ready to explain to Ford privately he could not use *baisait* like this' (CLJC III, 49-50). This criticism of Ford's clumsy sentence 'A French and an English reporter once gave the following account of exactly the same incident in a cause célèbre: *M. X. . . . baisait Mme. B. . . .; and Mr. Wilson and Mrs. June were seen in equivocal circumstances*' (Yale viii-ix) and Conrad's subsequent comment, indicate Conrad's better knowledge of colloquial French.³² In this letter to Elsie Hueffer Conrad lists 22 pages, up to the end of 'The Field of Olives', on which he made substantive suggestions. In a subsequent letter, which implies that Conrad had received the proofs in several batches, he makes a few additional comments from which it is possible, from the context and handwriting comparisons, to deduce that Elsie Hueffer herself made

many of the changes. For example Conrad writes that ‘your corrections are all *improvements* except the one in last batch I pointed out, and one in this p. 148 last par: where *served* is not so good as the erased phrase’ (CLJC III, 50) – this refers to the erasure of ‘did the service of’. Overall, on at least 64 of the 187 proof pages Conrad made comments, small grammatical changes and transpositions, as well as tactful suggestions about more accurate or appropriate vocabulary. Most but not all of these were adopted. Scrutiny of the corrected proofs thus reveals that Conrad’s own input to the translation of the stories and to the preface was rather more substantial than he admitted to Davray. When on 22 August 1903 he wrote to Davray in Paris he only claimed some small responsibility for the choice, noted his cautious approach (‘il fallait de la prudence, ici!’) and stated rather ambiguously that he had ‘also seen the proofs – but *nothing more*’ (CLJC III, 52-3).

What evidence is there of Ford’s own responses to his wife’s work? He displays lukewarm enthusiasm when he writes ‘It is invidious, in a preface to a translation, however excellent, to dwell too long on the wording of the original: the Translator in this case has made at least spirited attempts to retain Maupassant’s rhythms’ (EM 14-5). Ford’s language in his preface when he writes ‘I should have liked to have seen’ suggests that he had no direct input into the choice (EM 21). That he refers only briefly to ‘the Translator’ may simply highlight the generally low public profile, if not to say near invisibility, of some woman translators at the time, or simply reflect their by then failing marriage. Alternatively he may have wished deliberately to remain publicly at a distance rather than actively promoting his wife’s work.

Conrad undertook some advance publicity in Paris. In his letter to Davray in August, Conrad had alerted him to this forthcoming work and listed the stories therein. With his public voice as a literary man, Conrad adopted a slightly superior tone, writing that ‘the translator E. M. (a woman) has consulted me on the choice of tales’. He added that ‘the thing has been done with love – with care, with devotion – and, I myself believe – with surprising success’. He puffed Ford’s preface, promised Davray a copy and asked him to promote it in France. Conrad again praised Elsie Hueffer’s renderings, saying that she had ‘given a Maupassantesque style to English prose’ and that the translation was ‘perfectly idiomatic, entirely pure’ (CLJC III, 53-4).

By comparing some of the Martindale versions with those of the Dunne editions, it is possible not only to validate Conrad's opinion but more importantly to reveal Elsie Hueffer's own voice, and the unique style and quality of these translations. Her work bears out Conrad's early advice about being idiomatic. It is distinguished in several ways: her attention to detail, her relaxed idiomatic language when appropriate, the felicity and rhythms of her prose and the intelligence with which she has read and understood the original, certainly compared with that of the anonymous Dunne translators whose bizarre errors are too numerous to catalogue here. Most striking is the feminine voice which emerges in the Martindale versions. For example in that gentle, strangely haunting little story 'Menuet' (EM 114-23), the garden 'joli comme un doux sourire de vieille' is rendered as a garden as 'beautiful as the gentle smile of an old lady' rather than the colourless 'a pretty garden like the smile of an old person' (Dunne XV, 205). For 'les plates-bandes de petits arbres rangés comme des collégiens en promenade', the Martindale translation has 'borders of young trees, arranged like school children out for a walk' (EM 116) whereas the Dunne translator gives us the clumsy gallicism 'trees arranged like collegians promenading' (Dunne XV, 205). A little later we read that the straw beehives (skeps) 'opened to the sun their little doors no larger than the hole in a thimble' (EM 116) whereas the Dunne translation has straw hives which 'opened to the sun their great doors like the opening of a sewing thimble' (Dunne XV, 205-6), clearly a misunderstanding of 'ouvraient au soleil leurs portes grandes comme l'entrée d'un dé à coudre'. The Dunne translator who wrote 'golden flies were buzzing' (Dunne XV, 206) fails to recognise that Maupassant's 'mouches bourdonnantes et dorées, vraies maîtresses de ce lieu pacifique' who filled this corner of the Luxembourg Gardens were, in this context obviously bees ('mouches à miel'); the Martindale translation gets it right with 'bees humming and gleaming like gold' (EM 116). Unlike Elsie Hueffer, the Dunne translator clearly knew little of bees or of sewing, or even of period costume, translating the dancing master's old fashioned 'culotte à pont' in the next but one paragraph as 'trousers with a flap' rather than 'knee breeches' (EM 117).

In 'The Return', in which the opening paragraphs provide a succession of vivid, telescoped, painterly images of a coastal landscape, a humble fisherman's cottage and a close up of his family, Elsie Hueffer shows her personal experience of rural domesticity.

L'homme est à la pêche, et la femme, devant la loge, répare les mailles d'un grand filet brun, tendu sur le mur ainsi qu'une immense toile d'araignée. Une fillette de quatorze ans, à l'entrée du jardin, assise sur une chaise de paille penchée en arrière et appuyée du dos à la barrière, raccommode du linge, du linge de pauvre, rapiécé, repris déjà. Une autre gamine, plus jeune d'un an, berce dans ses bras un enfant tout petit, encore sans gestes et sans parole; et deux mioches de deux et trois ans, le derrière dans la terre, nez à nez, jardinent de leurs mains maladroites et se jettent des poignées de poussière dans la figure.

The husband has gone out fishing, and in front of the hut the wife is mending a great brown net, which hangs spread out over the wall like an immense spider's web. At the entrance to the garden, a girl of fourteen is sitting on a rush-bottomed chair, tilted against the post of the gate. She is mending some linen under-garments – clothes of poor people, that have been patched and darned already. Another girl, a year younger, is nursing a very small baby, as yet too young for speech or gesture; and, squatting down face to face, a couple of mites of two and three grub about in the dust with clumsy hands, throwing handfuls of dirt at each other. (EM 124-5)

This last sentence offers a perfect rendering of Maupassant's phrases, a vivid and realistic image of two tiny children playing together. In contrast the Dunne translator, in his or her version, (with the story clumsily entitled 'A French Enoch Arden') renders this as 'the two youngsters of two and three years sitting on the ground are playing garden with their clumsy hands and throwing fistfuls of dust in each other's face' (Dunne XVII, 130). This suggests that he or she (unlike Elsie Hueffer) had never watched very young children at play outdoors. Furthermore the Dunne translator has the fourteen-year-old girl mending 'resting her arm on the fence' (129), a very unlikely posture for sewing, whereas the Martindale version recognises that it is the chair, and not the girl's body, which is tilted back and resting on the fence.

Some of Elsie Hueffer's translation is also quite suggestively robust, such as in the blackly humorous 'Saint-Antoine' when imaginatively and without vulgarity she describes the sixty-year-old Antoine, a 'vigoureux tisseur de servantes' as 'still vigorously enterprising with his servant girls' (EM 94). The Dunne version 'had a vigorous hand with servants' is clumsy, ambiguous, almost meaningless (Dunne X, 142).

In October 1903, Conrad thanked Elsie Hueffer warmly for the published work. At the same time he commented irritably on Ford's

criticism in his preface (EM 14) of Maupassant's tendency to be a 'rhetorician' citing the end of 'The Chair-Mender' (*CLJC* III, 64). Conrad strongly defended Maupassant's ending, even suggesting that Ford had confused this with another story, the rather overblown final paragraph of 'Mademoiselle Perle'; there is no extant letter either to or from Ford on this subject. Here we see Conrad communicating with Ford through his wife, a triangular strategy he also used at times with other couples, including the Galsworthys.³³ There are several possible reasons. Since Conrad was rarely – if ever – a confident and dispassionate critic of his friends' works, he may have been first testing out his views on Elsie, so as not to offend Ford. He may also have been aware of nascent tensions in their marriage, and was deliberately testing Elsie's loyalty to her husband against her loyalty to Conrad's expressed artistic ideas and/or her own integrity as a translator. He may also, through this discussion about Ford's use of language, have been indirectly trying to test, strengthen or complicate his own friendship with Ford, by challenging him, but not through direct confrontation.

In October 1903, Conrad, on a visit to the Galsworthys in London, attempted some advance private promotion of the translation within more well-connected circles. Without obvious irony or sarcasm he wrote that 'Jack [Galsworthy] and his little world are excited at the prospect of the Maup. translation of which I've made no secret "dans les salons" to which I've had access (it's *ten copies off the stalls for sure*)' (*CLJC* II, 450). Conrad was privately very supportive of Elsie Hueffer's work and directly expressed his respect for her, writing affectionately: 'My sincerest congratulations. It is indeed a first rate translation. Your toil, a very honest and unselfish toil has not been thrown away. Here are whole pages upon pages, rendered with amazing fidelity of tone' (*CLJC* III, 50). When Conrad praises the translation as 'honest and unselfish toil', I argue that this reflects his own work ethic – what Galsworthy called Conrad's 'instinctive fidelity, his artist's desire to make the best thing he could' (Galsworthy 92). This echoes the way he appreciated the work, the craft, of merchant seaman, and should not, I argue, be taken as an undervaluation of Elsie Hueffer's work.

In his monthly column 'Lettres anglaises' in the *Mercure de France*, Davray responded from Paris by mentioning the translation, immediately after a short, lukewarm notice about *Romance*. He wrote, in a slightly supercilious manner:

Il est difficile de dire quel sera le sort du petit recueil de nouvelles de Maupassant, traduit par E. M. Dans sa préface, Mr Ford Madox Hueffer dit que le public ne s'intéresse guère à Maupassant. On traduit fort peu en anglais les romans français, cela ne tient pas seulement à leur réalisme qui effaroucherait la pudibonderie d'outre Manche [*sic*], mais c'est surtout parce que le public éclairé est suffisamment lettré pour lire dans le texte les romans français; de plus, les littérateurs parlent ou lisent couramment le français. Edmond Gosse, Andrew Lang, Henry James, Arthur Symons, Joseph Conrad, n'ont pas besoin de traducteurs pour apprécier Flaubert, Maupassant ou Anatole France. Mais peut-être y aurait-il quelque intérêt à offrir au grand public une partie importante de l'œuvre de Maupassant; il y a en ce moment une tendance à réagir contre la pudibonderie exagérée de l'époque victorienne et Maupassant a des qualités qui plairaient vraisemblablement à beaucoup de gens de l'autre côté du détroit.³⁴

It is difficult to say what will be the fate of the little collection of Maupassant's short stories, translated by E. M. In his preface, Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer says that the general public shows hardly any interest in Maupassant. Very few French novels are translated into English; this isn't only because their realism would alarm more prudish cross-Channel readers; above all it is because the enlightened public is sufficiently literate to read French novels in the original; furthermore, literary men speak or read French fluently. Edmund Gosse, Andrew Lang, Henry James, Arthur Symons, Joseph Conrad don't need translators to appreciate Flaubert, Maupassant or Anatole France. But perhaps it would be of some interest to present a significant selection of Maupassant's work to the general public; there is at the moment a trend towards reacting against the excessive prudishness of the Victorian era, and Maupassant has qualities which would be very likely to please many people across the straits [of Dover]. (my translation)

This little collection did in fact have a future, albeit a modest one. It was reprinted by Duckworth in 1910 and a new edition in the Jonathan Cape Travellers Library appeared in 1927, reprinted in 1929 and 1935, by which time Maupassant was better known and read outside France, as more works had been translated into English.

Using the proofs as well as the published volume, I have demonstrated how Conrad privately encouraged and tactfully helped a 'civilized woman' in her translations of one of his and Ford's most important style masters and literary influences, helped her select the stories, discussed the process in more detail than he admitted to Davray, and undertook proof-reading and detailed commentary on her translation. At the same time he promoted the work in Paris and in London as the first accessible translation to appear in England. This was soon to be followed by another Maupassant translation from

Conrad's circle of friends. A month or two after the publication of the Martindale volume, Conrad was to encourage and actively collaborate with another talented multilingual woman, Ada Galsworthy, to translate another eleven Maupassant stories for Duckworth. To Conrad's great delight this new selection was headed by 'Yvette' (*CLJC* III, 71). It is of a similarly high standard, has a preface by Conrad, well complements Elsie Hueffer's volume and was also reprinted several times (1914, 1915 and 1920).

While Ford's own involvement in the Martindale edition clearly differs from that of Conrad, it is arguably equally important, both at the time and in retrospect. Ford's preface, at over fourteen pages, places emphasis on the process of translating Maupassant, unlike Conrad's shorter preface to Ada Galsworthy's translations which is essentially a general critical introduction to Maupassant for English readers. Ford's preface is distinguished in a number of ways. Written in a style that is vivid and conversational, he stresses how translating Maupassant requires a sensitivity to his 'pure and limpid vernacular that was also pure and limpid literary French' and praises Elsie's 'spirited attempts' (EM 10-1, 15). He uses examples from 'Le Champ d'oliviers' to highlight this style, as well as Maupassant's mastery of the craft of storytelling, and declares that 'the supreme quality [...] is his interest. That, after all, is the supreme because it is the indispensable, quality of all art' (EM 22). The appearance of the translations, with Ford's preface, at the same time as *Romance* (October 1903) may have ensured a higher literary profile for this modest volume of translations than if it had appeared alone. Ford's preface is also invaluable in allowing, through his references to other stories, a reconstruction of the manner in which he himself read and re-read the short works of Maupassant, and recalled them twenty years later (*JC* 35-6, 94, 179-80). While there are no comments or amendments in the proofs which are recognisable as being in Ford's hand, and no evidence of any other direct input into the translation, the implication from Conrad's first response to Ford on the subject in July 1902 is that the project not only had Conrad's unqualified endorsement, but was at least partially supported by Ford.

NOTES

- 1 Robert Gathorne-Hardy, ed., *Ottoline: The Early Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell*, London: Faber, 1963, p. 240.
- 2 See for example Frederick Karl, *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives*, London: Faber, 1979; Karl barely mentions Conrad's women friends other than Marguerite Poradowska. Indexed entries for women with whom Conrad was known to have had a distinct intellectual and/or social relationship such as Elsie Hueffer, Ada Galsworthy and Constance Garnett, occupy approximately 5% of the index space afforded to their husbands. There are fifteen entries under 'Conrad and women' in Zdzisław Najder's *Joseph Conrad: A Life* (trans. Halina Najder, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007 – henceforth Najder); of these eleven relate to the period before Conrad's marriage and two are about the American journalist, Jane Anderson. Jocelyn Baines, *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971) reveals a similar bias. In John Stape's *The Several Lives of Joseph Conrad* (London: Arrow, 2008), all of Conrad's significant male friendships are summarized in 18 separate entries but, as with the other biographies, women occupy very little space in the narrative. In Jeffrey Meyers's *Joseph Conrad: A Biography* (London: Murray, 1991), there is a long appendix devoted to speculation about Conrad's relationship with Jane Anderson, but other discussions of Conrad's friendships are restricted to men.
- 3 Susan Jones, *Conrad and Women*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, pp. 1-2.
- 4 Laurence Davies, Frederick Karl, Owen Knowles, Gene M. Moore and J. H. Stape, eds., *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, 9 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983-2007 – henceforth *CLJC*.
- 5 Conrad had recently, in April 1902, accepted Davray as his own translator (*CLJC* II, pp. 398-400). For an evaluation of Davray's importance, see Annie Escuret 'Henry-Durand Davray and the *Mercure de France*', in *The Reception of H. G. Wells in Europe*, ed. Patrick Parrinder and John S. Partington, London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005, pp. 28-47.
- 6 See consolidated index of recipients in *CLJC* IX, pp. 297-309.
- 7 This edition is henceforth referred to as the 'Martindale' translation and abbreviated to 'EM'. Page references are to the 1927 edition: *Stories from de Maupassant*, trans. E. M. with a preface by Ford Madox Ford, London: Jonathan Cape Travellers' Library, 1927. The original Duckworth 1903 edition is almost unobtainable. Specific references to the corrected and annotated proofs are referred to as 'Yale' with page numbers, and differ from the 1927 Cape edition. I am deeply indebted to Dr Gene M. Moore, University of Amsterdam, for generously donating me his copy of these proofs, a full analysis of which is beyond the scope of this chapter.
- 8 See George Jefferson, *Edward Garnett: A Life in Literature*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1982, pp. 77-9.
- 9 Conrad to Elsie Hueffer, 8 January 1903, Pent Farm (*CLJC* III, pp. 7-8); Conrad to Ford, 11 January 1903, Pent Farm (*CLJC* III, pp. 8-10).
- 10 By the loss by fire at the Pent on 23 June 1902 of parts of the manuscript of 'The End of the Tether', necessitating urgent rewriting from memory to meet the *Blackwood's Magazine* serialization deadline.

- 11 This refers to *Fathers and Sons* (see *CLJC* II, p. 435, n. 3).
- 12 Documented visits include late July 1902, October 1902, late November 1902, Christmas 1902, January 1903 and onwards, 2 weeks in March 1903, end of March 1903, April 1903, September 1903; see Owen Knowles, *A Conrad Chronology*, Boston, MA: G. K. Hall & Co, 1990.
- 13 More accurately as Laurence Davies put it, 'a Conrad archipelago replete with islands' (*CLJC* VII, p. xxxiii).
- 14 W. B. Hutchings, 'Ford and Maupassant', in *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*, ed. Robert Hampson and Max Saunders, IFMFS 2, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003, pp. 257-70; Yves Hervouet, *The French Face of Joseph Conrad*, Cambridge: University Press, 1990 – henceforth Hervouet; pp. 13-14 and *passim*; Cedric Watts and Laurence Davies, *Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 172, 202-5; John Galsworthy, *Castles in Spain and Other Screeds*, London: Heinemann, 1927 – henceforth Galsworthy; pp. 152-3.
- 15 E. V. Lucas was a quiet supporter of Conrad for many years, first meeting through Garnett in 1896; see J. H. Stape and Owen Knowles, eds., *A Portrait in Letters: Correspondence to and about Joseph Conrad*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996, p. 23. Lucas had in 1895 bought a cottage at Froghole, very close to the Cearne, and previously rented by the Garnetts, and close to Grace's Cottage; see David Garnett, *The Golden Echo*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1953, p. 20. Lucas in the early 1890s had, as a young journalist and writer in London, spent his evenings translating Maupassant, not for publication but to practice his style; see E. V. Knox, 'Lucas, Edward Verrall (1868-1938)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, 09 July 2015, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34622>>.
- 16 See Max Saunders' chapter in the present volume on Ford and Anatole France.
- 17 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, – henceforth Saunders; I, p. 242.
- 18 Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance*, London: Duckworth, 1924 – henceforth *JC*; pp. 91, 94. Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record*, ed. Zdzisław Najder and J. H. Stape, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 19.
- 19 See Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, 1 January 1894, Rouen (*CLJC* I, pp. 141-4).
- 20 See Ford, *Henry James: A Critical Study*, London: Martin Secker, 1913, p. 75; Ford, *The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad*, 1929, ed. by C. H. Sisson, Manchester: Carcanet, pp. 108-9.
- 21 Ford, *Critical Essays*, ed. Max Saunders and Richard Stang, Manchester: Carcanet, 2002, pp. 209, 250.
- 22 See <<http://www.maupassantiana.fr/>> for details of publication history (retrieved 09 July 2015).
- 23 Michael G. Lerner, *Maupassant*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1975, p. 153; Eileen S. DeMarco, *Reading and Riding: Hachette's Railroad Bookstore Network in 19th-Century France*, Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2006, pp. 87, 107.
- 24 'Le Champ d'oliviers', in *L'Inutile beauté*, Paris: V. Havard, 1890, pp. 61-128; 'La Relique', in *Mademoiselle Fifi*, Paris: V. Havard, 1883, pp. 117-29; 'La Rempailleuse', 'Menuet', and 'Saint-Antoine', in *Contes de la bécasse*, Paris: Rouveyre et Blond, 1883, pp. 133-48, 71-82, 257-76; 'La Nuit: Cauchemar', in *Clair de lune*, Paris: Ollendorf, 1888, 1894 expanded edn., pp. 301-16; 'L'Épave'

- and 'Mademoiselle Perle', in *La Petite Roque*, Paris: V. Havard, 1888, pp. 87-114, 137-64; 'Le Retour', in *Yvette*, Paris: V. Havard, 1884, pp. 163-76.
- 25 See J. H. Stape, 'Another Conrad Borrowing from Maupassant', *Notes and Queries*, 49:4 (Dec. 2002), 493-4.
- 26 Ford, *No Enemy: A Tale of Reconstruction*, [1919] 1929, New York: The Ecco Press, 1984, pp. 257-8. At the beginning of Chapter XII (p. 258) is a note from Gringoire to the narrator that 'Mme Prudent's name was really *Dutoit*' further indicating a conscious appropriation from Maupassant.
- 27 Francis Steegmuller, *Maupassant*, London: Collins, 1950 – henceforth Steegmuller; p. 320.
- 28 Published as *The Odd Number: Thirteen Tales*, New York: Harper & Bros, 1889.
- 29 Guy de Maupassant, *Yvette and Other Stories*, trans. A. G. (Mrs John Galsworthy), with a foreword by Joseph Conrad, London: Duckworth, 1904. John and Ada Galsworthy were by then living as husband and wife though not free to marry until 1905.
- 30 *The Life Work of Henri René Guy de Maupassant Embracing Romance Travel Comedy and Verse*, for the first time complete in English, with a critical preface by Paul Bourget of the French Academy and a critical introduction by Robert Arnot MA, 17 vols., New York: M. Walter Dunne, 1903 – henceforth Dunne.
- 31 Ford and Stella Bowen had first been in Provence in late 1922 at Harold Monro's villa in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, then between April and September 1923 in Tarascon. Ford wrote his Conrad memoir far from Provence, near Paris at Guermantes (Seine-et-Marne) and finished it in Bruges in October 1924 (Saunders II, p. 171).
- 32 As a verb this is rather too sexually explicit. Conrad bracketed the sentence for deletion in the proofs (Yale viii).
- 33 See for example Conrad to Ada Galsworthy, Pent Farm, 21 October 1905 (*CLJC* III, p. 289).
- 34 *Mercure de France*, 49 (Jan.-March 1904), 272 (9 June 2015), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1055173/f271.image>.