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Abstract
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Keywords: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social*, eighteenth-century translation, argumentative voice, *amplificatio*

Résumé
Cette étude compare deux traductions anglaises contemporaines d'un des principaux ouvrages de Jean-Jacques Rousseau sur la nature de la société et l'institution de la souveraineté politique, *Du contrat social; ou principes du droit politique* (1762). L'étude de cas vise à éclairer davantage l'étendue et la nature de la présence discursive interprétative des traducteurs dans leur rendu du discours philosophique. La présente contribution analyse une sélection d'extraits dans les textes source et cible afin de dégager les traces de médiation

argumentative implicite du traducteur. Cette médiation se manifeste principalement par l'emphase rhétorique (*amplificatio*) et l'explicitation de sens implicites, mais aussi par l'altération de la dénotation et l'affaiblissement ou l'omission d'arguments (*brevitas*). L'étude révèle que les traductions de 1764 et 1791 du *Contrat social* expriment la plupart du temps les arguments de l'auteur de façon plus emphatique et explicite, conformément à une « attitude associative » de la part des traducteurs (Hermans, 2010) dont les interventions corroborent le discours d'origine. La traduction « révolutionnaire » du *Contrat social* de 1791 a en outre tendance dans les passages où il est question du pouvoir royal à instiller une connotation qui dénonce plus ouvertement le despotisme monarchique.

Mots-clés: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Du *contrat social,* traduction au XVIII[e] siècle, voix argumentative, *amplificatio*

Introduction: the print-cultural context of translations of Rousseau

Bridging reflections of classical antiquity and modern contract theory, the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) stand among the most original and complex contributions to political philosophy. Rousseau was never a philosopher in the traditional sense, however. Rather than aiming for consistent logical exposition, his ideas were steeped in passionate eloquence, often invoking paradoxical arguments, a natural consequence of his overriding desire to be truthful (Shklar, 1969). This desire led him to denounce the shortcomings and failures of modern society and social hypocrisy. Contrary to the common Enlightenment narrative of teleological progress, Rousseau saw only degenerate human nature in civilized man. Only in a pre-societal state, he argued in his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), did human nature exhibit its original, natural goodness. As his imaginary interlocutor observes in the third *Dialogue*, this premise is the unifying core of his psychological, artistic, pedagogical, political, and ethical ideas: "j'y vis partout le développement de son grand principe que la nature a fait l'homme heureux et bon, mais que la société le déprave et le rend misérable" (Rousseau, 1959 [1782], I, p. 934). The revolutionaries of 1789 adopted this Rousseauian image of depraved humanity and pointed to the *ancien régime* as its cause (Furet, 1997).[1]

1. Reisert (2003) elaborates how Rousseau traces the political and ethical corruptions of his times to "amour-propre," which makes human beings "rational but unreasonable" (p. 10). Singling out introductions to Rousseau's political thought from the vast corpus of secondary literature is bound to be highly selective. Two of the classic and celebrated contributions in the English language are by Masters (1968) and Shklar (1969).

When the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* was drafted by the French National Assembly in 1789, references to Rousseau's proposal to resolve the question of political inequality in *Du contrat social* (1762) were included almost verbatim.

The present contribution compares a selection of excerpts from two contemporary English translations of *Du contrat social*. Its intention is to shed further light on translators' discursive voice in rendering philosophical discourse, to understand how this voice mediates the argumentation of the original text, and to appraise the possible relevance of the revolutionary context in these two translations. Before introducing the main concepts of the analysis in section 1, I will chart a chronology of the translation of Rousseau's major works and consider the reception of the translations of the *Social contract* in their print-cultural context.

After the "blast" (France, 2005, p. 386) of the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1751), which won the prize of the *Académie de Dijon* in 1750, Rousseau quickly developed a reputation throughout the European Republic of Letters for decrying the dehumanizing effects of progress and civilization. Although his works were widely read in French across the Channel,[2] a rapid succession of translations contributed to the author's celebrity status in mid-eighteenth century Britain, which would take on proportions of "Rousseaumania" (Duffy, 1979, p. 14) between the 1760s and 1790s. Four different English translations appeared of the first *Discours* in 1751, 1752, 1760, and 1767. Rousseau's best-selling epistolary idyll, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), was published in English in April 1761. When the final two volumes of *Eloisa, or a series of original letters* appeared in July 1761, the first two had already sold out.

Eloisa's wide popular success set the scene for translations of other works. *A discourse upon the origin and foundation of the inequality among mankind*, the translation of the *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), or the second *Discourse*, was published in January 1762. Its title page is the first to mention the authorial reference "by John James Rousseau," a sign of cultural appropriation that can be found in other translations and reveals the success of the author in Britain.

This celebrated treatise is Rousseau's most radical work, and he considered it to be the most complete expression of his philosophical

2. See Duffy (1979) and Roddier (1950).

principles (Masters, 1968). Engaging with the state-of-nature tradition promoted by seventeenth-century political theory, Rousseau develops a hypothetical account of what human nature was like before the introduction of social and political institutions. The *Discours* counters Thomas Hobbes's portrayal of the natural state as a state of war and instead pictures the original human being as a solitary creature who is good by nature and has an innate capacity to pity the suffering of others. The happiest stage of human progress coincides with the first small social groups, the intermediate stage between the primitive and the civilized. This happiness deteriorates with the introduction of private property. As social bonds increase, natural benevolence is replaced by a competitive concern for the opinions of others. *Amour-propre* drives men to pretend and affect qualities in order to acquire power and esteem. Ultimately, oppression, hatred, and corruption are the concomitant effects of civilization.

Preserving the original goodness of human nature is likewise the pedagogical motto of *Émile, ou de l'éducation* (1762), one of Rousseau's most extensive works and the first to be publicly burned in France and Geneva for its seditious defense of "natural" religion. This defense praised the teaching of the Gospels but attacked the idea of divine revelation because it subjected reason to dogmatic faith; instead, the young Émile is taught to listen to the natural voice of his own conscience. Two rivalling translations appeared in short succession: *Emilius and Sophia; or, A New System of Education* in 1762 and *Emilius; or, An Essay on Education* in 1763. Both translators invoke Rousseau's right to be heard in Britain in prefaces that implicitly contrast his condemnation for impiety in France and Geneva with the freedom of expression upheld in England.

Du contrat social; ou principes du droit politique (1762), which came out in the same year as *Émile*, was equally ill-fated: it was condemned and publicly burned in Geneva, while the authorities in Paris prohibited its entry into France. Rousseau renounced his Genevan citizenship in 1763 and went into exile abroad, becoming Europe's most celebrated intellectual fugitive. He spent two years in Britain (1766-1767) at the invitation of David Hume before their friendship notoriously ended in a bitter quarrel. Generally regarded as the "leading proponent of primitivistic thought" (Sewall, 1938, p. 102), Rousseau was admired for his sublime eloquence, for the strenuous nature of his moral views, and also—perhaps unsurprisingly in the context of the Seven Years' War—for his

denunciation of corrupt French manners and his assertion of bold ideas in a land of "bigots."[3]

The famous opening dictum, "L'homme est né libre, & partout il est dans les fers" (Rousseau, 1762, p. 3), frames the argument of *Du contrat social*: innate human freedom is repressed by modern state structures and civil freedom is not safeguarded by political authorities. Building upon seventeenth-century political thinkers such as Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau emphasizes the consent of individuals as the standard of political legitimacy (Riley, 2013). Only a social contract that expresses the general will of all citizens can legitimize political authority. The best models of this political consent, in Rousseau's view, were ancient Sparta and republican Rome. *Du contrat social* is perhaps Rousseau's most vehemently discussed text in modern scholarship, not least for all the apparent paradoxes and ambiguities that its arguments entail.[4] To name but two, the text grants sovereignty to the people, yet dismisses democratic governance as unfeasible, and, in one of its most notorious paradoxes, argues that republican subjects should be "forced" to be free. The text was rendered into English in 1764 as *A Treatise on the Social Compact; or the principles of politic law*. A new translation entitled *An Inquiry into the Nature of the Social Contract; or principles of political right* appeared in 1791, after the outbreak of the French Revolution.[5]

The celebrity appeal of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Britain (Mason, 2008; Warner, 1940), the reception of his most popular works in review journals (Johnson, 1922; Sewall, 1938, 1939; Warner, 1933), and the wide-ranging permeation of his ideas in the eighteenth century[6] (Roddier, 1950), and particularly in the British Romantic period (Duffy, 1979; Voisine, 1956; Goulbourne and Higgins, 2017), are all well-researched and well-documented topics in the vast body of Rousseau studies, yet little attention has been given

3. When Rousseau arrived in London in January 1766, the *Westminster Journal* reported that he had come "to shelter himself from the persecution of the numberless bigots of the Continent" (quoted in Mason, 2008, p. 96).

4. For an in-depth discussion see, among others, Williams (2014) and Wraight (2008).

5. This overview has been confined to the main contemporary English translations of Rousseau's major works. See Roddier (1950), Sénelier (1950), Spittael (2015), and Warner (1934, 1940) for a list of all translations and full editorial details.

6. Rousseau's influence on Adam Smith's concept of pity (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1759) and self-interest (*The Wealth of Nations*, 1776) are among the most famous in this network of ideas.

to the materiality of the texts that transmitted the ideas. The role played by translations in expanding the response to Rousseau's ideas is difficult to unravel and determine, however, notably in the case of his social and political discourses. Unlike *Emilius and Sophia*, which was excerpted at length in the periodical press (Jooken and Rooryck, forthcoming), Rousseau's second *Discourse* and *Social Contract* were reviewed far less extensively. The few reviews there were pointed to the absurdity and paradoxes of the second *Discourse* while praising its bold eloquence (Johnson, 1922, p. 11). According to Duffy (1979, p. 22), the original *Du contrat social* was hardly discussed at all before 1789, let alone its first translation, which according to France "did not have a great impact in the short term" (2005, p. 387). Discussions of the reputation of Rousseauian contract theory revolve around the ideas themselves rather than the textual conduit of those ideas. Roddier (1950, p. 389), for example, focuses on the rising interest in the concept of political freedom and the progressive corruption of human societies in the context of mid-1760s confrontations between George III and political radicals like John Wilkes.

There are, however, subtle indications that hint at the print-cultural relevance of translation as a player in the public sphere. Even though his name does not appear on the title page, the 1764 version of *Du contrat social* was known to be the work of William Kenrick, the most prolific of Rousseau's English translators.[7] This polemical Grub Street hack writer and translator may have been a driving force behind the marketing of Rousseau's work (France, 2000, p. 272), notably because he favourably reviewed his own translations anonymously and criticized those by others in his capacity as chief critic at Ralph Griffiths's Whig periodical *The Monthly Review*. In November 1763, the *Monthly* reviewed Kenrick's *Treatise on the Social Compact*,[8] adding an excerpt from chapter XV, book III, a chapter that addresses the difficulty of acknowledging the "general will" in a representational political system. With constitutional controversies between king and Parliament dominating British

7. As the successful translator of *Eloisa* and *Emilius and Sophia*, Kenrick would eventually oversee translations of virtually all of Rousseau's works, jointly published in the *Miscellaneous Works of Mr. J.J. Rousseau* (5 vols., Becket and de Hondt, 1767). For an appraisal of Kenrick's translations of Rousseau, see Bour (2018) and Sewall (1941).

8. The title page bears the imprint "1764," but, judging from the review, the book must have appeared in the autumn of 1763.

politics at the time, the selection of this particular passage appears to have been a conscious choice (see also Roddier, 1950, p. 227). The reviewer applauds the flawlessness of the translation and commends Rousseau's "notions in politics" as being "as new and singular, as those he entertains of religion and philosophy" (Anon., 1763a, p. 385).

Interestingly, Kenrick's translation was re-edited, without any changes to the text, by the London printer J. Murray in 1791. This renewed interest and rise in marketing potential after the French Revolution illustrates Palmer's observation that *Du contrat social* "did not so much make revolution as it was made by it" (Palmer, 2014, p. 119). Likewise, the print-cultural embedding of the new translation of 1791, by an anonymous translator, is significant. *An Inquiry into the Nature of the Social Contract* was published by George Robinson, his son, and two brothers. Being the largest trading booksellers and publishers in England between 1764 and 1822 (Bentley Jr., 2004), their interest in publishing Rousseau's radical text is indicative of the interests of the English reading public at the time. The Robinsons' radical affiliations also transpired when, in November 1793, the four partners were fined for selling copies of *The Rights of Man*, Thomas Paine's famous answer to Edmund Burke's attack on the French Revolution. Paine's pamphlet had been published, not by Robinson, in March 1791 and banned shortly afterwards because it prophesized the overthrow of the monarchy. The new translation of *Du contrat social* was issued at around the same time as Paine's text and reviewed to great acclaim in *The Critical Review*. The reviewer notes that the translator "has executed his task with great precision and perspicuity" (Anon., 1791, p. 478) and that Rousseau's arguments, according to which power must really reside in the people, are "correct" and "convincing" (*ibid.*). It bears mentioning that the same journal had delivered a scathing critique of the author in its review of the older translation: in November 1763, the reviewer observed that the author's "speculations are too far fetched, and too fine spun […] to be of the smallest utility either to government or society" (Anon., 1763b, p. 375). At that time, however, the periodical still represented a firm Tory outlook, in contrast to the liberal *Monthly*. In the course of the 1780s, British reviewing culture changed, producing a blend of political affinities within periodicals, and, by the 1790s, all major reviews were supporting the French Revolution (Andrews, 2000). Moreover, the *Critical* would be published by the Robinson firm together with the printer Archibald Hamilton from 1781 onwards,

which probably also explains the shift in appreciation for Rousseau and the praise for the 1791 translation.

A typology of the translator's discursive voice

The contextual link between publisher, press, and translation reveals one aspect of the status of these translations: their launch interacted with the changing contours of political contexts, in this case the permeation of radical ideas after the outbreak of the French Revolution. In order to clarify how the two translators convey their interpretation of the author's key arguments, the analysis that follows focuses on textual traces of discursive argumentation.

This focus on the materiality of the text itself, the "workshop" of the translator, ties in with ideas developed by Stéphane Van Damme, whose study of Enlightenment thought endorses a history of ideas rooted in, rather than disembodied from, actual textual expression and highlights the "pragmatique linguistique de la philosophie" (2014, p. 22) as a productive field of inquiry. Identifying loci in the text where interventions of the translator occurred exposes nodes of ideas or arguments which the translator interpreted as of crucial importance in the transmission of the author's work.

Studies of contemporary English translations of Rousseau's first *Discours* and of *Émile*[9] have revealed a range of textual adaptations, some of them explicitly marked as interventions by the translator, others implicitly embedded in the text. Of course, this range need not surprise any student of translation in the early modern period. As Mary Helen McMurran (2010) has amply demonstrated in her account of the emergence of the novel, the distinction between source and target was "intentionally blurred" (p. 7) in the eighteenth century: translators felt at liberty to be faithful to an original composition or to adapt it freely, and original creations could pose as translations, either for literary effect or marketing purposes. This blurry conception was rooted in the pre-modern concept of composition. Critics and writers shared the view "that no composition was entirely new, that it always included some form of translated borrowing; that, therefore, translating took part in any composition" (Baudry, 2013, p. 17). In

9. For an analysis of translations of the first *Discours*, see Rooryck and Jooken (2013) and Spittael (2015). A comparison of the two English translations of *Émile*, in particular of their rendering of the expression of natural religion in *La profession de foi de Vicaire Savoyard* (book IV of Émile), is discussed in Jooken and Rooryck (forthcoming).

short, insofar as transmission from classical sources was integral to all literary creation, the act of translation was the continuation of an act of rendering already embedded in the original text. Fluid boundaries between source and target therefore transpired on the level of textual creation: author and translator were conceived of as engaging in a shared literary endeavour, at liberty to avail themselves of similar rhetorical tropes. Thus, the main techniques that occur in prose fiction translations from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century (McMurran, 2010, pp. 77-79) typically aimed at "*energeia*" or "vividness," either by amplifying or expanding the text (*amplificatio*) or by reducing or omitting passages (*brevitas*).

In analyzing excerpts from two translations of Rousseau's *Du contrat social*, the present case study explores how *amplificatio* and *brevitas* are not only activated in translations of prose fiction, but also inform what Guy Rooryck and I have identified as *argumentative voice* in the translation of philosophical discourse (see Rooryck and Jooken, 2013, 2019). Our research has so far distinguished four recurrent communicative functions in the translator's voice, or "index of the Translator's discursive presence" (Hermans, 1996, p. 27), defined as an enarrative[10] or interpretative *voice* in our typology. Enarrative voice is akin to a commentary inscribed into the original source text. It either surfaces as an explicit allographic text in footnotes or other paratexts, or is implicitly integrated into the rendition of the authorial text, remaining indiscernible to the reader who does not have access to the original. The functions are:

1) *meta-discursive voice*: the translator explicitly discusses or justifies his or her textual and editorial decisions.

2) *argumentative voice*: the translator explicitly or implicitly engages with the argumentative positions of the author's text, either to clarify and highlight them (*amplificatio*), or, conversely, to downplay them or omit them (*brevitas*).

3) *evaluative voice*: the translator explicitly or implicitly expresses a positive or negative appreciation of the author or of the text.

10. The concept is affiliated with Damian-Grint's discussion of hermeneutic *enarratio* in twelfth-century translations of sacred texts (1999).

4) *extradiegetic voice*: the translator explicitly or implicitly incorporates contextual references, either linked to the source culture or to the target culture.

The discussion that follows intends to corroborate and refine our umbrella category of argumentative voice. In its current description, this category covers shifts of intensification (*amplificatio*) or reduction (*brevitas*) that may affect the rhetorical or semantic scope of the translated message. The corpus study will clearly distinguish between these two types of discursive argumentative voice: rhetorical interventions on the one hand and, on the other, interventions that alter the denotation of the message. In addition, the study will illustrate how the textual shifts analyzed reveal the attitude of the translators, notably their support or criticism of the ideas expressed by the author. This distinction reflects what Hermans (2010, p. 69) has called "associative" and "dissociative" attitudes of the translator towards the represented discourse.

Amplificatio and *brevitas* in *A Treatise on the Social Compact* (1764) and *An Inquiry into the Nature of the Social Contract* (1791)

The last stage of political history depicted in the *Discours sur l'inégalité* is characterized by despotism and slavery, terms that largely overlap in Rousseau's account: the rich have instituted laws and rights designed primarily to protect their own possessions. Subjects have been tricked into believing that they have acquired freedom and security, whereas in fact they have been submitted to servitude and inequality. *Du contrat social* aims to resolve the dismal ending of the second *Discours* and construct a possible alternative: a republic that places sovereignty in the people and cultivates an ethos of freedom.

The corpus of texts studied is based on the original editions, which will be referred to in the respective discussions as *Contrat* (1762), *Compact* (1764) and *Contract* (1791). Four chapters were selected for the comparative analysis. They are thematically united by their focus on "slavery" and the meaning of political freedom:

1) Book I, Chapter IV, *De l'Esclavage* (1762, pp. 14-25); *On slavery* (1764, pp. 9-17), *Of Slavery* (1791, pp. 16-29)

2) Book III, Chapter VI, *De la Monarchie* (1762, pp. 175-190); *On monarchy* (1764, pp. 117-127), *Of Monarchy* (1791, pp. 202-217)

3) Book III, Chapter X, *De L'abus du Gouvernement & de sa pente à dégénérer* (1762, pp. 214-221); *Of the abuse of government, and its tendency to degenerate* (1764, pp. 144-150); *Of the abuse of government, and its propensity to degeneration* (1791, pp. 240-248)

4) Book III, Chapter XVIII, *Moyens de prévenir les usurpations du Gouvernement* (1762, pp. 253-258); *Of the means of preventing the usurpations of government* (1764, pp. 173-178); *The Means of preventing the Usurpations of Government* (1791, pp. 280-285)

The discussion starts by considering a number of paratextual interventions, before focusing on the chapter on slavery and related references in other chapters.[11] "Slavery" in the context of the *Contrat* refers to the situation of subjects of despotism who need to be released from their illegitimate chains, not to colonial chattel-slavery practices.

In both translations, rhetorical emphasis occurs frequently, yet, as the comparative analysis will show, the 1791 version alters the propositions of the text more profoundly and amplifies its claims from a "revolutionary" vantage point. This contextualized embedding of argumentative voice is already clear from the opening preface that precedes the author's "advertisement":

PREFACE

> The high honours which have been recently paid to the memory of Rousseau, by the National Assembly of France; avowedly from a persuasion that a treatise of his, entitled *Du Contrat Social*, had prepared the way for the Revolution which has lately taken place in that country, must naturally excite a desire in the minds of Englishmen, to be acquainted with a work, which could lay the foundation of so important an event. A translation is therefore offered to the public; in which care has been taken to give the sense of the author, in the plainest language;

11. What has not been included in the analysis is a comparison of the translators' lexical equivalents of Rousseau's key concepts or terminology. The 1764 translation clearly explores the possibly apt translations of "contrat social," rendering the term as "social compact" in the main title, and as "pact" or "covenant" in chapter titles. The French term "pacte" occurs in the title of Book I, chapter VI *Du Pacte social*. In the 1791 English version, "contract" is the main equivalent of "contrat" but "compact" is used in many chapters too. There are numerous other patterns of lexical variation that might be explored here, but the idiosyncratic nature of choices in translation can only be identified if they are compared with examples in diachronic electronic corpora of early modern usage or with records in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This is beyond the scope of this paper.

> that all who choose to trace, in this treatise, the principles of the new system of French government, may do so, without that difficulty which is sometimes found in reading translations of philosophical works. (Rousseau, 1791, n.p.)

This preface, by a voice that may be the translator's, underlines the importance of the text and primes the reader through extra-diegetic discourse: the current translation should be of interest to English readers who, after the important recent political events in France, must be interested in acquainting themselves with "the principles of the new system of French government." These principles are directly linked, according to the "avowed persuasion" of the National Assembly, to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Du contrat social*. The preface thus clearly adds what Genette has called "connotative value" (1997, p. 93) to the treatise that follows: it should be read as a text that "prepared the way for the Revolution." In a meta-discursive observation, the preface also adds that the translation has steered clear of difficult phrases and has rendered "the sense of the author, in the plainest language," which may serve as a selling point to attract a broad readership.

Apart from this first paratextual instance, the translator's explicit discursive presence is revealed in three explanatory footnotes that illustrate the promise to use "plain" language and avoid difficulties by offering additional definitions. One note is a cross-reference to a source mentioned in the text, but the other two are more significant interventions on the content level: they define the terms used in the argumentation. The first occurs in Book I, chapter V, in which Rousseau discusses the difference between pre-civilized groups of individuals, "des hommes épars," and political bodies. Whereas the 1764 translation stresses the scattered nature of "individuals," the 1791 text qualifies them as "uncivilized" men and, in the explanatory footnote, motivates this choice in a meta-discursive reference to the next chapter:

> Que des hommes épars soient successivement assujettis à un seul, en quelque nombre qu'ils puissent être, je ne vois là qu'un maître & des esclaves. (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 25)
>
> Let individuals, in any number whatever, become severally and successively subject to one man, they are all, in that case, nothing more than master and slaves. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 17)

> When uncivilized* men are successively subjugated by an individual, whatever number there may be of them, they appear to me only as a master and his slaves.
> *The term *uncivilized* is here applied to men who have not yet entered into the social compact, as described in the following chapter; and who of course are not in the civil state, whatever may be the refinement of their minds or their manners. Rousseau styles them *hommes épars*. (*Contract*, 1791, p. 30; italics in original)

The 1764 version incidentally also reveals the translator's implicit argumentative presence by rhetorically adding the intensifiers "in any number whatever" and "severally," techniques that are taken up below.

An explanatory note also occurs in book II, chapter V, on the right to life and death. In order to resolve ambiguity concerning one of the recurring concepts of the work, that is, the term "Prince," the 1791 translation clarifies the author's usage to the reader. The original text states "quand le Prince lui [le Citoyen] a dit: Il est expédient à l'Etat que tu meures, il doit mourir" (*Contrat*, 1762, p. 78), which is translated into "when the prince* says to a man, 'It is expedient for the state that thou shouldst die,' he must die" (*Contract*, 1791, pp. 90-91). The footnote added to "prince" explains:

> *Rousseau does not use the term *Prince* to express, according to the common acceptation of the word, a man who is a Sovereign or Chief Ruler: neither does he apply it to the principal Magistrate, or head of Executive Power singly; but to the whole Body of Government collectively, and to that Body alone. (1791, p. 90; italics in original)[12]

The 1764 translation, which translates the title of chapter V as "On capital punishments," renders this passage as: "when the prince declares that the good of the state requires his life, he ought to resign it" (*Compact*, 1764, p. 32), choosing an indirect rather than direct voice and a formulation that intervenes rhetorically but does not qualify the argumentation in semantic terms.

In Book IIII, chapter XIV, the third of a sequence of chapters on sovereign authority, Rousseau attaches a footnote to describe the function of *orateurs* in ancient Rome, comparing them to orators in the English Parliament. The note explains: "*A peu près selon le sens qu'on donne à ce nom dans le Parlement d'Angleterre" (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 233). The modal adverbial is retained in the 1764 translation:

12. This definition is consistent with Rousseau's own definition of *Prince* in Book III, chapter VI.

"*Nearly* in the sense given to those who speak on any question in the parliament of England" (*Compact*, 1764, p. 159; my italics). The 1791 version, however, renders the observation as an unqualified statement: "*The word orator *is used here in the sense* the English parliament affix to it" (*Contract*, 1791, p. 260; my italics).

These paratextual instances suggest that the translators' argumentative mediation is either a case of rhetorical *amplificatio* or of propositional alteration. From the footnotes discussed, it would seem that the 1764 text applies rhetorical emphasis but retains the denotation of the original, while the 1791 version is more likely to adapt the semantic scope of the message itself, for example by putting key terms like *Prince* into the right, non-aristocratic, perspective. This discursive mediation is in keeping with its promise in the preface to produce a "plain" text. The argumentative distinction between the two translations will now be elaborated in a discussion of the chapter on slavery.

A different emphasis can be observed in the translators' rendering of the first sentence of the chapter. The French text opens with an adamant denial of any existence of natural authority of one human being over another, who is by nature his "semblable." Set in the biological context of the human species in the 1764 translation, this claim is transferred to a political context of equality in the 1791 version. The latter interpretation of "semblable" therefore initiates a different semantic pattern and embeds the text in a political setting from the very beginning:

> Puisqu'aucun homme n'a une autorité naturelle sur *son semblable*. (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 14; my italics)
>
> As no man hath any natural authority *over the rest of his species*. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 9; my italics).
>
> Since no man has any natural authority *over his equals*. (*Contract,* 1791, p. 16; my italics).

The chapter sets out to interpret the act of enslavement, which consists in "aliéner sa liberté & se rendre esclave d'un maître" (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 14), where the act of "aliéner," Rousseau argues, may imply an act of giving or selling. An individual can sell himself for his subsistence, but it is hard to specify any exchange of this kind on the level of a people who enters into slavery. Rousseau's argument is phrased in statements in the simple present tense that end in a

rhetorical question: "Or un homme qui se fait esclave d'un autre, ne se donne pas, il se vend, tout au moins pour sa subsistance : mais un peuple pour quoi se vend-il?" (*Contrat,* 1762, pp. 14-15).

Modality is introduced in the translation of this argument. In Kenrick's version, the addition of a "should" subjunctive adds rhetorical emphasis to the rhetorical question: "Now a man who becomes the slave of another doth not give himself away, but sells himself, at least for his subsistence; but why *should* a whole people sell themselves?" (*Compact*, 1764, p. 10; my italics). In the 1791 translation, the modal tenor of the argumentation is strengthened. Rhetorical emphasis is added typographically by italicizing "give" and "sell," but especially by stressing the impossibility (or lack of capacity) implied in the added modal "can" and the strong personal obligation expressed in "must": "but a man who becomes the slave of another, cannot *give*, he must s*ell* himself, at least for a subsistence. But how can a people sell themselves?" (*Contract*, 1791, p. 17; italics in original). The rhetorical emphasis is matched by a shift in the logical pattern: Rousseau's "*pour quoi*" [what for] becomes "how" in the 1791 version. This makes the question more rhetorical and underlines the absurdity of any communal acceptance of slavery.

In the interpretation of the next line, Kenrick's 1764 version again adds modality ("can," "be supposed to") to rhetorically stress the impossibility of a people's enslavement. The argumentative voice is also apparent in the use of the intensifier "really." In addition to this emphasis, the translator intervenes semantically, by synecdochically shifting "leur personne" to "their liberty":

> Les sujets donnent donc leur personne à condition qu'on prendra aussi leur bien? Je ne vois pas ce qu'il leur reste à conserver. (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 15)
>
> Can subjects be supposed to give away their *liberty*, on condition that the receiver shall take their property along with it? After this, I really cannot see any thing they have left. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 10; my italics)

The 1791 text is less rhetorically ardent than the older translation, even though it adds "such a gratuity" to stress the gravity of subjects giving themselves up to slavery. Semantically, however, the interpretation again introduces a shift to a political context. The pronoun "on" is replaced with "the prince," i.e., the body of government (*supra*). The hierarchical nature of the relationship is added to the argument by introducing the verb "condescend": "Do subjects therefore give their

persons on condition that *the prince* will *condescend* to accept their property also? I see nothing, after *such a gratuity*, that there remains for them to preserve" (*Contract*, 1791, p. 17; my italics).

The original text continues to explore arguments that may persuade subjects to renounce their liberty to an absolute ruler, adding a critical reflection that this act allegedly guarantees public peace: "On dira que le despote assure à ses sujets la tranquillité civile" (*Contrat*, 1762, p. 15). Rousseau's "despote" is modified to "monarch" in Kenrick's version, while the 1791 translator keeps "despot": "It may be said, a monarch maintains among his subjects the public tranquility" (*Compact*, 1764, p. 10); "We are told that a despot ensures civil tranquility to his subjects" (*Contract*, 1791, p. 17).

Rousseau defines his usage of "despote" in book III, chapter X as "l'usurpateur du pouvoir souverain" (p. 221) who puts himself above the law. By casting a "monarch" in this context, Kenrick creates an association of despotism with the monarchy, and associates the monarch with the characteristics of despotism, which are also mentioned in the same passage, namely "insatiable avarice" and "oppressions" (p. 10). This is a significant shift that affects the meaning of the argument. Interestingly, however, the 1791 translation uses "despot(ic/ism)" more frequently than either Rousseau or Kenrick does: the term occurs fifteen times in comparison to eleven in Kenrick's translation and twelve in Rousseau's original. The following examples illustrate the more emphatic interpretation of the 1791 translator, which strengthens the association of royal power and despotism.

In the chapter on the monarchy (book III, chapter VI), the 1791 version introduces the term in a passage that discusses how monarchs scorn the need to be loved by the people. The 1791 version reverses the meaning of the line "on s'en moquera dans les Cours." It adds a prediction to the original observation and expands the text beyond what is implied in the original: if monarchs abuse the support of the people as a route to despotic rule, they will be deceived themselves rather than being the agents of mockery.

> Les Rois veulent être absolus & de loin on leur crie que le meilleur moyen de l'être, est de se faire aimer de leurs peuples. Cette maxime est très-belle, & même très-vraie à certains égards. Malheureusement on s'en moquera toujours dans les Cours. (*Contrat,* 1762, pp. 177-178)

> Kings would be absolute, and they are sometimes told that their best way to become so, is to make themselves beloved by the people. This maxim is doubtless a very fine one, and even in some respects true. But unhappily it is laughed at in courts. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 119)
>
> Kings are all desirous of being absolute; and they are told from all quarters that the most certain way of becoming so is to gain the affections of the people. This is a fine maxim; *but unfortunately, those who endeavour to conciliate the love of the multitude as a means of arriving at despotism, always find themselves deceived in the pursuit.* (*Contract,* 1791, pp. 204-205; my italics)

The sequel of this passage also demonstrates how the 1791 translator sharpens the tone of the argument and the despotic connotation of monarchy from a "revolutionary" perspective:

> Les meilleurs Rois veulent pouvoir être méchants s'il leur plait, sans cesser d'être les maîtres. (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 178)
>
> Even the best kings are desirous of having it in their power to do ill when they please, without losing their prerogatives. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 119)
>
> [f]or even the best kings wish to possess the power of *being tyrants*, if they please, with impunity. (*Contract,* 1791, p. 205; my italics)

The 1791 edition introduces the noun "tyrant" here, which in Rousseau's definition equals an "usurpateur de l'autorité royale" (book III, chapter X, p. 221). The choice of this noun in English again intensifies the argument and polarizes the account of royal rule. The 1791 version continues to adopt this kind of argumentation in the next passage, which makes an implied supposition explicit and, in doing so, introduces the term "tyrant" to refer to the executive authority of a "Prince." The 1764 text, on the other hand, only introduces rhetorical emphasis in the combined use of two synonyms for the adjective "puissant:"

> J'avoue que, supposant les sujets toujours parfaitement soumis, l'intérêt du Prince seroit alors que le peuple fût puissant, afin que cette puissance étant la sienne le rendît redoutable à ses voisins; mais comme cet intérêt n'est que secondaire & subordonné, & que les deux suppositions sont incompatibles, il est naturel que les Princes donnent toujours la préférence à la maxime qui leur est le plus immédiatement utile. (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 179)
>
> I confess indeed that, supposing the people to be held in perfect subjection, it would be to the interest of the prince that they should be

> *rich and powerful*, because their strength, being also his, serves to make him respectable to his neighbours; but as this interest is only secondary and subordinate, and that these suppositions are incompatible, it is natural for princes to give the preference always to that maxim which is the most immediately useful. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 120; my italics)

> I grant, that, if subjects were always perfectly submissive, it would be the prince's interest to make them powerful; because, as their power would be his, he might employ it to render himself formidable to the neighbouring states. As this is however but a secondary consideration; and as the two suppositions *of a people being able to resist the will of a tyrant, and of their continuing entirely obedient to his will*, are incompatible; We must of course conclude that princes will ever give the preference to that maxim which will be most immediately useful to them. (*Contract,* 1791, pp. 205-206; my italics)

The 1791 text again adds the term "despotism" in chapter XVIII of book III. The following excerpt discusses the possible "usurpations" of government which, by pretending to protect public peace, may prevent assemblies that seek to restore good government. Whereas the 1764 translation adds rhetorical *amplificatio* ("bold enough") to the text, the 1791 translation includes not only emphasis ("full extent," "beyond the line," "ventured to speak too freely"), but also an explicit description of what is contained in the suggestion that the "Prince," that is, the "executive authority," may extend his/its rights to the point of abuse by pretending to uphold public welfare:

> Car en paroissant n'user que de ses droits, il lui [le Prince] est fort aisé de les étendre, & d'empêcher, sous le prétexte du repos public, les assemblées destinées à rétablir le bon ordre; de sorte qu'il se prévaut d'un silence qu'il empêche de rompre, ou des irrégularités qu'il fait commettre, pour supposer en sa faveur l'aveu de ceux que la crainte fait taire, & pour punir ceux qui osent parler. (*Contrat,* 1762, pp. 255-256)

> [I]n appearing only to make use of his prerogatives, he [the prince] may extend them, and under the pretence of maintaining the public peace, may prevent those assemblies which might otherwise be calculated to re-establish the good order of government: so that he might profit by that silence which he keeps from being broken, and by those irregularities which he himself might cause to be committed; pleading in his favour the tacit approbation of those whose fears keep them silent; and punishing those *who are bold enough to speak*. (*Compact,* 1764, pp. 175-176; my italics)

> [U]nder colour of only exerting rights *to their full extent*, it may easily go *beyond the line*; and, pretending to have the public tranquility alone in view, prevent the meeting of those assemblies intended for the re-establishment of good order. The silence *which the people may be thus compelled to observe*, and the excesses which government may at the same time privately encourage, *may become powerful instruments for furthering the schemes of despotism*: the former may be urged as a proof that the people approve the conduct of administration, because they do not complain of it; and the latter employed as a means of drawing punishment on those, who have *ventured to speak too freely of its evident tendency*. (*Contract*, 1791, pp. 282-283; my italics)

Returning to the chapter on slavery after this focus on references to despotism in the 1791 English version, the analysis clearly reveals that the 1764 translation too makes ample use of rhetorical emphasis. It thus intensifies the argument of the absurdity of slavery, as in the added modality "can" and "must necessarily be" in this excerpt:

> Dire qu'un homme se donne gratuitement, c'est dire une chose absurde & inconcevable; un tel acte est illégitime & nul par cela seul que celui qui le fait, n'est pas dans son bon sens. Dire la même chose de tout un peuple, c'est supposer un peuple de foux: la folie ne fait pas droit. (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 16)

> To say, that a man *can give* himself away, is to talk unintelligibly and absurdly; such an act *must necessarily be* illegal and void, were it for no other reason, than that it argues insanity of mind in the agent. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 11; my italics)

> To say that a man gives himself gratuitously, is absurd and incomprehensible; such an act would in itself be illegal and void, because the person who performed it could not be in his proper senses. (*Contract,* 1791, pp. 18-19)

Both translators use strong rhetorical language in discussing liberty in the next passage, but Kenrick introduces the more rhetorical argumentation, adding a rhetorical question, intensifiers like "his all," and the pronouns and determiners "us" and "our very nature" to involve the reader. Interestingly, the text also adds the adjective "natural" to liberty, which makes the implied argument of freedom being intrinsic to human nature explicit. The 1791 version introduces the determiner "our" as a rhetorical technique and adds deontic modality to strengthen the necessity of the logical argument.

> Renoncer à sa liberté, c'est renoncer à sa qualité d'homme, aux droits de l'humanité, même à ses devoirs. Il n'y a nul dédommagement possible pour quiconque renonce à tout. Une telle renonciation est incompatible avec la nature de l'homme, & c'est ôter toute moralité à ses actions que d'ôter toute liberté à sa volonté. Enfin, c'est une convention vaine & contradictoire, de stipuler d'une part une autorité absolue, & de l'autre une obéissance sans bornes. (*Contrat,* 1762, pp. 17-18)
>
> To renounce one's *natural* liberty, is to renounce one's *very being* as a man; it is to renounce not only the rights, but even the duties of humanity. *And what possible indemnification can be made the man who thus gives up his all?* Such a renunciation is incompatible *with our very nature*; for to deprive *us* of the liberty of the will, is to take away all morality from *our* actions. In a word, a convention, which stipulates on the one part absolute authority, and on the other implicit obedience, is, in itself, futile and contradictory. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 12; my italics)
>
> To renounce *our* liberty, is to renounce *our* quality of man, and with it all the rights and duties of humanity; and no adequate compensation can possibly be made for such-a sacrifice, as it is in itself incompatible with the nature of man; whose actions, when once he is deprived of his free will, *must be* destitute of all morality. In a word, a convention which stipulates for absolute authority on one side, and unlimited obedience on the other, *must always be considered* as vain and contradictory. (*Contract,* 1791, p. 20; my italics)

The text goes on to qualify any mutual rights that would exist between a master and a slave as irrational. The translations underscore the emptiness of this rhetoric, because a slave being the master's possession is devoid of rights: intensifiers ("of course," "absurdly") and explicit stress ("he himself") occur in the 1764 translation, while the 1791 text adds the intensifier "absolute nonsense." Both translators also rephrase the second rhetorical question of the original into a strong statement:

> Car quel droit mon esclave auroit-il contre moi, puisque tout ce qu'il a m'appartient, & que son droit étant le mien, ce droit de moi contre moi-même est un mot qui n'a aucun sens? (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 18)
>
> For what claim can my slave have upon me, *when he himself*, and all that belongs to him, are mine? His claims are *of course* my own, and to say those can be set up against me, is *to talk absurdly*. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 12; my italics)
>
> For what right can my slave have that is not mine, since every thing that he has belongs to me? and, his right being mine, to speak of the

> right of me against myself, *is absolute nonsense*. (*Contract,* 1791, pp. 20-21; my italics)

Finally, the only case of *brevitas* in the excerpts discussed involves the omission of a religious reference. In a passage that refutes the Hobbesian idea that war is the natural state of men and refers to the wars of the thirteenth-century King Louis IX of France, the translations do not include the reference to "la paix de Dieu," which suspended these wars. They do emphasize the abusive nature of feudal government, the 1764 version by adding the intensifiers "only some" and "truly," and the 1791 translation by qualifying the system as "so completely" absurd:

> à l'égard des guerres privées, autorisées par les établissements de Louis IX, Roi de France, & suspendues par la paix de Dieu, ce sont des abus du gouvernement féodal, systême absurde s'il en fut jamais, contraire aux principes du droit naturel et & à toute bonne politique. (*Contrat,* 1762, p. 20)

> with regard to the particular combats authorised by the institutions of Lewis XI [*sic*]. King of France; they were *only some of the* abuses of the feudal government, a system *truly* absurd, as contrary to the principles of natural justice, as of good policy. (*Compact,* 1764, p. 13; my italics)

> with regard to the petty Wars authorized by the establishments of Louis IX. of France, they were abuses of the feudal government, a system *so completely* absurd, that it contradicted every principle of natural right, and of sound policy. (*Contract,* 1791, p. 23; my italics)

Conclusion

This exploratory case study of excerpts from two contemporary translations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Du contrat social* (1762), respectively appearing before (1764) and during (1791) the French Revolution, has revealed that translators add significantly to the argumentation of the original treatise. Both cases disclose the argumentative voice of an "associative" translator who supports the author's communicative intent and whose textual shifts attest to *amplificatio* rather than *brevitas*. This discursive presence usually remains implicitly embedded in the text and can be traced in the frequent addition of adverbial intensifiers or modals to underline the absurdity of a master-servant relationship between a sovereign and his subjects.

The 1764 translation foregrounds the argument of freedom in a remarkable instance of semantic elucidation, shifting "leur

personne" (*Contrat*, 1762, p. 15) to "their liberty" (*Compact*, 1764, p. 10). Furthermore, the association between monarchy and the abuse of royal power is subtly strengthened when the English text replaces an original reference to "despote" with "monarch" (*ibid.*). Meaningful alterations to the proposition of the argument itself, however, are especially striking in the translation that appeared during the revolutionary period. Even though both the 1764 and 1791 translators consistently reinforce Rousseau's arguments on the prerogatives of liberty and the abusive nature of power, only the 1791 version consistently associates monarchy with despotism throughout, suggesting that monarchy, by definition, entails the usurpation of power. Indeed, the term "tyrant" (*Contract*, 1791, p. 206) is introduced in a passage that left the power of the sovereign implicit in the original.

The 1791 translation also integrates explicit meta-discursive and extra-diegetic references that link the translation to the radical topic of its treatise and the political context in which it is embedded. It promises to deliver a "plain" text in its preface, which appears to confirm Sher's observation that eighteenth-century publishers "pitched their books, even scholarly books, to the general reading public" (Sher, 2006, p. 28). This preface frames Rousseau's treatise as the text that "prepared the way for the Revolution." Footnotes in the text further explain the political context of promoting equality and even suggest that associations prior to the introduction of a social contract were "uncivilized" (*Contract*, 1791, p. 30, footnote).

Discursive analyses such as the one we have carried out here can help us trace the translator's agency in mediating Enlightenment thought.[13] In addition, textual interventions can be regarded as a partial record of the contemporary cultural reception of novel discourse, something which is certainly the case in the 1791 translation. The comparison between reviews of *Compact* (1764) and *Contract* (1791) in the *Critical Review* reveal the major shift in the appreciation of Rousseau's discourse in the space of almost thirty years. It also points to the importance of the print-cultural embedding of translation, with the 1791 translation being distributed by the Robinson family, printers who were known to associate themselves with Thomas

13. See also Thomas (2014, p. 514): "La traduction devient pour le traducteur l'occasion de penser à son tour, de faire sienne la pensée de l'auteur, de la développer voire de la corriger."

Paine's radical pamphlet on the rights of man. The multiple radical groups and debating societies that formed in Britain in the wake of the French Revolution generally accepted the Rousseauian principle that the "general will" is unquestionably right, but "there is no reason to assume it [Rousseau's *Social Contract*] provided the theoretical basis for the approach to these questions in the British popular societies" (Mee, 2016, p. 11). Without explicit evidence, it is near impossible to establish a direct connection between the translations and the public debate they may have inspired.

However, establishing this connection need not be the ambition of textual comparisons of original discourse and their renderings in novel cultural contexts. Translators being both readers and communicators of ideas clearly leave behind traces of their argumentation in the text, a voice that both reflects and may prime the response and possible criticism of the reading public. Further studies of translators' explicit and implicit discursive presence can add significant critical steps to describing the blurred dividing lines between eighteenth-century source texts and translations and, by so doing, illustrate the dialogue that takes place in this indistinct territory.

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