

## Where is the “History” in Translation Histories? Où est l’« Histoire » dans les histoires de la traduction?

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### Article abstract

This paper explores two interrelated problems of method of concern to translation historians and that are part of the overarching issue of interdisciplinarity. The first has to do with conflicting methods used in history and the second with deciding whether or not it is necessary for a translation scholar to define her or his philosophical position with regards to history. This article is part of a book project on the history of translation in Louisiana, which has been understudied. The writing of a translation history implies the act of rendering visible what has been obscured by the official grand narrative of History, or what Nietzsche called “monumental” history. To look for translation where officially there was none, or very little, amounts to search for multiple histories of people who do not necessarily fit into the dominant definition of what it means to be American, because they spoke languages other than English and adhered to cultural practices that resisted melting into the common pot. From this perspective history is viewed as discourse because, very much like translation, it is made up of language, seen as living matter shaped and manipulated by power relations. The focus of the study is two local 19<sup>th</sup>-century historians from Louisiana who repeatedly doubled up as translators—from French to English and back into French—to produce histories of Louisiana. The conclusion states that translation historians are first historiographers, imbued with all the disciplinary and ethical responsibilities that entails. Since historiography forms a nexus for history and translation, it is not only necessary to theorize both but also to develop methods that can be integral to both.

# Where is the “History” in Translation Histories?

**Anne Malena**

*What is needed in place of such a monumental history is the idea of a history of singularity and particularity, a history that defies respectability or generalization and that welcomes the surprise of the future as it makes clear the specificities and particularities, the events, of history.*  
(Elizabeth Grosz, 2000)

## **The Issues**

This paper addresses two questions that have emerged out of a larger project on the history of translation in Louisiana and have led to the following formulations: (1) It is necessary for translation scholars “doing history” to be familiar with methods used by historians and the debates about them. (2) Translation scholars researching translation histories need to define their own philosophical position regarding history as part of their work. Both of these conclusions also stem from the more general problem of interdisciplinarity, which in spite of obviously defining the field of Translation Studies creates immense difficulties for the individual scholar. This is largely an institutional problem related to a deep-seated and justifiably lasting sense of insecurity within the field because, particularly in traditional humanities departments, translation experts need to remain vigilant and always ready to defend the value of translation and its critical analysis. Furthermore, interdisciplinarity is difficult to accomplish without committed support from institutions because it requires full collaboration between colleagues from different fields who may all be struggling with overwork and the pressure to publish

frequently in the “best” venues. Interdisciplinary collaboration, therefore, takes time and resources, commodities now so rare in the humanities and the social sciences that only very few people even have the leisure to think about it. Translation scholars, however, are already experts in several fields at once since they juggle various languages and cultures, seek to create links between disciplinary spaces where none may have existed before, live in multiple worlds, bring different backgrounds to the study of translation and dwell, personally and professionally, in the in-between. As Louis Menand has suggested:

Humanities departments do not need to retrench; they need, on the contrary, to colonize. Interdisciplinarity is a bee with a fair amount of buzz in it these days. Humanists keep saying that they want more interdisciplinarity. They’re right. Interdisciplinarity is good. But it is, after all, only the institutional ratification of disciplinarity. It’s premised precisely on the belief that the disciplines represent discrete programs of inquiry, and there is nothing remotely transgressive about it. You get a psychologist and a music professor, or a sociologist and a literature professor, on the platform together, and the mere meeting accounts for a lot of the thrill. (2005, p. 14)

In the same way, Translation Studies does not need to retrench since any panel of translation scholars at a conference will bring to the fore several disciplines, for example, literature, linguistics and history.

Nevertheless, the aim of this study is to argue against the “natural” aspect of this kind of interdisciplinarity and to show that translation scholars who labour to document a history of translation in any given context have to think like historians. This is neither an easy nor an impossible task but it deserves a closer look to render visible the link between translation and history that translation scholars themselves tend to take for granted. Before discussing the case of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Louisiana historians who used translation to generate their own particular brand of historiography then, it is necessary to focus on the reasons why I argue for translation historians to be aware of their own historiographic activity.

## **The History of Translation in Louisiana**

While conducting research for my book on the history of translation in Louisiana, I have encountered great difficulty in theorizing the many "holes" in that history. A striking case is that of Sacagawea, the apparently most skilful and efficient interpreter in the Lewis & Clark expedition, about whom very little is known although she has sparked the imagination of scholars, writers and community activists to the point of producing two divergent versions of her life following the expedition, one trivial and very short, the other mythical and very long. The explorers hired two interpreters: Toussaint Charbonneau, her husband, and George Drouillard. Since she was pregnant at the time she accompanied the expedition, gave birth to Jean-Baptiste at the winter quarters and proved valuable, sometimes more so than Charbonneau, as an "unofficial" interpreter on the trek itself. From the perspective of the historian, "solid" sources are limited to the journals of the expedition, written by various authors and, therefore, subjective and unverifiable. As a result this case requires a different method based on an interdisciplinary approach combining translation, interpretation, history, archive theory, historiography and more. Adding to this disciplinary cacophony is the realization that my own bias will be given voice in this project, that documenting the history of Sacagawea and the stories about her amounts to historiography.<sup>1</sup> The issue then becomes how to be the best and most ethical historiographer possible in spite of the messiness of past research. As it turns out the answer dwells precisely in this messiness, in the recognition that history is messy, a multivoiced process of making meaning involving "a contradictory set of narratives depicting an endless entanglement of imperial and colonial experiences and identities" (Schueller and Watts, 2003, p. 5). History, therefore, should include documents such as the journals Thomas Jefferson ordered Lewis to keep as well as fragments of oral history; notoriously difficult to establish and subject to consensus, facts should not be opposed to narratives. Historiography needs to concern itself with the silences, the

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<sup>1</sup> A sample of the variety of resources available about Sacagawea include the opposing views of Hebard (2002 [1932]) and Howard (1971); the journals of the expedition were published by Lewis (2002). For more balanced scholarship see Karttunen (1994).

unheard, lost or strangled voices as much as with the written, official, authoritative and sanctioned documents. We will see below that the Louisiana historians discussed in this study didn't concern themselves with such "holes" because they seemed to take both historiography and translation for granted. While these men were creatures of their own time and cannot be faulted for doing what was normal to them, their histories, and the role that translation played in producing them, send red flags to the researcher of today who wishes to be ethically responsible. The discussion of François-Xavier Martin and Charles Gayarré, therefore, will be positioned according to the methods used by historians more than two centuries later. While this may appear anachronistic to some it is meant to show how the different methods used by Martin and Gayarré lead to very different histories and how the study of these can help the researcher become more aware of his or her own subjective position when writing about them.

## Historians and History

*Le bon historien, lui, ressemble à l'ogre de la légende.  
Là où il flaire la chair humaine, il sait que là est son  
gibier.*  
(Marc Bloch, 1949)

The three texts that will be analyzed after a brief exposé of the theories entering into their reading and evaluation are (1) *The History of Louisiana, from the Earliest Period* (1827 and 1829), by François-Xavier Martin; (2) *Essai historique sur la Louisiane* (1830) by Carlos Esteban Arturo Gayarré, better known as Charles Gayarré; and (3) *Histoire de la Louisiane* (1846 and 1847) by the same. Martin's history is a bit of an anomaly since the author was born in Marseilles and had gone to Martinique as a young man in order to work on his uncle's plantation, as often happened in the colonies offering opportunities for growth and maturity to sons of rich families. From there, perhaps avoiding pre-revolutionary troubled times in France, he went on to North Carolina to seek his fortune and set himself up as a printer, creating a small weekly, the *Gazette de la Caroline du Nord* in 1786. Passing the bar exam in 1789, he self-published

several of his own translations and writings before becoming a member of the North Carolina legislature in 1806. In 1810 he is first appointed Superior Court judge in New Orleans and then Louisiana's Supreme Court judge. Martin justifies the enterprise of his two-volume history of Louisiana in a four-page preface, stating that he felt it was important for young people not to forget the "civilizing" mission both France and Spain carried out in the colonies (1827, p. v). By that he means to demonstrate that, before the arrival of the French, the country was "exclusively occupied by savages and wild beasts" (*ibid.*). Hence the attention he pays to native populations is filtered through this colonizing gaze and limited to the troubles encountered by the French. He ends by stating that, after twenty years of collecting material and now as an aging historian, he felt an urgent need to publish the book (*ibid.*, p. vii). Remarkably for that time, however, he also deliberately chooses to situate the history of Louisiana in the larger context of the colonization of the Americas by England and Spain as well as France, explaining that a "colony is always more or less affected by the wars, in which the mother country is engaged" (*ibid.*).

The second text, *Essai historique sur la Louisiane*, is essentially the translation of Martin's although much shorter. Gayarré, born in New Orleans and, therefore, a Creole and part of the elite, also became a legislator. He later developed the *Essai* into the third text included here in the analysis: *Histoire de la Louisiane*, which he later translated in English in 1866, something he claimed to have intended all along. The comparison of prefaces, often the only testimonies by translators available to the translation researcher, helps in gaining some understanding of the respective "conscience" of these historians/judges/translators. In a barely two-page preface to *L'essai*, Gayarré justifies his translation of Martin's text from his own subject position, to use anachronistic terms, as "a Louisianan by birth and by heart," that is as a French Creole addressing himself to a Creole audience speaking French. He recognizes the debt he owes to Martin's work but admits to have shaped the text to suit the audience. This privileging of language, mostly absent from Martin's method considerations is still evident in the longer preface to the *Histoire* (Gayarré, 1846, pp. i-vii). He first appeals to the reader's

indulgence in understanding that the *Essai* was a youthful work and that this new version corrects its lack of rigour and includes new material that has since become available. On the basis of these prefaces the researcher wonders how her own position with regards to writing history might be formulated today. What follows, and before reading the histories under study, are some of the tenets of this position.

Marc Bloch has had a lasting influence on historians who still refer to his *Apologie pour l'histoire, ou Métier d'historien* to develop their own method and isolate some of its principles. It was written in 1942 but not completed before Bloch was arrested by the Gestapo and shot by firing squad for his activities in the *Résistance* in 1944. The *Apologie* was published in 1949, in the *Cahier des Annales*, which he had founded with Lucien Febvre.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps due to the conditions in which it was written—in hiding and without access to resources—it presents its arguments with the greatest of clarity and a sense of urgency not unlike what Walter Benjamin expressed in “Sur le concept de l'histoire: La connaissance du passé ressemblerait plutôt à l'acte par lequel à l'homme au moment d'un danger soudain se présentera un souvenir qui le sauve” (1991, pp. 435-436). As befits an apologia, Bloch aims to explain and defend history and what a good historian does. History for him is an effort towards better knowledge or a science on the move, and a young science at that:

[...] vieille sous la forme embryonnaire du récit, longtemps encombrée de fictions, plus longtemps encore attachée aux événements les plus immédiatement saisissables, elle est, comme entreprise raisonnée d'analyse, toute jeune. Elle peine à pénétrer, enfin, au-dessous des faits de surface; à rejeter, après les séductions de la légende ou de la rhétorique, les poisons, aujourd'hui plus dangereux, de la routine érudite et de l'empirisme déguisé en sens commun. (Bloch, 1949, p. 11)

This statement clearly plays on the long association between history and narrative and on the need to help its development as a rational and analytical enterprise in order to go beyond

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2 My thanks to colleagues from the *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi* for having made Bloch's text available online.

facts, or underneath the factual surface as it were, and reject the poison of erudite routine and empiricism disguised as common sense. As Andrew Gow points out in a paper dealing with the difficulty of teaching method to undergraduate history students, "common-sense approaches usually presume the stability and long-term identity of 'human nature,' assuming that all people in all places and at all times act out of fundamentally the same motives" (2010, p. 263). Indeed, as Sergia Adamo suggests: "the historian's most distinctive problem is that posed by temporality itself" (2006, p. 90). In personalizing history as Bloch does in the above quote, making it the grammatical subject, he not only avoids a direct attack on fellow historians but, more importantly, implicitly blends history and its telling, or historiography, warning the reader of the risks of doing so, or of allowing history to write itself as Barthes points out:

*[L']objectivité – ou carence de signes de l'énonçant – apparaît ainsi comme une forme particulière d'imaginaire, le produit de ce que l'on pourrait appeler l'illusion référentielle, puisque l'historien prétend laisser le référent parler tout seul. (1982, p. 22, cited in Payàs, 2004, p. 555; her emphasis)*

For Bloch there are only two ways to be impartial: that of the scientist who "enregistre, bien mieux, [...] provoque l'expérience qui, peut-être, renversera ses plus chères théories" (Bloch, 1949, p. 80) and that of the judge:

Quel que soit le vœu secret de son cœur, le bon juge interroge les témoins sans autre souci que de connaître les faits, tels qu'ils furent. Cela est, des deux côtés, une obligation de conscience qui ne se discute point. (*ibid.*)

But he goes on to state that the moment arrives when the scientist and the judge go their separate ways since, once the scientist has observed and explained, his job is done, whereas the judge still has to hand down his sentence. He argues further that, at least since Michelet, it is clear that man is the historian's object of study but that the plural of *men* is better because it is the grammatical mode of relativity, thus a better fit for a science of the diverse (*ibid.*, p. 18). His goal then, in drawing this analogy between a man of science and a judge, is to tease out history's specificity as



a science of men: “La nomenclature d’une science des hommes aura toujours ses traits particuliers.” Contrary to the hard sciences, words such as “success,” “failure,” “awkwardness,” “ability” belong to the vocabulary of history (*ibid.*, p. 82). For him then, the main task of the historian is to “comprendre,” to understand but also to comprehend, that is to recognize the impossibility to divide the object, man, into smaller parts easier to study or to isolate him from his environment, activities or what he calls his conscience, “[c]ar pour matière, elle [l’histoire] a précisément, en dernier ressort, des consciences humaines. Les rapports qui se nouent à travers celles-ci, les contaminations, voire les confusions dont elles sont le terrain constituant, à ses yeux, la réalité même” (*ibid.*, pp. 86-87).

A poststructuralist well before his time, therefore, Bloch never dismissed the close link between history and narrative but was careful not to put too strong an emphasis on it, being also acutely aware of the benefits of interdisciplinarity. Towards the end of his *Apologie* he gazes out of the window and writes:

Dans la vue que j’ai de ma fenêtre, chaque savant prend son bien, sans trop s’occuper de l’ensemble. Le physicien explique le bleu du ciel; le chimiste, l’eau du ruisseau; le botaniste, l’herbe. Le soin de recomposer le paysage tel qu’il m’apparaît et m’émeut, ils le laissent à l’art, si le peintre ou le poète veulent bien s’en charger. C’est que le paysage, comme unité, existe seulement dans ma conscience. (*ibid.*, p. 86)

The historian picks up where both science and art leave off. Just like translation students learn to speed up the grieving process when, after having tried everything, they have to register a loss, the lesson to learn in history is perhaps that not everything can be explained in spite of how passionately one tries. In spite of this admission, the larger project this study fits into does deal with several of those “blank spaces in the history of translation,” which Julio-César Santoyo wrote about in 2006. One is “oral translation,” which, long before Lewis and Clark, was a vital part of the Louisiana settlement and whose evidence is recorded in travelogues. Another is the “daily practice of translation” and the necessity to bring to light what Santoyo describes as “[e]veryday, common, erudite, unscholarly translations [that] have hardly [and

in this case not at all] ever attracted the attention of historians" (2006, p. 15). Last but not least are the frequent scholarly "mistakes" that have been passed down through the centuries, often from erroneous translations and I do consider it my duty to "erase and rub them out completely," as Santoyo demands, although that task will definitely require interdisciplinary collaboration (*ibid.*, p. 35). Let's examine now how Bloch's principles contrast with those of earlier historians while informing my own method.

## Translation Historians and History

As mentioned above it is reasonable to assume that translation was an integral part of the historian's task in the colonial context of Louisiana and Martin's apparent source text first appears to have been adapted from the 1758 work by Le Page Du Pratz as suggested by the somewhat unreliable Louisianan literary historian, Edward Laroque Tinker (1932, p. 337); at closer examination, however, Du Pratz is only listed as a source in chapters nine, ten, eleven and twelve of the fourteen chapters composing the first volume and not at all in the second volume. Du Pratz himself translated his *Histoire* into English, publishing that second version in London in 1763 (reprinted in 1774). An American version appeared in 1804, most likely the one Martin consulted, thus having no need to resort to translation, but Du Pratz's translation will have to be the object of another study. In a preliminary chapter, for which Martin lists Ulloa, Lorimer, Dunbar, Sidney and Heustis as sources,<sup>3</sup> he lays out the "Topographical View of the State of Louisiana" (1827, pp. xxv-lxxxiii). The subsequent thirty-three chapters that constitute the two volumes of his history follow a chronological order. As with Du Pratz, I have found that the occasional translations of certain passages in his sources helped the skillful process of compiling them into his own history. Obviously, his ability as a historian was enhanced by his linguistic skills, suggesting that translation was for him an integral part of the task he had set himself but not something he needed to reflect on. This rather familiar attitude for the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is for the moment a working

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3 I have been able to retrace most of these and close examinations of the texts will be included in the larger study.

hypothesis for the text's complete analysis that will be part of the book. Beyond Du Pratz, Martin's two volumes appear to continue an already long historiographic chain about the vast territory of Louisiana, South America and New France. Martin and the authors before him borrowed, translated and corrected versions preceding their own. Since Martin lists his sources at the end of each chapter, it is relatively easy to retrace the scholarly and narrative threads of his *History of Louisiana*.

Surprisingly, and probably because Gayarré had very clear ideological reasons for writing a new history, the prefaces of his two texts reveal no such academic preoccupation about sources or the larger context. However, his work, like Martin's, starts with the "Discovery of America" but speeds through its main events in order to focus exclusively on Louisiana as a defined territory. The very brief preface to his first work, the *Essai*, makes clear his intention to offer his compatriots a simpler, and more importantly, French version of Martin's history:

Louisianais de naissance et de cœur, j'ai lu avec une émotion de piété filiale, *L'Histoire de la Louisiane* que le Juge Martin a publiée en Anglais, et j'ai pensé qu'une faible ébauche historique, sur mon pays natal, tracée avec des palettes françaises, exciterait quelqu'intérêt chez cette partie de la population pour qui le Français est encore la langue maternelle.<sup>4</sup> (Gayarré, 1830, p. iii)

Gayarré's insistence on Louisianan identity, and the attention he pays to French as the language inextricably tied to this identity, marks him as a historian clearly influenced by ideology, or by "consciously pursued ends" as Bloch would put it (1949, p. 89; my translation). In a final move of false modesty in this early preface, Gayarré even goes so far as to claim that the specific Louisiana vernacular of French is best suited for this work: "Sauvage de l'Amérique, je balbutie à peine la langue de la gloire et du génie [la langue littéraire]. J'ai donc écrit sans art et sans apprêt, et seulement pour ceux qui ne parlent, comme moi, que le jargon provincial" (1830, p. iv). The French he writes in, however, is perfectly standard and one would be hard pressed to figure out whether, by "jargon provincial," he means Creole, non-literary

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4 I have kept Gayarré's orthography throughout.

language or "lesser" French. Interestingly, he also defines himself and his work against the literary norms of the times, perhaps falsely apologizing for the lower register of his narrative but not for the narrative itself.

The preface to his *Histoire de la Louisiane*, however, states that: "Je voulais d'abord écrire cet ouvrage en anglais. La raison en est toute simple: C'est la langue du pays, et ensuite, l'ouvrage aurait eu une distribution plus étendue" (*ibid.*, p. iii). This turnaround, sixteen years after the first version, is rather striking and suggests that Gayarré was reacting to English becoming predominant in Louisiana as a result of the arrival of business investors, or the well-known carpetbaggers, from the North.<sup>5</sup> He does explain further that, according to his method of letting history be told by its contemporaries, he has inserted direct quotations by important actors in the country:

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5 This is, however, a debatable viewpoint as there was much literary activity in French in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or, as Lynn Weiss puts it: "The tumultuous nineteenth century proved especially conducive to every aspect of literary activity, and in Louisiana francophone writing and publishing flourished" (2004, p. xxiii). Gayarré's perception was probably influenced by the language spoken around him and the kind of French he would have considered, whether from France, Acadian, or even Creole; more work needs to be done to determine whether English predominated in oral contexts. According to Weiss, "the most fecund period of literary production in francophone Louisiana literature began in the 1830s, and much of that literature appeared in newspapers and journals" (2004, p. xxiv). It must also be noted that Gayarré, before his death in 1895 at ninety years-old, would become one of the most regular contributors to *Les Comptes-rendus de l'Athénée louisianais*, the journal of the *Athénée Louisianais* founded by Alfred Mercier and a group of Creole intellectuals in 1875 or 1876 (see "The Institutions"). In the last quarter of the century and following the Civil War and Reconstruction, this French-speaking elite was indeed fighting by any means possible, including translation, for the survival of French. For more information on the *Athénée* and 19<sup>th</sup> century Louisiana literature in French, in particular a volume of poetry by free people of colour, entitled *Les Cenelles*, see Weiss (2004); for a study of some of the translations published in the *Athénée* see Malena (2006); for some historical information on French in Louisiana see Dubois and Melançon (2000); Valdman (2001).

Mon but était de faire reparaître chaque époque avec sa couleur locale, et, en quelque sorte, chaque personnage avec le costume du temps. Je sentis que mon ouvrage en anglais serait dépourvu de ce charme que je lui donnais, à mes yeux du moins, en empruntant le langage des premiers colons. (*ibid.*, p. iv)

While this intention of recreating the “reality” of history sets off the kind of alarm bells about “natural” representation that Bloch would later warn historians about, the point is that, beyond being a man of his time, Gayarré chose a vastly different method to that of Martin’s while still relying on translation to produce his text. He does admit owing a great deal to Martin but reserves the right to consult the latter’s sources and use them directly. For example, he claims that the “interesting” book by Garcilaso de la Vega provided him with most of the material for the “famous” de Soto expedition into North America (*ibid.*, p. ii), perhaps because Martin had obliquely criticized this Peruvian 16<sup>th</sup> century writer, dubbed “*El Inca*” to differentiate him from the Spanish poet of the same name and the same era, in the following passage:

But this writer speaks of lions in the forests of Florida, and of a number of caciques who commanded several thousand of warriors. It is believed that those who furnished this Indian writer with the memoirs on which he wrote, were less fond of truth than of the marvellous. (Martin, 1827, p. 10)

We will come back to de Soto in the brief translation analysis below. Finally, Gayarré asks: “Qu’est-ce qu’écrire l’histoire?” (1846, p. iv) and provides the following answer: “C’est faire le portrait de ce qu’était un pays à différentes époques, à sa naissance, dans son adolescence, dans sa virilité et dans sa vieillesse, si toutefois il a traversé toutes ces phases de l’existence” (*ibid.*). Based on this obviously anthropomorphizing view, it isn’t surprising that he sees two different options in painting Louisiana’s portrait, the first with large brush strokes and the second as an anatomic painting, in every finest detail. He chose the latter and calls it a family portrait. Contrary to Martin, he doesn’t elaborate on his method, preferring to pursue in an impressionistic vein in order to produce a microscopic view of Louisiana:

Or, lorsque je fus entouré de tous les documents relatifs à la Louisiane, il me sembla que je la voyais se dresser devant moi,

telle qu'elle était sous Louis XIV, sous le Régent, sous Louis XV et sous Charles III d'Espagne. Je saisis mes pinceaux et je me mis à l'œuvre. [...] Mon cœur me dit que c'était notre mère, à nous Franco et Hispanio-Américains, qui était là devant moi. (*ibid.*, p. v)

Following that heart-felt exposé of personification and conjuration of the female figure of Louisiana, he does make an important point about the territory having been a stranger to Anglo-Americans until 1803: “Je dis donc que de 1540 à 1803, la Louisiane, au lieu d'être une mère ou une soeur, était, pour les Anglo-Américains, une étrangère, et même souvent une ennemie” (*ibid.*, p. vi). My research both confirms and contradicts this last statement since, because of its linguistic difference, Louisiana was certainly “foreign” to the Anglo-Americans but this status continued well past the date of its purchase by the Federal State. To complete his justification for French, Gayarré ends the preface to a work that promises to be much more than a translation on a somewhat surprising and for now unverified note, admitting having been seduced to write a history in French by and for Louisianan women who, according to him, for the most part, didn't read English (*ibid.*, pp. vi-vii).

A translation historian needs to understand first and foremost how the work of Martin and Gayarré, and others like them, influenced both historiography and translation practice in Louisiana, as well as what conclusions can be drawn from this intertwined complicity between history and translation. The following comparative analysis, therefore, seeks to illustrate some of these differences without yet pretending to answer those larger questions. The de Soto episode—in italics in the table below—appears in the first chapter of all three texts, as can be seen in the following table. This comparison makes it obvious that Gayarré already condenses Martin's text for the *Essai* in 1830 and drastically reduces it in 1846 to fit his idea of what is important in Louisiana's history:

Table 1: A Comparison of the first chapter's table of contents

| MARTIN, 1827, p. 1.   | GAYARRÉ, 1830, p. 5.  | GAYARRÉ, 1846, p. 1.   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Discovery of America.—Charles VIII.—Henry VII.—Ferdinand and Isabella.—Cabot.—Prima vista.—Lewis XII.—Denys.—Aubert.—Gulf of St. Lawrence.—Indians carried to France.—Henry VIII.—Francis I.—Ponce de Leon [<i>sic</i>].—Florida.—The Baron de Levy.—Sable Island.—Vasquez de Aillon.—Velasquez.—Veranzany.—Narvaez.—Apalachians.—The peace of Cambray.—Cartier.—River of St. Lawrence.—<i>Hernandez de Soto</i>.—Chickasaws.—Alabamas.—Mobilians.—Choctaws.—The Mississippi.—Red River.—Robertval.—Canada.—Luis de Muscoso.—Los Vaqueros.—Edward VI.—Henry II.—Mary.—Philip II.—Elizabeth.—Charles IX.—Coligny.—Ribaud.—Caroline.—Albert.—Barré.—Laudonniere.—Sir John Hawkins.—Pedro de Mendenez.—St. Augustine.—Destruction of the French colony.—De Gourgues.—Henry III.—Sir Humphrey Gilbert.—Sir Walter Raleigh.—Ocacock.—Virginia.—Sir Richard Grenville.—De La Roche.—Acadie</p> | <p>Découverte de l'Amérique par Christophe Colomb. Ponce de Léon arrive à la Floride. Tentatives d'établissements faites par le Baron de Lévy et Cartier, au Canada. Origine du mot Canada. <i>Arrivée de Hernandez de Soto à la Baie de Santo Spiritu</i>. Il parcourt la Floride, la Géorgie, le Tennessee, le Kentucky, le Mississippi, la Louisiane. Ses combats avec les Indiens. Sa mort à l'embouchure de la Rivière Rouge.—Muscoso lui succède. Combat naval des Indiens et des Espagnols sur le Mississippi. Fuite des Espagnols</p> | <p>Découverte de l'Amérique.—Premiers établissements.—<i>Expédition de Soto</i>.</p> |

In each chapter the initial sentence reveals the difference in approach. Martin is concerned with establishing context for history: "Charles the eighth, the seventh monarch of the house of Valois, wielded the scepter of France, and Henry the seventh that of England, in 1492, when Columbus, under the auspices of Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile, discovered the western hemisphere" (1827, pp. 1-2); Gayarré, the historian and not the translator, appears concerned with the didactics of history, in this case what can be learned from Christopher Columbus, so much so that he leaves the beginning unchanged in the later version: "Il est, dans le cours des siècles, des époques marquées par la toute puissance divine pour l'arrivée de ces grands événements qui sont destinés à changer la face du monde" (1830, p. 5; 1846, p. 1); When, in the 1846 version he does get to Columbus a full page later, it is in embellished terms: "Cette voix [celle qui annonce un monde nouveau en Europe] est celle d'un homme obscur qui porte le nom de Christophe Colomb" (Gayarré, 1846, p. 2); the only change from the 1830 version is the use of the present instead of the past. Based on this small sample, therefore, one would be tempted to think of Gayarré's "translation" as an adaptation but, as shown in the table below, a close comparison of the passages where de Soto is mentioned for the first time reveals more complicated strategies:



Table 2: Comparison of strategies

| MARTIN, 1827, pp. 8-9.  | GAYARRÉ, 1830, pp. 10-11.  | GAYARRÉ, 1846, pp. 6-7.   |
|---|--|---|
| Two years after [in 1537], Charles the first of Spain gave the government of St. Yago de Cuba to Hernandez de Soto, with the permission to prosecute the discovery of, and subjugate, Florida; and on the twelfth of May of the following year, he sailed from the Havana with an army of nine hundred foot and three hundred and fifty horses. The fleet was equipped and the land and naval forces raised and supported at Soto's expense. He had amassed considerable wealth in Peru, in the conquest of which he had assisted Pizarro. The fleet was delayed by contrary winds, and at last reached the bay <b>in which Narvaez has landed eleven years before.</b> * | Les Français sont les premiers qui ont fondé une colonie à la Louisiane et qui lui ont donné le doux nom qu'elle porte. Mais ce fut un Espagnol qui, le premier, la découvrit et y promena des regards explorateurs. Cet enfant de la Castille fut <b>Hernandez de Soto</b> ,* l'illustre compagnon de <b>Pizarre</b> . <b>Après avoir aidé à la conquête du Pérou, Soto s'était retiré à St. Yago de Cuba dont le roi d'Espagne lui avait donné le gouvernement, avec la permission de porter la guerre dans la Floride et de la subjuguier. Il avait acquis dans le Pérou des richesses immenses,</b> mais il était loin de songer à en jouir dans la mollesse et le repos. Il est de ces hommes pour qui l'inaction est le plus pénible de tous les tourmens. Leur ambition dédaigne la couche de la volupté et les plaisirs de l'épicurien. Il leur faut le bruit des armes, le son du clairon, le triomphe du guerrier, et l'immortalité d'une vie historique. Telles | Les Français sont les premiers qui ont fondé une colonie à la Louisiane et qui lui ont donné le doux nom qu'elle porte. Mais ce fut un Espagnol qui, le premier, la découvrit et y promena des regards explorateurs. Il s'appelait <b>Hernando de Soto</b> , et avait été l'illustre compagnon de <b>Pizarre</b> .* <b>Après avoir aidé à la conquête du Pérou, il avait obtenu du roi d'Espagne le gouvernement de St. Yago de Cuba, avec la permission de porter la guerre dans la Floride et de la subjuguier. Il avait de plus le privilège d'en être le gouverneur et capitaine-général, sa vie durant, et d'y établir un marquisat à son choix, de trente lieues de long sur quinze de large. Soto avait acquis dans le Pérou des richesses immenses,</b> mais il était loin de songer à en jouir dans la mollesse et le repos. Il est de ces hommes pour qui l'inaction est le plus pénible de tous les <i>tourments</i> . Leur ambition dédaigne la couche de la volupté et les plaisirs de |

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|---|---|--|
| <p>* Bold represents an omitted passage in Gayarré.</p> | <p>sont les délices de ces ames fortement trempées qui se nourrissent de mouvements et d'émotions. Tel était Hernandez de Soto que fatiguaient les exploits de Cortes et de Pizarre. Nouveau Thémistocle, les lauriers de ses rivaux l'empêchaient de dormir. Il regarde autour de lui pour fixer le theatre de ses exploits futurs : il l'a trouve et il n'aspire plus désormais qu'à être connu sous le nom de conquérant de la Floride. Aussitôt <b>il équipe une flotte à ses frais, il y fait monter six cents hommes d'infanterie et trois cent cinquante de cavalerie, et malgré les vents et les flots</b> qui semblaient conspirer contre lui, pour retarder son voyage, <b>il aborde enfin dans la baie de Santo Spiritu</b> en 1538.</p> <p>* Bold represents translation from Martin.</p> | <p>l'épicurien. Il leur faut le bruit des armées, le son du clairon, le triomphe du guerrier, et l'immortalité d'une vie historique. Telles sont les délices de ces ames fortement trempées qui se nourrissent de <i>mouvements</i> et d'émotions. Tels était <i>Hernando de Soto</i> que fatiguaient les exploits de <i>Pizarre et de Cortès</i>. Nouveau Thémistocle, les lauriers de ses rivaux l'empêchaient de dormir. <i>Aussi cherchait-il de tous côtés le théâtre de ses exploits futurs. Il crut l'avoir trouvé dans la Floride, et il n'aspira plus dès lors qu'à en devenir le conquérant. Il équipa à ses frais une flotte, mille hommes d'infanterie et trois cent cinquante chevaux, avec lesquels il partit de la Havane. Après sept jours de navigation, il aborda à la baie de Santo Spiritu, le 31 mai 1539.</i></p> <p>* Bold represents translation from Martin while italics represent changes from the 1830 <i>Essai</i>.</p> |
|---|---|--|

Martin's entire episode is recounted in four and a half pages (1827, pp. 8-13) while Gayarré stretches it to six pages in the *Essai* (1830, pp. 10-16) and to ten in *Histoire* (1846, pp. 6-16). This table renders visible the differences in style of both historians, which may have caused Gayarré's reordering of information (e.g., the more logic chronological order as opposed to Martin's resorting to anteriority in the past perfect to provide details of de Soto's life). As for the translated passages, Gayarré's translation strategies are not only an illustration of the common practice at that time of "free translation," but an integral part of the embellished text and, therefore, representative of Gayarré's sense of style and more importantly of the choices he made as an individual, a historian and a Louisiana Creole man. As such, and as was discussed above with regards to the prefaces, he is driven to start this entirely "Spanish" episode with a reference to the French. I would argue further that the stylistic ameliorations he makes in the 1846 *Histoire* reflect this pre-occupation as well as his maturity as a writer and a historian. While the number of army men and horses actually gathered by de Soto remains nebulous, due in great part to the ambiguity of Martin's text, Gayarré appears to have checked other sources in order to clarify certain details and provide others. It was Martin's custom to indicate yearly dates almost exclusively in the margins, which often makes it difficult to ascertain when precisely a particular event took place. In 1846 Gayarré decides that he miscalculated the exact date of de Soto disembarkation at Santo Spiritu and corrects it.<sup>6</sup> The fact that he doesn't shorten this passage in any way may be due to his didactic aim and his desire to adhere to his chosen method of painting a detailed portrait.

## Conclusion

*The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.*  
(Leslie Poles Hartley, 1967)

Not everyone engaged in debates about history and its methods would agree with Hartley's view, expressed at the beginning of

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<sup>6</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopedia* website gives 25 May 1539 as the date of his landing while Wikipedia stays silent about the exact day, which leads me to believe that more work needs to be done on the primary sources.

a novel dealing partly with the discrepancies between a diary, which constitutes an archive of sorts, of the summer spent by a young British boy acting as a go-between for two illicit lovers, and the adult memories of this boy turned narrator. While Clara Foz rightly points out that "translators studying the history of their profession (so far of little interest to those who are historians by trade) are in general careful not to identify themselves as historians" (2006, p. 131), the aim of this study is to argue that it has become necessary for translation scholars to take a few steps across the divide. For example, scholars might consider participating in and adding a translation perspective to conferences organized by other disciplines than translation, and in particular in interdisciplinary gatherings dealing with thematic issues pertinent to their own work within fields such as cultural studies, postcolonial studies, women's studies, literary studies, and history. One might be surprised to discover that more and more, these disciplines welcome translation perspectives because they often reveal the depth of multicultural and multilingual contexts that might otherwise be obscured by the use of English and its homogenizing tendency in research of this kind. Most notably, historians, particularly those who view history as discourse and need reading knowledge of several languages to do their work, are open to perspectives from Translation Studies. Disciplines reflect the world in interesting ways, with its coalitions and divisions, those in power and the marginalized, conflict and negotiation and many other human interactions. Translation and translators often still have the same status that the Bakhtinian scholar, Peter Hitchcock, borrowing from Shelley, described almost twenty years ago: "Translators are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" (1993, p. 170). It must be noted that, for better or for worse, translators are becoming more visible thanks to today's acknowledgement of globalization, but translation historians still need to present themselves as experts in the different ways that things are done in foreign countries, and familiarize themselves with methods used by historians to interpret the differences of the past and to define their own philosophical position with regards to history. Some important work has already been accomplished by translation scholars concerned with method, such as Lieven d'Hulst (2001), Anthony Pym (1998), Paul St-Pierre (1993), Clara Foz (2006), Gertrudis Payàs (2004) and several others.

On the side of history, many scholars have been influenced by thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (2007), Walter Benjamin (1991), Marc Bloch (1949), Michel Foucault (2002), Paul Veyne (1984) and Hayden White (1975). In his attempt to answer his own question—"What does it mean to *have* a history?" (p. 244)—White borrows from Foucault:

The aim of "the archaeology of ideas" is to enter into the interior of any given mode of discourse in order to determine the point at which it consigns a certain area of experience to the limbo of things about which one cannot speak. The "chronicle" of the human sciences, as thus envisaged, comprises a series of violent acts done to the world of things on behalf of an impossible ideal of linguistic transparency. (1975, pp. 239–240)

Translation scholars are particularly sensitive to discursive violence since translation inevitably appropriates the source text in order to transfer it into the target culture.

In this way historiography forms the nexus for both history and translation and it becomes necessary to theorize both. Some authors are more helpful than others in this endeavour and a lot of work remains to be done. My own research has drawn me to reflect on a link between Benjamin and Derek Walcott, the St. Lucian poet and 1992 Nobel Prize laureate, in their thinking respectively about translation and history. Thus the translator of Baudelaire's prose poems and the poet seeing a performance of the *Ramleela* in his home island come to use the same imagery to describe first the translation process, and second the representation of the non monumental history of the Caribbean:

Fragments of an amphora which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of an amphora. (Benjamin, 1999, p. 79)

Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted

when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. (Walcott, 1993, n.p.)

The tension in both passages is between order and chaos, between monumental history and experience, between wholeness and fragmentations. Fragments, love and glue are all that the translator/poet/historian is given to work with; no mention of facts here, or of authentic representations, certainty of meaning and even less of coherent entities. The mode of signification of the original, and not its meaning, is revealed through the fragmentary process of translation; in similar fashion, history is ruptured in the Antilles of Derek Walcott and the glue holding its fragments together also reveals its original shape as having been always already fragmented because of colonial violence. This position is in turn echoed in the epigraph by Grosz that indirectly refers to Nietzsche who wrote "the unhistorical and the historical are equally necessary to the health of an individual, a community, and a system of culture" (1977, p. 8).

Michael Cronin reminds us, translation "has implications for both the past and the future. In our [that is for translation historians] study of the past, it can allow hidden histories to emerge that are often neglected or obscured by histories that are bounded by the paradigm of the nation-state. These histories may often be non textual and primarily involve interpreting but they are histories that remain to be written" (2003, p. 79). That is precisely the problematics emerging out of the previously discussed example of the Lewis and Clark expedition since during and after the journey, a different kind of interpretation from Charbonneau's and Sacagawea's practice took place. The initial aim and the results of the voyage were indeed "bounded by the paradigm of the nation-state" and translated along a nation-building process for the Euro-American public, as, in a sense, they continue to be today. In other words, the expedition has been regarded as a generally positive event in the history of the United States. This interpretation, however, fails to take into account the heterogeneous nature of the country and the fact that the expedition only benefited certain members of 19<sup>th</sup> century American society but hindered others. For example, the "discovery" of an access route to the Pacific Ocean through

the territory of Louisiana brought about serious consequences for native people whose lands later became the property of the United States.<sup>7</sup>

The different methods that Martin and Gayarré chose to write their histories of Louisiana produced very different results: the former does account for the inevitable fragmentation of an early colonial world by setting Louisiana in a larger context unconcerned with national issues while the latter lets himself be heavily influenced by the “national” spirit of French Louisiana.<sup>8</sup> Martin’s objective was clearly to further knowledge about the history of Louisiana and he did so by using sources carefully and by referring to as many sources as possible in order to build his own on a solid basis. Gayarré’s purpose, on the other hand, was subjective and emerged out of his love for a non-American Louisiana as some of his later writings in the *Athénée* reveal. He was the product of a threatened colonial society and he manipulates sources, without referring to them clearly and through translation when it suits his convictions, in order to launch a cry for the preservation of the only world he knows as his own. It is through the combination of methods used by historians, bolstered by archive and postcolonial theories, and a translation perspective, that such particularities can be uncovered. To conclude, translation scholars who double up as historians are able to detect these important differences and decipher the discursive evidence they find to produce historiographies of translation that are careful not to erase difference nor simplify human interactions.

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7 It must also be noted that the same paradigm has ignored that Alexander Mackenzie had already reached the Pacific along a Northern (Canadian) route (Vaugeois, 2005, pp. 75-77).

8 To consider Louisiana from a “national” perspective in the 19<sup>th</sup> century carries with it a great deal of irony since the territory wanted to be recognized almost as a nation unto itself because of its cultural difference from the United States and was later occupied by federal troupes at the end of the Civil War. What is referred to here then is the pride of unity and difference from an ideological standpoint.

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**ABSTRACT: Where is the "History" in Translation Histories?** — This paper explores two interrelated problems of method of concern to translation historians and that are part of the overarching issue of interdisciplinarity. The first has to do with conflicting methods used in history and the second with deciding whether or not it is necessary for a translation scholar to define her or his philosophical position with regards to history. This article is part of a book project on the history of translation in Louisiana, which has been understudied. The writing of a translation history implies the act of rendering visible what has been obscured by the official grand narrative of History, or what Nietzsche called "monumental" history. To look for translation where officially there was none, or very little, amounts to search for multiple histories of people who do not necessarily fit into the dominant definition of what it means to be American, because they spoke languages other than English and adhered to cultural practices that resisted melting into the common pot. From this perspective history is viewed as discourse because, very much like translation, it is made up of language, seen as living matter shaped and manipulated by power relations. The focus of the study is two local 19<sup>th</sup>-century historians from Louisiana who repeatedly doubled up as translators—from French to English and back into French—to produce histories of Louisiana. The conclusion states that translation historians are first historiographers, imbued with

all the disciplinary and ethical responsibilities that entails. Since historiography forms a nexus for history and translation, it is not only necessary to theorize both but also to develop methods that can be integral to both.

**RÉSUMÉ : Où est l'« Histoire » dans les histoires de la traduction?** — Cette étude se penche sur deux problèmes méthodiques reliés entre eux qui préoccupent les historiens de la traduction et font partie de la question globale de l'interdisciplinarité. Il s'agit premièrement des méthodes divergentes utilisées en histoire et deuxièmement, il s'agit de savoir s'il est nécessaire qu'un/e traductologue définisse sa propre position philosophique en ce qui concerne l'histoire. Le présent article est un fragment d'un futur livre sur l'histoire de la traduction en Louisiane, un sujet jusqu'ici peu étudié. L'écriture d'une histoire de la traduction oblige à remettre au jour ce qui a été occulté par l'Histoire officielle, ou ce que Nietzsche a appelé l'«histoire monumentale ». Chercher des traductions là où, officiellement, il n'en existe pas, ou si peu, signifie aller à la recherche des multiples histoires de gens qui ne correspondent pas à l'identité américaine dominante parce qu'ils parlaient des langues autres que l'anglais et adhéraient à des pratiques culturelles qui les empêchaient de se fondre dans le creuset américain. Dans cette perspective, l'histoire est discours parce que, à l'instar de la traduction, elle est faite de langage, elle est une matière vivante modelée et manipulée par les relations de pouvoir. Notre étude analyse le cas de deux historiens de la Louisiane du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle qui, dans une sorte d'aller-retour, eurent recours à la traduction — du français vers l'anglais, puis retour au français — pour rédiger leur propre histoire de la Louisiane. Nous en venons à la conclusion que les historiens de la traduction sont d'abord des historiographes, conscients des responsabilités professionnelles et éthiques que cela entraîne. Histoire et traduction sont liées par l'historiographie; c'est pour cette raison qu'il est nécessaire, non seulement d'élaborer des théories, mais aussi de développer des méthodes pouvant intégrer les deux disciplines.

**Keywords:** history, translation, historiography, interdisciplinarity, Louisiana

**Mots-clés :** histoire, traduction, historiographie, interdisciplinarité, Louisiane

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