

LE NÈGRE RECONNAISSANT (1814): A TRANBLEMIC ANALYSIS OF MARIA EDGEWORTH'S *THE GRATEFUL NEGRO* INTO FRENCH *

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Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) was one of the most popular authors in pre-Victorian Britain. Gender studies have recently drawn attention to her *oeuvre* since she cultivated different genres and translations of her works into several languages proliferated on the Continent throughout the nineteenth century. My goal is to provide a translemic analysis of “Le nègre reconnaissant” (1814), a translation of one of the stories composing *Popular Tales* (1804) within the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and Itamar Even-Zohar’s theory of literary polysystems. After a contextualization of this author and the particular tale, we will concentrate on the main features of the target text before focusing on the changes and transformations with respect to the original.

Keywords: *Maria Edgeworth, translation studies, gender studies, British literature, Popular Tales.*

Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) fue una de las escritoras más populares en Gran Bretaña en el periodo previctoriano. En los últimos años, los estudios de género han prestado atención a su obra, ya que Edgeworth cultivó distintos géneros y las traducciones de sus obras a distintas lenguas proliferaron en el continente durante el siglo diecinueve. Mi objetivo es proporcionar un análisis translémico de “Le nègre reconnaissant” (1814), traducción de una de las historias que componen *Popular Tales* (1804) dentro del marco de los Estudios Descriptivos de Traducción (EDT) y de la teoría de los

polisistemas literarios de Itamar Even-Zohar. Después de una contextualización de esta autora y del cuento en particular, nos concentraremos en las características principales del texto meta antes de estudiar los cambios y transformaciones con respecto al original.

Palabras clave: *Maria Edgeworth, estudios de traducción, estudios de género, literatura británica, Popular Tales.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Interest in Maria Edgeworth's complex *oeuvre* has lately grown. Critics in the field of gender and cultural studies are turning their attention to productions like *Castle Rackrent* and the so-called Irish novels (*Ennui, The Absentee, Ormond*) (Kauffman and Fauske 2004; Nash 2006), which shows a revival in Edgeworth's reputation as a woman writer and as a witness of the changes taking place in Britain at the time of the Industrial Revolution. This paper concentrates on another field within Edgeworth Studies and is part of a larger project dealing with Edgeworth's reception on the Continent (Fernández 2012; 2013; 2014). We aim to analyze one of the French translations of Edgeworth's "The Grateful Negro", a story contained in her collection of *Popular Tales* (1804). For this purpose, our translemic study will take Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) as a point of departure. Itamar Even-Zohar understands that the polysystem includes literary and extraliterary systems and canonic and non canonic writings and regards literature in dynamic relationship with the social context. This scholar defines the literary system as "The network of relations that is hypothesized to obtain between a number of activities called literary, and consequently these activities themselves observed via that network" (1990: 28). Polysystems theory is particularly useful for our analysis due to the integration and interdependence of the elements comprising the literary system and Even-Zohar explains the nature of these elements:

Thus, a CONSUMER may "consume" a PRODUCT produced by a PRODUCER, but in order for

the “product” (such as “text”) to be generated, a common REPERTOIRE must exist, whose usability is determined by some INSTITUTION. A MARKET must exist where such a good can be transmitted (1990: 34).

2. MARIA EDGEWORTH AND *THE GRATEFUL NEGRO*

Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) will always be remembered for having inaugurated the regionalist novel, and, more specifically, the Big House novel with *Castle Rackrent* (1800). From the ideological point of view, Richard Lovell and his daughter were enlightened “whigs” and regarded education as an integrated project. Their works must be seen in the context of didactic literature, which was popular at the turn of the nineteenth century and is linked with the *market*, or the aggregated factors involved within the selling and buying of literary products and with the promotion of types of consumption (bookshops, book clubs and libraries, among others) (Even-Zohar 1990: 38). Richard Lovell was a member of the Protestant Anglo-Irish *élite* and he belonged to *The Lunar Society*, as well. Critics have attacked Maria’s dependence on her father, who envisioned their educational project as a “literary partnership” (Topliss 1994: 26) and participated in Maria’s works by giving her the main idea of a story, acting as her “proof reader”, or by writing the prefaces to her works. Maria was always grateful to him and Richard Lovell also guided her reading in economy, sociology and history, giving Maria an intellectual formation and ensuring her wide acquaintance with British and French literature. The most prolific woman writer in Britain, Edgeworth’s corpus ranges from the domestic novel (*Belinda* 1801, *Helen* 1834) to her Irish tales (*Ennui* 1809, *The Absentee* 1812) or pedagogic essays (*Practical Education* 1801, *Essays of Professional Education* 1809), and her works were rendered into many European languages in a short time (Colvin 1979: x, 289-90).

“The Grateful Negro” does not fit exactly the most conventional description of “tale”. This label is inspired in Jean François Marmontel’s *contes moraux* referring to a short comic story in which the lower classes usually appeared and which respected the “vraisemblance” (1818: 525). The narrative was published in the third

volume of the collection *Popular Tales* (1804) together with “Lame Jervas”, “The Will”, “The Limerick Gloves”, “Out of Debt, Out of Danger”, “The Lottery”, “Murad the Unlucky”, “The Manufacturers”, “The Contrast” and “Tomorrow”. All of them are considerably longer than previous children’s stories —*The Parent’s Assistant* (1796), for example— and are divided into several parts whose headings Richard Lovell attributed to the editor in the “Preface” that he prepared for his daughter. The target readers —or the *consumers*— of the stories are defined as middle-class young people “[...] who might be amused and instructed by books which were not professedly adapted to the classes that have been enumerated [nobility, clergy and gentleman of the learned professions]” (Edgeworth 1804, III: ii). He justifies the title “Popular Tales” (“they may be current beyond circles which are sometimes exclusively considered as polite” [Edgeworth 1804, III: iii]) and insists on the importance of education. For Maria’s father, it is very important that these narratives do not offend “against morality, tire by their sameness, or disgust by their imitation of other writers” (Edgeworth 1804, III: iv).

Even-Zohar defines the *repertoire* as the rules and materials governing the production and uses of texts (1990: 39). As for the *institution*, it includes critics and publishing houses (Even-Zohar 1990: 37) and it decides which texts deserve to be remembered by the community. In this case, Edgeworth was supported by important publications like *The Edinburg Review* and she always had a didactic aim in mind which was generally welcome.

The tale is about two Jamaican planters, Mr. Jefferies —bearing a name curiously resembling Thomas Jefferson—, who considers negroes as inferior and indolent, and Mr. Edwards, a kind master and supporter of emancipation. The former is calculating and indebted and has a cruel overseer named Durant who is very different from Abraham Bailey, Edwards’ humane overseer. When the story begins, Caesar, a Koromantyn negro belonging to Jefferies is going to be sold because his master has debts. Caesar’s partner, Clara, who is an Eboe negro, cries because they must part. Edwards talks with Jefferies to solve the problem and this gives rise to an interesting conversation about the necessity of slavery. The first viewpoint is that if negroes were hired as laborers, they would not work as hard as they do as slaves.

Jefferies states that the interests of the negroes are protected by the laws of the land and that they have as good a claim to their rights as the poorest slave on any of their plantations. The narrator explains that Koromantyns are frank and fearless while Eboes are soft and languishing. Edwards buys the slave couple and gives them ground and a cottage. Meanwhile, Jefferies' negroes plot against their master. Hector, one of Caesar's friends, heads the conspiracy. It does not matter how much Caesar tries to persuade Hector not to go ahead with their plans: Hector thinks that a white man is not a friend at the same time that he silently realizes that Caesar can frustrate his schemes.

Hector resorts to a powerful sorceress, Esther, a woman able to use magic to control Clara's will. The girl experiences some decay and at a certain moment she begs Caesar to obey Hector. However, Caesar does not hesitate and remains firm in his resolution. Then two negative events take place. First, Durant hints at the conspiracy and whips Caesar and three more negroes. Second, Hector's wife is unfairly punished. He gets angrier than ever and employs Esther to change Caesar's mind again. With Esther's help, Clara is thrown into a trance and Caesar finally gives up: he accepts the conspiracy. However, he runs away to Edwards' plantation and warns his master about what is going to happen. Hector tries to murder Caesar and hurts him in a fight. When Caesar recovers from his wound, he sees that Clara has woken up from her lethargy. The story ends with Durant being murdered by rebels and Jefferies losing a lot of money after the rebels attack on his property.

Edgeworth's story deals with a controversial issue on which the Edgeworths had taken sides. For George E. Boulukos, Edgeworth occupied a moderate position and remained ambiguous about the slave trade: slaves should accept their condition voluntarily and Caesar accepts his slavery by internalizing a paternalistic contract (1999: 13-4). Critics have seen parallels between the representation of the West Indies and the conditions in Ireland (Boulukos 1999: 21, note 23; O'Gallchoir 2003: x). The Edgeworths themselves published a review of John Carr's *The Stranger in Ireland* (1807) remarking that "the arguments in favour of the abolition of the slave-trade are not more clear, than those in favour of Catholic emancipation" (qtd. Butler 1992: 341). Apart from Adam Smith's *The Wealth of the Nations* (1776), "The

Grateful Negro” is inspired in Kotzebue’s drama and in Bryan Edwards’ *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1793).ⁱ Besides, in 1773 Edgeworth’s friend, Thomas Day had published a poem entitled “The Dying Negro”, Anna Barbauld was the author of “Epistle to William Wilberforce” (1791) and Ann Yearsley, Hannah More and Helen Maria Williams had similarly addressed the theme (O’Gallchoir 2003: X). The story is also connected with previous works by Edgeworth dealing with slavery and the idea of subjection: “Whim for Whim” (1798) and *Belinda* (1801).

3. LE NÈGRE RECONNAISSANT

In our analysis, we have to consider Edgeworth a respected *producer*. On the Continent, she rivalled Mme. de Staël, and she travelled to France and Switzerland to meet Abbé Morelle and Étienne Dumont. Edgeworth’s popularity reached Switzerland and France very quickly thanks to the translations of the Genevan scholars, March-Auguste and Charles Pictet in *Bibliothèque Britannique* and Morellet explained: “À Paris on lit votre livre sur l’éducation —à Genève on l’avale— à Paris on admire vos principes —à Genève on les suit” (Butler, 1972: 190).

The French translation appeared in the first volume of *Conseils à mon fils* with “Les deux familles” (“The Contrast”). Volume two contains “La chaumière de Rosanna” (“Rosanna”), magistrate Joseph Moser’s “Le turban” and Amelia Opie’s “Edgar and Alfred”. The latter had become very popular after the publication of *Adeline Mowbray* (1804). *Conseils à mon fils* is advertised as a “traduction libre de l’anglais de Théodore-Pierre Bertin” and contains twelve pictures. Caught in the debate between adaptation or fidelity to the original, prefaces became the space for translators to justify themselves. Here the “Avertissement” at the beginning introduces the stories and the idea behind each one. The narratives in the French work aim to make an unforgettable impression on parents, who are curiously the target readers or the *consumers*. In “Le nègre reconnaissant”, the goal is to “[peindre] d’une manière dramatique, et par conséquent propre à inspirer le plus vif intérêt, les dangers de la cruauté et de la superstition” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 10) and *Conseils à mon fils* is defined

as “une production remplie d’avis utiles à la jeunesse” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 11). The other female author, Opie, “se montre ici rivale de Maria Edgeworth, et dont le talent a plus d’un rapport avec celui de cette femme célèbre” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 11). It is also explained why the title “Contes populaires” was not chosen, although the stories come from *Popular Tales*: “ce titre n’eût pas été applicable à tous ceux qui le composent” (Edgeworth 1834, I: 11).

Théodore-Pierre Bertin (1751–1819) is primarily remembered as the person responsible for adapting Samuel Taylor’s shorthand to the French language and introducing modern shorthand to France. Bertin taught English before travelling to London to work as a translator, and, on his return to Paris in 1791, rendered into French Taylor’s book *An essay intended to establish a standard for a universal system of Stenography*, publishing it under the title *Système universel et complet de Sténographie ou Manière abrégée d’écrire applicable à tous les idiomes* (1792). His book went into four editions (Rosenfeld 2001: 200), and the French National Convention gave him an annual grant to continue this work until the establishment of the Consulate. Under the Restoration, he established a stenographic service for the French Parliament and took a government post in the administration of business licenses (*Régie des Droits Réunis*). In 1817, he had become stenographer for the conservative journal *Le Moniteur Universel*. Bertin published one version of Thomas Day’s *Ami des enfans* (1827), apart from translating other books by Edgeworth (*Choix de nouveaux contes moraux offerts à la jeunesse* [1813]) (Colvin 1979: 289-90). He also wrote *Nouvelle Grammaire française-anglaise* (1817) and fifty works on various subjects, such as *Satyres d’Young et autres ouvrages anglaises* (1787), *Encyclopédie comique ou recueil anglais* (1802) or *Le Neuton de la jeunesse* (1804). As the writer Louis Gabriel Michaud points out, “Les traductions de Bertin sont faites pour la plus grande partie avec beaucoup de négligence et d’inexactitude” (1816: 320).ⁱⁱ

The editor, Jean-Gabriel Dentu, was a well-respected Parisian intellectual who resisted Napoleon’s cultural reform. Carla Hesse argues that Dentu had taken advantage of the 1789 declaration of freedom of the press to set up his own business and he later dealt with all kinds of genres. A *nouveau riche*, Dentu soon adjusted to the new selection criteria of the *regime*, though the Government was always

suspicious of his activities (1991: 246). He published *Lettres historiques, politiques, philosophiques et particulières de Henri Saint-John, lord vicomte Bolingbroke* (1808) and *Ossian, fils de Fingal, barde du 3^e siècle* (1810) or *Histoire de la guerre de l'indépendance des Etats-Unis d'Amérique* (1812-1813) by Abbé Galiani. Dentu offered a library of foreign authors with translations of the best German and English writers, for example, Charles-Louis de Sevelinges's translation of Goethe's *Werther* (1825) and Louis-Mathurin Moreau-Christophe's translation of Lawrence Sterne's *Voyage sentimental de Sterne* (1828). Due to his ideology, Dentu was imprisoned without a trial and was liberated after the Bourbons' return. An ardent royalist, he printed practically all legitimistic pamphlets. In 1819, he founded with Alphonse Martainville *Le Drapeau blanc*, an independent monarchic publication where Félicité Robert de Lamennais and Charles Nodier also collaborated.

In this case, both the *institution* and the *repertoire* are related to political upheavals and censorship in France at that time. In 1794, the First Republic (Convention) voted for the abolition of slavery in all French colonies: all men, irrespective of colour, living in the colonies were French citizens and would enjoy all the rights provided by the Constitution. Later on, in 1802, Napoleon re-established colonial slavery and the slave trade and denied rights to free blacks. Censorship prevented most abolitionist writings, and even publications on the colonies in general, from 1802 until 1817.ⁱⁱⁱ As the scholar Lawrence C. Jennings argues, after Napoleon's defeat in 1814, British abolitionists were isolated and accused of being allies of France (2000: 4-5; Denby 2006: 142) until slavery was definitively abolished in 1848 by the Second Republic.

Conseils à mon fils is subtitled "free translation", another way to refer to *les belles infidèles*, the French tradition of free dynamic translation aiming to provide target texts which are pleasant to read. This policy, which had already been adopted by Nicolas Perrot D'Ablancourt, meant that texts should have clarity, concision and elegance while fidelity to the source text was secondary. Obviously, Edgeworth's productions soon entered the French *market*, which was eager to incorporate materials from Great Britain. According to Wilhem Graëber, Anglomania was very strong in France in the eighteenth century and the very fact of translating implied a critique against

classicism. Despite this circumstance, a translator was not “free”: “la critique française leur demandaient des comptes et les obligeait à faire une selection de façon à ce que les norms du pays restent inviolées” (Graëber 1996: 307; see also McMurrin 2010: 104-11).

Bertin does not significantly alter the paratext. He includes all the footnotes in the original, except the note about Kotzebue’s work (Edgeworth 1804, III: 194), and adds a temporarily revealing footnote: “C’est en 1802 que miss Edgeworth écrivait” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 262). Regarding proper names, there is an adaptation to the target language, so Mr. Edwards becomes “M. Edouards” and “Mistriss Jefféries” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 292) corresponds with “Mrs. Jefferies” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 228). The former is referred to as “ce colon” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 252); “colons” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 290) is translated as “West Indians” (Edgeworth 1804: 413), and “West Indian planter” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 202) is more vividly rendered as “colon des Indes occidentales” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 260). An English name is kept (“Abraham Bailey” [Edgeworth 1814, I: 253]) and a metonymy is used, so “England” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 229) is turned into “Grande Bretagne” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 293). Some cultural terms are difficult to translate since there is no target language equivalent, so a calque is preferred and “sheriff” turns into “shérif”. This is not systematically applied: we find some irregularities, like “brandy” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 203) translated as “eau-de-vie” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 262). The translation retains both the measurements and the coins of the original: “cinquante mille livres sterling” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 307) corresponds with “fifty thousand pounds” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 239). Either due to the translator’s carelessness or to the printing process, the text contains some typographical mistakes. “Derval” appears instead of “Durant” and “Bermingham” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 260), as well as a change in the order of elements: “for indigo, and rum, and sugar, we must have” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 202) becomes in French “on a besoin de sucre, de rum et d’indigo” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 260), and “Look again!” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 234) is translated as “Regarde à ta droite” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 299).

One of the most enigmatic characters in the tale is Esther. Her skill in poisonous herbs and her knowledge of venomous reptiles, earned her a high reputation amongst the negroes and “worked their

imagination to that pitch and purpose she pleased” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 216-7). In English she is always referred to as “the sorceress”, but, Bertin embellishes his text by adding a good deal of synonyms: “sorcière” appears together with “nécromancienne” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 285); “pythonisse” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 296) and “magicienne” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 297), and the insult “The hag” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 232) is rendered as “la vieille mégère” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 298).

Bertin’s translation introduces some plot changes, so the resulting *product* turns out to be something quite different to that in the source text. When Edwards and his family go to enjoy the negro festival (Edgeworth 1804, III: 231), the French text simply says “il sortit” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 296). There are more important details affecting the narrative: in French, Mr. Edwards offers to purchase Caesar (Edgeworth 1814, I: 264) while in English, her refers to both Caesar and Clara (Edgeworth 1804, III: 264). Also, the meaning in one incident is entirely changed: Mrs. Jefferies receives an expensive dress from London and her nail is torn as the lady is taking it out from a chest (Edgeworth 1804, III: 229). The anecdote is reduced to “Une négresse, en tirant une des robes de cette caisse, en laissa accrocher par un clou une des manches, qui fut déchirée depuis le bas jusqu’en haut” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 293-4). Finally, instead of “the conch” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 223), “la trompe” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 286) is chosen. The target reader does not have the same information as the English reader at a more important level. The fact that the characters are slaves carried from Africa disappears:

These friends were bound to each other by the strongest ties. Their slavery and their sufferings began in the same hour: they were both brought from their own country in the same ship. This circumstance alone forms, amongst the negroes, a bond of connexion not easily to be dissolved (Edgeworth 1804, III: 206).

Tous ses complices étaient unis entr’eux par les liens les plus forts, leur esclavage et leurs souffrances, qui forment parmi les nègres un noeud indissoluble; mais l’amitié de César et d’Hector avait commencé

même avant qu'ils eussent été unis par la sympathie du malheur (Edgeworth 1814, I: 268-9).

The ending of the long note about Koromantyn superstitions is transformed: “tous les nègres qui lui restaient reprirent leur vigueur et recouvrèrent entièrement la santé. La magicienne en avait fait périr plus de cent” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 280) corresponds with “his negroes seemed all to be animated with new spirits; *and the malady spread no farther among them. The total of his losses, in the course of about fifteen years preceding the discovery, and imputable solely to the Obeak practice, he estimates, at least, at one hundred negroes*” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 218).

In the French version, additions have two main functions. On the one hand, they emphasize characterological features, so bad characters are rendered in worse colours than in the original English. Mr. Jefferies, for instance, is portrayed as cruel and a hedonist: “Mr. Jefferies considered the negroes as an inferior species, incapable of gratitude, disposed to treachery, and to be roused from their natural indolence only by force: he treated his slaves, or rather suffered his overseer to treat them, with the greatest severity” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 193) is rendered as “M. Jefféries, *homme uniquement occupé de ses plaisirs, et peu accoutumé à méditer*, envisageait les nègres comme une espèce d'hommes inférieurs, peu capables de reconnaissance, enclins à la trahison, et qu'on ne pouvait tirer de leur indolence naturelle que par la force” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 250, my italics).

On the other hand, additions are also related to the desire to present a sentimental narrative. This is in accordance with the lack of rigid conventions making some genres like the novel particularly suited for representing marginal figures associated with the repressed and the weak (Festa 2006: 9). “Tears which no torture could have extorted! Gratitude swelled in his bosom and he longed to be alone, that he might freely yield to his emotions” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 206-7) is transformed into: “ses yeux se remplirent de larmes, *de larmes que n'eussent pu arracher les plus cruelles tortures*. La reconnaissance gonfla son coeur, et il n'aspira qu'à être seul avec Clara, pour s'abandonner plus librement à sa sensibilité” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 266-7). Another example can be seen when the narrator explains what happens when

a slave prospers: “[...] perhaps [he is] sent to terminate his miserable existence in the mines of Mexico: excluded for ever from the light of heaven! and all this without any crime or imprudence on his part, real or pretended (Edgeworth 1804, III: 197). French readers find an addition: “[...] et quelquefois transporté dans les mines du Mexique pour y terminer une existence malheureuse, et cela sans aucun crime de sa part. *Il est puni parce que son maître est malheureux*” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 253, my italics).

Suppressions are particularly revealing. Theatrical features, like asides, disappear: “Caesar now, for the first time, looked up, and fixing his eyes upon Mr. Edwards for a moment, *advanced with an intrepid rather than an imploring countenance*, and said, ‘Will you be my master?’ (Edgeworth 1804, III: 200, my italics)” becomes “César alors, pour la première fois, leva les yeux de terre, et regardant M. Edouards: Veuillez être mon maître, lui dit-il” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 257-8). Most suppressions are related to political language:

“Oh, you can’t oblige me more! I love frankness of all things. To tell you the truth, I have heard complaints of Durant’s severity; but I make it a principle to turn a deaf ear to them, for I know nothing can be done with these fellows without it. You are partial to negroes; but even you must allow they are a race of beings naturally inferior to us. *You may in vain think of managing a black as you would a white*. Do what you please for a negro, he will cheat you the first opportunity he has. You know what their maxim is: ‘God gives black men what white men forget’” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 204, my italics).

—“Oh! vous ne pouvez pas me faire plus de plaisir; j’aime beaucoup votre franchise. A dire le vrai, j’ai souvent entendu faire des plaintes de la sévérité de Durval, mais je me suis fait un principe de ne pas les écouter; car, sans cette sévérité, on ne pourrait rien faire des nègres. Vous parlez en faveur de ces esclaves; mais vous n’en devez pas moins convenir que c’est une race inférieur à la nôtre. Traitez un nègre avec douceur, à la première occasion il vous volera. Vous savez quelle est

leur maxime: *Dieu donne aux noirs ce que les blancs oublient*"
(Edgeworth 1814, I: 263-4).

Caesar respects Mr. Edwards and is unmoved by Hector's speech and anger. Despite Caesar's efforts to persuade Hector, the latter is determined to go ahead. His inflamed rhetoric disappears in French, so "Why do you linger here, Caesar? Why do you hesitate? *Hasten this moment to your master; claim your reward, for delivering into his power hundreds of your countrymen!* Why do you hesitate? Away! The coward's friendship can be of use to none. Who can value his gratitude? Who can fear his revenge" (Edgeworth 1804, III: 213, my italics) becomes "Pourquoi t'arrêter ici avec moi, C'esar? Pourquoi hésiter un seul instant? Fuis loin de moi; l'amitié d'un lâche n'est utile à personne. Qui peut mettre un prix à ses services? qui peut redouter sa vengeance?" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 274-5). In French, violence is mitigated. *The Annual Review and History of Literature* attacked "The Grateful Negro" precisely because it confounded and blunted the moral sense. They condemned Caesar's reaction when he betrays his friends and country into the hands of their oppressors (1805: 461-2): "Caesar, in a transport of rage, seized her by the throat: *but his fury was soon checked*" (Edgeworth 1804, III: 233) corresponds with "César, dans un transport de rage, la saisit à la gorge" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 298).

In consonance with *les belles infidèles* and the *bon goût*, the translator resorts to paraphrases: "Hector and three other negroes were lashed unmercifully; but no confessions could be extorted" (Edgeworth 1804, III: 226) is translated as "Hector et trois autres de ses camarades furent traités avec la plus grande inhumanité; mais aucun avec ne sortit de leur bouche" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 290). The same happens with Esther's blackmail to Caesar: "Wretch!" cried she "you have defied my power: behold its victim!" (Edgeworth 1804, III: 233) which is rendered as "Tu as douté de ma puissance, lui dit-elle; vois ma victime!" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 298). "Fiend" (Edgeworth 1804, III: 233) referring to Esther is transformed into "monstre" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 298). Similarly, "Poor little devil" (Edgeworth 1804, III: 227) becomes "Le pauvre petit" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 291). Violent language and scenes are totally changed: "Why did you waken me from my dream? It was delightful! *The whites were weltering in their*

blood! But, silence! We may be overheard!” (Edgeworth 1804, III: 210-1, my italics) becomes ““Pourquoi m’as-tu tiré de mon songe? il faisait mes délices, il enivrait de joie mon ame; mais silence! on pourrait nous entendre”” (Edgeworth 1814, I:271).

4. CONCLUSION

“The Grateful Negro” is one of the few stories written by Edgeworth in which slavery is directly discussed. Our examination has taken into account the elements in Even-Zohar’s theory and shows that Bertin is quite respectful of the source text, especially compared with other translations published in France at that time and reproducing *les belles infidèles* tradition. His work appeared in a collection addressed to parents. It is quite conservative in that it does not manipulate the plot or original paratext and the exotic setting in Jamaica is preserved. Despite this conservative tendency, the text reveals its filiation with the target polysystem, so proper names are adapted into French, calques implying phonetic adaptation turn out the best alternative to cultural words in English and synonyms are used to avoid repetition. The translator also eliminates some details which might shock French readers. These include the purchase of black slaves or the excerpt about their journey from Africa. Political language and violence are likewise suppressed: Mr. Jefferies’s view of the negroes, his inflamed speech and the images referring to war and revenge are absent from the French text.

Superstition and ancestral beliefs are avoided and substituted by a more moderate, enlightened tone. Some terms about cruel punishments and insults to women are paraphrased and, whenever possible, a neutral equivalent is preferred. The narrative voice also reinforces the Manichean tendency to render characters as stereotypes, which is not respectful to Edgeworths’ ideas and affects the characterization of Mr. Jefferies.

Various additions control the reader’s response to the text as a sentimental narrative. This happens when Caesar praises Mr. Edwards’s generosity for giving him some provision-ground. In practice, the translated text still appears subordinated to the linguistic

and stylistic requirements of French classical tastes, that is, to the readers' demands.

NOTES

- ¹ It is precisely from Edwards that the author takes details to characterize Caesar and Clara, so Koromantyn negroes have “[...] a firmness of body in mind, which modern ideas of superiority would denominate ferociousness [...] They encounter danger and death without seeming to think. They have constitutions fitted for the severest labour, and from custom appear not averse to employment” (1798: 152) while the Eboes—who are also called Mocoos and are the natives of Benin—are “universally sickly”, very superstitious and less valuable to a master: “when in danger of hardship, or severity of punishment, they prefer a voluntary death to enduring it” (Edwards 1798: 158-9).
- ² Edgeworth’s translator wrote a political book, *Le cri d’indignation ou l’ami des Bourbons* (1814), where he defended the monarchy and stated:
- A ces différents titres, se joint la perseverance avec laquelle je me suis refusé pendant les cours de nos revolutions à tout éloge des hommes et des choses, et devorais malgré moi en silence le silence que j’éprouvais de vivre sous un gouvernement don’t je ne cessé de desirer la fin, et de la prédire à mes amis [...] Qui se dit l’ami des Bourbons se déclare nécessairement l’ennemi juré de Bonaparte, d’un homme dont il ne faut pas aujourd’hui laisser ignorer un seul crime (Bertin 1814: III-IV).
- ³ Sympathy for blacks decreased. However, in 1802-3, Pierre Victor Malouet and Bory de Saint-Venant wrote that slavery was required to force blacks to work and to maintain the security of the colonial whites. François-René de Chateaubriand and others defended the reestablishment of slavery and the slave trade while attacking the principles of the Enlightenment. Some of those who were pro-blacks stressed the unity of the human race and criticized the slave traffic, like Marquis de Lafayette, Benjamin Constant and Baron Auguste de Staël-Holstein.

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