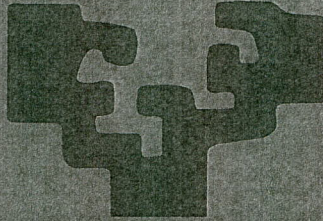


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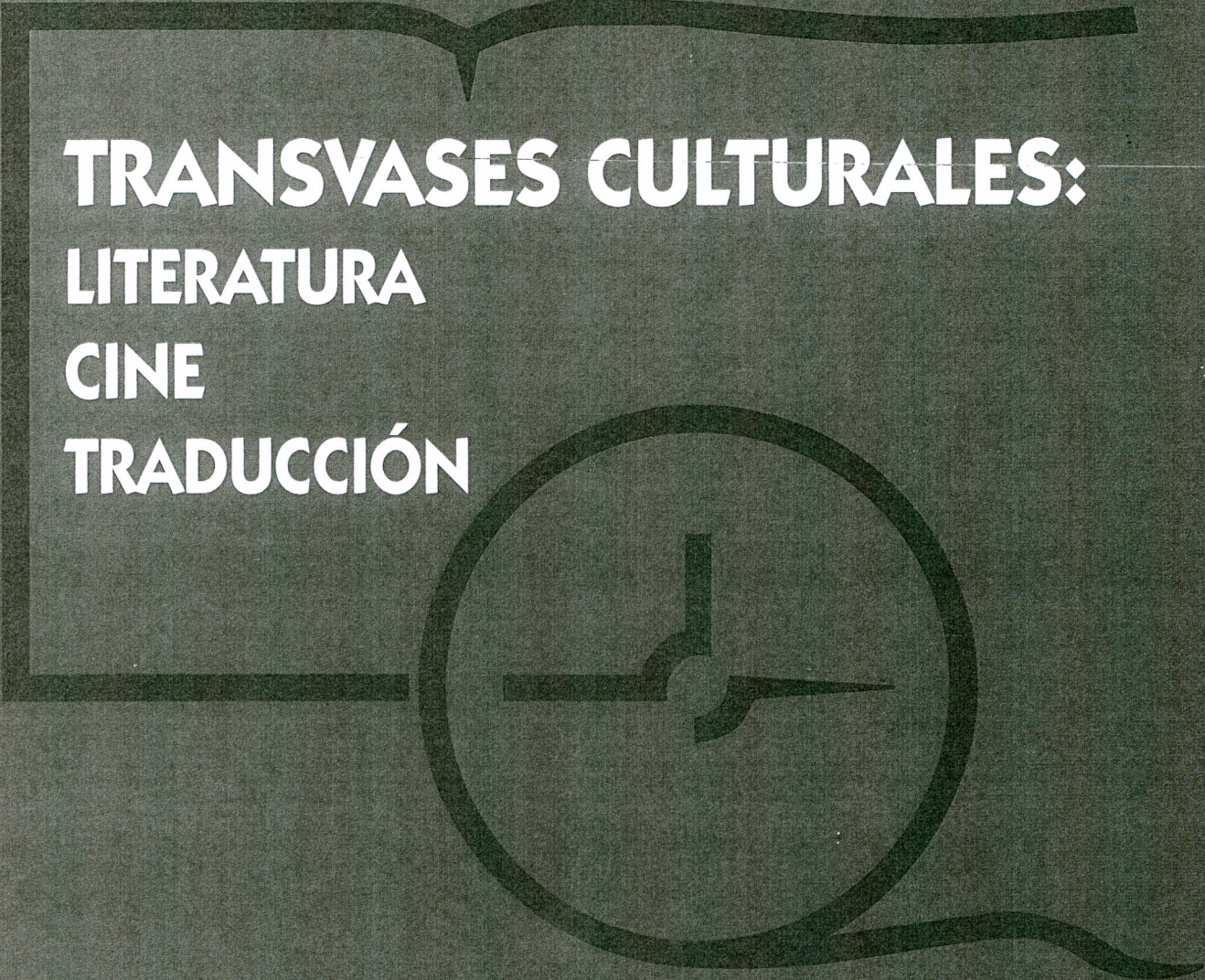


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**CULTURAL TRANSFER IN DIFFERENT LITERARY CONTEXTS.
THE CASE OF *LA CELESTINA***

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Soon after it was first published in 1499 *La Celestina*, was early translated into English, and each of the following centuries saw a different translation of this Spanish masterpiece; thus up to the Nineteenth Century three translations from the Spanish appeared in England⁽¹⁾: John Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea* (1525), James Mabbe's (Don Diego Puede-Ser) *The Spanish Bawd* (1631), and Captain John Stevens' *The Bawd of Madrid* (1707)⁽²⁾. These translations vary by far from the original, owing to the fact that they are the result of the different aims and objectives of their respective translators together with the different literary tastes of the epoches in the target culture, which also made both the structure and the way of dealing with the text itself and the characters different.

In this paper we shall deal both with their differences and their analogies, and concentrate on the most striking difference: structure, and on the most significant characteristic they have in common: additions, as well as their nature and how these two determining factors serve the purposes of the different translators in the literary context of the epoch.

John Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea* is "A New Commoditye in Englysh in Maner of an Enterlude", which is not surprising, since most early Tudor plays state that they are interludes or written 'in the manner of an interlude'. *Calisto and Melebea* does not have any structure at all, for it consists in a series of 1,087 verses without divisions and only follows acts I, II and IV of the original, providing a new "happy" ending. *La Celestina* was first introduced into England through Queen Catherine and her Spanish Court, but it was soon reprovved by Luis Vives because of 'its immorality'⁽³⁾; *La Celestina* notwithstanding proves to be a moralistic conclusion by telling of the consequences of base and lustful behaviour. Rastell, aware of this, is interested in the layout of the action and the characters (Acts I and II) and in Act IV, because Melebea should fall into Celestina's net, since it is a structural element. After that, he drops the rest of the tragicomedy and chooses a new ending more suitable for both the general conception of enjoyment and simplicity of the interlude.

The Spanish Bawd, Mabbe's *Celestina*, is a "Comedie or a Tragicke-Comedie" structured in twenty-one acts, like the Spanish original, whereas Captain Stevens' *The Bawd of Madrid* is a "Tale", as the translator states in the preface, divided into nine chapters, each of them preceded by as many other brief summaries.

As far as characters are concerned, the number of them also varies in these translations, for whereas Stevens and Mabbe keep all the characters and their Spanish names, Rastell's interlude has only six, opposed to the fifteen of the original. The characters in the interlude are simply Calisto and his servants Parmeno and Sempronio, Melebea, Celestina and Danio, Melebea's father, called Pleberio in the Spanish original.

All this serves their respective authors' aims: Rastell's is moral, as in the interludes, as he clearly states:

... wherein is shewd and dyscrybyd as well as bewte and good proper-
tes of women, as theyr vycys and evyll conditions, with a morall conclusion
and exhortacyon to vertew⁽⁴⁾.

and in this line come along all the additions and variations from the original, as the following examples of Melebea's monologue show:

I know that Nature hath gyvyn me bewte,
With sanguynous compleccyon, favour and fayreness;
The more to God I to do fewte
With wyll, lyfe, laud, and love of perfytness.⁽⁵⁾

Shall I accomplysh hys carnall desyre?
Nay, yet at stake rather bren in a fyre!⁽⁶⁾

What, a mys woman? Now Cristes benedicite!
Nay, nay, he shall never that day see
Hys voluptuous appetyte consentyd by me.⁽⁷⁾

The above additions show a virtuous Melebea with a sanguineous complexion and thus with a natural tendency towards love and a Calisto full of sexual desire who is a menace to her virtue. But virtue is always rewarded and Rastell provides a new happy ending designed to teach a moral lesson, for Danio, Melebea's father, had a dream and tells it to his daughter: he is walking along a garden and sees two different places: "a hote bath, holsome and pleasyng" (v. 943) and a "pyt of foule stynkyng water" (v. 946). Danio keeps walking along the good way of grace and virtue and meets a "folue rough bych" on his way. When he is on the verge of falling into the "stynkyng water", he wakes up. Melebea understands and interprets the dream: she was on the way of grace and virtue when she met Celestina and turned to the wrong way. When she was on the point of falling into the pit of crazy love and desire, her father recounted to her the dream that would save her from these perils.

Mabbe's *The Spanish Bawd* follows the Spanish text closely, although "put into English cloathes", because:

For though I speake like Celestina, yet come I short of her; for she is so
concisely significant, and indeede so differing is the Idiome of the Spanish

from the English, that I may imitate it, but not come neere it. Yet have I made it as naturall, as our language will give leave, and have more beaten my braines about it in some places, then a man would beate a Flint to get fire; and with much adoe, have force those sparkles, which increasing to a greater flame, gave light to my dark understanding.⁽⁸⁾

The Spanish Bawd turns out to be an amplification of the original and additions come from a natural tendency in translation of amplifying as a way of clarifying the original rather than out of novelistic attempts, and Mabbe makes explicit what the original says implicitey, as the following instances show:

I said Sir, Should you, whose heart, is greater than Alexanders, despair of obtaining a woman? wherefore many, having beene seated in highest estate, have basely prostituted themselves to the embracements of Mulettees, and Stablegroomes, suffering them to breathe in their faces, with their unsavory breaths, and to imbosome them between their brests: And othersome not ashame to have companied with brute-beast. Have you not heard of Pasiphaë, who plai'd the wanton with a Bull? and of Minerva, how she dallied with a dogge?⁽⁹⁾

Dije que tú, que tienes más corazón que Nembrot ni Alejandro, desesperas de alcanzar una mujer, muchas de las cuales en grandes estados constituidas se sometieron a los pechos y resollos de viles acemileros y otras a brutos animales. ¿No has leído de Pasifé con el toro, de Minerva con el can?⁽¹⁰⁾

And that of your Grandmother and her Ape, that's a fable too: Witnesse your Grandfathers knife, that kill'd the villaine that did cuckold him.⁽¹¹⁾

Lo de tu abuela con el ximio ¿hablilla fue? testigo es el cuchillo de tu abuelo.⁽¹²⁾

My Master is all Melibea: who now but Melibea? whose heart not able to containe her, like a boyling vessell, venting it's heate, goes bubbling her name in his mouth. Well, I have now as much as I desire: I know on which foote you halt, I shall now heale you.⁽¹³⁾

Tú te lo dirás. Como Melibea es grande, no cabe en el corazón de mi amo, que por la boca le sale a borbollones. No es más menester: bien sé de qué pie coxqueas; yo te sanaré.⁽¹⁴⁾

In addition to this, there is a tendency deeply rooted in Elizabethan translators to translate single ideas from the original with synonyms and binary expressions, and in *The Spanish Bawd* there is also a large number of examples of additions due to a novelistic desire:

What old witch is this, that comes thus trayling her taile on the ground?
*Looke how shee sweepes the streetes with her gowne! Fie, what a dust she
 makes!*⁽¹⁵⁾

¿Quién es esta vieja, que viene haldeando?⁽¹⁶⁾

*I perceive, so goes the market, as it goes with you. And as you find
 your penniworths, so you speake of the Faire. And though you perhaps
 complaine, the rich will sing another song.*⁽¹⁷⁾

Bien conozco que hablas de la feria, según te va en ella: así que otra
 canción dirán los ricos. ^(p. 18)

Both the interlude and Stevens' Tale are far shorter than the original, contrasting to Mabbe's greatly amplified translation. Although brevity and conciseness is golden for Rastell and Stevens, these two translators make several additions. Mabbe's alterations, mostly amplifications, derive from the idea of adapting the Spanish work to England, whereas Stevens' additions are a novelistic device used to attract the readers' attention and to make some 'improvements' on the Spanish tragicomedy, which "has too many Acts, so that it would never appear well in its Natural Dress, which prevail'd with me to alter the Method, retaining still the whole Intrigue, without deviating from it in the least, but only making a Tale of it", states Captain Stevens in the Preface to the book⁽¹⁹⁾. In the preface to his translation *The most Entertaining History of Hypolito and Amin-ta*⁽²⁰⁾, Stevens comments on the situation of his country and the need for enjoyment and relaxation. It is important to relax the mind as well as the body, writes Captain Stevens, and therefore he chooses an amusing work, *La Celestina*, to translate it into English, but some changes are needed to bring the text up to date. Thus, for Stevens, alterations come from the idea of adapting *La Celestina* to England, to the epoch -the beginning of the Eighteenth Century- and to the fact that the translation should be published together with three more translations in an anthology. Captain Stevens intends to make a tale out of the Spanish tragicomedy and *The Bawd of Madrid*, whose chapters I and II are an addition, starts by giving an account of "the town of Madrid" to the English readers:

The Renowned Town of Madrid, which has ever refus'd to admit of the Title of a City, lest any other should contend with it for Superiority; chusing rather to be the first Town, than the second City in the World, is Seated on the Banks of the much Celebrated River Manzanares (...) This is the Capital or Court of the mighty Monarchy of Spain; the Residence of its Kings; the Center or Heart of the Kingdom, the Resort of Gallant Men; the Assembly of Beautiful Ladies; and Mirror of Wit; of Discretion, and of Curtesie. (...) This Delicious Place contains 400 Streets, 14 Squares, or Market Places, 18 Parishes, 58 Monasteries of Fryars and Nuns, besides a vast number of

Chappels, which, elsewhere, for their Wealth, might be reckon'd as Churches; 22 Hospitals, and among them, that they call the General Hospital ...⁽²¹⁾

After this description of Madrid, also present in Stevens' *English-Spanish Dictionary*⁽²²⁾, Chapter I continues by introducing the character of Celestina:

Here was Born, and here Liv'd the most Infamously Famous Celestina, a Woman Basely Born, Vilely Educated, and of a Scandalous Wicked Life. Her more Youthful Days were spent in Excess of Lewdness, under the Conduct of an Old Promoter of Sin, who Carefully instructed her in all her Arts, and she was so apt a Scholar, that she far exceeded her Mistress, and all others that had gone before her. Being thus grown Old in Iniquity ...⁽²³⁾

Chapter II starts by introducing the characters of Calisto and Melibea and their relationship: Calisto has been in love with Melibea for several months and, owing to the carefulness of Melibea's father, he cannot see her. Calisto woos his lady and serenades her windows at night till one day he happens to meet her in one of the gardens in the city, the city of Madrid, and it is here that the Spanish original begins and Stevens thus follows it:

Calisto, a young Nobleman, Rich, Courteous, Affable, and Witty, fell desperately in love with the Beautiful Melibea, Daughter to Pleberio, a Gentleman of First Rank for Birth, Endowments of the Mind, Fortune, and all other Qualifications that render Men Great in the Eyes of the World. Melibea was Modest, and so closely observ'd of her Parents, that there was little hope of making any Amorous Overtures to her ...⁽²⁴⁾

Therefore Stevens' preliminary additions are a kind of introduction to the Spanish tragicomedy, which starts *in media res* with the meeting of the two lovers. Other Stevens' additions are meant to clarify the original or to turn the tragicomedy into a Tale:

This was the Sly Discourse the Deceitful Old Bawd us'd to ensnare the Innocent Melibea, whose Natural Modesty, and Vertuous Education, at first blew her into a Flame; but we see how soon it was quell'd by the False Arts of that Insinuating Procurer. In fine ..⁽²⁵⁾

Let us leave them together, and follow Celestina Home.⁽²⁶⁾

The location of the additions in these three translations is also relevant; in the interlude they are mainly at the end, to suppress the tragic ending; additions are at the beginning in Stevens' translation to turn it into a tale: Stevens has to provide the details, to make up a story concerning this love story, whereas Mabbe's are an amplification of the original spread throughout the work.

The different structures, nature of the characters, and additions are determining factors derived from the different purposes of the three translators in their also different literary contexts. Rastell has a moral intention and, like many other Tudor writers, chooses the structure of the interlude, therefore simplifying the original, reducing the number of characters and suppressing the tragic element of the tragicomedy. At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, Stevens' intentions are to please the reader by publishing four translations from the Spanish in an anthology; in other words, he intends to offer something which is easy to understand, to enjoy, and consequently turns *La Celestina* into a tale. Mabbe is the only one of the three translators who intends to preserve the original structure and the essence of the tragicomedy for his readers, although, like many other Elizabethan translations, in order to favour its introduction in a foreign country, the Spanish work was "put into English cloathes".

NOTES

¹ Other English translations of *La Celestina* are from the French: *The delightful history of Celestina the Faire*, London?, J. Wolf, 1591, translated from the French version of Primaleon; there is another edition of this translation printed by Adam Islip in London in 1591. *The Tragicke Comedye of Celestina*, London, William Aspley, 1598.

² Rastell, J., 1979, *Calisto and Melebea* in Axton, R., *Three Rastell Plays: Four Elements, Calisto and Melebea, Gentleness and Nobility*. D. S. Brewer, Rowman & Littlefield: 69-96.

Mabbe, J., 1884, *The Spanish Bawd represented in Celestina, or the Tragicke-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea wherein is contained, besides the pleasantnesse and sweetnesse of the stile, many philosophical sencences, and profitable instructions necessary for the younger sort: shewing the deceits and subtilties housed in the bosomes of false servants and cunny-catching bawds*, in Fitzmaurice-Kelly, J. (ed.) *Celestina or the Tragicke-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea Englished from the Spanish of Fernando de Rojas by James Mabbe, Anno 1631. With an introduction by J. Fitzmaurice-Kelly*. London: Published by David Nutt in the Strand.

Stevens, J., 1707, *The Bawd of Madrid* in *The Spanish Libertines: The Spanish Jilt, The Bawd of Madrid, Estevanillo Gonzales and An Evenings Intrigue*. London: Printed for S. Bunchley at the Publishing Office in Bearbinder Lane.

³ See Ungerer, G., 1972, *Anglo-Spanish Relations in Tudor Literature*. New York: Ams Press Inc.: 9-18.

⁴ Rastell, J., 1979, *Calisto and Melebea*. *Op. cit.*: 69. From now onwards the quotations will be referred to by their verse number.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vv. 15-18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vv. 27-28.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vv. 33-35.

⁸ Mabbe, J., 1884, *The Spanish Bawd*. *Op. cit.*, The Epistle Dedicatory: 10-11.

⁹ *Ibid.*: 28.

¹⁰ Rojas, F., 1980, *La Celestina* (Ed. B. M. Damiani). Madrid: Cátedra: 61.

¹¹ Mabbe, J., 1884, *The Spanish Bawd*. *Op. cit.*: 28.

¹² Rojas, F., 1980, *La Celestina*. *Op. cit.*: 62.

¹³ Mabbe, J., 1884, *The Spanish Bawd*. *Op. cit.*: 26.

¹⁴ Rojas, F., 1980, *La Celestina*. *Op. cit.*: 59.

¹⁵ Mabbe, J., 1884, *The Spanish Bawd*. *Op. cit.*: 80.

¹⁶ Rojas, F., 1980, *La Celestina*. *Op. cit.*: 111.

¹⁷ Mabbe, J., 1884, *The Spanish Bawd*. *Op. cit.*: 84.

¹⁸ Rojas, F., 1980, *La Celestina*. *Op. cit.*: 116.

¹⁹ Stevens, J. 1707, *The Bawd of Madrid*, *Op. cit.*, The Preface: 4.

²⁰ Stevens, J., 1729 (2nd. ed.), *The Most Entertaining*

History of Hyppolito and Aminta. London: Printed for A. Bettesworth at the Red-Lyon, and J. Batley at the Dove in Pater-Noster Row. The Preface.

²¹ Stevens, J., 1707, *The Bawd of Madrid*. *Op. cit.*: 67-68.

²² Stevens, J., 1726, *A New Dictionary, Spanish-English and English-Spanish, much more Copious than any other hitherto Extant. Laying down the true Etymology of Words, with their various Significations; Terms of Arts and Sciences, Proper Names of Men and Women, Surnames of Families, Titles of Honour, the Geography of Spain and the West Indies etc.* London: Printed for J. Darby, A. Bettesworth, F. Fayram, J. Pemberton, C. Rivington, J. Hooke, F. Clay, J. Battley and E. Symon.

²³ Stevens, J., 1707, *The Bawd of Madrid*. *Op. cit.*: 69.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 73.

²⁵ *Ibid.*: 90.

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 105.