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Field, 'Habitus', Capital and 'Illusio'

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## **A Bourdieusian Theory of Translation, or the Coincidence of Practical Instances** *Field, 'Habitus', Capital and 'Illusio'*

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*Abstract. This article attempts to adapt Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory of symbolic goods to translation by highlighting points of convergence between the reflections of the sociologist and questions of translation. Founded upon a theory of action, Bourdieu's sociology allows for an integration of translation practice into his heuristic model. The practice of translation, like every practice in Bourdieu's terms, is based upon a coincidence of two instances (generally separated by scholars): the external instance of literary texts (what we have customarily called the literary institution and what Bourdieu calls the fields) and the internal instance (textual productions and products, the producing agents and their 'habitus'). Using examples from American literature translated in France in the 19th and 20th centuries, this paper analyzes the effect on translation of the existence, or nonexistence, of American and French literary fields, with emphasis on the censorship that the judicial fields attempted to impose upon the literary field during the period under consideration. It then analyzes the 'habitus' of a number of translators (Coindreau, Vian and Duhamel) and the way in which their social trajectories developed. Finally, it is suggested that the 'illusio' is ultimately the object of the translator's task. Governed by the principle of homology, translation is the work of a translator who, embodied in his or her bi-cultural 'habitus', imports the foreign text into the target culture, thus orienting this culture towards a new social future.*

The effort of Pierre Bourdieu has been principally to construct a theory of action (this is the subtitle of his book, *Practical Reason*, 1998) that explains the practice of agents, opposing the following two conceptions of action: the rationalist vision that considers "irrational any action or representation which is not generated by the explicitly posed *reasons* of an autonomous individual, fully conscious of his or her motivations", and the extreme

structuralist theses that consider the *agents* as simply “epiphenomena of structure” (*ibid.*:viii). With the key notions of field, *habitus* and capital (to which I add the notion of *illusio*), all of which are applicable to translation studies, Bourdieu develops a philosophy of action by constructing a fundamental relationship between the social trajectory of the agent (based on his or her incorporated dispositions, or *habitus*) and the objective structures (specified under fields). This is a “two-way” relationship (*ibid.*:vii): the social trajectory that constitutes the *habitus* contributes to the structuring of fields, which in turn structure the *habitus*. On a global level, the object of research in translation studies ultimately becomes the analysis of the differential relationship between the *habitus* of translation agents (including publishers, critics, etc.) who have taken a position in a given target field in a given epoch, and the determinant factors of the target field as the site of reception of the translation. Additionally, of course, the object of translation research is a differential analysis of source and target texts as exhibitors of pertinent traits studied in the *habitus* of agents and in the fields in question.

The central notions of field, *habitus*, capital and *illusio* are intrinsically woven together, such that none can be defined without recourse to the others. Bourdieu’s theory of cultural action is thus not only a sociology of the institution but also of its agents. It is a sociology of the text as a production in the process of being carried out, of the product itself and of its consumption in the social fields, the whole seen in a relational manner. For Bourdieu, practical instances cannot be adequately described if we neglect one of the elements nor if we make distinctions between things which should not be thought of separately; for example, if we distinguish between the external and internal dimensions of a production, between the objective structures which are the fields and the incorporated dispositions which are the *habitus*. In this sense, for Bourdieu there exists neither internal nor external dimensions but a concurrence of both. It is upon this foundation that I present a sociology of translation below, considering a number of cases of American literature translated into French.

## 1. The present state of research in the sociology of translation

Let us turn first to Bourdieu’s influence on translation studies over the past few years. In his article ‘The Pivotal Status of the Translator’s *Habitus*’ (1998), Daniel Simeoni seeks to reinterpret polysystem theory in order to integrate the notion of *habitus*. For Simeoni, the notion of *habitus* encompasses the notion of norms and, unlike norms, incorporates the double dimension of “structuring and structured” function (*ibid.*:21-22). Does Simeoni manage to replace the notion of norms with the notion of *habitus*? Arguably he doesn’t, because the author neglects to resituate the notion of *habitus* in the general context of Bourdieu’s social theory and, in particular,

in his notion of field, which cannot be dissociated from *habitus*. It is unfortunate that Simeoni's treatment of Bourdieu's theory of culture does not offer any first-hand quotations from Bourdieu, and that it is through the mediation of John B. Thompson, himself cited by Gumperz and Levinson, that the reader is introduced to the notion of *habitus*. A recontextualization of *habitus* within fields, and not just within specialized fields but in fields of power, would allow us to see the insurmountable limitations of this attempt to compare norms and *habitus*. It is not only the notion of norms that needs to be redefined, but that of system, and it is fundamental that the notion of capital – essential to Bourdieu's theory – be included. It is necessary, then, for polysystem theory to be completely reevaluated in the context of Bourdieu's social theory, to the point where polysystem theory might have to renounce its own paradigm in order to accommodate that of Bourdieu.

In *Translation in Systems* (1999), Hermans illustrates in detail the nature and influence of polysystem theory on studies of translation. On the question of resemblances between Bourdieu's theory and polysystem theory, Hermans writes that "while his [Bourdieu's] insistence on the relational nature of his thinking provides an obvious point of overlap (Bourdieu 1994:17), in his own estimation the empirical urge underlying his work separates him from system theory, which he regards as based on an organicist, totalizing philosophy" (1999:131). It is true that Bourdieu rejects the notion of system in order to elucidate the rapport between symbolic productions and their mode of reception, but this doesn't mean that he is simply an 'empiricist' (in the sense of 'empirical studies'). He develops a body of theoretical notions (*habitus*, field, etc.), all closely dependent on each other, precisely to illustrate the truth of empirical reality – which, in their own way, the polysystem theorists also do, with the notions of polysystem, of canon, and of norms. In the end, it is doubtful that "the relational nature of his thinking provides an obvious point of overlap" with polysystem theory.

The research of Isabelle Kalinowski (2001), whose doctoral thesis on the reception of Hölderlin in France was defended in 1999, offers a theorization of translation based on the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu. The author carried out a study of the population of translators (more than thirty) of Hölderlin into French and the "interplay of divisions that structure it [the reception of Hölderlin]" (*ibid.*:26; my translation). The "networks of solidarity [between Hölderlin's work and its translators] were constructed separately from recognized academic circles" (*ibid.*:41; my translation), operating according to the model of 'poetic affinity', or dialogue between poets (criticized by Berman 1985) and of the proximity of 'poetry and thought' established by Heidegger. Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, relayed by Maurice Blanchot, is examined in one case: the translation of *im Freien* by *dans l'ouvert* in André du Bouchet's version of *Grèce* by Hölderlin. Kalinowski's fine article links the analysis of the translators' intellectual trajectory, the editorial destinations

of their translations, the intertextual modes of carrying out the translations and the theorizations upon which they depend.

In 1999, Pascale Casanova published *la République mondiale des lettres*. The book is an analysis of Paris' dominant position in literature since Du Bellay. But the Parisian supremacy is contested by England, and then by Germany (the Herderian revolution). We are in fact in the "period of decolonization", the "third significant stage" (not yet completed) "of the formation of an international literary space" (Casanova 1999:116; my translation). For Casanova, Joyce and Faulkner brought about "one of the greatest revolutions" in the literary universe (*ibid.*:455). But, if for the centre (Paris) Faulkner was great because of his formal creations, in the marginal zones Faulkner was interpreted as a "liberator", "because he found a literary solution to what had until then remained a political, aesthetic and literary impasse" (*ibid.*).

Finally, a special issue of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (a journal founded by Pierre Bourdieu) appeared in September 2002 under the direction of Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro. The title of this issue is *Traduction: les échanges littéraires internationaux*. Supporters of the polysystem theory are found here alongside proponents of Pierre Bourdieu's theory: Zohar Shavit, Blaise Wilfert, Isabelle Kalinowski, Ioana Popa, Hervé Serry, Pascale Casanova, Gisèle Sapiro.<sup>1</sup>

All these contributions to a sociology of translation have one thing in common. To the best of my knowledge,<sup>2</sup> they nearly all (with the notable exception of Isabelle Kalinowski) reflect prevailing divisions between external and internal sociologies of the text, and they give exclusive attention to the analysis of external sociology to the detriment of internal sociology, sanctioning a division that is not justified. In the examples that follow, I examine how the two modalities of a sociology of translation – internal and external – are expressed.

## 2. The literary field and translation

The specific logic of a field is established in the incorporated state in the form of a specific *habitus*, or, more precisely, a sense of the game, ordinarily described as a 'spirit' or 'sense' ('philosophical', 'literary', 'artistic', etc.), which is practically never set out or imposed in

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<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of the contributions in this issue of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, see Gouanvic (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> I am not familiar with all contributions of the authors examined above, despite my efforts to take into account all the articles published on the subject. What I write about these contributions is no doubt partial, given the buoyant state of the field of translation studies in regards to the sociology of translation.

an explicit way. Because it takes place insensibly, in other words gradually, progressively and imperceptibly, the conversion of the original *habitus*, a more or less radical process (depending on the distance), which is required by entry into the game and acquisition of the specific *habitus*, passes for the most part unnoticed. (Bourdieu 2000:11)

The fundamental concept of Pierre Bourdieu's theory is that of field. Everything (*habitus*, capital, *illusio*) revolves around this heuristic notion that Bourdieu defines as follows by presenting the case of the literary field (1990:143):

I would say that the literary field is a force-field as well as a field of struggles which aim at transforming or maintaining the established relation of forces: each of the agents commits the force (the capital) that he has acquired through previous struggles to the strategies that depend for their general direction on his position in the power struggle, that is, on his specific capital.

What factors have determined the formation of the French and, also, of the American literary field? How do we describe the fields? In the case of Henry Miller, I will analyze the legal question (it would be better to say 'judiciary') and in particular the prohibitions that are imposed upon the literary field from outside the field, and the legal question of signed contracts between editors and authors. I will then examine how translations are inserted into the literary space in a specialized series. At the same time, I will look at how certain authors (Cooper, Hawthorne, H. B. Stowe, London and Dos Passos) managed to have their works published in the literary space.

The formation of the French literary field, which emerged in the second half of the 19th century through the contributions of Flaubert and Baudelaire, is characterized by a veritable revolution – the autonomization of everything related to literature according to the principle of the economic world 'reversed' (Bourdieu 1983), against the subjection of the literary universe to other spaces, in particular the economic space and the political and judiciary spaces.<sup>3</sup> From the moment when the literary seeks to impose itself in struggles, which can be quite violent,<sup>4</sup> as the sole criterion for a ruling on everything

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<sup>3</sup> This does not in the least prevent other spaces from attempting to exercise their rule over the literary field, as we will see. See the very numerous prohibitions to which literature will be subjected after 1939.

<sup>4</sup> See Paul Olagnier (1934:51-52; my translation): "Flaubert was tried for *Madame Bovary* and acquitted; but Baudelaire was charged a fine of 300 francs for *les Fleurs du Mal* in 1857, and Jean Richepin was condemned to one month in prison and a 500 franc fine for *Chanson des Gueux*". A law passed in 1946 later 'rehabilitated' Baudelaire's *les Fleurs du Mal* and authorized the publication of a complete edition.

that concerns it, authors acquire a freedom vis-à-vis the social space for their work; they acquire a (relative) freedom to write what they want, shifting the risks of censorship from social structures towards the literary field as it is being formed. Without the authors always being conscious of it, this leads to the literary field acquiring the right to exercise a (self)censorship of the author and the work, in addition to the censorship imposed by judiciary sources.

### 2.1. *The restricted field of American literature in Paris between 1920 and 1939*

The restricted field of American literature in Paris between 1920 and 1939 developed at the same time as the American literary field was formed in the United States. By restricted field, Bourdieu means the following (1971:54-55; emphasis in original; my translation):

The field of production as such owes its structure to the opposition, more or less clear cut in different domains of intellectual and artistic life, between, on the one hand, *the field of restricted production* as a system producing the symbolic goods (and instruments of appropriation of these goods) objectively destined (at least in the short term) to a public of symbolic goods producers, themselves producing for producers of symbolic goods, and on the other hand, *the field of large-scale symbolic production* specifically organized with a view to the production of symbolic goods destined for non-producers (“the wider public”) which can be recruited either in non-intellectual segments of the dominant class (“the cultivated public”), or in the other social classes. Differing from the system of large production which obeys the law of competition for the conquest of as vast a market as possible, the field of restricted production tends to produce its own norms of production and the evaluative criteria of its products and obeys the fundamental law of competition for strictly cultural recognition granted to the group of peers, who are both privileged clients and competitors.

Authors and Anglo-American editors, the latter amounting to a dozen or so between 1920 and 1939, form a field of restricted production that is governed by the fierce desire to be freed from all censorship external to the field. The ban on the publication of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* by *The Little Review* in the US defined the boundaries that the American authorities did not want to cross in literary editions. This experience is shaped by Edward Titus, editor of Ludwig Lewisohn’s *The Case of Mr. Crump*, published by the Parisian house ‘At the Sign of the Black Manikin’. The book was rejected by the American mail services because it violated Section 211 of the American ‘Criminal Code’. Ezra Pound, for his part, declared that he didn’t

want to be published in either England or the US because of the legal restrictions on the rights of the author. He said he would like, as literary director of The Three Mountains Press, “to free prose writers from the necessity of presenting their work in the stock-size volume of commerce” (cited in Ford 1975:99-100).

The case of Henry Miller – and the expatriates generally – is highly illustrative in this regard. Expatriates Hemingway, Dos Passos, e.e. cummings, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and Henry Miller emigrated to Paris in the interwar period to write their works, finding a sort of extraterritoriality<sup>5</sup> there, precisely because the realist American literary field was not yet autonomous, existing only in an embryonic state, and because literature was entirely subject to the dictates of the economy and of politics, as evident in the ban on the distribution of their works in the US.<sup>6</sup>

The publication of Miller’s works in translation began in 1945, with *Tropic of Cancer* edited by les éditions Denoël and *Tropic of Capricorn* in 1946 by les éditions du Chêne. Legal proceedings were immediately initiated against the two *Tropics* by le Cartel d’action sociale et morale (the Social and Moral Action Cartel). The charge provoked a strong reaction in the French literary field. Maurice Nadeau formed a support committee in defence of Miller. The ministry of justice stepped back and allowed this affair to drag on as it awaited a vote on an amnesty law in August 1947. The case was eventually withdrawn in June 1950 (Poulain 1998:565). Even though the case of the two translated *Tropics* was withdrawn, the attacks on Miller’s works by the *Cartel d’action sociale et morale* provoked a strong response in the literary field, thus helping to reinforce the field as the sole structure entitled to rule on what is or is not publishable. On the one hand, this made it more difficult for institutions that do not belong to the literary field (legal, political, religious, social, etc.) to impose censorship on it, and on the other

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<sup>5</sup> This extraterritoriality lies first in the fact that the works were written and published in English in the French culture and second in that “the book ... could not be tried for offending good behaviour between 1882 and 1939” (Poulain 1998:n.5, 557; my translation). In 1882 a revision of article 28 of the 1881 law had excluded books from trials in correctional court. On the other hand, a decree issued on 6 May 1939 forbade “the circulation, distribution or sale” on French soil of any foreign work containing an *offense* to the President of the Republic, propagating false news, or reproducing “fabricated information, falsified or falsely attributed to third parties” (cited in Poulain 1998:557; my translation). Moreover, a decree passed on 29 July 1939 “condemn[ed] the crime of gross indecency” (*ibid.*; my translation), instituting a special Commission for books to adjudicate the affair in question.

<sup>6</sup> Authors who wrote and published their works in the US in effect had to play the socio-cultural game in the American social space, treating themes and discourses that conformed to the ambient doxa. Their talent consisted of being able to find innovative ways around this censorship; this is how they made their mark.



it continually undermined the coercive moves of the Powers that be. Nonetheless, bans on sales to minors, the use of posters and publicity continued to be enforced, first against Boris Vian (as in the case of *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes*, published under the pseudonym of Vernon Sullivan by les éditions du Scorpion in 1947), then against Maurice Girodias' Éditions Olympia Press, with 49 bans on sales to minors and the use of posters<sup>7</sup> according to by-laws in effect between 1954 and 1963, and against works published by Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Éric Losfeld and Régine Desforges, among others. In the debates over what was to be censored, the aesthetic and literary argument was decisive: what is not good literature is susceptible to censorship. This was the argument used in the case of *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes*, condemned by its opponents as a novel of the Série Noire and (presumably) of American origin: "The American-style detective novel would be the site of literary mediocrity, and, worse, of encouragement of sexual licentiousness, of immorality, and mainly of violence" (*ibid.*:561; my translation). Soon after the Second World War came to an end, France began to resist Americanization, caught as it was between its liberator and the cold war climate that was becoming established. The important difference between French censorship and American censorship, where the latter forced American authors to ex-patriate themselves to French censorship on French soil, is that American censorship rejected outright all works that were considered indecent, while French censorship mainly restricted the distribution of works by enforcing 'bans on sales to minors, use of posters and publicity'.

## 2.2 *The emergence of an autonomous French literary field*

The existence of a literary field in which foreign literary works can circulate in translation is a key element of the 'translation' (in the mathematical sense) of these works. This is already apparent in the creation by twentieth-century editors of specialized series of foreign literature, as opposed to the 19th century where translations were integrated into non-specific series of general or popular literature.<sup>8</sup> The situation of authors and works translated in the French literary field in the 20th century is different from that in the 19th century, since the French literary field did not yet exist at that stage. To demonstrate this, I will briefly analyze the case of French editions of works by American authors such as James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet

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<sup>7</sup> The 49 titles published in English included *Lolita*, by Vladimir Nabokov.

<sup>8</sup> Publishing translations in special series has the effect of putting translations at a distance, as though in a gesture of respect. Once discovered by the national literary field, they are then integrated into general series and assimilated in the literary field (Gouanvic, forthcoming).

Beecher Stowe, and, in the 20th century, Jack London and John Dos Passos; I will also examine the lessons to be drawn from translated editions of these authors for the formation of the French literary field.

C. Gosselin, the first to publish translations of Cooper (*l'Espion* in 1822, translated by A.-J.-B. Defauconpret), launched his complete works as general, mainstream literature. A first edition of twenty-four novels was followed by a second edition of ten novels. Next, a 'new translation' (complete works, in fact, of ten volumes) was published between 1827 and 1835 by Gosselin, Mame et Delaunay. Between 1830 and 1834 Furne published 13 volumes of Cooper's work.<sup>9</sup> Numerous adaptations of these same stories were to be published by different adaptors, in particular versions addressed to young people, but also versions considered 'popular' for a wider public. The decisive facts are that, on the one hand, this abundance of translations was not governed by any strict respect for authorship rights; publishers could simply appropriate the work of a foreign author without restriction and have her or his work translated, even from a pirate edition. On the other hand, with one exception, none of these translations addressed to a general public was published in specialized series reserved for translations.

By contrast, Hawthorne's major work, *The Scarlet Letter*, was published in E. D. Forgues' translation under the title *la Lettre rouge* in 1865 in a special series of L. Hachette, 'Bibliothèque des meilleurs romans étrangers' (Library of Best Foreign Novels). This was a reissue of the first edition of 1853 by G. De Gonet in a translation by Old Nick (pseudonym of E. D. Forgues). The series was to continue into the 20th century, but without the title 'Library', as can be seen in Hachette's publication of Curwood's entire work.<sup>10</sup>

Harriet Beecher Stowe's case is similar to Cooper's. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in Boston in 1852, was translated and published by La Librairie Nouvelle, Perrotin, Delahaye, V. Lecou, Michel Lévy Frères, Charpentier and several other publishers, including Hachette. None of these translations was published in a special series of foreign literature (such series did not exist), except in the case of Hachette, which published the series 'Littératures anciennes et étrangères' (Ancient and Foreign Literature) in the 'Bibliothèques des chemins de fer' and 'Bibliothèque des meilleurs romans étrangers', as we have seen in the discussion of Hawthorne.

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<sup>9</sup> Fourteen works were published between 1835 and 1837, then thirty in 1852, twenty-two works between 1859 and 1864, etc. G. Barba published eleven titles in his series 'le Cabinet littéraire' between 1838 and 1841. All these translations are by Defauconpret and are translations rather than adaptations. Numerous translations by different translators were also published: B. Laroche, P. Louisy, E. de la Bédollière.

<sup>10</sup> Curwood was first published by Éditions G. Crès outside any series, and then by Hachette in the series 'Les meilleurs romans étrangers' (Best Foreign Novels).

The first editions of translations of Jack London were published by G. Crès, Hachette, la Renaissance du livre, Juven and a few others. But the editors of London remained Crès and Hachette. Crès published the American author outside any special series of foreign novels between 1922 and 1930, while Hachette began publishing London in 1931, when Éditions G. Crès ceased to publish him. Predictably, London's works appeared in Hachette's 'Les meilleurs romans étrangers' series; works taken from the Éditions Crès list were re-edited. What this demonstrates with respect to the autonomy of fields of literature published in France – whether literature for young people, popular literature, or highbrow literature – is that in Jack London's case,<sup>11</sup> the translations were subject to contracts that were respected by the editors, thus avoiding fierce competition among editors publishing pirate editions and those publishing authorized editions. In terms of relations among book publishers from different nations, we see a tendency towards autonomy in literary fields as compared with other national fields. This is not sufficient, however, to confirm the autonomy of a national literary field.<sup>12</sup>

Translations of John Dos Passos' work were published under contract by Éditions P. Rieder (which published *l'Initiation d'un homme*, the first of his novels, in 1925 in the series 'Prosateurs étrangers modernes'/Modern Foreign Prose Writers), Bernard Grasset (which published *42e parallèle* in the series 'Les écrits'/Writings under the direction of Jean Guéhenno in 1933), but mainly by Gallimard (principally after the Second World War, with the exception of *Manhattan Transfer* in 1928, reedited in the series 'Du monde entier'/From the World Over, founded in 1931) and in small publishing houses: les Éditions de Flore, Éditions du Pavois, La Jeune Parque and Amiot-Dumont. What has been said about Jack London applied to all publishers of Dos Passos, especially with respect to publication rights in the literary field, a field that had already stabilized in the interwar period and after.

These examples demonstrate that on the one hand translations of Cooper and Stowe were published widely in the French literary space. This means that almost all translations of their works were carried out and published

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<sup>11</sup> Without assuming that the same is true of other contemporary authors, of course.

<sup>12</sup> The first international accord regulating the publishing field, notably the rights of the author and of the translator, is the Bern Convention of 8 September 1886, to which all European countries gradually adhered, except Russia. This convention, however, was only concerned with the protection of pecuniary rights, without considering moral rights (Olagnier 1934:t. 2, 45). The protection of moral rights was adopted after the "last section" of this convention, The Paris Act, was ratified on 24 July 1971. The United States did not sign up to the Bern Convention until 1 March 1989, until which time it disregarded the obligation for all foreign works to be registered with the Copyright Office (Pierrat 1998:549).

without any contractual agreement with the publisher (or *a fortiori* with the author).<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, these numerous translations were not published in special series at the time, when the literary field was not yet formed. The existence of special series of translated foreign novels is one of the characteristics of the French literary field, as far as translation is concerned. Hachette, which was established in 1826, is a real pioneer in this domain; it founded a series of foreign novels entitled ‘Bibliothèque des meilleurs romans étrangers’ in which Hawthorne’s *la Lettre rouge* was published from 1865 onwards. But this is the only editor that published translations in a series. Not until the turn of the century, when, for example, Mercure de France published its ‘Collection d’auteurs étrangers’ (Series of Foreign Authors) did we see the phenomenon of series having an impact on the realist novel.<sup>14</sup>

These facts of publication (contracts, trials for gross indecency, existence of special series) point to the autonomization of the French literary field. They are indicators essentially of power struggles that took place in the literary field at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The fact that the fields were becoming autonomous was evident above all in the extent to which they became the site for struggles for exclusive appropriation of authors and their works, whether translated or original, in the form of a monopoly for the acquisition of maximum symbolic capital, as we will see below.

### 3. The *habitus*<sup>15</sup> of the translator

Translation as a practice has little to do with conforming to norms through the deliberate use of specific strategies; in other words, it is not a question of consciously choosing from a panoply of available solutions. Norms do not

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<sup>13</sup> Publishers and translators very occasionally obtained the ‘right’ to translate and to publish their translated version of the original text. For example, the translation by Louise Swanton Belloc of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, published in 1853 by Charpentier, carries the note: “Translated at the author’s request, by Mrs. L. Sw. Belloc” (my translation).

<sup>14</sup> As with *Contes choisis* by Mark Twain, published from 1900 onwards in Mercure de France’s ‘Collection d’auteurs étrangers’ (Series of Foreign Authors). It should also be noted that books for children were commonly published in special series directly aimed at children (or their parents) as early as the beginning of the 19th century, and maybe even earlier. This, however, does not weaken my argument; quite the opposite, since the secondary effect produced by the existence of special series was notably to exclude these books from the category of legitimate productions.

<sup>15</sup> It is not possible in the space of this essay to analyze the notion of *habitus* in depth. I assume that this notion, which I have adapted to translation, is familiar. Briefly, however, *habitus* is a deeply embodied phenomenon that structures a field and at the same time is structured by the field. See, for example, Bourdieu’s ‘The Dialectic of Positions and Dispositions’ (2000:155-59). See also my previous articles and book on the subject (Gouanvic 1999, forthcoming).

explain the more or less subjective and random choices made by translators who are free to translate or not to translate, to follow or not to follow the original closely. If a translator imposes a rhythm upon the text, a lexicon or a syntax that does not originate in the source text and thus substitutes his or her voice for that of the author, this is essentially not a conscious strategic choice but an effect of his or her specific *habitus*, as acquired in the target literary field.

The translator is not, and cannot be, a writer, even though the borderline between the two activities is blurred when writers use translation to compose their own works (Berman 1984), and despite the fact that national laws tend to subsume translators under the category of writers.<sup>16</sup> Writer-translators understand this well once they actively engage in producing a translation and find that they lose themselves in the movement between source and target text, ultimately pushing themselves as writers to the background. This is true of Marguerite Yourcenar, translator of Henry James (*What Maisie Knew*). Yourcenar succeeds admirably in her translations of James because she applies to the activity of translating a certain centrifugal empathetic movement that carries her outside of her own themes and discourse as a writer, and towards the themes and discourses of the foreign author.

If a writer in a given society has the capacity to “[make] public things which everyone felt in a confused sort of way”, the capacity of “publishing the implicit, the tacit” (Bourdieu 1990:81-82), the translator places him- or herself at the service of the writer to make this capacity manifest in the target language and culture. In so doing, the translator becomes the agent of the writer, transferring the writer’s discourse into the target culture.<sup>17</sup> This discourse proceeds from the actualization of the writer’s *habitus* in the literary field. The evolution of the source society expresses a universal image of the human being seen through the prism of the specifics of a history, and this small history produces an image of the greater History. Literature, the shaping of aesthetics, is as much the producer of meaning as is the explicit text of the story that is being recounted, and maybe more so in certain genres and in certain works – those that have reached the status of classics.

What is the effect of the existence of a realist French literary field for translations? This is what I will now examine in broaching the subject of the *habitus* of several translators. Bourdieu writes that “[t]he *habitus*, which is the generative principle of responses more or less well adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of an individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collec-

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<sup>16</sup> This is how a French law passed on 11 March 1957 deals with translators.

<sup>17</sup> The transfer of the writer’s discourse by the translator into the target literary field is not self-evident. For an examination of this question, and in particular the relation of homology, see Gouanvic (forthcoming).

tive history of family and class” (1990:91). How, then, is the *habitus* of translation invested in the literary field? To clarify this, it is necessary to analyze the *habitus* of translators as it has actualized itself in the translation of specific works in a given epoch. Three translators of American literature distinguish themselves in the French literary space between 1920 and 1960: Maurice-Edgar Coindreau, Marcel Duhamel and Boris Vian. Coindreau translated American realist literature from the south of the US and is responsible for discovering<sup>18</sup> William Faulkner. Marcel Duhamel is the founder of the *Série Noire* and translator of the novels of the same series (*Série Noire*). Boris Vian introduced American science fiction and promoted a specific field of science fiction literature in France. These three translators had very different social trajectories that determined their literary tastes when they began to translate. Coindreau was an *agrégé*<sup>19</sup> of Spanish; Marcel Duhamel was self-taught and, in his twenties, was already managing his uncle’s hotels; Boris Vian was an engineer who graduated from the Centrale school.<sup>20</sup>

Coindreau originally came from Vendée; this is important, as we will see shortly. After the First World War, he moved to Madrid, where he studied to prepare for the *agrégation* of Spanish. Here, he met Dos Passos, whose book, *Manhattan Transfer*, he published in 1928 with Gallimard, having completed the translation after his emigration to the US. Once in the US, Coindreau discovered the literature of the south, to which he devoted the rest of his life. In his personal Pantheon, the three greats of American literature are Faulkner, Goyen and O’Connor. Why the fascination with these three southern writers? What, in his *habitus*, pushed him towards these authors? In his biography *Mémoires d’un traducteur* (1974), Coindreau offers one explanation: Faulkner, he tells us, was not unaware of “some of the convulsions of the past, even in a foreign land” (Coindreau 1974:18; my translation). Faulkner alludes to the events of the Chouannerie, according to Coindreau. And Coindreau adds: “I can even assure you that this bloody history didn’t have any secrets for him. In the first place, he was a great reader of Balzac, and when by chance in conversation I told him that, having been born in La Roche-sur-Yon, I was descended on my mother’s side from an old Vendean family, he let slip the comment: ‘Yours too have gone through this?’” (*ibid.*:19; my translation). Coindreau equated the failure of the counter-revolution of

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<sup>18</sup> The issue of how William Faulkner was discovered in France is beyond the scope of this article. The role played by Maurice-Edgar Coindreau and of R.-N. Raimbault in this respect is currently being examined by Annick Chapdelaine from McGill University (Montréal).

<sup>19</sup> Until recently, the *agrégation* was the highest French competitive examination, especially designed for university professors.

<sup>20</sup> I have already dealt with the topic of this translator’s *habitus* in ‘Ethos, Ethics and Translation’ (Gouanvic 2001).

the Chouannerie with the failure of the southern Secession, and it is this equation that explains his literary taste and priorities. He even stated that had he possessed the talent of a writer he would undoubtedly have written a novel set in the South of the United States (as William Humphrey did in *Proud Flesh*), “a story of Renshaw [from *Proud Flesh*] all perfumed with a lovely odor of Chouannerie” (*ibid.*:103; my translation).

Marcel Duhamel (1972), on the other hand, was not an academic at all. Coming from a very modest background and having barely gone further than primary school, he followed his sister to Manchester in 1915, where a small job in the Midland Hotel awaited her. Within a few months, without ever having taken an English class at school, he was speaking the language of Shakespeare. Upon his return to France, he did his military service in Turkey, where he met Jacques Prévert and Yves Tanguy. The three moved in the early 1920s to a small apartment on rue du Château that became a kind of phalanstery or commune, and was to survive in literary history as one of the high places of surrealism. Duhamel managed his uncle’s hotels and then tried his hand at translation: of Henry Miller (*Tropic of Cancer*), Raoul Whitfield (*Green Ice*) and W. R. Burnett (*Little Caesar*). The latter, published by *France-Soir*, earned him a reputation as a translator. He was soon hired by Tobis Klangfilm, where he worked on dubbing bad-boy American films. In 1944, he was hired by the publisher Gallimard and later became one of the right-hand men of Gaston Gallimard himself (he travelled to England in 1944 to negotiate translation rights for English and American authors). In 1945, he founded the *Série Noire* (the title is from Jacques Prévert), a series consisting of superb translations whose quality distinguished them from the run-of-the-mill translations of detective novels. The translations were particularly brilliant in their use of the vernacular, not a common feature of French literature, either original or translated, at the time. An entire team of accredited translators worked on translating detective novels for the *Série Noire*: they came to be known as the ‘gang of translators’.<sup>21</sup> In 1944, Duhamel met Hemingway, as a liberator of Paris. He translated several of Hemingway’s books and novels and, among others, those of Steinbeck, Caldwell and MacCoy.

Boris Vian worked for Duhamel’s *Série Noire* and translated Raymond Chandler’s *The Lady in the Lake*. But he is best known for acting as an agent in promoting American science fiction in France from 1950 onwards. He was a distinguished agent in importing science fiction in several regards, contributing to the emergence of an autonomous field of science fiction by (a) participating in meetings of fans, with Raymond Queneau and Michel

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<sup>21</sup> The ‘gang of translators’ consisted mainly of Robert Scipion, Janine Hérisson, Albert Simonin, Janine Chauveau, Henri Robillot and Minnie Danzas.

Pilotin (the latter's pseudonym was Stephen Spriel), (b) publishing critiques in Jean-Paul Sartre's *les Temps modernes* as well as *Arts*, *la Parisienne* and *l'Écran*, and (c) publishing translations/adaptations in *France-Dimanche*, *les Temps modernes*, *le Mercure de France* and in the newly created series 'le Rayon fantastique', launched by Hachette/Gallimard in 1951. In terms of how he approached his work as translator, his approach was somewhat similar to Marguerite Yourcenar's, the translator of Henry James. Vian enhanced the rhetoric of American authors while bringing out the particular poetics of the texts. This is most evident in his translation of *The World of Null-A* by Alfred E. van Vogt, translated as *le Monde des non-A* and published in 1953. Boris Vian, the engineer, performed the function of agent of science fiction in France because his *habitus* led him to appreciate particular texts that thematized scientific and technological plots, this genre of work estranged from our realist universe. Owing to his *habitus*, he was not afraid of mixing science and technology with literature. Moreover, he actively promoted imagination in science and technology by creating the conditions for the formation of a specialized field of science fiction, which was very much at odds with the traditional conception of literature.

These three translators, as we have seen, have very different social trajectories. But the most decisive difference lies in the type of literature they favoured. Each type of literature, or literary genre, has a correspondent structure into which it inserts itself – this being a relatively autonomous field. The most obvious example of the existence of autonomous fields is the emergence of science fiction after 1950, which developed in parallel to the realist field that had been in existence since the second half of the 19th century, as suggested earlier. But Marcel Duhamel's *Série Noire* also came to be integrated into a specific field, that of detective literature.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. Symbolic capital and translation

Symbolic capital is not acquired – in the case of the writer – essentially by heritage but by recognition, which must be constantly regained through new works published in the literary field. But symbolic capital becomes established and stable once the work of an author achieves the status of a classic; at this point, the author and his or her work acquire enduring, stable symbolic capital that is not susceptible to being questioned over time. This is not the same for the translator. The translator benefits from the symbolic capital

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<sup>22</sup> In this brief article, I cannot offer an extended analysis of the way in which the respective *habitus* of Coindreau, Duhamel and Vian led them to translate in the way they did, using concrete examples of translations. For a contrastive study of source and target texts, see Gouanvic (1999) for Boris Vian and Gouanvic (forthcoming) for Coindreau and Duhamel.



invested in the original work, published in the source society. Through his or her translation, the translator intervenes as an agent who confers on the author and on the work a quantity of capital by submitting it to the logic of a target literary field, and to its mechanisms of recognition. We see this clearly in the three examples of translators mentioned above.

Coindreau contributed to the recognition of Faulkner and other writers of the southern US in the French literary field by distinguishing them from the mass of existing American writers;<sup>23</sup> this recognition also reflected on the translator as the discoverer of this literature, to the point that Sartre designated American literature in the interwar period as the 'Coindreau literature'. Duhamel's translations had a comparable effect, but they did not enjoy the same fame, or symbolic capital, because Duhamel translated a non-canonical genre, the detective novel. Judged as para-literature, situated on the margins of literature, or as second rate literature, the detective novel did not enjoy the same reception from those who had the power to say what counted as Literature: namely, the critics and the arbiters of literary elegance. The detective novel was assimilated into entertainment reading, and 'officially' (that is to say in the doxa) it played a secondary role in the cultural enterprise. Thus, all those who found themselves in the specialized field of the detective novel could only benefit from a capital inferior to that acquired in the dominant field of realist literature. Nevertheless, Duhamel played a significant role in establishing the vernacular as the medium of expression for the *Série Noire* series, an act that conferred on him the position of central agent in the field of detective literature. His symbolic capital is manifest notably in a superior credibility, even in relation to American authors. Chester Himes, to give only one example, began to write detective novels on the advice of Duhamel and from that point on achieved great success as an author. In the case of Boris Vian, his symbolic capital resided in the *habitus* of an engineer from the Centrale school, and was acquired through his ability to promote techno-scientific themes in literature. He and Raymond Queneau formed a very powerful cultural team, since their *habitus* were complementary, at once literary and scientific. If science fiction as a genre became firmly rooted in France from 1950 onward, if it has constituted an autonomous and lasting field since then, it is thanks to the dominant symbolic capital of the Vian-Queneau team.

## 5. Concluding remarks: the *illusio* and translation

The 'impious dismantling of fiction' ... leads to discovering, along

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<sup>23</sup> The reception of Coindreau's and Raimbault's translations of Faulkner in French culture contributed significantly to the awarding of the Nobel Prize to this American author in 1950.

with Mallarmé, that the *foundation of belief* (and of the delectation which, in the case of literary fiction, it procures) resides in the *illusio*, the adherence to the game as a game, the acceptance of the fundamental premise that the game, literary or scientific, is worth being played, being taken seriously. The literary *illusio*, that originating adherence to the literary game which grounds the belief in the *importance* or *interest* of literary fictions, is the precondition – almost always unperceived – of the aesthetic pleasure which is always, in part, the pleasure of playing the game, of participating in the fiction, of being in total accord with the premises of the game. (Bourdieu 1995: 333-4; emphasis in original)

The original *illusio*, founded upon the “willing suspension of disbelief” (Coleridge 1907:6) through which adherence to the game of fiction must pass, is ultimately the task of the translator.<sup>24</sup> Optimal translation is that which (re)produces in the target text the capacity of a work of fiction to provoke the adherence of a reader to the source work of fiction. The *illusio* of a source text is achieved by the fictional discourse developed within the text (set of themes, expressive techniques and *signifiante*), where the text reinvents the specific rules of the literary genre to which it belongs and reinterprets them according to its own logic. If a literary source text establishes a readership that adheres to the *illusio* of this text through distinctive methods that it has actualized, the text is likely to find a correspondent readership in the target culture through the agency of a translation carried out under the principle of homology, which is to say ‘resemblance in difference’.<sup>25</sup> The difficulty of a translation resides precisely in the interplay between resemblance and difference, a source work being neither exactly the same nor entirely different in translation.

The translation of the novels of the *Série Noire*, of American science fiction and of American realist novelists in the 19th and 20th centuries in French is, in principle, a case of authentic translation that seeks to (re)produce in French the particular *illusio* of the source texts. For the *illusio* of detective novels in the *Série Noire* is not the *illusio* of science fiction, nor that of the realist novels of Hawthorne, James, Dos Passos and Hemingway. Specific stakes and a specific *illusio* characterize each field, and adept readers

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<sup>24</sup> I examine this question of *illusio* in its relationship to the ‘signifiante’ of literary texts in my article ‘*L’illusio* et la signifiante, fondements d’une pratique éthique de la traduction’ (Gouanvic 2005b). Moreover, I suggest a distinction between *illusio* and Coleridge’s ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ in ‘Objectivation, réflexivité et traduction: Pour une lecture bourdieusienne en traductologie’ (Gouanvic 2005a).

<sup>25</sup> Not to be confused with the linguistic meaning that Roman Jakobson (1966:233) gives to a close conceptual couple, that of “equivalence in difference”. Bourdieu’s sense of ‘resemblance in difference’, on which homology is founded, is sociological.

adhere to these in internalizing the stake specific to the field – of science fiction, of the detective novel, of the realist novel ... – for the duration of the reading.

Thus we see that the *illusio* is closely linked to the dynamics of a field, existing only in the action of agents equipped with the *habitus* and symbolic capital acquired in that field. Translation responds to these diverse determinations as a specific practice in the act of being carried out. As a practice principally of a translator (but also of other agents – publishers, series directors, literary directors, critics, etc.), translation distinguishes itself quite radically from adaptation,<sup>26</sup> even though the borderline between the two activities is sometimes tenuous. Adaptation can draw on expressive techniques, adopt themes and orders of *signifiance* comparable to those of the source work and, in this case, the portion that resembles the source work can be more important than the portion that differs from it. Conversely, a translation could cultivate its difference from the source text by abandoning the resemblance part of the homology of translation. Whatever the case, it is always the *habitus* of a translator that influences the way translation is practised, and this *habitus* cannot be interpreted separately from its rapport with the foreign culture, which is endowed with a greater or lesser aura of legitimacy that is transmitted through translation and tends to dictate a new orientation in the receiving culture, a new social future.

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<sup>26</sup> Literary adaptation is today mostly done in the case of literature for young people. This literature is endowed with certain particularities: not only is there a specific national field corresponding to it, but foreign texts that are published in this field are most often adaptations through abridgements. So, if we wish to study the problematics of interlingual adaptation, we must clearly turn to literature for young people. Moreover, it must be noted that the field of literature for young people is defined by the intended public (young people) and not by belonging to a literary genre; it is thus characterized by the integrated co-existence of several genres (realist, fantasy, horror, science fiction, etc.), where it would be necessary to analyze the age groups to which these genres are addressed.

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