

D. G. Shatalov (Oxford, UK) INFERIORITY, EQUIPOLLENCE, AND SUPERIORITY IN METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF TRANSLATION

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Since evaluation is an integral part of conceptualization, the elements of the concept 'TRANSLATION' (such as the translator and the author, the source text and the target text, linguistic and textual elements) can be conceived of as inferior/equipollent/superior to each other. In the article, the author looks at how the hierarchical relations between the above-mentioned elements can be conceptualized metaphorically.

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*INFERIORITY, EQUIPOLLENCE, AND SUPERIORITY
IN METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF TRANSLATION*

The present article focuses on the relations of inferiority, equipollence, and superiority in the metaphorical conceptualizations of translation which were expressed in the English and French discourse on translation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Since evaluation is an integral part of conceptualization, the elements of the concept TRANSLATION (such as the translator and the author, the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), linguistic and textual elements) can be conceived of as inferior/equipollent/superior to each other. In this article, I will look at how the hierarchical relations between the above-mentioned elements can be conceptualized metaphorically.

1. The translator's inferiority/equipollence/superiority to the author

Translators' reflexion about the process of translation includes and is supplemented by their self-reflexion. The question *How to translate?* is often answered via the metaphors for the translator's status in relation to the author. The translator's inferiority/equipollence/superiority to the author and the author's superiority/equipollence/inferiority to the translator can be metaphorically understood as spatial, social, family, or sexual relations (*behind – ahead, below – above, master and his servant/slave, friends, lovers, contestants, father and his son, a teacher and his/her pupil, etc.*).

The translator's inferiority/equipollence/superiority to the author can be conceptualized via orientational metaphors. According to Tytler (1791), the translator should try to 'soar, if he can, beyond' the author by improving his/her style if it is not poetic¹. When the translator 'perceives, at any time, a diminution of his powers, when he sees a drooping wing, he must raise him [the author] on his own pinions'². On the other hand, via the metaphor INFERIORITY IS DOWN, translation is often understood as creeping. For example, Behn (1688) ar-

¹ Tytler, *ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION*, p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

gues that translators are ‘necessitated to servilely to creep after the sense of foreign Authors’¹. Dryden, in ‘THE LIFE OF LUCIAN’ (written in about 1696), contends that creeping after the author’s sense is an integral part of translation². However, in Dryden’s opinion, translators ‘are not to creep after the words of their author’³ As a metaphorical source for translation, creeping presupposes following the author/his sense/words, etc. Following is going after. That is why the metaphors of following and creeping may include the idea of the translator’s inferiority via INFERIORITY IS BEHIND and SUPERIORITY IS AHEAD. According to Pope (1715), the translator follows ‘modestly’ in the author’s footsteps⁴.

The translator’s inferiority is often understood via the metaphor TRANSLATOR IS A SERVANT/SLAVE, THE AUTHOR IS MASTER. Servants and slaves owe obedience to their master. They are expected to obey his will without question. In the metaphor of servitude, master’s will and orders are mapped onto some elements of the ST. Obeying master’s will and orders corresponds to preserving/recreating these elements in the TT. Therefore, translation can be seen as being obedient, and literal translation as being servile. Chapman, Denham, and Cowley denounce literal translation by using the metaphor LITERAL TRANSLATION IS SERVITUDE. Chapman (1629) calls literal translation ‘verbal servitude’,⁵ Denham (1648), ‘the labour’d births of slavish brains’,⁶ and Cowley (1656), ‘a vile and unworthy kinde of Servitude’⁷.

1 Aphra Behn, ‘THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY’, in THE HISTORY OF ORACLES, AND THE CHEATS OF THE PAGAN PRIESTS, by M. de Fontenelle, trans. by Aphra Behn (London : [n. pub.], 1688), sigs A2r – [A5v] (sigs A4r – A4v).

2 Dryden, ‘THE LIFE OF LUCIAN’, in OF DRAMATIC POESY, ii, 209 – 215 (214).

3 Ibid.

4 Pope, ‘Preface’ to the Iiad of Homer, in The Twickenham edition, vii, 3 – 25 (18).

5 George Chapman, ‘TO THE READER’, in A IUSTIFICATION OF A STRANGE ACTION OF NERO; In burying with a solemne fvnerrall, one of the cast hayres of his mistresse Poppæa. Also a iust reproofe of a Romane smell-feast, being the fifth satyre of Ivenall, by Juvenal (London : T. Harper, 1629), sigs [A3v – A4v] (sig. [A4r]), in EARLY ENGLISH BOOKS ONLINE <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>> [accessed 21 November 2008].

6 Denham, ‘TO SIR RICHARD FANSHAW’, in THE POETICAL WORKS OF SIR JOHN DENHAM, by John Denham, p. 80, (17).

7 Cowley, ‘THE PREFACE TO THE PINDARIQUE ODES’, in Abraham Cowley, pp. 18 – 20 (p. 19).

In their opinion, translation is not servitude. In 'AN ESSAY ON TRANSLATED VERSE' (1684), Roscommon uses the innovative metaphors THE TRANSLATOR IS THE AUTHOR'S FRIEND and THE TRANSLATOR IS THE AUTHOR:

*And chuse an Author as you chuse a Friend:
United by this Sympathetick Bond,
You grow Familiar, Intimate and Fond;
Your thoughts, your Words, your Stiles, your Souls agree,
No Longer his Interpreter, but He¹.*

According to Roscommon's conception, the translator is free to choose the author that he/she likes. Becoming the author means that the translator, as it were, by magic, will produce the same text which the author would produce if he/she could speak the TL. If translators cannot choose the texts they like, having to earn money, there cannot be any affinity between the author and the translator. In this case, TRANSLATION IS PROSTITUTION:

*I pity from my Soul Unhappy men,
Compell'd by want to Prostitute their Pen².*

Dryden shared Roscommon's idea that the author and the translator should be congenial to each other. However, in all other respects, Dryden's metaphorical conception of the relations between the translator and the author is diametrically opposite to Roscommon's. According to the metaphor THE TRANSLATOR IS THE AUTHOR'S SLAVE, used in Dryden's dedication prefixed to his translation of the AENEID (1697), the translator is seen as inferior to the author:

But slaves we are, and labour on another man's plantation; we dress the vineyard, but the wine is the owner's: if the soil be sometimes barren, then we are sure of being scourged: if it be beautiful, and our care succeeds, we are not thanked; for the proud reader will only say, the poor

¹ Dillon, earl of Roscommon, 'AN ESSAY ON TRANSLATED VERSE', in CRITICAL ESSAYS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, ed. by Spingarn, ii, 295 – 309 (300).

² Ibid., p. 305.

*drudge has done his duty. [...] He who invents is master of his thoughts and words [...] but the wretched translator has no such privilege*¹.

Via the metaphor RESULTS ARE PRODUCTS, the ST corresponds to the vineyard and the TT to the wine, which is considered to be the master's, i. e. the author's. The 'wine' can also be interpreted as the praise given to the author (and not to the translator). In Roscommon's conception, the translator, who is no longer the author's 'Interpreter but He', does not feel that he/she works on the author's 'plantation', i. e. the translator feels as though he/she wrote his/her own text. Even if the author will be singled out for the praise, the translator will be only too happy since the author is his/her best friend or alter ego. According to Dryden, 'He who invents is master of his thoughts and words [...] but the wretched translator has no such privilege'². By contrast, in Roscommon's view, the translator is also, metaphorically, master of his thoughts and words as he is, again metaphorically, the author of the text. His/her thoughts 'agree' with the author's, not because they must agree, but because it happens as if by magic. Thus, the translator's thoughts and words remain his/her own and, at the same time, coincide with the author's. However, it would be naive to think that all translators would always be able to identify themselves completely with the author. In this case, in Roscommon's view, the translator is no longer a friend but a slave:

*What I have instanced only in the best
Is in proportion true of All the rest.
Take pains the genuine Meaning to explore,
There Sweat, there Strain, tug the laborious Oar*³.

The translator is conceptualized as a galley slave by virtue of the metaphor TOIL IS SLAVERY. Although 'the best' translators may feel as though they are the author's friends or alter egos, the majority of those who translate remain, metaphorically, the author's slaves. Even for Roscommon himself, Horace remains his 'Master':

¹ Dryden, 'TO THE MOST HONOURABLE JOHN, LORD MARQUESS OF NORMANBY', in OF DRAMATIC POESY, ii, 223 - 258 (250 - 251).

² Ibid., p. 251.

³ Dillon, earl of Roscommon, 'AN ESSAY ON TRANSLATED VERSE', in CRITICAL ESSAYS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, ed. by Spingarn, ii, 295 - 309 (302).

*Degrading Prose explains his meaning ill,
And shews the Stuff, but not the Workman's skill;
I, who have serv'd him more than twenty years,
Scarce know my Master as he there appears*¹.

In the metaphor THE TRANSLATOR IS THE AUTHOR'S SERVANT, the translator's loyalty is conceived of as the servant's loyalty to his/her master. All in all, in Roscommon's conception of translation, the translator is not as inferior to the author as in Dryden's. He/she is loyal to the author, but he/she does not perceive himself/herself as a 'poor drudge', 'wretched', etc. Although sometimes the meaning of the original can be obscure, the translator, regardless of the difficulties, aspires to become the author's 'Friend'. Roscommon's conception gives hope that, at least, sometimes, translators' ability to identify themselves with their authors can liberate them from slavery.

As we have seen, there are two variants of the metaphor THE AUTHOR IS MASTER: THE AUTHOR IS MASTER OF HIS/HER THOUGHTS AND EXPRESSIONS (this metaphor presupposes that the author is free to generate whatever thoughts he/she wishes and to express them in whatever manner he/she likes) and THE AUTHOR IS THE TRANSLATOR'S MASTER. In the former metaphor, the author is master of his thoughts and expressions whereas the translator, who 'has nothing in his own power', is not². According to this approach, as Tytler (1791) puts it, 'it is not only requisite that the ideas and sentiments of the original author should be conveyed, but likewise his style and manner of writing'³. This approach, however, is considered by Tytler as one of two extreme views. According to the other one, the translator is free to use the expressions that (as he/she thinks) convey the author's thoughts best. For this approach, Tytler uses the metaphor THE TRANSLATOR IS MASTER OF THE AUTHOR'S THOUGHTS, which implies that the translator is allowed to communicate the author's thoughts in whatever expressions he/she likes:

¹ Ibid, p. 298.

² Batteux, 'PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION', trans. by Miller, in WESTERN TRANSLATION THEORY, ed. by Robinson, pp. 195 – 199 (p. 196).

³ Tytler, ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION, pp. 7 – 8.

*it has hence become a common opinion, that it is the duty of a translator to attend only to the sense and spirit of his original, to make himself perfectly master of his author's ideas, and to communicate them in those expressions which he judges to be best suited to convey them*¹.

This metaphor does not contradict Batteux's metaphor (1747 – 1748) THE AUTHOR IS MASTER OF HIS THOUGHTS AND EXPRESSIONS². The author, as it were, passes the mastery over his thoughts to the translator, who, becoming master of the author's thoughts, remains master of his own expressions. As master of the author's thoughts, he/she is allowed to 'improve and embellish'³.

A complex combination of love and servile respect, the relationships between fathers and sons can be mapped onto the relations between authors and translators. Preservation of the ST's elements can be viewed as paying respect to father. According to Dryden (1680), 'he [Ovid] sometimes cloy's his readers instead of satisfying them; and gives occasion to his translators, who dare not cover him, to blush at the nakedness of their father'⁴. In this case, the father's nakedness is mapped onto the drawbacks of the ST, which are preserved in translation.

Similarly to fathers, teachers should be obeyed, respected, and imitated. They can be seen as superior to students. Via Pope's metaphor THE AUTHOR IS A TEACHER (1715), translation is conceived of as following the teacher's example: "Tis a great Secret in Writing to know when to be plain, and when poetical and figurative; and it is what Homer will teach us if we will follow modestly in his Footsteps"⁵.

Passionate love, free from fearful reverence, can be regarded as prerequisite to successful translation. Developing Roscommon's metaphor

1 Ibid., p. 7.

2 'The author [...] is absolute master of his own thoughts and expressions' (Batteux, 'PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION', trans. by Miller, in WESTERN TRANSLATION THEORY, ed. by Robinson, pp. 195 – 199 (p. 196)). In the original: 'L'auteur [...] est maître absolu de ses pensées et de ses expressions' (Batteux, COURS DE BELLES-LETTRES, p. 293).

3 Tytler, ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION, p. 8.

4 Dryden, 'THE PREFACE TO OVID'S EPISTLES', in OF DRAMATIC POESY, i, 262 – 273 (266).

5 Pope, 'PREFACE' to the ILIAD of Homer, in The Twickenham edition, vii, 3 – 25 (18).

of friendship, Francklin, in his poem TRANSLATION (1753), argues that the author and the translator should be 'by secret sympathy combined', which is possible only if 'an author like a mistress warms'². Thus, the friendship between the author and the translator grows into love. The translator does not serve the author any longer (who, metaphorically, was perceived as master, even by Roscommon), but provides the author with his/her tender care:

*Unless an author like a mistress warms,
How shall we hide his faults, or taste his charms,
How all his modest, latent beauties find,
How trace each lovelier feature of the mind,
Soften each blemish, and each grace improve,
And treat him with the dignity of love?*³

If there is no true 'sympathy' between the author and the translator, the latter is conceived of not as a caring lover, but as a 'prostitute for pay'⁴. In this case, the author again becomes superior to the translator, who is a 'low wretch', 'tasteless', and 'blind'⁵.

The translator's inferiority/equipollence/superiority to the author can be conceptualized by virtue of the metaphor THE TRANSLATOR AND THE AUTHOR ARE CONTESTANTS. As Francklin (1753) argues, not all translators can compete with the author:

*Yet will they dare the pondrous lance to wield,
Yet will they strive to lift the seven-fold shield,
The rock of Ajax ev'ry child wou'd throw,
And ev'ry stripling bend Ulysses' bow*⁶.

According to Tytler (1791), the translator of poetry 'must maintain with him [the author] a perpetual contest of genius' and should aspire

1 Francklin, 'TRANSLATION; A POEM', in ENGLISH TRANSLATION THEORY 1650-1800, by T. R. Steiner, pp. 110 - 116 (p. 114).

2 Ibid., p. 113.

3 Ibid., pp. 113 - 114.

4 Ibid., p. 112.

5 Ibid.

6 Francklin, 'TRANSLATION; A POEM', in ENGLISH TRANSLATION THEORY 1650-1800, by T. R. Steiner, pp. 110 - 116 (p. 112).

to write better than the author, if this is possible. Tytler refers to Delille's statement that 'Il faut être quelquefois supérieur à son original, précisément parce qu'on lui est très-inférieur'¹, i. e. 'sometimes you must be superior to the original precisely because you are far inferior to it' [trans. by DS].

2. Inferior translation as violation of a norm

The translation can be conceptualized as inferior/equipollent/superior to the original. Inferior translation is often seen as violation of a norm, namely, a crime or a sin. Via the metaphor MISLEADING TRANSLATION IS COUNTERFEITING, Smith (1611) asks the rhetorical question whether making mistakes in translation is criminal:

*Many men's mouths have been opened a good while (and yet are not stopped) with speeches about the translation so long in hand, or rather perusals of translations made before: and ask what may be the reason, what the necessity of the employment. Hath the church been deceived, say they, all this while? Hath her sweet bread been mingled with leaven, her silver with dross, her wine with water, her milk with lime?*²

Using the metaphor TRANSLATION IS COMMITTING VENIAL SINS, Smith postulates that perfect translation is impossible: 'A man may be counted a virtuous man, though he have made many slips in his life'³. Since counterfeiting is done on purpose and 'slips' are made unintentionally, Smith replaces the former metaphor with the latter. To err is human; hence, translation cannot be absolutely immaculate.

Dryden's metaphors, as well as Smith's, imply that perfect translation is impossible. However, the conclusion which Dryden (1685, 1697) comes to is that translation is criminal:

¹ Tytler, ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION, p. 46.

² Smith, 'PREFACE TO THE AUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE BIBLE', in WESTERN TRANSLATION THEORY, ed. by Robinson, pp. 139 - 147 (p. 142).

³ Ibid., p. 143.

I have done him [Virgil] less injury than any of his former libelers [...]. What my jury may be, I know not; but 'tis good for a criminal to plead before a favourable judge¹.

I own that, endeavouring to turn his [Virgil's] Nisus and Euryalus as close as I was able, I have performed this episode too literally; that giving more scope to Mezentius and Lausus, that version, which has more of the majesty of Virgil, has less of his conciseness [...]. So that methinks I come like a malefactor, to make a speech upon the gallows, and to warn all other poets, by my sad example, from the sacrilege of translating Virgil².

In Dryden's opinion, translation may involve crime and sin because it is impossible to avoid distortion of the original. In comparison to Smith's conception of translation, in Dryden's conception, the translator feels his/her guilt (for making mistakes) more acutely.

3. Superiority/inferiority of textual and linguistic elements and aspects

The translator's inferiority/equipollence/superiority to the author can be seen as a reason for preserving/reproducing or not preserving/reproducing some elements of the ST. Similarly, superiority/inferiority of the ST's elements/aspects to other ST's elements/aspects can be regarded as a reason for preserving/reproducing or not preserving/reproducing them in translation. Furthermore, superiority/inferiority of the TL's elements to other TL's elements can be seen as a reason for retaining these elements in translation. Superiority of textual and linguistic elements and aspects is often conceptualized as sacredness. Preservation/reproduction of inferior textual and linguistic elements and aspects can be viewed as superstitious devotion. It appears that the concept of superstitious devotion was brought to the fore during the Reformation, when offerings to images were pro-

¹ Dryden, 'TO THE MOST HONOURABLE JOHN, LORD MARQUESS OF NORMANBY', in *OF DRAMATIC POESY*, ii, 223 – 258 (256 – 257).

² Dryden, 'PREFACE TO SYLVÆ', in *OF DRAMATIC POESY*, ii, 18 – 33 (23).

hibited and, moreover, images themselves were often burned¹. Similarly to words, images in churches were considered as signs. Because images only represented Saints, they could not be worshipped. According to the conduit metaphor, which shapes our understanding of linguistic communication, words are only vehicles of ideas/sense². Perhaps, that is why some translators believe that words cannot be superior to sense. Dryden (1700) expresses the latter idea by virtue of the metaphor WORDS ARE NOT SACRED ENTITIES:

But there are other judges who think that I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion: they suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language; and that it is less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it [...] When an ancient world, for its sound and significancy, deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. All beyond is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed³.

The new and genuine sanctity for Dryden (1680) is the author's sense: 'The sense of the author, generally, is to be sacred and inviolable'⁴. Though, later (1697) Dryden argues that 'it not so sacred as that one iota must not be added or diminished, on pain of anathema'⁵.

Dryden uses the metaphor INFERIOR IS NOT SACRED with reference to words. However, in d'Ablancourt's opinion, expressed in the preface to his translation of Lucian (1654), both words and thoughts of the author are not sacred. D'Ablancourt does not want to be like 'those who idolize every word and every thought of the Ancients'⁶ ('ceux qui

1 Christopher Haigh, ENGLISH REFORMATIONS: RELIGION, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY UNDER THE TUDORS (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 129.

2 Reddy, 'THE CONDUIT METAPHOR – A CASE OF FRAME CONFLICT IN OUR LANGUAGE ABOUT LANGUAGE', in METAPHOR AND THOUGHT, ed. by Ortony, pp. 284-324.

3 Dryden, 'PREFACE TO FABLES ANCIENT AND MODERN', in OF DRAMATIC POESY, ii, 269 – 294 (287 – 288).

4 Dryden, 'THE PREFACE TO OVID'S EPISTLES', in OF DRAMATIC POESY, i, 262 – 273 (272).

5 Dryden, 'TO THE MOST HONOURABLE JOHN, LORD MARQUESS OF NORMANBY', in OF DRAMATIC POESY, ii, 223 – 258 (250).

6 D'Ablancourt, 'PREFACE TO LUCIAN', trans. by Venuti, in THE TRANSLATION STUDIES READER, ed. by Venuti, pp. 33 – 37 (p.36).

sont idolâtre de toutes les paroles et de toutes les pensées des Anciens')¹.

Similarly to the elements of the ST, the elements of the TL can be regarded as superior/inferior to each other. In his preface to the AUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE BIBLE (1611), Smith informs the reader that the translators did not aspire to render the same word, occurring several times in the original, by one and the same English word². Smith uses the metaphor TRANSLATING THE SAME WORD IN THE ORIGINAL BY ONE AND THE SAME WORD IS A SUPERSTITION: 'we cannot follow a better pattern for elocution than God himself; therefore he using divers words in his holy writ, and indifferently for one thing in nature: we, if we will not be superstitious, may use the same liberty in our English versions out of the Hebrew and Greek'³. Thus, Smith dismisses as superstition the idea that some English words are sacred and should be used in translation instead of those which are not:

We might also be charged (by scoffers) with some unequal dealing towards a great number of good English words. For, as it is written of a certain great Philosopher, that he should say, that those logs were happy that were made images to be worshipped; for their fellows, as good as they, lay for blocks behind the fire⁴.

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1 D'Ablancourt, 'A Monsieur Conrart, Conseiller & Secrétaire du Roy', in *Lettres et préfaces critiques*, ed. by Zuber, pp. 177 – 189 (p. 187).

2 Smith, 'Preface to the Authorized Version of the Bible', in *Western translation theory*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 139 – 147 (pp. 146 – 147).

3 *Ibid.*, p. 147.

4 *Ibid.*

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