

Translation, the Canon and its Discontents

Translation, the Canon and its Discontents:

Version and Subversion

Edited by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Miguel Ramalhete Gomes	
PART I – LAYING DOWN AND SENDING UP THE CANON	
Boileau Englished: Beyond Translation—Imitation, Adaptation, Subversion in Late Seventeenth-Century England	12
Charles Whitworth	
Novel and Translation in Spain during the Eighteenth Century and the Romantic Period: Revising the British Canon	23
Begoña Lasa Álvarez	
The Brazilian Emperor’s Translation Canon	42
Sergio Romanelli	
PART II – NEGOTIATING NATIONAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES	
The Latvian Translation Scene: Change of Canons, Shifts of Norms	56
Andrejs Veisbergs	
Subversive Notes: A Politically Oriented Version of <i>Moby Dick</i> produced during the Salazar Regime	77
Gabriela Gândara Terenas	
Translations of Robert Burns’ Poetry in the Soviet Union: Ideological Aspects	93
Natalia Kaloh Vid	

PART III – RETHINKING AND REWRITING THE CANON

Adult Canonical Texts Adapted For Children: <i>Don Quixote</i>	112
Beatriz M ^a Rodríguez Rodríguez	
Canon and the Case of <i>The Jewel of Seven Stars</i> , by Bram Stoker	127
Jorge Almeida e Pinho	
The Spanish Canon of English-Canadian Literature	140
Pilar Somacarrera Íñigo	

PART IV – A PRACTISED SUBVERSION

Marilyn into marilyn: Translation and Transformation	164
Mick Greer	
“To Make Soundsense and Sensesound”: On the Challenges of Translating <i>Finnegans Wake</i>	176
Márcia Lemos	
Contributors	193
Index	198

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INTRODUCTION

MIGUEL RAMALHETE GOMES

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This collection addresses the complex process by which translation and other forms of rewriting, such as adaptation, have contributed to canon formation, revision, destabilization, and dismantlement. Through the play between *version* and *subversion*, which is inherent to any form of rewriting, the chapters in this volume stress the role of translation and adaptation as potentially transformative mediations, capable of shaping and undermining identities.

Translation and canon have, of course, a long history in common. Versions of texts have very often proved to be constitutive phenomena in themselves, capable of producing literary innovation and adding to the canon. On the other hand, as André Lefevere has explained in *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*,¹ the logic of rewriting can be found not only in translation but also in historiography, anthologisation, criticism and editing, activities which directly contribute to canon formation.² In many cases, as Susan Bassnett and Lefevere also pointed out in their introduction to the collective volume *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*,³ versions can become so necessary, pervasive, and naturalised that they may ultimately function as

¹ André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), 9.

² In fact, Ton Hoenselaars has come to suggest the model of a “sliding generic scale” applied to rewriting: “The borderline between translation and adaptation is extremely difficult to draw, certainly since, in recent years, translation itself has come to be looked upon as a form of adapting or rewriting [...]. If rewriting is inherent in translation and adaptation alike, and if we want to have a working distinction between these two practices, perhaps we ought to concentrate on the degree of rewriting and the alleged or implied objectives of the go-between.” Ton Hoenselaars, “Introduction,” in *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. Ton Hoenselaars, 1-27 (London: Thomson Learning, 2004), 15.

³ Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, eds., *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Clevedon, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 9.

originals for most non-professional readers. Although certain translations have acquired canonical status—one will think of the King James Bible or the Tieck/Schlegel translations of Shakespeare—most, of course, exist in a competitive space where their effectiveness is limited to a short time span, usually a few decades. This being said, even canonical translations are not exempt from being scrutinised, altered, or challenged.

It is this process of challenge, undermining, and revision that underpins the chapters of this volume, focused as they are on the subversive effects of the introduction, through translation, of foreign texts in a specific context, as well as on the subversion done to the texts from the source culture when these are transplanted into the target culture. Such manipulation need not be liberating either—some of the chapters describe what happens when texts are domesticated and forcefully adapted in a context of political oppression. This is one of the reasons for the reference to *discontents* in our title, as an almost inevitable result of the tense interplay between political, social, and aesthetic designs. In fact, discontent may turn out to be the outcome of translation in general, as translations have traditionally been the target of fluctuating levels of criticism of the “*traduttore, traditore*” variety.

The volume aims to continue work developed around the long-disputed notion of a literary canon. Much has been written about how canons are formed, their purposes, as well as the works and authors that they may tend to exclude. The still on-going controversy around Harold Bloom’s *The Western Canon* (1994) is a case in point, and several studies have been dedicated to the theme.⁴ On the side of translation studies, the relations with the concept of the canon and its concomitant ideologies have been one of the objects of descriptive translation studies, as well as of the study of cultural translation and of translation history,⁵ having also

⁴ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994). See, for example, Paul Lauter, *Canons and Contexts* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art’s Histories* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), to name but a few examples.

⁵ This can be seen from the following well-known titles published in English: Theo Hermans, ed., *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Lawrence Venuti, ed., *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Román Alvarez and Maria Carmen-Africa Vidal, eds., *Translation, Power, Subversion* (Clevedon, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1996); Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome Press 1997).

been fruitfully approached in the analysis of intralinguistic and intermedial versions (for instance, in the field of children and young adults' literature).

These chapters show the broad dissemination characteristic of the study of translation and adaptation, reaching from Brazil and Canada to Ireland, England, Latvia, and beyond, but also with a strong focus on translations and adaptations in Portugal and Spain. The temporal limits at stake are equally wide-ranging, from Restoration England to the Portuguese Salazar regime and the Soviet Union, down to the present day. All the chapters are, nevertheless, firmly focused on the effects of rewritings in the production and subversion of canons, while also taking into account the obvious power of canons in the choice and practice of translations and adaptations. This collection thus turns on the mutual subversion of canons by translations and of translations by canons, as well as on the cultural import of these reciprocal processes, namely in terms of the instrumental use of translation to further or challenge political ideologies, national identities and aesthetic standards. Finally, the chapters of this volume amply confirm—although such confirmation is, of course, no longer necessary—the standing of Translation Studies as a perfectly well-established discipline nowadays, with a variety of solid approaches based on considerable common ground and a wealth of empirical data.⁶

This volume is divided in four parts, each covering different dimensions and historical moments of the same processes. The first part, entitled “Laying down and Sending up the Canon,” focuses on the uses of translation from the late seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century, for purposes of forming, developing, and questioning not only generic categories but also cultural and social identities.

Charles Whitworth's chapter, “Boileau Englished: Beyond Translation—Imitation, Adaptation, Subversion in Late Seventeenth-Century England,” thus tells of how adaptation and parody, beyond strict translation, were used to settle literary feuds in the context of the Nine Years War. Literary translation was a thriving industry in Restoration England and French works in particular, both critical and purely literary (poetry, drama, prose), were the object of numerous translations, often by eminent figures in the English literary landscape. Among the most popular

⁶ For a brief account of the rise and current standing of Translation Studies, as well as of its accompanying rhetoric of legitimation, see Rui Carvalho Homem, *Poetry and Translation in Northern Ireland: Dislocations in Contemporary Writing* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 13-14.

of French authors was Nicolas Boileau Despréaux (1636-1711), whose satirical verse, critical writings and even patriotic celebratory odes attracted the attention of English translators and imitators, but also of parodists and satirists; the geo-political context of the Nine Years War afforded ample opportunities for the settling of accounts between literary partisans on either side. The examples considered in Whitworth's chapter stretch and exceed the limits of strict translation, offering further material for scholarly examination and raising questions about pre-defined generic categories. As the work of Boileau was imported into England, it was simultaneously "scrambled" and "made English," which is to say, adapted. Subversion is, therefore, strongly present in the first chapter of the collection, as it studies forms of sending up other texts in a charged political background.

This opening chapter is followed by "Novel and Translation in Spain during the Eighteenth Century and the Romantic Period: Revising the British Canon," Begoña Lasa Álvarez's probing study of what types of English novels found their way into Spain and are known to have influenced the local development of the genre during the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. Lasa points out that a significant proportion of these novels, more than might be expected, were actually written by women—according to some catalogues, they were translated in a similar or sometimes higher proportion than novels by men—and argues that the study of this response needs to go beyond the study of the reception of canonical novels. To determine the reasons underlying this fact, Lasa clarifies, on the one hand, the precise route followed by those texts until their final arrival in the Peninsula, given that the majority of them were second-hand translations from French. This factor frequently had substantial consequences, particularly due to the requirements of the *bon goût* and the method chiefly used by French translators, known as the *belles infidèles*. On the other hand, Spanish idiosyncrasies—literary tradition, religious bigotry or censorship—are shown to have obviously exerted a notable influence in this translemic process, favouring the acceptance or rejection of specific authors, specific texts, or certain parts of them.

Finally, Sergio Romanelli fascinatingly explores the translation work done by none other than the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II (1825-1891), whose letters, diaries, and translation manuscripts in various languages offer us a captivating glimpse into the intellectual networks established by Dom Pedro as well as into the cultural, social, and historical polysystem of nineteenth-century Imperial Brazil. By analysing these documents, Romanelli traces Dom Pedro's profile as a translator and his

approach to the texts he translated to determine what place translation, as an intellectual activity, occupied in his life, considered in its historical context. This is therefore not only a specific study of a particular corpus, but also a case study set in the cultural, social and historical polysystem of nineteenth-century Imperial Brazil, in which both translation and the Emperor played key roles in the formation of cultural and social identity. The Emperor's personal canon can hardly be ignored in the context of literature in Brazil and Romanelli's chapter offers us a further insight into the possible motivations for Dom Pedro's translations and contacts with European and American intellectual circles.

The second part of the volume focuses on negotiations of national and political identities through translation, in a timely reminder that, on the one hand, translations have proved vital in infusing literary and national identities with foreign input, thereby helping to create such identities, and that, on the other hand, they have been regularly altered for ideological purposes, not only with subversive intent, but very often as a means of complying with the literary canons set by oppressive states.

Andrejs Veisbergs' chapter, "The Latvian Translation Scene: Change of Canons, Shifts of Norms," begins this section with a sweeping panorama of the decisive contribution of translations to Latvian national identity, the literary polysystem, and the written language itself. In Veisbergs' account, translations can be seen to have always constituted the majority of literary and other texts in Latvian. Translation played a pivotal role in the beginnings of written Latvian from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and, for three hundred years, virtually all printed texts were translations. Translators formed, codified and modified written Latvian. Traversing the history of written Latvian, from the sixteenth century onwards, Veisbergs explains not only the influence of translations from German, English, and Russian, but also how shifts in canons resulted in shifts in norms, so that, for example, religious translation was characterized by a strict fidelity approach, whereas secular works tended to be freely adapted and domesticated, not only in the case of localisations of easy-reading, sentimental German stories, but also in more ambitious translations of Western classics. Translations during the period of Soviet occupation, now mostly done from Russian or via Russian, meant a shift back to a more rigid faithfulness, although, as one might expect, they were accompanied by ideologically motivated cuts and the insertion of editorial paratexts. Veisbergs concludes his chapter with a description of the scene of translation in Latvia nowadays, after the restoration of independence at the end of the twentieth century, in an account showing that translation remains a powerful force in the Latvian narrative polyphony.

In “Subversive Notes: a Politically Oriented Version of *Moby Dick* Produced during the Salazar Regime,” Gabriela Gândara Terenas focuses specifically on the insertion of translators’ footnotes in Melville’s *Moby Dick* during the years of the Salazar regime in Portugal. However, rather than subvert the discourse of the dictatorship, such footnotes, prepared by translators Alfredo Margarido and Daniel Gonçalves for the 1962 first complete version of *Moby Dick* in Portuguese, rather manipulated the novel in order to propagate the colonial ideology of the *Estado Novo* (1933-74) and the Portuguese Discoveries in an advantageous light, at the time of the celebrations held as a tribute to Henry the Navigator. Terenas’ chapter briefly surveys Portuguese translations of *Moby Dick* from 1954 to 2004 to stress how with these specific footnotes, which were entirely superfluous to the understanding of Melville’s text, the translators went out of their way to please an audience supportive of a nationalist narrative glorifying the Portuguese Discoveries and the regime’s colonial ideology. Terenas thus assesses how far the translators manipulated the message of the original text, either consciously or otherwise, in order for the final version to be well received by their target readership whilst complying with the prevailing ideological environment.

The last chapter of this part, Natalia Kaloh Vid’s “Translations of Robert Burns’ Poetry in the Soviet Union: Ideological Aspects,” also turns to the ideological manipulation of texts in translation. The main aim of the analysis is to show how an ideology enforced by the Soviet state as the official standard for art and literature exerted pressures on literary translation and how the literary text underwent a series of transformations or distortions depending on the stance and ideology of the translator. Translations of Robert Burns are shown to perfectly exemplify how a dominant ideology was brought to play in literary translation, as they underwent a series of ideologically influenced transformations in the Soviet cultural environment. In this chapter, Kaloh Vid analyses the curious case of translator Samuil Marshak, who managed to garner almost as much fame as Burns in the cultural context of the Soviet Union. Her chapter thus discusses several of Marshak’s translation techniques and strategies at a micro-stylistic level, namely in terms of lexical and grammar choices, in order to throw light on Marshak’s ideologically motivated transformations, which were meant to adapt Burns’ poetry to the official Soviet standards for art and literature.

The third part of the volume concentrates on contemporary forms of rethinking and rewriting the canon from within the Iberian Peninsula, as either the source or the target of such efforts. The three chapters in this part discuss adaptations and translations not only of canonical texts, but

also of texts whose canonical status is only more recently being established. As such, this part of the volume is particularly concerned with the roles of translation and adaptation today in shaping and questioning the canon, and the chapters contained here offer both theoretical discussions and illuminating case studies of the enduring contribution of versions of texts to a canon which must be understood as plural, shifting, and constantly subject to subversion.

In the first chapter of this part of the volume, “Adult Canonical Texts Adapted for Children: *Don Quixote*,” Beatriz M^a Rodríguez Rodríguez analyses the strategies and techniques used in adapting *Don Quixote* for English-speaking children. Rodríguez begins by noting that adaptations and translations of children’s books modify and consolidate the literary canon; they establish a common ground for intercultural communication, whereas they can also enhance the status of the source book. She points out that, though *Don Quixote* was obviously chosen for adaptation on account of its canonical status, its accessibility will prove impossible to many without the work of mediation and rewriting, since target texts must be engaging enough to introduce children to the novel, motivate them and maintain their interest once they become adults. In considering such adaptations, Rodríguez focuses on the choice of the most appealing episodes and on instances of simplification of complex passages, as well as on the way in which the protagonist is introduced, thus showing how the source text is manipulated in order to correspond to audience expectations, in the context of children’s and young adults’ literature.

In “Canon and the Case of *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, by Bram Stoker,” Jorge Almeida e Pinho also discusses the ways in which canonicity can be attributed to a translated text, by focusing on the case of the 2013 Portuguese translation of Bram Stoker’s *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. After an initial discussion of the concept of canon, in which Harold Bloom’s unavoidable though polemic *The Western Canon* (1994) is taken into account, Pinho sets Bram Stoker’s 1903 novel in its context, as well as in the context of Portuguese translations of Stoker’s work. In what Pinho points out is a version of the domestication and foreignisation discussion, he asks whether the acquisition of canonicity for a translated text derives from its close reproduction of the traits associated with the original text, or whether it is actually the result of the inscription of a dominant interpretation from the target culture in the foreign text. A final option remains: since translated works move and change according to the eras, marked by different and fashionable modes of expression, Pinho considers whether it is the original work’s canonicity that is simply projected onto

the translated version, as the case with *The Jewel of Seven Stars* seems to suggest.

In the final chapter of this section, “The Spanish Canon of English-Canadian Literature,” Pilar Somacarrera Iñigo also pursues the different perceptions of canonicity depending on geographical location, in her analysis of the changing place of English-Canadian writing in Spain, a presence which, in the original version and in translation, is a relatively recent phenomenon going back to the late 1980s. Focusing on a corpus which, though belatedly internationalised, has seen its growing canonicity attested by numerous recent awards, Somacarrera begins with the question of whether there is such a thing as a unified canon of English-Canadian writing and with attempts to open this canon to immigrant writers. This discussion introduces an exploration of the impact of Canadian writing in Spain, stimulated as it was by the infusion of institutional support from the Canadian government in the Spanish publishing and academic spheres. In order to do so, and drawing on notions from translation studies and comparative literature, she traces a comparative history of how Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Michael Ondaatje, and Rohinton Mistry started to be translated and reviewed in the Spanish literary system, which leads Somacarrera to conclude that, although Canadian literature has indeed achieved canonical status in Spain, it continues to occupy an inferior, albeit constantly shifting position, when compared with European literatures.

The last part of the volume is meant as a double epilogue, shedding a different light on the issues discussed throughout the preceding three parts of the book. Both chapters in this section focus, among other things, on translations of the later works of James Joyce, known for the daunting challenges they pose to translators everywhere. Indeed, both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, with their polyglot language, force us to stretch our understanding of what translation can be and inevitably place any endeavour at translating them under the sign of subversion.

Mick Greer, in “Marilyn into marilyn: Translation and Transformation,” adopts a more experimental approach and explores how the practice of literary translation and the comparison of translations can contribute to language learning in the classroom, beyond the “pragmatic” translation of texts with a highly specific, functional purpose. Greer narrates how, in the context of class work on Truman Capote’s *A Beautiful Child* (on Marilyn Monroe), he challenged his students to translate and compare translations of two very distinct texts. To begin with, the class discussed two translations into Portuguese, one by António Houaiss (1966) and the other by João Palma-Ferreira (1989), of the “Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the

Tailor” section from the end of the “Ithaca” chapter in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*; using the literary text itself as a possible translation model, the students then engaged in a translation into English of “Na Morte de Marilyn,” by the Portuguese poet Ruy Belo. The results of this work—in which students were divided into groups, with each being given a different section of the poem—helped raise the students’ awareness of meaning, ambiguity, and obscurity, but also of accuracy and clarity, in literary texts and, by extension, in language use in general. Greer’s chapter thus presents (sub)version in the making, as he explores what happens to texts whose canonicity is perhaps strengthened but also definitely put to the test through the practical work of translation.

Márcia Lemos, on the other hand, captivatingly explores the translatability or untranslatability of Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, possibly the most recalcitrant text one might encounter, both as reader and translator, in a chapter entitled “‘To Make Soundsense and Sensesound’: On the Challenges of Translating *Finnegans Wake*.” Its multilingualism and encyclopaedic tissue of references make any translation of the *Wake* simultaneously a losing game and an act of great creativity. As Lemos points out, Joyce’s last book can itself be seen as a mosaic of translations, which ultimately begs the question of whether translation is at all possible in a case such as this. As a means to probe into these problems, Lemos begins by focusing on issues raised by Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon’s *The Restored Finnegans Wake* (2012), namely the concepts of accident and mistake as applied to a book such as the *Wake*. After a short introduction to the field of translations of *Finnegans Wake*, Lemos then focuses on two translations of *Finnegans Wake*, namely Philippe Lavergne’s 1982 French version, and Manuel dos Santos Lourenço’s 1975 Portuguese version of the first paragraphs of the text, and discusses their respective translation strategies in a comparative approach that reveals the apparently inexhaustible potential for subversion to be found in *Finnegans Wake* and its rewritings.

This volume thus means to promote a broader and more complex grasp of the interplay between translation (and other forms of rewriting) and the ways in which canons are historically set up, transformed, and challenged. Versions are shown to subvert canonical formations, both undermining and replacing certain elements and even conceptual underpinnings, while also contributing to found canons of their own or establish alternative positions within existing formations. Nevertheless, this subversion proves

to be profoundly ambivalent, since it can be used as an intellectual weapon in geo-political conflicts or as a means of disseminating the ideology of oppressive regimes at the expense of the source text; it can also, importantly, serve to circulate and garner attention to marginalised texts. Discontent is therefore revealed to be a relational concept, depending on where one stands in the field of competing positions that is the canon.

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PART I

LAYING DOWN AND SENDING UP THE CANON

BOILEAU ENGLISHED:
BEYOND TRANSLATION—
IMITATION, ADAPTATION, SUBVERSION
IN LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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Moving the goalposts before the game begins should probably not be considered fair play. It may appear perverse to begin the first essay of this volume on literary translation by talking about some late seventeenth-century texts, one of which, the one with which I shall be mainly concerned, is not exactly, certainly not merely a translation, and the others of which, to be mentioned more briefly in closing, are clearly not translations in any of the usual senses of that elastic term, but are rather parodies or burlesques, satirical send-ups in any case. And one of those latter examples is not even in English, but in French, the language of the original, or source text. Clearly, none of the authors of the English pieces under consideration had the intention merely to render their French originals intelligible to non-French readers. Thus, several provisos need to be stated and parameters fixed at the beginning.

First, the texts I shall be dealing with are in verse. True verse-to-verse translation obviously imposes constraints upon the translator that are not imposed on translators of prose texts or prose paraphrasers of original works in verse. Furthermore, Sir William Soame and John Dryden, in their collaborative 1683 translation/adaptation/imitation or whatever it is (all of the above maybe) of Boileau's *Art poétique*, retain the rhymed couplets of the original (but reduce the French alexandrines to pentameters), while the Franco-Englishman Peter Motteux (1663-1718) follows exactly, line for line and stanza for stanza and in French, the form of Boileau's *Ode sur la prise de Namur*, in his *Parodie de l'Ode* (1695). In my third example, the anonymous author (generally agreed to be Matthew Prior) of *An English Ballad in Answer to Mr. Despréaux's Pindarique Ode ...* (1695) writes in English, but in cross-rhyme and in stanzas of varying lengths quite different from Boileau's regular ten-line stanzas. Yet the very existence of

his satirical ballad is entirely dependent, we might say parasitic, upon the French poem, although it can in no way be considered a translation or an imitation or an adaptation. Quite simply, if Boileau had not written his *Ode*, neither Motteux nor Prior could have written his piece. These last two pieces, parodies or send-ups of Boileau's *Namur* ode, will be touched on briefly at the end of the paper, as they take us quite far from anything that can be considered literary translation. They do however come to us from a period of intense interest in and translation and adaptation of French as well as classical models, and in particular of treatises on the arts of poetry and translation.¹ Just where such derivatives as the ones that concern us here may or may not be placed on the wide spectrum of literary translation/adaptation/imitation, is a question that might reasonably be reflected upon in the course of a volume devoted to "Translation, the Canon and its Discontents."

Nicolas Boileau Despréaux (1636-1711) had a vast and deep influence on English poets and critics of the Restoration, as a satirist but also as a neo-classical critic. Perhaps no other French authors except Molière and Corneille exercised such extensive influence on English literature and criticism in the latter half of the seventeenth century.² Such important English authors as Rochester, Etherege, Buckingham and Oldham, among

¹ In the years immediately around the date of the Soame-Dryden version of Boileau's *Art poétique*, several members of Dryden's circle produced essays or translations in a similar vein. The Earl of Roscommon and John Oldham published translations of Horace's *Ars Poetica* in 1680 and 1681 respectively. Dryden's long-time patron, the Earl of Musgrave, produced his *Essay upon Poetry* in 1682, and Roscommon's poetic *Essay on Translated Verse* appeared in 1684. Dryden commended Roscommon, in 75 lines of verse, on his "excellent Essay." What amounts to Dryden's own "essay" on translation is his preface to a miscellany of 1680, containing translations of Virgil, Theocritus, Lucretius and Horace. In the opening line, Dryden declares himself to be "troubled with the disease of translation." In 1684 appeared also the anonymous *The Whole Art of the Stage*, a translation with "some alterations" of the widely influential *La Pratique du Théâtre* (1657) by François Hédelin, Abbé d'Aubignac (1604-1676). As the anonymous English work is not well known and the translator's preface has some bearing on the subject of translation, an abbreviated text in modern spelling is appended to the present essay. The first sentence alludes to the incessant stream of translations from the French pouring from English presses.

² Dryden himself adapted Molière's *L'Etourdi* in *Sir Martin Mar-all* (1667). The most assiduous English Molièrian however was Dryden's nemesis, Thomas Shadwell, who admired the French dramatist because he was, in Shadwell's opinion, much like his model Ben Jonson in the genre of satirical comedy. Corneille is omnipresent if "off-stage" in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668; 1684).

others, translated his satires. His mock-epic, *Le Lutrin*, was widely translated and imitated. The earliest known translation of his *Art poétique* (1674) was the work of Sir William Soame, Bart., an otherwise unknown author (he does not figure in the *Dictionary of National Biography*), but a close friend of Dryden's. According to the publisher Jacob Tonson, who republished the work in 1708, Soame asked Dryden to overlook and revise his translation of the *Art poétique*. Dryden did so, extensively, and it was he who substituted English names and allusions for the French ones in Boileau's original, thus making it a truly English *Art of Poetry*.³ The revised work was published anonymously in 1683 as *The Art of Poetry, Written in French by The Sieur de Boileau, Made English*. In his reprint Tonson added to the title: "by Sir William Soame, Bart. And Revis'd and Alter'd, by Mr. John Dryden." So the work that has been included in editions of Dryden since the eighteenth century is in fact a collaborative one. Just how much of Soame's original translation remains is impossible to determine, in the absence of other works by him with which to compare the style, and as it was in any case thoroughly reworked by Dryden. The phrase "Made English" in the title has a double sense, in that the work of Soame and Dryden is both a rendering into English of a poem written in French, and a domestication, or localization of it by the changing of names, titles and events to English ones. So, translation, adaptation, imitation, appropriation, localization...? Version, subversion, or something else, a hybrid? We should keep in mind that Dryden was a prolific translator, of classical works—all of Virgil, large selections from Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Lucretius and Theocritus—, of Boccaccio, and of Middle English, notably several of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and other poems, though the latter may be seen rather as modernizations from Middle to Modern (*ie*, Augustan) English, rather than as translations proper; yet another shade of meaning of that elastic term.

The English text of *The Art of Poetry* is very nearly the same length as the French, 1093 lines to exactly 1100, the odd number of lines in the English being due to the frequent use of triplets (three successive rhyming lines instead of the normal two), a common practice in Augustan poetry, usually marked by brackets in printed texts to show that they were intentional. There are four Cantos to match the four *Chants* in the French,

³ Boileau's own work owes much to Horace's *Ars Poetica*, as Horace himself was indebted to both Neoptolemus of Parium and Aristotle. References throughout are to the texts in Nicolas Boileau, *Satires, Epîtres, Art poétique*, ed. Jean-Pierre Collinet, Gallimard Poésie (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 226-58; and to *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. James Kinsley, Oxford English Texts, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), I, 332-61.

and the lengths of the respective sections are very close to those of the original. Many lines are exact renditions of the French; a parallel-text edition would show this very well. The main differences come where the English version substitutes English analogues for the French originals or, more rarely, simply omits an irrelevant passage.⁴ Most of Dryden's substitutions are apt, a few less so. The only French author mentioned by name—twice—in the English poem (I.21, 101) is, oddly, Du Bartas, author of the great biblical epic, *La Semaine ou la Création du Monde* (1578), who is not mentioned at all by Boileau. Probably Dryden was thinking of the English translation of *La Semaine* by Joshua Sylvester (1608), and so considered it an English work. The first occurrence of the name is in place of Saint-Amant, author of a biblical epic in French; the second is in a gratuitous two-line insertion in the discussion of pastoral poetry. Both references to Du Bartas/Sylvester are disparaging.

Edmund Spenser replaces Clément Marot as a pastoralist in the brief history of poetry in the first Canto (I.117); however, Boileau's attribution to Marot of *ballades*, *triolet*s and *mascardes* is inaccurate. Earlier, Spenser is substituted for another minor French pastoralist, the dramatist and poet Honorat de Bueil, seigneur de Racan (I.18), virtually forgotten today. In fact, Boileau's thumbnail sketch of the history of French poetry is, well, sketchy, to say the least. For example, he seems to imply that there was nothing or no one of note before François Villon (fifteenth century), ignoring completely the great medieval traditions of Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes, Froissart, the authors of *Le Roman de la Rose* and the *Roman de Renart*, the *trouvères* and *troubadours*, and poet-composers such as Guillaume de Machaut and Eustache Deschamps. Dryden feebly substitutes the translator Edward Fairfax for Villon, on the strength of the former's translation of the late medieval romance *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or, The Recoverie of Jerusalem*, itself a rough translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. But Fairfax's work did not appear until 1600, more than a century after Villon and also after Spenser who is placed after Fairfax in Dryden's catalogue. It scarcely merits Dryden's relegation of it to "a Darker Age" (Dryden would seem to have in mind the older, medieval work), but nor does it seem reasonable to credit the obscure Fairfax alone with bringing order to the chaos of English verse: "By his just Rules restrain'd Poetic Rage" (I.116). Once again, as with Du Bartas/Sylvester, Dryden seems to appropriate a translation from French into the English canon—but Fairfax is approved as Sylvester is not, so in

⁴ For example, lines 105-8 in *Chant I*, where Boileau speaks of enjambment and hiatus. See A. F. B. Clark, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England (1660-1830)* (1925; repr. New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 128.

the latter case Dryden gave the name of the French author instead of his English translator: it was more politically correct to denigrate a Frenchman rather than an Englishman. Rather surprisingly, Dryden does not mention Chaucer here, despite his admiration for the medieval poet, as his several modernizations and paraphrases attest.⁵ Chaucer does get a mention later in Canto II, in the section on satire (II.395), where he replaces Mathurin Régnier (1573-1613), a satirical poet highly regarded at the time. Elsewhere, Dryden substitutes Waller for Malherbe, Flecknoe for Scarron, Duffett (author of *The Mock Tempest*) for an obscure author of burlesques, d'Assoucy, and, less probably, Davenant for Ronsard, of whom Boileau is surprisingly contemptuous. Elsewhere, Dryden substitutes Thomas Randolph for Ronsard, considering both as rustic pastoralists.

In all then, Dryden, while following his original closely in terms of structure, often translating more or less literally for long stretches, departs from it freely when it comes to citing examples. There are approximately twenty-five names of English poets and dramatists (and two architects) in the English poem, including allusions to titles whose authors are easily identifiable: *Hudibras* (Samuel Butler), *The Fox*, *The Alchemist* (both Ben Jonson). When Dryden is at his best, the English illustrations slip neatly and aptly into place. In the third Canto, when, echoing Boileau, he describes buffoonery in comedy, he deftly substitutes Jonson's *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* for Molière's *Fourberies de Scapin* and *Misanthrope*:

Dans ce sac ridicule où Scapin s'enveloppe,
Je ne reconnais plus l'auteur du Misanthrope. (III.399-400)

When in the *Fox* I see the Tortois hist,
I lose the Author of the *Alchymist*. (III.828-9)⁶

In addition, Dryden does not hesitate to omit allusions to specific French military victories, replacing them with generalized calls for poets to sing "our Monarch's praise."⁷ Invoking for this purpose, at the end of the

⁵ Dryden left versions of the Knight's Tale, the Wife of Bath's Tale, the Nun's Priest's Tale, and a paraphrase of the portrait of the Parson in the General Prologue, as well as a version of the anonymous fifteenth-century allegory, *The Flower and the Leaf*, long attributed to Chaucer.

⁶ The tortoise alludes to the incident in the subplot of *Volpone*, when the foolish English adventurer, Sir Politic Would-be, hides under a tortoise shell. In Molière's *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, the titular hero hides in a sack.

⁷ Boileau, in last-minute additions to his poem, cites victories by Louis XIV in 1673-74 at Maastricht, Dole, Salins and Besançon (IV.209-14). Dryden here just

poem, Spenser, Cowley, Denham, Waller—and himself, by name, as dramatist (“Let Dryden with new Rules our Stage refine”; IV.1056)—Dryden trumps Boileau’s invocation of Corneille, Racine, Bensserade and Segrais (IV.195-201). Rather surprisingly, Shakespeare’s name does not appear anywhere in Dryden’s adaptation. Nor do any of the Elizabethan poets except Spenser and the translator Fairfax, though the dramatists George Chapman and Thomas Randolph get cursory, negative mentions. Jonson is there of course, as playwright, not poet, and Chaucer who “in his old Stile, conserves a modern grace,” though he would have been happier had “the freedom of his Rhymes / Offended not the method of our Times” (II.396-8). This reservation no doubt accounts for Dryden’s renditions into modern verse of several of Chaucer’s works, rescuing the medieval poet from his “old Stile” as it were, as Pope would seek to do for Shakespeare when editing the dramatist’s works several decades later. In the digression on the sonnet in the larger section on the ode, there is no reference to any English sonneteer, not Shakespeare, or Sidney, or even Spenser. While Cowley, Denham and Waller among his contemporaries are singled out by Dryden for praise, Milton and Marvell, even the earlier Cavalier poets, the “sons of Ben”—Suckling, Carew, Lovelace, Herrick—among others are absent, while Davenant, Settle, Duffet, and Shadwell—all dramatists—are dismissed for diverse shortcomings.

Thus does Dryden “make English” the *Art of Poetry* of the famous Frenchman, substituting English names and works for French, while simply bypassing the chauvinistic praise of Louis XIV in the final Canto, replacing Louis with “our Monarch,” who remains unnamed. What began perhaps as a straightforward translation of Boileau’s verse treatise by Sir William Soame became in Dryden’s hands an adaptation *à l’anglaise*, an English *ars poetica*, but without reference to any previous treatises in English such as those by Gascoigne, Daniel, Campion, or Sidney, and, however derivative it may be *vis-à-vis* its French model, *The Art of Poetry* is certainly much more than a translation, but certainly less than a totally new and original work. It remains a masterpiece of its kind, whatever that “kind” may be.

In conclusion, I want to look more briefly at two works that have in common with each other and with *The Art of Poetry* a work by Boileau as source or occasion and stimulus. In 1692, during the Nine Years’ War, Louis XIV had taken the Spanish Netherlands town of Namur from the forces of the Grand Alliance, chiefly comprised of Holland, England,

regrets that there is no second Virgil to “Rehearse / Our Hero’s Glories” (IV.1058-9); “our Hero” being Charles II.

Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. Among the celebratory effusions was one by Boileau, a hyperbolic *Ode sur la Prise de Namur*. Three years later, William III, at the head of the Alliance army, retook the town that in the meantime had been strongly fortified by Louis's great military engineer, Maréchal de Vauban. It was now English poets and scribblers who poured out commendatory verses in celebration of the English-led victory over the detested French. Besides the parodies of Boileau by Motteux and Prior, of which a little more in a moment, I have found at least six such odes (there may be others), some by otherwise unknown persons, but two by no less distinguished authors than William Congreve and Joseph Addison. One is by a young gentleman named Charles Whitworth, protégé of the diplomat George Stepney whom he served as secretary. Stepney was, like Addison and Congreve, a member of the influential Whig Kit Cat club. Whitworth (1675-1725) would himself become a distinguished diplomat and would later be created Baron Whitworth of Galway by King George I.⁸

A Huguenot immigrant, Pierre de Motteux, who had taken refuge in England in 1685 when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, and anglicized his name to Peter, made a successful career as a journalist and translator. He produced translations of Rabelais, Cervantes and others, wrote several plays and opera *libretti*, and was a friend of most of the literary figures of his day, including Dryden. In 1695, instead of composing an ode of his own in celebration of the retaking of Namur by the English king, he produced a line-by-line parody-paraphrase, in French, of Boileau's 1693 *Ode*, which Motteux had printed in a parallel edition with Boileau's: *Ode sur la Prise de Namur* on the left, *Parodie de l'Ode de Boileau Despréaux sur la Prise de Namur* on the right. Fluent in his mother tongue of course, Motteux produced a quite brilliant parody, often taking the very line of Boileau's work and redirecting it: for example, the line "Tout brille en Lui, tout est Roy" in stanza 7 is lifted verbatim from Boileau, and simply applied to William instead of Louis.

Rather than quoting further from the piece, I shall refer briefly to Motteux's dedicatory epistle to "Monsieur Henley":⁹

⁸ *Albion Rediviva, in a Poem to His Majesty on his Happy Success* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1695), is Whitworth's only known attempt at poetry. His most important production, *An Account of Russia as it was in the Year 1710*, was published posthumously in 1758. Doubtless Stepney's links with Tonson via the Kit Kat Club facilitated the publication by Tonson of the young Whitworth's panegyric.

⁹ Doubtless Anthony Henley (1666/7-1711), politician, wit and minor poet who was also a patron of musicians and dramatists. He was a member of the Kit Cat Club, to which Addison, Steele, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Prior (for a time) and a

Je me souviens qu'ayant fait voir l'Ode de Mr. Despreaux à Messieurs Dryden & Wycherly [...] ces Messieurs, qui aussi bien que moy sont les admirateurs des premières oeuvres de Mr. Despreaux, eurent de la peine a concevoir que cette Ode fut de l'illustre auteur de l'Art Poétique. [...] Comme je pindarise en Despreaux, j'ai taché de conserver les plus durs endroits de son Ode ...

The disparagement of Boileau's *Ode* by Dryden and Wycherley seems to have been more on literary grounds than on political ones, as they and Motteux clearly admired the "illustrious author of the *Art poétique*." Though Boileau's *Ode* is Motteux's butt in his parody, these few lines in the dedication bear witness to the respect in which the Frenchman and his treatise on poetry were held on the other side of the Channel. What Motteux mocks in his send-up is Boileau's chauvinistic panegyric on the French king. "*Je pindarise en Despreaux*," that is, "I write in the style of Despreaux' [Boileau's] Pindaric ode."

My final example moves us even further away from translation proper than Motteux's parody has done. The occasion and the object of the satire however are the same: Boileau's *Namur* ode of 1693. The parody, published anonymously, but known to be by Matthew Prior, another Kit Cat and prominent politician and man of letters, has been judged one of the best of its kind in English (Clark, 22). It must of course be read, as Tonson published it, in parallel with the French ode: the derivative English piece cannot be understood or appreciated in isolation from its *raison d'être*. Unlike Motteux's parody, Prior's burlesque is in English, in stanzas of varying length (4, 8, or 12 lines) and in cross-rhymes rather than couplets. The first few lines will give the flavour of the whole. Boileau begins:

number of aristocratic Whig politicians also belonged. It is noteworthy that several of the English *Namur* odes were published by Tonson, a founder of the Kit Cats. These included those by Congreve, Addison, Whitworth and Thomas Yalden. Yalden, a minor poet and later Anglican clergyman, was a friend of Addison's and a member of the same Oxford college, Magdalen. The Kit Cat network was large and influential in the 1690s and early 1700s, anticipating the Whig political supremacy of the following decades. An anonymous pamphlet criticized some half-dozen of the *Namur* odes: *Reflections on the Poems made upon the siege and taking of Namur ... in a Letter to a Friend at Oxon* (London, 1696). There is no mention in it of Motteux's and Prior's parodies.

Quelle docte & sainte yvresse
 Aujourd'hui me fait la loy?
 Chastes Nymphes du Permesse,¹⁰
 N'est ce pas vous que je voy?

Prior's opening lines:

Was you not drunk, and did not know it,
 When you thought Phœbus gave you Law?
 Or was it not, good Brother Poet,
 The chaste Nymph *Maintenon* you saw?¹¹

Where Motteux wields an elegant French rapier, parrying Boileau's lines and reposting in kind, Prior swings an English quarterstaff, battering his opponent with a very blunt instrument. Both pieces are thus dependent upon Boileau's *Ode*, both turn it back upon its author. We may note that both pieces were published, in the same year, 1695, in parallel editions, alongside their source/occasion/provocation, Boileau's *Ode*. The reader could thus be in no doubt as to the target of their mockery. Neither is a translation by any stretch of that term, but I suggest that the genres to which they respectively belong, parodic paraphrase and outright burlesque, are in some sense both versions and subversions of the original. Wilful perversity too, no doubt.

¹⁰ In Greek mythology, a river associated with the Muses.

¹¹ Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon (1635-1719), the second wife of Louis XIV (though the marriage was never publicly or officially acknowledged), and granddaughter of the Huguenot poet Agrippa d'Aubigné. It was widely believed that she had not yielded to Louis's blandishments to become his mistress before their marriage. Although she was a convert to Catholicism, she was admired in England for her Protestant origins and her protests against the persecution visited upon French Protestants following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Appendix

The Whole Art of the Stage./ Containing not only the Rules of the Dramatic Art, but/ many curious Observations about it./ Which may be of great use to the Authors, Actors, and Spectators of Plays./ Together with much Critical Learning about the Stage and Plays of the Ancients./ Written in French by the command of/ Cardinal Richelieu./ By Monsieur Hedelin, Abbot of Aubignac, and now/ made English. London [...] 1684. [Spelling and punctuation modernized].

The Translator's Preface.

Some may wonder that this, being a work of such use, and replenished with such judicious remarks, as well as deep learning in the whole course of it, has hitherto escaped the pen of our translators out of a language that has almost tired our presses with continual productions. But the reason of that may be that it was published in a time when we were embroiled in civil wars here in England, and that having laid aside all those innocent theatrical representations, the whole kingdom was become the stage of real tragedies. So that till his Majesty's happy Restoration, with whom the Muses seemed to have been banished this Island, it could not be expected that a book of this nature could meet with any kind reception in the world. But by that time I suppose the impressions were all sold off, and it was to be met with nowhere but in the libraries of the curious. It was by communication from a person of that sort that the translator first had the thoughts of making it English, which he obtained leisure to do by an unhappy confinement to a retired life for his health's sake from more solid studies and business which his profession else involves him in. So, reader, thou hast here *The Whole Art of the Stage*, of which there needs little to be said, the book being its own commendation. As for the author, he was a person of a good family in Paris, and of exquisite learning in Antiquity, much cherished by Cardinal Richelieu, that great Mæcenas of ingenious men, and by him for his deserts made Abbot of Aubignac and designed Overseer or Superintendent-general of the theatres in France, if the project of restoring them to their ancient glory (of which you will see an abstract at the end of the book) had gone on, and not been interrupted by the Cardinal's death.

The translator has made some alterations in the author's method and order of his chapters, for the author having promiscuously placed much of the crabbed Antiquity learning among the other observations upon the dramatic art, and that being likely to disgust some readers, the translator has put it all in one book at the latter end, where those who love that critical learning may have it altogether, and the others who delight in a

smoother career of reasons and observations may go on in the first three parts without too strong an application in matters of some intricacy.

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