

## A TRANSLMIC ANALYSIS OF MARIA EDGEWORTH'S *L'ABSENT OU LA FAMILLE IRLANDAISE À LONDRES* (1814)<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT.** *After the publication of Castle Rackrent (1800), Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) became one of the most famous nineteenth-century women writers in Great Britain, and her oeuvre was quickly translated on the Continent. This article analyzes the French translation of Edgeworth's Irish tale The Absentee (1812) within the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). For that purpose, both the source and the target text will be contextualized following Itamar Even-Zohar's ideas on the literary system which is understood as a network of relations between elements depending on each other. As will be shown, the text prepared for the French-speaking readers greatly departs from the original text published in Great Britain, a fact which should be considered by any research on Edgeworth's reception in Europe.*

*Keywords:* Translation, Maria Edgeworth, Ireland, cultural studies, women's literature, British literature.

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## UN ANÁLISIS TRANSLÉMICO DE *L'ABSENT OU LA FAMILLE IRLANDAISE À LONDRES (1814)* DE MARIA EDGEWORTH

**RESUMEN.** *Tras la publicación de Castle Rackrent (1800), Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) se convirtió en una de las escritoras británicas más famosas y su obra fue rápidamente traducida en el continente. Este artículo analiza la traducción francesa de su relato irlandés The Absentee (1812) dentro del marco de los Estudios Descriptivos de Traducción (EDT). Con este propósito, se contextualizará el texto fuente y meta siguiendo las ideas de Itamar Even-Zohar sobre el sistema literario entendido como una red de relaciones entre elementos interdependientes. Como se demostrará, el texto preparado para los lectores francófonos difiere considerablemente del texto original publicado en Gran Bretaña, hecho que se debería considerar en cualquier investigación sobre la recepción de Edgeworth en Europa.*

*Palabras clave:* Traducción, Maria Edgeworth, Irlanda, estudios culturales, literatura femenina, literatura británica.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY: DESCRIPTIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES (DTS)

This paper aims to analyze the translation into French of one of Maria Edgeworth's most famous works by means of a translemic analysis. This new field within Edgeworth Studies takes as a point of departure Edgeworth's popularity on the Continent which has already been highlighted by Christina Colvin (1979: 289-290) and Marilyn Butler (1999: vii, xxxii), and it follows the line of previous research on Edgeworth's reception in Europe (Fernández 2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2012; 2013a). After a contextualization of the authoress and her age, both the source (ST) and target text (TT) will be examined within the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), and more specifically Even-Zohar's theory of the literary system according to which,

[...] 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. None of the factors enumerated can be described to function in isolation, and the kind of relations that may be detected run across all possible axes of the scheme (Even-Zohar 1990: 34).

In this analysis, the *products* are the English ST and the French TT intended for nineteenth-century *consumers* or readers in Great Britain and France respectively. Both Edgeworth and the author(s) of the French translation were the *producers* and had in mind a *market* composed of readers who valued domestic fiction and were attracted by materials depicting other ways of life. The critics, publishing houses, journals and universities are the aggregated factors conforming the *institution*, which most of the times praised Edgeworth's works. Finally, the *repertoire* is that part of the literary system selecting the rules and materials governing both the production as the use of the product. In this case, it refers to the paradigm of the regional tale which was so successful in Great Britain and was founded by Edgeworth herself. It is convenient to remind that Edgeworth uses Irish folklore in her stories (Dabundo 2006).

Even-Zohar inaugurated a path that many researchers in translation studies would follow and paralleled similar research in women's studies (Bassnett 1995: 128). It is useful for our purpose since it regards translation as a major shaping force for the change of the literary system (Bassnett 1995: 126; Lefevere 1985: 88). Though as a method we will mainly use Itamar Even-Zohar's contribution, we will supplement it with Rosa Rabadán's proposal of textual analysis (1991). This scholar takes Julio César Santoyo's idea of the transleme to define the translation unit she will use. The transleme is understood as an intertextual or bitextual unit comprising the same content and two different but solidary formal realizations whose existence depends on the global relationship of underlying equivalence in the textual binomy ST-TT (1991: 300). Rabadán's methodology includes four stages: the analysis of the ST and TT couples with the determination of the translemes and the dominant translemic relationship which leads to the validation of results according to different parameters: cohesion, intentionality, acceptability, situationality and intertextuality.

Rosa Rabadán is indebted to another translation scholar, Gideon Toury, who considers that a translated text must respect adequacy to the source language and acceptability in the target language despite the unavoidable changes in the ST: "This ultimate goal, to serve as a message in the *target* cultural-linguistic context, and in it alone, is by no means an indifferent factor in the production of the translated text. Rather, it may well be one of the main factors determining the formation and formulation of any translation" (Toury 1980: 16). Toury understands that a text's position (and function) –including the position and function which go with a text being regarded as a translation– is determined first and foremost by considerations originating in the culture which hosts them (1995: 26). Rabadán also regards translemic equivalence as a dynamic notion "subordinada a normas de carácter histórico, que actúa como propiedad definitoria de la traducción" (1991: 290-291, see also Newmark 1995: 184-5).

As inscribed in DTS, this article assumes that culture, language and literature are intersecting in society and are acting as a structure of independent elements. Both cultural studies and translation studies recognize the importance of understanding the manipulatory processes involved in textual production (Bassnett 1995: 136). Translation has been a major shaping force in the development of world culture to the point that no study of comparative literature can take place without regard to translation (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 12). Besides, if translated literature maintains a central position in the literary polysystem, it participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem and translation is likely to become one of the means of elaborating a new repertoire (Even-Zohar 1990: 46-47). For these reasons, the descriptive translemic analysis to be performed here cannot neglect cultural factors. It considers macrotextual aspects; such as the narrative point of view, prologues, footnotes, etc; and microtextual ones, for instance, the study of units of analysis or the segments established between texts, as well as the deviations or modifications operated in them (Snell-Hornby 1995), and the analysis of the TT precedes a proper contextualization of the ST.

## 2. MARIA EDGEWORTH AND THE ABSENTEE

### 2.1. AN ANGLO-IRISH AUTHORESS

The third child of Richard Lovell Edgeworth and his first wife Anna Maria Elers, Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) had a very close relationship with Ireland. She went to live there at fourteen when her father decided to settle his family to the estate in Edgeworthstown (Longford). Richard Lovell was an enlightened landowner with scientific interests, so Maria read the most influential British (Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, Edmund Spenser) and continental thinkers (Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, Armand Berquin, Jean François Marmontel or Jean-Jacques Rousseau). The Edgeworth household was frequented by very important public figures, like Erasmus Darwin or Josiah Wedgwood. Richard Lovell's eldest daughter educated her twenty-one brothers and sisters and she never married. Between 1791 and 1803, Maria spent various periods abroad, in Bristol, the industrial Midlands, London, Paris –where she mixed with progressive intellectuals–, like Etienne Dumont and where she refused the only marriage proposal she received in her life from a Swedish courtier. Her stay in Edinburgh allowed her to socialize with the Scottish empiricist philosopher Dugald Stewart and the novelist Elizabeth Hamilton. In 1814, Edgeworth began corresponding with Walter Scott, who later claimed her as an important influence in the General Preface to his *Waverley Novels* (1814).

*Practical Education* (1798) marked Edgeworth's emergence as a writer of note, and her reputation quickly spread via translations and liberal journals in Europe and

America. She also composed stories for children and adolescents and achieved great success. However, Edgeworth will be remembered for *Castle Rackrent*, telling the story of the ruin of the Rackrent family. Her novels about contemporary society (*Belinda*, *Leonora*, *Patronage* and *Helen*) are inserted in the feminocentric tradition cultivated by Jane Austen. Edgeworth was among the most commercially successful and prestigious novelists in Britain and Ireland: with *Patronage* (1814) she trebled what Scott earned from *Waverley* (1814) and seven times what Austen earned from *Emma* (1816). After Richard Lovell's death, Maria's productivity slowed. Reviewers attacked her harshly and finally they made her shy of publishing a new work for adults, but she still produced *Harry and Lucy* (1825) and *Helen* (1834).

## 2.2. THE ABSENTEE

Maria Edgeworth composed two series of *Tales of Fashionable Life*: *Ennui*, *Almeria*, *Mme. de Fleury* and *The Dun* appeared in 1809; while *The Absentee*, *Vivian* and *Émilie de Coulanges* were published in 1812. After the success of *Ennui* and *Popular Tales* (1804) containing some stories located in Ireland ("Rosanna" or "The Limerick Gloves"), *The Absentee* was eagerly awaited by Edgeworth readers. Though *The Absentee* deals with an Irish family, it is thematically linked with a longer work, *Patronage* (1814), and it focuses on the Clonbrons, who have an extravagant life in London and do not care at all about their estates in Ireland. The Edgeworths were deeply involved in Irish politics (Fernández 2013a), and *The Absentee* is written from the authoress's English point of view. Edgeworth's greatest influence is Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* (1771), an educational novel on how to be a good lord. For Norman Jeffares, *The Absentee* means a deep analysis of decadence and the decay of life when political power has disappeared and the old capital has become a provincial city (1982: 83). The Clonbrons are not aware that the people around find them ridiculous and really despise them. Only Lord Colambre, the English-educated heir, realises that his father is indebted and her mother is laughed at by high-class ladies. The novel also includes Lord Colambre's love story with his cousin, Grace Nugent, who is associated with Irish Catholicism and national consciousness (Butler 1992: 50-53), and, despite suspicions of her illegitimacy, finally gets married to Colambre. The hero decides to travel to Ireland incognito and observes the state of the Clonbrons' affairs. Eventually, the agents' proceedings are brought to light and Colambre achieves his parents' return to Ireland. The authoress continues representing Irish speech, which is again contrasted with high life in London.

Two concepts coined by Gérard Genette are important in our approach to the text: the epitext, or those materials outside the book in the form of reviews, interviews or private correspondence which can be illuminating in the study of text production; and the peritext, which means the materials inside the text, such as the

title, the preface or footnotes (1987: 10). In this regard, *The Absentee* was warmly welcome and more praised than *Ennui* because the former was “the first national novel that was fully recognizable as such” (Butler 1972: 375). Reviews were positive, and Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review* considered Edgeworth as “more qualified than most others to promote the knowledge and love of mankind” (1812: 126). John Wilson Croker in *Quarterly Review* appreciated that Edgeworth offered the English view of the Irish: “to Miss Edgeworth’s keen observation and vivid pencil, it was reserved to separate the genus into its species and individuals, and to exhibit the most accurate and yet the most diversified views that have ever been drawn of a national character” (Croker 1812: 336).

Daniel Augustus Beaufort and Louisa Beaufort collaborated in the writing of *The Absentee*. Richard Lovell did not intervene much in this work which was originally composed as a play –in fact, some traces of the theatrical origin are retained. However, the play was finally discarded, as Maria explained in a letter to Mrs. Ruxton:

Sheridan has answered as you and I foresaw he must; that in the present state of this country and with the strong prejudices that prevail in England he is sure the Lord Chamberlain would not license [the play] *The Absentee* [and that] even if he did the audience would not (so inveterate, says he, are their prepossessions) sympathise in a picture of the distresses of the lower Irish – Besides there would be an impossibility of finding actors and actresses who would even decently speak the Irish dialect for *so many Irish characters* (Van de Veire *et al.* 1999: xii, 21 November 1811; see also Butler 1972: 277, 291).

### 3. L'ABSENT

Maria Edgeworth was always welcome in the French-speaking countries. The rationalist philosopher André Morellet explained: “À Paris on lit votre livre sur l'éducation –à Genève on l'avale– à Paris on admire vos principes – à Geneve on les suit” (Butler 1972: 190). Thanks to the translations of her Swiss friends Charles and Marc-Auguste Pictet in *Bibliothèque Britannique*, versions of Edgeworth’s works circulated all around the Continent (Fernández 20010b), sometimes via indirect translations, as it happened in the Spanish case (Fernández 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2013b, 2014).

The editor of the TT text is Giovanni Antonio Galignani (1757-1821), a famous Italian newspaper publisher from Brescia who lived for some time in London, where he published twenty-four lectures on a new method of learning Italian without grammar or dictionary. Once in Paris, he and his wife, Anne Parsons, offered linguistic breakfasts and teas to persons desirous of mastering English or Italian. Mrs. Parsons-Galignani established an English bookshop and circulating library. In

1808, Galignani began to publish the *Repertory of English Literature*, and, on the fall of Napoleon in 1814, he commenced issuing guide-books and also a daily paper printed in English, *Galignani's Messenger*. This was at first a tri-weekly but speedily became a daily paper and circulated among English residents all over Europe since the stamp duty and postage rendered London journals expensive. Galignani published a Paris guide in English and German (1815), on opposite pages, for the use of officers of the allied troops. According to Christine Hayes, he was one of the French publishers who often pirated English and Spanish works at the beginning of the Revolution. Together with Barrois, Baudry or Bossange, Galignani saw piracy as a threat to their literary capital (Hayes 2010: 76). Pierre Brunel, Claude Pichois et André-Michel Rousseau maintain that during the nineteenth century,

le plus grand choix de livres étrangers se trouve dans les librairies spécialisées, qui s'adjoignent parfois des cabinets de lectures, lesquels reçoivent également des revues et des journaux: tous les Parisiens connaissent de longue date la librairie Galignani. La Bibliothèque américaine, la Bibliothèque polonaise, offrent des ressources analogues" (1983: 42).

Galignani even boasted that in his publications he preserved paragraphs which had been deleted in London and of adding complete information about authors and detailed references. His translators worked very quickly and Galignani could publish a translation just a few weeks after it came out in Britain. From the 1830s onwards, Galignani and Baudry launched the "Collection of Ancient and Modern British Authors" including the novels most recently published in England by Fenimore Cooper, Charles Dickens, Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott or William M. Thackeray. For Diana Cooper-Richet, thanks to these publishers it was possible to see the evolution of the first English Romantic works in Paris (2001: 134).

The nineteenth century witnessed translations of Edgeworth's works by Octave de Ségur, Louise Swanton Belloc, Élise Voïart, Élisabeth de Bon, Augustine Gottis, Eugénie Niboyet or Adèle Sobry, among others. Pierre Louis Dubuc was responsible for the translations *Ennui* (1812), *Manoeuvring* (1812) *Les deux Grisélidis* (1813), *Vivian* (1813), *Émilie de Coulanges* (1813) and *L'Absent ou la Famille irlandaise à Londres* (1814) (Cointre 2006: 300, 311), apart from versioning Sydney Oweson's, William Ireland's, A.M. Porter's, Jane West's and Jane Porter's works into English (Cointre 2006: 303, 313, 315; Polet 2000: 366).

Prefaces are comprised in what Genette defines as the paratext, an area of transaction between the author and the reader with varied semiotic functions: "un élément de paratexte est toujours subordonné à "son" texte, et cette fonctionnalité détermine l'essentiel de son allure et de son existence" (1987: 16). In "Préface du traducteur" it is explained that the descriptive subtitle "La Famille irlandaise à Londres"

has been added. Dubuc emphasizes that “absentee” is a new word in English meaning “les propriétaires irlandais qui abandonnent le soin de leurs terres à des agents, et en dépensent le revenu, et bien aussi les fonds, à Londres” (Edgeworth 1814: I). Then he comments the favourable reception of *The Edinburgh Review*. According to Dubuc, *The Absentee* has a great merit particularly appreciated in England:

C'est la peinture fidèle, frappante, et ingénueusement tracée des différentes classes de la société en Irlande; peinture où tous les traits distinctifs de chacune sont bien marqués, en conservant toutefois ceux qui sont communs à toutes, et en variant les scènes par le contraste de quelques caractères anglais ou écossais. Plusieurs détails intéressans, qui tiennent aux localités, perdent beaucoup de leur prix, pour des lecteurs qui sont étrangers à ces localités (Edgeworth 1814: I-II).

They are proud because with this translation they have managed not to “affoiblir l'original” and, unlike most translators, they have decided not to suppress what is difficult to translate: “nous ne nous sommes permis ces suppressions que pour quelques passages qu'il était à peu près impossible de rendre en français, de manière à conserver ce qu'ils avaient de spirituel or d'agréable en anglais” (Edgeworth 1814: II). He gives the example of Dareville's jokes at Lady Clonbrony's party and he is aware of the difficulty to translate both Lady Clonbrony's and Terence O'Fay's speech. On the former, it is stated: “Nous avons essayé d'en donner une idée en quelques endroits” (Edgeworth 1814: III), and, regarding the translator's capacity to adequately render O'Fay into French, it is added: “Nous ne nous flattons pas d'y avoir complètement réussi” (Edgeworth 1814: III). Dubuc makes clear that lots of works signed by “Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Edgeworth and Marie Edgeworth” were coming out in England at that time. He adheres to the original text published by Johnson in London and attaches the list of works prepared by Richard Lovell which appears in that first edition. Finally, they explain that *Vivian*, *Émilie de Coulanges* and *The Absentee* are part of one work (*Tales of Fashionable Life*) published in seven volumes, but susceptible to being read independently.

#### 4. RESULTS

##### 4.1. THE INFLUENCE OF LES BELLES INFIDÈLES

Most of the problems of the translation are anticipated in the preface and are related to what was called *les belles infidèles*, the French tradition of free dynamic translation aiming to provide target texts which are pleasant to read. This was a dominant feature of translation well into the eighteenth century which was already adopted by Nicolas Perrot D'Ablancourt. Far from being conceived as a mode of literary production separate from creative writing, translation was perceived as literary creation in and of itself. It

should have clarity, concision and elegance while fidelity to the source text was secondary. One review contributing to consolidate this adaptation doctrine was *L'Année Littéraire*, where the French critic Élie-Catherine Fréron stated:

La grande règle de toutes les règles est évidemment de plaire au lecteur français, que les longues ennuient, que choquent certains détails. On ne considère pas le roman étranger comme un objet d'art qu'on tente de reproduire avec tout le respect et tout le soin qu'il mérite, mais comme une carrière d'où il s'agit de tirer le plus des pierres possible pour les vendre au meilleur prix [...] Il n'est question que de trouver une main assez habile pour lever l'écorce, c'est-à-dire pour établir l'ordre, retrancher les superfluités, corriger les traits, et ne laisser voir enfin ce qui mérite effectivement de l'admiration (qtd. in Van Tieghem 1966: 17).

The French translator pays attention not to offend readers and adapts swear words to the target audience, so “D—d fine girl!” corresponds with “Diable m'emporte!” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 6). Offensive terms are replaced by neutral ones: “Neger” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 167) becomes “villain” (Edgeworth 1814, II: 195), and the same happens later when the carman Finnucan says about old Nick: “he's more of a *negger* than ever” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 214) rendered as “il est plus diable et plus noir que jamais” (Edgeworth 1814, II: 251). Another suppression is connected with a comment which might be very offensive:

In every cabin that she entered, by the first glance of her eye at the head, kerchiefed in no comely guise, or by the drawn-down corners of the mouth, or by the bit of a broken pipe, which in Ireland never characterises *stout labour*, or by the first sound of the voice, the drawling accent on ‘your honour,’ or, ‘my lady,’ *she could distinguish the proper objects of her charitable designs, that is to say, those of the old uneducated race, whom no one can help, because they will never help themselves.* To these she constantly addressed herself, making them give, in all their despairing tones, a history of their complaints and grievances; then asking them questions, aptly contrived to expose their habits of self-contradiction, their servility and flattery one moment, and their litigious and encroaching spirit the next: thus giving Lord Colambre the most unfavourable idea of the disposition and character of the lower class of the Irish people (Edgeworth 1812, V: 72-73, italics in the middle are mine).

Dans chaque cabane où elle entrait, au premier coup d'oeil, elle discernait les individus convenables à son charitable dessein, c'est-à-dire, ceux de la vieille race qu'on ne peut aider, parce qu'ils ne veulent jamais s'aider eux-mêmes. Une coiffure mal ajustée, un air de visage, une pipe cassée à la bouche, signe certain, en Irlande, peu d'ardeur au travail; le seul son de la voix, ou l'accent traînant en disant: “votre honneur,” ou “milady,” suffisaient pour lui faire connaître son monde. Alors elle s'adressait à ses gens, et leur faisait conter, sur leur ton dolent, l'histoire de leurs infortunes et de leurs griefs; elle leur faisait des questions propres à mettre en évidence leur habitude de se contredire, leur flatterie et leur servilité dans un moment, leur disposition litigieuse et leur ardeur à empiéter dans un autre; et elle donnait ainsi, à lord Colambre, la plus mauvaise idée des inclinations et du caractère du bas peuple en Irlande (Edgeworth 1814, II: 85-86).

Two contrasting strategies are observed to render the text more natural for the French audience. Due to the aim to control the reader's response to the text, the translation adds superfluous information producing a stylistic effect: "Pray, madam, do you know anything of Sir Terence O'Fay?" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 235) changes into "Permettez-moi de vous demander, madame, si vous connaissez sir Térance O'Fay, ou si vous en savez quelque chose?" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 40). This feature coexists with the suppression of one element in a series:

He was sensible that his mother, in some points –her manners, for instance– was obvious to ridicule *and satire*. In Lady Clonbrony's address there was a mixture of constraint, affectation, and indecision, unusual in a person of her *birth, rank, and knowledge* of the world (Edgeworth 1812, V: 210).

[...] il voyait que sa mère, à certains égards, dans ses manières, par exemple, prêtait au ridicule. Il y avait, dans l'abord, les façons et les propos de lady Clonbrony, un mélange de contraite, d'affectation et d'incertitude qui n'est pas ordinaire dans une personne de sa naissance et de son rang qui a beaucoup vu le grand monde (Edgeworth 1814, I: 12).

There is no consistency regarding the translation of titles, coins and measurements. Thus, titles are adapted to the new polysystem if there is an equivalent: "her grace of Torcaster" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 231) is rendered as "la duchesse de Torcaster" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 2) and "Mr. Quin" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 243) becomes "M. Quin" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 2). The only exceptions are "My lord–" (Edgeworth 1812, I: 207) and "Your Ladyship" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 231) which are translated as "milord" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 9) and "milady" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 2) respectively to preserve textual otherness. The source culture is retained regarding coins and measurements: "Twenty thousand a year" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 202) shifts into "Vingt mille livres sterling" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 3) and "pound" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 221) is transformed into "livres" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 25). Translation was not a specialized field in the nineteenth century and the translator probably had little time to prepare the text, which accounts for some inaccuracies, such as "Cat'érine" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 209) changing into "Henriette" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 9). Contrary to other translations of Edgeworth's texts into French, in which older forms are preferred, *L'Absent* features modern French spelling, promoted by the Académie Française from 1835 onwards.

#### 4.2. COHESION AND NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW

In *The Absentee*, the narrator deals with characters with Austenian irony when the fashionable world and Lord Colambre's falling in love are described. Italics denote ironical turns and the French text preserves this feature: "The son *will* have a prodigious fine estate when some Mr. Quinn dies" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 202) is translated as "Le fils *aura* une fortune prodigieuse à la mort d'un certain M. Quin"

(Edgeworth 1814, I: 2). Similarly, “*bred and born*” (Edgeworth 1812, I: 203) becomes “*née et élevée*” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 5). The name of colours “*belly-o'-the-fawn*” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 227) is naturalised, that is, it is adapted to the normal pronunciation and morphology of the target language – “*la belle uniforme*” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 68)–, but totally distorting the meaning.

Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet call modulation a change of point of view and very often the category of thought (1995: 36-37), a procedure Dubuc uses to adapt the text to the French taste, so “Perhaps his vexation was increased by his consciousness that there was some mixture of truth in their sarcasms” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 210) is transformed into “Peut-être était-il tant plus mortifié, qu'il sentait que ces sarcasmes ne portaient pas tout-à-fait à faux” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 12).

Both the narrative point of view and the presence or not of direct style contribute to give cohesion to the text (Rabadán 1991: 205-6), and one distinguishing trait of French translations is that they tended to turn direct speech into indirect. This feature has important consequences since in the original text characters' reactions and reflections give the impression of a play rather than a narrative. If direct speech is absorbed by the narrator's voice, the resulting text loses some immediacy and the meaning is altered and reformulated: “Prince of puppies! –insufferable!– My own mother!” Lord Colambre repeated to himself, as he walked hastily up and down the room” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 232) turns into “Il se promenait en long et en large dans l'appartement, faisant des réflexions tout bas, et prêt à éclater tout haut” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 37).

Closely related to this feature is the portrait of female characters who tend to be more submissive and less witty than in the ST. In *The Absentee* this poses no problem since the heroine Grace Nugent –introduced in English as “Grace Nugent” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 204) and in French as “miss Nugent” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 6)– does not articulate any feminist manifesto or exhibit any extravagant trace. There is, however, one case in which her characterization is affected: “He marked the *superior intelligence*, the animation, the eloquence of her countenance, its variety, whilst alternately, with arch raillery or grave humour, she played off Mr. Soho” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 233, my italics) is reformulated as “il remarqua tout ce qu'il y avait de *spirituel*, d'animé, d'éloquent dans sa physionomie; l'innocent artifice avec lequel, tantôt sérieuse, tantôt plaisant, elle déjouait M. Soho” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 38).

#### 4.3. SPEECH IN TRANSLATION

Dialect, sociolects and idiolects are related to situationality (Rabadán 1991: 207). It is no wonder that when it comes to the translation of particular idiolects, the text loses some colour and characterization is affected, as happens in the opening scene with Mrs. Dareville and the Duchess of Torcaster mocking Lady Clonbrony's efforts to pass for an English lady: “And she could not be five minutes in your grace's company before

she would tell you, that she was *Henglish*, born in *Hoxfordshire*” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 204) becomes “et elle n’aurait pas été cinq minutes avec votre Grâce, qu’elle lui aurait déjà dit qu’elle est *Hanglaise* et née dans le *Hoxfordshire*” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 5).

Dialect individualizes the speaker (Page 1973: 51), and some scholars propose using nonstandard grammar and varying the vocabulary of the target language to reproduce its effect (Catford 1965: 87-88). Another approach consists in substituting equivalent regional varieties (Berezowski 1997: 33). Sándor Hervey states that “the safest decision may after all be to make relatively sparing use of TL (Target Language) features that are recognizably dialectal without being clearly recognizable as belonging to a specific dialect” (1995: 113), which could be followed by some clarifying addition, a very effective procedure due to the proximity between dialect and substandard variety. In most recent studies, it is stated that the dialect in *The Absentee* only serves to distinguish social classes in the novel, but it does not characterize a linguistic community and is only highlighted in italics to keep a distant objective point of view with a didactic purpose (Hollingworth 1997: 7-25). This is observed in Lady Clonbrony’s speech. “[Y]our *teeste*” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 203) is neutralized –and therefore undertranslated– as “votre goût” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 37), a recurrent feature in the translation. Another example is found in “I *big* your *paudon*, Colambre; surely I, that was born in England, an Henglish-woman *bawn!* must be well infawned on this pint, anyway” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 237-238) as “Je vous demande pardon, Colambre; assurément moi qui suis née en Angleterre, moi qui suis Hanglaise, je dois bien savoir cela” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 43) or “[...] and I should have hoped your English *edication*, Colambre, would have given you too liberal idears for that – so I reelly don’t see why you should go to Ireland merely because it’s your native country” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 376) as “[...] et je me flattais que votre éducation anglaise vous avait donné des idées trop libérales, pour que vous pussiez penser ainsi. Je ne vois donc pas pourquoi vous iriez en Irlande, uniquement parce que vous y êtes né” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 210).

Lady Dashfort’s ever-pleasing maid, Petito, aims to use a register which is above her class. While the effect in English is comic (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 405-406), the French audience cannot appreciate it in *L’Absent* since her speech is not literally translated (Edgeworth 1814, III: 203-204). Mrs. Dareville imitation of Lady Clonbrony’s efforts to talk cockney is accompanied by a footnote in French:

“Yes, and you cawnt conceive the peens she teekes to talk of the teebles and cheers, and to thank Q, and, with so much teeste, to speak pure English,” said Mrs. Dareville.

“Pure cockney, you mean,” said Lady Langdale (Edgeworth 1812, V: 203).

“Oui,” dit mistress Dareville en contrefaisant sa manière irlandaise de prononcer certains mots, “si vous saviez combien elle se tourmente pour s’exprimer avec élégance, et parler l’anglais le plus pur...”

“Vous voulez dire le pur Cockney (I),” dit lady Langdale”

(I) Sobriquet qu'on donne aux bourgeois de la Cité de Londres (Edgeworth 1814: 4).

#### 4.4. SUPPRESSIONS AND OBSCURE EXPRESSIONS

Any text by Edgeworth is a challenge for a translator, not only for the occurrence of dialect and irony, but also for the recurrence of specialized terms rendering the text obscure, even for the source language reader. It is the case of “rhodomontade” meaning boastful talk or behaviour, so “Lord Colambre might have been amused with all this *rhodomontade*, and with the airs and voluble conceit of the orator; but, after what he had heard at Mr. Mordicai's, this whole scene struck him *more with melancholy than with mirth*” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 231-232) is transformed into “Lord Colambre se serait fort amusé de l'air capable et de la volubilité de cet orateur; mais ce qu'il avait appris de Mordicai *ne le disposait pas à trouver cette scène plaisante*” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 36). The translator also resorts to reductions and omissions of whole paragraphs. Therefore, there is a big difference between Soho's sprightly comments about decoration for Lady Clonbrony's gala and the third-person summary in the French version:

“So see, ma'am – (unrolling them) – scagliola porphyry columns supporting the grand dome – entablature, silvered and decorated with imitative bronze ornaments; under the entablature, *a valance in* pelmets, of puffed scarlet silk, would have an unparalleled grand effect, seen through the arches – with the *trebison trellice* paper, would make a tout ensemble, novel beyond example. On that Trebisond trellice paper, I confess, ladies, I do pique myself.

Then, for the little room, I recommend turning it temporarily into a Chinese pagoda, with this Chinese pagoda paper, with the porcelain border, and josses, and jars, and beakers to match; and I can venture to promise one vase of pre-eminent size and beauty. Oh, indubitably! if your la'ship prefers it, you can have the Egyptian hieroglyphic paper, with the ibis border to match! The only objection is, one sees it everywhere – quite antediluvian – gone to the hotels even; but, to be sure, if your la'ship has a fancy – At all events, I humbly recommend, what her Grace of Torcaster longs to patronise, my moon curtains, with candlelight draperies. A demission elegance this – I hit off yesterday – and – true, your la'ship's quite correct – out of the common, completely. And, of course, you'd have the sphynx candelabras, and the Phoenix argands. Oh! nothing else lights now, ma'am!” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 230-231).

M. Soho déroula donc ses tentures, et en fit admirer les détails, qu'il expliqua dans son jargon, et avec sa suffisance accoutumée. Puis il proposa, pour la petite pièce, une pagode chinoise, et se complut encore dans la description de toutes les choses dont elle serait ornée. “Quant à la dépensé [...]” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 35-36).

Mrs. Dareville walks into Lady Clonbrony's Chinese pagoda and points out every incongruency (an English fireplace, a white velvet hearthrug, etc) until she ironically sums up with the expression “Every thing here quite correct, appropriate, and

picturesque” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 288). Her jokes to Lady Clonbrony were alluded to in the “Préface” and include mimicking Lady Clonbrony before her face and making a comment about her exaggerated costume which is accepted by the Irish lady. This part is also reduced in the French text, so almost two pages (Edgeworth 1812, V: 285-289) are compressed in one paragraph and in that scene there is neither an attempt at literalness nor any compensatory sound technique:

Les disparates, de default d'accord dans la décorations de la pagode chinoise, lui fournirent d'abord matière à beaucoup de plaisanteries. Elle prétendit qu'un enorme vase de porcelaine qui s'y trouvait, était celui dans lequel un certain capitaine B..., qui commandait un vaisseau de la Compagnie des Indes, avait caché et fait porter à son bord, une jolie petite femme chinoise dont il était amoureux, et qu'il avait enlevée de cette manière. Le conte qu'elle fit de cette aventure, attira l'attention générale; et lady Clonbrony elle-même fut forcée d'en rire, et se pressa d'amener mistriss Dareville dans la tente turque, qu'elle croyait plus à l'abri de la critique. Mais elle n'y gagna rien; et mistriss Dareville trouva là encore de quoi s'égayer à ses dépens: elle avait un talent tout particulier pour contrefaire les gens, et, enhardie par le succès de ses saillies et la gaïeté qu'elle excitait, elle poussa l'impertinence jusqu'à prendre le ton de lady Clonbrony, en faisant usage de quelques expressions qu'elle employait fréquemment; mais elle fut arrêtée tout-à-coup par un regard de Grace Nugent, qui, placée derrière lady Clonbrony, se montre en cet instant. Il y eut un moment de licence, et ensuite le ton de la conversation changea (Edgeworth 1814, I: 102-103).

#### 4.5. REFERENCES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE TEXT

Edgeworth's *oeuvre* is crowded with quotations, references and allusions from other authors. For Rabadán, intertextuality means the dependence of previous texts (1991: 207) and there are important intertextual references in *The Absentee*. Edgeworth parodies Theseus's speech in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (V. I: 12-17) by comparing Mr. Soho with a poet revered by the world of fashion. The lines are dramatically simplified in French with the disappearance of metrical features. Not only is the semantic level altered, but both the poetic subtext and the aesthetic dimension of the ST are lost:

The upholsterer's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Glances from ceiling to floor, from floor to ceiling;  
And, as imagination bodies forth  
The form of things unknown, th' upholsterer's pencil  
Turns to shape and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name (Edgeworth 1812, V: 228).

“Et, son crayon en main, il esquissait des figures en l'air, et donnait des noms aux formes les plus bizarres” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 33).

The subplot dealing with Grace Nugent is directly related to *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. However, the French translation is again deprived of Shakespearean echoes: “a fat, jolly, Falstaff looking personage came into the yard, accosted Mordicai” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 218) simply becomes “[...] un homme de tournure ronde, ayant le teint fleuri et la mine joviale, accosta Mordicai” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 22) with negative consequences for the French reader.

Footnotes are part of what Gérard Genette calls the paratext. On the one hand, footnotes in *L'Absent* are related to specific characters and Ireland. The difficulty to reconstruct idiolects leads to appending footnotes simplifying the ST and controlling its reception. Thus, there is a footnote about whiskey “Sorte de liqueur irlandais” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 59) and another one in “pour avec me mettre dans les souliers” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 176) to explain Sir Terence O’Fay’s peculiar speech: “Façon de parler anglaise, pour dire se mettre en lieu et en place, ou au droit de quelqu’un. Nous l’avons conservée dans la traduction, à cause du jeu de mots”. If one word is too local, it is erased in French: “usquebaugh” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 250) disappears and it is substituted by “je m’étais assuré par une petite douceur” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 183). *Gossoon* (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 178) is simply not translated. On the other hand, there is another type of footnotes: in the second volume it is explained that Lydia Languish is a “personnage de comédie” (Edgeworth 1814, II: 65) and “fort sagement” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 73) is supplemented with “C’est un fait”. The footnote about “God give you Grace” shifts into “qu’il vous donne Grâce” with the explanation “Cet anglicisme est nécessaire pour laisser subsister le double sens” (Edgeworth 1814, II: 279).

The translator’s interventionism is similarly noticed. Though not a footnote, the expression “Irish absentees” (Edgeworth 1812, V: 202) is paraphrased as “des Irlandais qui vivent hors de chez eux” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 2), which reappears later (Edgeworth 1814, I: 15). Likewise, O’Fay’s makes a wordplay with the name of Miss Broadhurst (“Why, then, I said only Miss B –, and there are a whole hive of *bees*. But I’ll engage she’d thank me for what I suggested, and think herself the queen bee if my expedient was adopted by you” [Edgeworth 1812; V: 359]) which is explained with the translator’s intrusion “Pourquoi donc? j’ai dit simplement miss B..., et il y a une ruche entière d’abeilles (*il joue sur le mot; en anglais abeille bee, se prononce comme B*); mais je suis sûr qu’elle me serait obligée de ce que j’ai dit, et qu’elle se croirait la reine des abeilles, si vous adoptiez mon expédient” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 190, *my italics*).

Like the rest of Irish tales, *The Absentee*, aims at an audience who is not necessarily familiar with Irish life and customs. If in *Castle Rackrent* the “Glosary” fulfilled this function, in *The Absentee*, either the narrator or characters facilitate this information about people in Ireland. The French reader is explained that “*tally*”

(Edgeworth 1812, VI: 175) is the same as “*taille*” (Edgeworth 1814, II: 204) and Larry Pady gives an account of what “*potsheen*” is:

“*Potsheen*, plase your honour; – becaase it’s the little whiskey that’s made in the private still or pot; and *sheen*, becaase it’s a fond word for whatsoever we’d like, and for what we have little of, and would make much of: after taking the glass of it, no man could go and inform to ruin the cratures, for they all shelter on that estate under favour of them that go shares, and make rent of ‘em –but I’d never inform again’ ‘em. And, after all, if the truth was known, and my Lord Clonbrony should be informed against, and presented, for it’s his neglect is the bottom of the nuisance” (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 160).

– “*Potsheen*, ne déplaie à votre Honneur; parce que c’est le petit whiskey qu’on fait dans un alambic caché, autrement un pot; et *sheen*, parce que c’est le mot dont nous nous servons en parlant d’une chose que nous aimons, dont nous avons peu, et dont nous voudrions avoir beaucoup: après en avoir bu un verre, il n’y a pas d’homme capable d’aller dénoncer et ruiner les pauvres gens que le font, car ils se réfugient dans ce domaine, sous la protection de ce qui les mettent à contribution pour une partie du profit. Quant à moi, je ne les dénoncerai jamais: et, après tout, si la vérité était connue, ce serait lord Clonbrony qui devrait être poursuivi; car tout cela ne provient que de sa négligence” (Edgeworth 1814, II: 186-187).

#### 4.6. TRANSLATING IRELAND

The French translator chooses not to mark Irish speech, so “*Poor cratur’s*” (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 152) becomes “*Ces pauvres gens*” (Edgeworth 1814, II: 177), “*they do as they plase*” (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 153) is rendered as “*ils font tout ce qu’ils veulent*” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 178) and “*Do I make your honour sensible?*” (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 154) passes unnoticed for the target reader as simply “*Comprenez-vous?*” (Edgeworth 1814, I: 179). Similarly, Paddy’s speech is neutralized, so “*“God bless every bone in his body, then! he’s an Irishman,’ cried Paddy; ‘and there was the rason my heart warmed to him from the first minute he come into the yard, though I did not know it till now’”* (Edgeworth 1812, V: 223) is transformed into “*“Que Dieu le bénisse de la tête aux pieds, il est Irlandais,’ s’écria Paddy, ‘et voilà pourquoi mon coeur s’est senti porté pour lui dès qu’il est entré, quoique je ne le connusse pas’”* (Edgeworth 1814, I: 28).

The attempt to offer uniform speech leads to further losses of meaning and of cultural terms, for instance, what Larry Paddy says when they reach Lord Clonbrony’s estate and Larry’s comments on Old Nick:

“*Because I know very well, from one that was told, and I seen him tax the man of the King’s Head, with a copper half-crown, at first sight, which was only lead to look at, you’d think, to them that was not skilful in copper [...] Ay, it’s the rint, sure enough, we’re pounding out for him”.*

[...] "The rael saint!" said the postillion, suddenly changing his tone, and looking shocked. "Oh, don't be talking that way of the saints, plase your honour" (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 149).

– "Je le tiens de quelqu'un à qui on l'a dit; et, de plus, je l'ai vu reconnaître, au premier coup d'oeil, une demiecouronne pour être de cuivre, quoiqu'on l'eût plutôt prise pour être de plomb [...] Oui, certainement, c'est la rente que nous pilons à présent pour lui".

– "Je demande pardon à votre Honneur, mais je ne dis pas cela" (Edgeworth 1814, II: 174-175).

Also, in one of Sir Terence O'Fay's speeches about Miss Broadhurst's fortune an idiom is lost:

"Tut – Don't tell me! – I'd get her off before you could say Jack Robinson, and thank you too, if she had fifty thousand down, or a thousand a year in land. Would you have a man so d-d nice as to balk when house and land is a-goin – a-going – a-going! – because of the encumbrance of a little learning? I never heard that Miss Broadhurst was anything of a learned lady" (Edgeworth 1812, V: 256-7, my italics).

– "Que me dites-vous là? Je lui trouverais un bon parti sur-le-champ, si elle vait seulement cinquante mille livres sterling comptant, ou même un millier de livres sterling de rente. Croyez-vous qu'il y ait un homme si mal avisé, lorsque maisons et terres s'en vont grand train, pour s'eloigner, parce qu'il y a l'inconvenient d'un peu de savoir? Mais après tout, je n'ai jamais oui dire que miss Broadhurst fût le moins du monde savante" (Edgeworth 1814, I: 67).

The translator's intentionality and the acceptability of the text (Rabadán 1991: 207) are revealed here. In French it is not important if Irish speech is erased, as happens with Lady Dashfort's imitation laughing at ruined Irish landlords:

"[...] who 'must get their bit and their sup;' for, 'sure, it's only Biddy,' they say," continued Lady Dashfort, imitating their Irish brogue, 'find, "sure, 'tis nothing at all, out of all his honour, my lord, has. How could he feel it! Long life to him! He's not that way: not a couple in all Ireland, and that's saying a great dale, looks less after their own, nor is more off-handed, or open-hearted, or greater open-house-keepers, nor [than] my Lord and my Lady Killpatrick." Now there's encouragement for a lord and a lady to ruin themselves" (Edgeworth 1812, VI: 61-62).

## 5. CONCLUSION

This contrastive analysis of Edgeworth's most famous story in *Tale of Fashionable Life* with its first continental translation published by Galignani has shown that the TT was conditioned by French poetics and the *belles infidèles*. The examination of paratexts reveals that Edgeworth's entrance in the list of British

literature translated in France was supported by reviews and the name of Galignani himself.

If we apply Rabadán's model, we have to say that the underlying translemic relationship between ST and TT is linguistic-functional. The result is an irregular translation since functional solutions coexist with reductions in some aspects. In some cases, typical Edgeworthian traits are retained –as happens with irony–, and additions are related to the attempt to make the Anglo-Irish authoress closer to French readers, so there are explanatory footnotes about Irish life. However, other features are lost or greatly modified, which is contrary to the translator's commitment to preserve even what is difficult to translate as stated in the preface. This is especially noticeable at the microtextual level affecting idiolects and dialects which are neutralized or erased in the French translation and also with Edgeworth's rich texture of intertextual allusions. Edgeworth's text is finally nationalized thanks to syntactical adaptations, modulations and other translation procedures which render it appealing at the cost of sacrificing textual peculiarities. Translation is here subordinated to the norms and rules of the target polysystem and acceptability is privileged confirming Toury's statement that translated texts are "facts of one language and one textual tradition only: the target's" (1980: 83).

The desire to explain the text by appending information for the target reader coexists with undertranslation and the semiotic consequences in the French polysystem, which was the threshold to enter other polysystems at the time and the origin of many indirect translations of Edgeworth's works. In Spain, for example, Edgeworth's *oeuvre* was translated through French. At any rate, the effect of the ST on British readers was totally different from the effect on the French audience who could not appreciate Edgeworth's characteristic style and complex depiction of Ireland.

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