

A Study of Prosody in Modern English Translations of Molière's Plays

Cédric Ploix
St Hugh's College
University of Oxford



Thesis and abstracts submitted in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Hilary Term 2018

*Monsieur Molière, unfortunately dead,
 Sends fond regrets from his eternal bed.
 For it was he with an immortal play
 Who mixed the batter for tonight's soufflé
 In 1666 – his entertainment
 Titled The Misanthrope. A dark arraignment
 Of human life and love and hope, blah blah,
 But funny, too, and I mean funny ha-ha.
 A masterpiece from comedy's top mensch!
 Too bad for us he left the play in French,
 Which no ones speaks – except, of course, the French,
 And pompous types who bandy terms like 'genre.'
 Is it a compliment, or does it honor a
 Great work, to render it in our base tongue?
 And then to 'fix' a plot the angels sung?
 Well, as I say, Molière has packed his tent
 And our producers gave him two percent –
 So screw Molière, we'll do our own damn version!
 In English, thank you, for your full immersion,
 That you may revel in our native tones –
 At least those who (hello?!) turn off your phones.*

David Ives, *The School of Lies*

*Rime, écho qui prends la voix
 Du hautbois
 Ou l'éclat de la trompette,
 Dernier adieu d'un ami
 Qu'à demi
 L'autre ami de loin répète*

Sainte-Beuve, 'A la rime'

If poetry [...] is what is lost in translation, then it is also, or can be, what is added.

Ranjit Bolt, *The Art of Translation*

Short Abstract

My thesis discusses prosody, in the narrow sense of verse, meter and rhyme, used by modern English translators to revitalise Molière's comedies in order to make them successful on the modern English-speaking stage. The thesis first discusses the problems and paradoxes of verse translations, and questions the aesthetic equivalence between the alexandrine and blank verse, rhyming couplets and the English dodecasyllable. It points to different cultural associations, and the different reception they have enjoyed on stage. My thesis moves away from the usual criticisms of English verse forms and considers instances where the English and French verse systems can achieve similar dramatic effects and can be more efficient than prose in contributing to the workings of comedy. The reason behind the choice of self-conscious rhyming couplets is to enhance comic effects. Thanks to the use of witty rhymes, translators transform Molière's situational humour into verbal humour, particularly appealing to English audiences. This style serves both Molière, by introducing his comedies to the commercial stage, and also the translators, who gain more visibility. The thesis then analyses a number of strategies used to advertise the presence of rhymes, by way of a methodical computer-aided quantitative analysis and more traditional stylistic analyses, pointing to striking differences in the poetics of rhyme between Molière and his modern translators. The link between verse form and aesthetics is reasserted in the last chapter of the thesis through the analysis of how particular prosodic systems can have a significant impact on the aesthetics and the dramaturgy of the play. Five case studies of non-standard prosodic systems are examined as well as the case of verse adaptations from prose plays.

Long Abstract

This thesis discusses one of the main strategies used by modern translators to revitalise Molière's comedies in order to make them successful on the modern English-speaking stage. It discusses the role of prosody, in the narrow sense of verse, meter and rhymes used by translators to enhance comic effects. Thanks to the use of witty rhymes, translators transform Molière's situational humour into verbal humour, particularly appealing to English audiences. This thesis departs from the position that a successful adaptation relies on cultural domestication, reterritorialization of the action or modernisation of the idiom, which are already mainstream topics in the field. The series of adaptations analysed, indeed, proves that success can be achieved on the commercial stage even when the play is still set in Molière's Paris and period costumes are used.

Key notions of translation studies, notably, the foreignization/domestication dialectic as well as formal and dynamic equivalence have framed some of my analyses. Rhyming couplets are an intrinsically foreignised system for the modern English-speaking stage, however, their conspicuousness also pertains to a kind of prosodic domestication. The formal/dynamic equivalence (which I adapt from its original understanding in Eugene Nida's work), has proved useful in reflecting on prosodic equivalence and on text-performance relationship. Secondary sources relate to translation studies, theatre studies and French studies, making this thesis a contribution to various disciplines. The primary sources are extensive and most of them are untapped by critics. Studying modern translations inevitably poses the question of the cut-off point as to how recent my corpus should be. Although more translations are produced every year, I have chosen not to go beyond Justin Fleming's 2016 translations, and not earlier than Wilbur's 1956, making the thesis a study of 60 years of Molière translations.

The first chapter, because of its more theoretical nature, does not limit the discussion to Molière's plays; I use examples from translations of Racine's plays, and provide an overview of the reception of verse used for comic as well as tragic plays. The thesis can therefore claim to address all aspects of the translation of the alexandrine into English verse forms, although there is certainly more work to do on translations of Racine's and Corneille's plays.

The first chapter compares the formal features of the alexandrine and English traditional verse forms, and therefore a major element considered responsible for the untranslatability of Molière's verse plays. I first identify a number of problems and paradoxes associated with verse and metrical translations. I demonstrate that claims to fidelity when choosing to respect the verse system of the original (metrical mimesis or another constraining system), is problematic because of the necessary departures from the sense-units lying within the original.

This has been recurrently commented upon by translators in their prefatory materials. The mere act of turning lines of 12 syllables into lines of 10 syllables, as chosen by most verse translators, creates problems. A stronger argument demonstrating the invalidity of transposing the alexandrine into the two forms commonly used in English poetry (blank verse and rhyming or heroic couplets), derives from the formal differences between these prosodic systems. I first maintain the lack of aesthetic equivalence between the alexandrine and blank verse, as I posit a strong link between prosody and aesthetics. Moreover, the reception of the alexandrine is experienced differently from blank verse, stemming from a culturally and historically different use, which furthers the non-equivalence. The same investigation is then conducted for English rhyming couplets. The formal dissimilarities and difference in reception are even more striking, necessitating precautions for translators who use them. Heroic couplets have often been chosen by translators for retaining the appealing rhythm of the original. However, many reviewers fail to see the translators' views as legitimate, and have roundly criticised the lack of stageability of this form. Owing to the greater formal constraints of English and the lack of tradition of rhymed verse drama, criticism has been more outspoken in England than in France.

Finally, I focus on the existing attempts to reproduce the prosodic principles of the alexandrine closely in English rhyming hexameters. Similar conclusions are reached: the 'English alexandrine' will produce different effects to the source form and it is, furthermore, often regarded as a threat to stageability. Studying the English alexandrine makes it possible to claim that prosodic systems are fundamentally language-specific. Three examples of relatively successful alexandrines are nevertheless given and briefly examined. This paves the way for a reflection on the role of the performing agents in ensuring the 'performability' of the work. This reflection is important as there is a tendency in the field of Theatre Translation to assume that criteria for performability lie only within the translated texts: more remarks will be made on this topic throughout the thesis.

Chapter II attempts to bring a positive insight into verse translations, especially rhyming ones, first by reflecting on what the alexandrine brings to Molière's drama (other than a purely formal pleasure). This chapter explores how, despite the reservations explored in the first chapter, blank verse and rhyming couplets can be used effectively in translation, and argues that the use of prose would lead to a regrettable aesthetic loss. This chapter fills a gap in Molière studies: surprisingly little has been written on the aesthetics and dramatic qualities of Molière's verse. I argue that the alexandrine, as exploited by Molière, contributes to argumentation, dramatic tension, the depiction of conflict and comic effects, which are all essential to the workings of comedy. At the same time, I reflect on how best these qualities can be retained in

translation. I argue that English verse forms work well provided they comply fully with the principles dictated by their own prosodic systems. In other words, prosodic equivalence is possible with the help of prosodic domestication. First, I argue that the threat to verisimilitude that verse poses can contribute to the efficiency of Molière's comedy, contrarily to what is sometimes assumed, and I proceed to study a few translations which have used verse and prosodic variations precisely to signal a departure from realist aesthetics. Second, building on the formal description of the alexandrine given in the first chapter, I examine how Molière uses the structure of French verse to support his characters' rhetoric. Rhymes in English can assume the same structuring function and some translators have used them to this end. However, I demonstrate that the rhythm of the iambic pentameter can be fully exploited with a view to achieving rhetorical strength, which is an example of an equivalence based on prosodic domestication. I then go on to show the kinds of dramatic tensions that can be achieved by the alexandrine, especially in setting a particular hypocritical high-tone. Once again, I show that a particular use of the constraining English prosodic systems can achieve this effect with great efficiency. Prosodic domestication can also be used to translate efficiently Molière's stichomythia, by shifting the emphasis from verse structuration to marked stresses on monosyllabic rhyming words. Finally, contrary to what is sometimes stated by translators, and contrary to preconceived ideas, I argue that Molière's rhymes do lend themselves to comic effects on many occasions. I am aware that this last section could lead to further analysis, and serves here simply to give some idea of the broad use of comic rhymes in Molière's verse plays and to counteract the misconception. I do not seek to compare Molière's verse with translators' comic effect in their verse here: I explore how translators furthered the comic potential of Molière's verse into self-conscious and relentless comic rhymes thanks to prosodic domestication in the next two chapters.

Chapter III is less concerned with a systematic comparison between translations and Molière's plays, and focuses more on comparing the translations between themselves. It provides a broad historical overview of the evolution of verse in translations of Molière's comedies. First, an extract from *Le Misanthrope* is compared with the comparable extract from seven modern rhymed translations, spanning four decades, from Wilbur (1956) to Ranjit Bolt (1998), showing striking differences in terms of comic strategies. It is argued that a turning point took place with Tony Harrison's translation written for the National Theatre in 1973. I take account of the methodological issues that have arisen and that can be subject of criticism, and I attempt to justify my approach. I then demonstrate the emphasis on rhyme that actors give in performance with the help of reviews and deductions from the texts. This invites me to

further the reflection on the text-performance relationship begun in the introduction and Chapter I, as well as on the notion of equivalence. This chapter then contextualises the use of comic rhymes in the recent history of British drama, reflects on the position of the translations and the translator in modern theatrical culture, and comments on the need for translators to use rhyming couplets to claim authorship to the original text, to gain visibility, and potentially to elevate them to the status of ‘celebrity translator.’ I also situate the translations in the careers of poets or playwrights in order to understand the motives behind the style chosen for their translations. The last part of this chapter picks up two broad theoretical questions briefly addressed in the introduction. First, I point to the difficulty in defining the status of the works as translation or adaptation, because of an inconsistency of use between what is said in programme notes and in the published editions of the texts. This leads us to the question of the relationship of the English translation in relation to Molière’s plays, and the legitimacy of such prosodic interventions in relation to Molière’s aesthetics, a question for which no definite answer can be given.

Chapter IV illustrates the use of conspicuous rhyme in modern translations by delving into a selection of successful translations. It does so in two ways: the first employs a method of qualitative analysis that has never been conducted before and for which I had to design a specific method and computer program. The study provides interesting insights into the extent to which translators exploit the difference in formal properties between French and English rhymes. The vocabulary and sound quality of rhymes in Molière’s *Le Misanthrope* are studied and compared with several modern translations (Tony Harrison, Robert Cohen, Timothy Mooney and two translations by Ranjit Bolt). The higher results, obtained by the translations, in richness of vocabulary, richness of rhyming sounds and the prominence of the rhyming sounds, or the number of common phonemes rhymes share (what I call the ‘phonetic weight’) is striking. I then study the distribution of rhyming sounds in the plays. It is found that in translations, the distribution is very unequal: rare sounds (sounds occurring in no more than two or three couplets) are used in a high density and the number of sounds appearing many times is significantly lower. A much more equal distribution is found in Molière’s *Misanthrope*. The results for Ranjit Bolt’s translations are, however, comparable to those for Molière. This points to the limits of this study and calls for a qualitative study to understand what underlies the comic dimension of Bolt’s rhymes. Far from negating the validity of the methodology used – and indeed, the validity of the study – I argue that the difference in results may point to differences in the strategy of handling rhymes between American translators and

British translators. This confirms the assumption made in Chapter I on a greater tolerance of rhymes by American audiences, as compared to British audiences.

The second approach is a qualitative study of the strategies translators deploy to make a striking use of rhymes. First I focus on how translators tone down the presence of verse in order to achieve comic effects by emphasising rhymes at strategic moments: this recurrent strategy explains the results found in Bolt in the quantitative study. Then I explore the strategies recurrently found in translations to emphasise the sonorous dimension of rhymes: a long series of feminine rhymes, a high density of the same rhyming sounds in a speech, the use of tercets, distorted words to comply with the necessity of rhyming, and the use of French words as rhyming words can all emphasise the sonorous quality of rhymes. The study also examines the signifying quality of rhyming words, by especially scrutinising rhyming curse words and rhyming words that convey character. I also reflect on how couplets can confirm or undermine expectations in the signifying relationship between rhyming words, as well as on how the rhythmic deployment of the line can be shaped to emphasise the rhymes in a comic manner.

The final chapter moves away from the analysis of rhymes to consider verse as a whole. It provides case studies of the innovative prosodic experimentations of six particular translators; Bolt's rhyming tetrameter translations, Neil Bartlett's alexandrine translations, David Bryer's trilingual verse, Roger McGough's mixture of prose and verse, Justin Fleming's mixture of rhyme schemes and Timothy Mooney's verse adaptations of several of Molière's prose plays. This chapter shows the variety of effects that prosody can create: rhymed verse does not limit itself to fostering verbal humour, although it is often its primary function in many translations. Depending on the translator's use of verse, the text can create tension, regulate the tempo of drama, and provide guidance for the actor's delivery, which actors may or may not follow. Prosody can have consequences for the theatrical illusion: a conspicuous verse system can deliberately alienate the spectators, particularly when comic effects are avoided. Verse can also assist the audience in its understanding of the play, by emphasising characterisation, and by strengthening certain aspects of dramatic situations. Prosody also has an essential role in structuring discourse, in placing emphasis on certain words and ideas. Prosodic variation allows rhetorical strategies to be varied and the role of each prosodic form to be clarified. Indeed, by setting forms in opposition, prosodic variation enables us to further our reflections on their respective effects. More generally, this chapter shows that a prosodic system makes up a significant part of the translation's identity.

In the appendix, I include a comprehensive catalogue of published English translations of all of Molière's plays and I indicate the prosodic form employed in each of the translations.

The appendix will be the basis of a substantial future project: I shall keep working on the database, include a brief description and reviews of each plays wherever possible, details of performance and production wherever applicable and links to online material (reviews, google books, amazon). I intend to publish the data in a website equipped with various search options (translation/adaptation, nationality of the translator, monolingual/bilingual edition, performed/unperformed etc.).

Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Michael Hawcroft for his kind support and his patience. My thanks go to the some of the translators John Edmunds, David Bryer, Roger McGough and Andrew Hilton who have provided me with manuscripts as well as encouragement.

The whole community of St Hugh's College has provided a caring environment for which I am very grateful.

My family and friends have been a great source of encouragement, in particular my mother for her invaluable support, and Helen who became my fiancée and then my wife during the preparation of this thesis.

Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter I	19
Prosodic Equivalence between the French Alexandrine and English Verse Forms: Theoretical Considerations	
1. A Paradox at the Heart of Verse Translation	19
1.1. Faithful to what?	19
1.2. An issue raised by translators of classical French plays	21
1.3. Dealing with verse compression	22
1.4. The necessary deviations in verse translation	23
2. Differences between French and English Verse Forms	24
2.1. Formal difference between blank verse and alexandrine	25
<i>a. Historical and cultural equivalence</i>	
<i>b. Accentual and syllabic forms</i>	
2.2. Different effects on stage	28
<i>a. Blank verse and verisimilitude</i>	
<i>b. Shakespeare's shadow</i>	
2.3. Difference between rhyming couplets and alexandrines	31
<i>a. Necessity of French rhymes and artificiality of English rhymes</i>	
<i>b. Difference of effects: the sonorous dimension of English rhymes</i>	
2.4. Rhymed verse: a hazardous choice for the stage	34
<i>a. Comparing the reception of the alexandrine and rhyming couplets</i>	
<i>b. Historical difference</i>	
<i>c. Rhymes as an obstacle to dramatic efficiency</i>	
<i>d. A global problem on the English-speaking stage?</i>	
2.5. Metrical mimesis: an English alexandrine?	41
<i>a. Prosodic systems and language-specificity</i>	
<i>b. Criticisms of dodecasyllabic couplets</i>	
<i>c. Examples of rhymed hexameter translations</i>	
<i>d. The role of performance agents</i>	

Chapter II 49

The Dramatic Qualities of the Alexandrine and Translators' Responses

1. Molière and Verse	49
1.1. Molière's ability to rhyme	49
1.2. Justifying verse	50
1.3. The translators' critical input and prosodic domestication	52
2. Verse in Molière's Comedy and its Translations	54
2.1. Verse and detachment from reality	54
<i>a. General considerations</i>	
<i>b. Challenging verisimilitude through prosodic variations</i>	
<i>c. A case study: Ranjit Bolt's George Dandin</i>	
2.2. The contribution of verse to argumentation	60
2.3. Verse, high-tone and hypocrisy	64
2.4. Verse and domination	67
2.5. Verse, rhyme and comic effects	69

Chapter III 73

Molière in Modern English Rhyming Couplets

1. Conspicuous Rhyming Couplets in Modern Translations of Molière's Plays	73
1.1. A post-war drive towards comic rhymes	73
<i>a. A case study</i>	
<i>b. Methodological issues</i>	
1.2. Rhyme in performance	81
<i>a. Flaunting rhymes</i>	
<i>b. Text-performance relationship</i>	
2. The Purpose of Conspicuous Rhyme	85
2.1. Rhyming couplets and the commercial stage	85
<i>a. The magnetic power of comic rhymes</i>	
<i>b. Experimental forms on the commercial stage</i>	
2.2. Rhyming couplets and translators' visibility	91
<i>a. Raising the translators' profiles</i>	
<i>b. Rhyming couplets as a stimulating challenge</i>	
<i>c. The evolution of translators' own experimentation with prosody</i>	

3. Source- and Target-text Relationship	99
3.1. Questioning the status of the works: translations or adaptations?	99
3.2. Questioning the legitimacy of rhymes: impoverishment of the substance of Molière's comedies?	101
 Chapter IV	 105
Rhymes and Verbal Humour	
 1. Quantitative Study of Rhymes in <i>Le Misanthrope</i> and in Some Translations	 105
1.1. Lexical variety	107
1.2. Sound variety	109
<i>a. Taking into account the 'consonne d'appui'</i>	
<i>b. The distribution of rhyming sounds</i>	
<i>c. Phonetic weight</i>	
1.3. The case of Ranjit Bolt's <i>The Misanthrope</i> and <i>The Grouch</i>	115
 2. Strategies Deployed to Advertise the Presence of Rhymes	 119
2.1. Prosodic flexibility	120
<i>a. Loose rhymes</i>	
<i>b. Loose verse</i>	
<i>c. Rhyme as one element of the sound-texture</i>	
2.2. Emphasis on the sonorous quality of rhymes	125
<i>a. Subservient rhymes</i>	
<i>b. Feminine rhymes</i>	
<i>c. Repetitive rhyming sounds</i>	
<i>d. Verse fragmentation</i>	
2.3. Emphasis on the semantic quality of rhymes	132
<i>a. Semantic value of rhymes</i>	
<i>b. Semantic relationship between rhyming words</i>	
2.4. Expectations and comic effects	139
<i>a. Feedline and punchline</i>	
<i>b. Creating unexpected semantic relationships</i>	
<i>c. Playing with expectation with rhymes</i>	

Chapter V	145
Case Studies of Translations Written in Non-standard Rhyming Couplets	
1. Ranjit Bolt's Octosyllables in <i>Tartuffe</i> (2002)	146
2. Neil Bartlett's Dodecasyllables in <i>The Misanthrope</i> and <i>The School for Wives</i>	151
3. David Bryer's Trilingual Dodecasyllables in <i>Women on Top</i>	155
4. Roger McGough's Prosodic Variations in <i>Tartuffe</i> and <i>The Misanthrope</i>	160
5. Justin Fleming's Mixed Rhyme Schemes	167
6. Timothy Mooney's Versification of Prose Plays	172
 Conclusion	 181
 Appendix	 185
 Bibliography	 225

Introduction

If we are not careful, Molière could become one of the obstacles to a united Europe. How can you trade freely, let alone merge with a nation whose best comedy never travels?

This statement, written by John Peter in *The Sunday Times* (18/10/1987, quoted in Peacock 2000: 958), albeit humorous, especially given its post-Brexit political topicality, has nothing surprising to it. Molière's failure to capture the English stage is a commonplace idea. As translator Ranjit Bolt notes in *The Art of Translation*, English translators tackling Molière start with a handicap:

The English translator of Molière has an illustrious comic tradition in his own language to tell him just where Molière stands in the pantheon of comic playwrights. He is good, yes – very good indeed – but he is not great. In particular, looking at our own, British counterparts, his theatrical sense is arguably not so fine as that of Wycherley, say, or Congreve, or Sheridan, while his wit and intelligence are indubitably less. (2010: 38)

The subconscious spontaneous comparison between translations of foreign dramatists and Britain's own literary champions – as Bolt says, Wycherley, Congreve, or Sheridan, but also, and most of all, Shakespeare – coupled with a certain cultural isolationism prevailing in the UK, of which Brexit is certainly a symptom, compromises the presence of foreign theatre on the English-speaking stage. Indeed, according to the British Theatre Repertoire Survey,¹ translated plays represented only about 3% of the total number of staged productions in the UK in 2013. Without doubt the fortune of foreign drama has failed and will continue to fail to know brighter days.

More crucially, as Bolt also argues, the profound difference in comic aesthetics between the French tradition and the English tradition has not helped Molière's fate across the Channel and across the Atlantic: 'It is a fact that must be admitted that, line for line, Molière is not a funny writer: his comedy is almost exclusively either psychological or situational, rather than verbal' (2010: 31). If one considers a text untranslatable when its substance, structure, style, and their aesthetic effects cannot be carried across into the target language whilst preserving the function of the source text – in the case of Molière, making the audience laugh – Molière is indeed an untranslatable playwright.² Deprecatory statements like Bolt's are not uncommon in journalistic reviews of productions of English translations of Molière's plays. The semi-failure of Richard Wilbur's *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre in 1967 launched a series of them: 'Molière rarely works in English and the National failed to find the key' said the *Pictorial*

¹ <http://britishtheatreconference.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/British-Theatre-Repertoire-2013.pdf>

² This is worse for Racine, 'untranslatability' and 'Racine' have become two twin words, repeated *ad nauseam*.

Record of the National Theatre 1963-71 (quoted in Harrison 1973: 169).³ To cite a particularly severe one, a reviewer nominated Molière as the ‘most uninteresting of world dramatists’ (quoted in Stevenson 2004: 106).

However, what seems to be a general consensus over the unsuitability of Molière for English translation and the English stage has to be called into question when considering the string of translations and adaptations of Molière’s plays that recently sent tremors through the English-speaking stage. Miles Malleson’s 1950s translations sparked a revival of Molière on the British stage for the first time since the Restoration period.⁴ Harrison’s groundbreaking adaptation of *Le Misanthrope* in 1973 marked a second turning point in the history of English translations of Molière’s comedies (see ch. III, 1.1.a). This translation was a triumph at the National Theatre: out of the 96 plays that marked the first chapter of the history of the institution – from its creation in 1964 to 1975, the year it migrated from the Old Vic to South Bank – Harrison’s *Misanthrope* is the twelfth most played, with a total of 82 performances, coming after plays by famous authors, namely Shakespeare, Stoppard, Shaffer and Congreve.⁵ Since then, dozens of translators have produced an English Molière that has won almost unanimous critical acclaim. The success of Molière has even contributed to the (relative) opening up of the British stage to the European drama repertoire. Molière is the most performed French playwright at the National Theatre, with nine translations between 1967 and 2002.⁶ Averaging one production every five years, Molière’s presence is discreet, but still higher than that of Racine (3 translations), Beaumarchais (1) and Feydeau (1). More significantly, Molière enjoyed the privilege of featuring in the West End along with a few other foreign authors, such as Schiller (*Don Carlos*), Ibsen (*A Doll’s House*), Pirandello (*As You Desire Me*) and Brecht (*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*). Molière’s success in the West End is significant, maybe more so than at the National Theatre. According to Cristina Marinetti, between 1995 and 2006, 16.4% of the total number of plays produced at the National Theatre were translations (2013: 29). Although 16.4% seems rather low, the State-subsidised institution is still much more open to staging foreign plays than the private commercial stage, producing five times as many foreign plays as the British average.

³ See ch. III, 1.2.b. and 3.b. on the misadventure of Wilbur’s *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre.

⁴ The presence of Molière on the Scottish stage is also a post-war phenomenon. Translations were comparatively more frequent in Scotland than in the rest of the UK. In quest of a national repertoire, Scotland quickly became a promised land for adaptations of French classics (Peacock 1993).

⁵ One must also note the exceptional success of Georges Feydeau’s vaudeville *Une puce à l’oreille*, translated by John Mortimer in 1996, with 128 performances.

⁶ Ten productions, if one counts the revival of Harrison’s *Misanthrope* at the National in 1989.

Molière has also attracted the legendary directors Peter Brook and Peter Hall, directors of successful West End productions like Sean Foley and Neil Bartlett, celebrity poets like Tony Harrison, Liz Lochhead and Roger McGough, famous playwrights such as Martin Crimp and Christopher Hampton, and star actors such as Diana Rigg (Harrison, *The Misanthrope* 1973), David Tennent (Marber, *Don Juan in Soho* 2017) and Griff Rhys Jones (Foley and Porter, *The Miser* 2017).

Translations of Molière's comedies by Richard Wilbur alone undermine the claim that Molière is untranslatable: after his *Misanthrope* (1953) and *Tartuffe*, for which he won the Bollingen translation prize in 1963, his prolific Molière series has enjoyed continued international admiration (see ch. III, 1.1.a., 2.2.c.). Not only is the performability of Wilbur's translations now established – he is the standard choice when the director does not commission a new translation in the Americas – but also the quality of his translations is undisputed. *The New York Review of Books*, in a review on Wilbur's *Tartuffe*, quotes a reviewer referring to *The Misanthrope*: 'For the first time in 300 years, a play by Molière has the English translation it deserves' (26/06/1963). Referring to Wilbur's *Tartuffe*, written in the same spirit as *The Misanthrope*, the journal gives the play the accolade of 'the nearest thing to Molière that we have.'

If fact, Bolt challenges the consensus: 'if Baudelaire is untranslatable, even by a genius, Molière is eminently *translatable*, by a practitioner with sufficient skill' (2010: 45). There is a need, indeed, to contest this established idea, as Molière remains, to all intents and purposes, relatively absent from the British stage, at least in comparison with Shakespeare in France. While productions of Shakespeare's plays sometimes outnumber productions of Molière in France, with Shakespeare almost becoming the French national playwright by adoption (Fayard 2009), Molière does have the potential to exceed the figure of 3% published in the Theatre Repertoire Survey.

To understand this misconception, it may be worth reflecting on the notion of untranslatability. Several critics, such as Jacques Derrida and Roman Jakobson believe untranslatability is unavoidable and inherent to all literature. Henri Meschonnic takes the opposite stance and rejects the almost metaphysical view of the notion, and maintains that untranslatability is historically-contingent. He argues that the notion derives from an ideologically-perceived difference of status between the original literature and translation:

L'intraduisible est social et historique, non métaphysique (l'incommunicable, l'ineffable, le mystère, le génie). Tant que le moment de la traduction texte n'est pas venu, l'effet translinguistique est un effet de transcendance, et l'intraduisible passe pour une nature, un absolu. (1972: 51)

In this view, it becomes perfectly acceptable to contend that perhaps Molière *was* untranslatable in the past – at least in the long period from English Restoration to the 1950s – but he is certainly no longer so. Without going as far as Meschonnic as to disregard the fact that some formal features may *necessarily* be impossible to render in the target language (see ch. I), one can indeed argue that untranslatability is more a cultural phenomenon rather than a strictly formal problem. To extend Meschonnic's view, one can argue that untranslatability has two opposite roots. First, untranslatability may stem from a culture-bound lack of acceptance of the possibility of foreignisation, as per the term popularised by Lawrence Venuti (1995), or to quote Friedrich Schleiermacher's famous words, a refusal of a translation that 'takes the reader to the author,' instead of a translation that 'takes the author to the reader.'⁷ This resistance is understandable as theatre, especially the commercial stage, requires an immediate appeal to the audience, as Jean-Paul Sartre vividly recalls: 'Le théâtre, étant une entreprise coûteuse et dont le rendement doit être immédiat, exige qu'une pièce réussisse sur l'heure ou qu'elle disparaisse. [...] l'auteur sait qu'il se fera applaudir ou siffler sur-le-champ' (1973: 92). Because of the requirements of the stage, translators can hardly afford to preserve an aesthetics that would be too alien for the target audience, especially when the programme notes promise a joyful evening of sheer comedy.

Untranslatability as a notion may also derive from the opposite stance and originate in the refusal to regard translation as creative writing per se. Again, the alleged impossibility of looking for and finding compensating strategies pertains more to an ideological denial than to genuine unfeasibility. In other words, a cultural lack of acceptance to recreate the effects conveyed by the source text by way of a wholesale transformation can take refuge in readily labelling some literature as 'untranslatable.' Outwardly domesticating translations was little practised in the nineteenth century where a textocentrist and authorial culture predominated. In this way, untranslatability may be defined as a nineteenth-century-inherited notion that refuses to accept translation as a creative engagement with the source text. The reason for the post-war revival of Molière quite simply derives from the realisation that if Molière only meant to provoke laughter in his audience (at least according to some critics⁸), the translations of his plays should provoke the same effect.

One of the fundamental strategies for preserving the efficacy of a play in translation is to foreground the cultural frame of reference of the target audience. The need to alter the

⁷ 'Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens' [On the Different Methods of Translating'] (1813).

⁸ Critics have long argued over the question as to whether Molière was primarily a comedian or a serious philosopher-satirist, with, amongst others, Will Grayburn Moore, René Bray, Richard Fargher on one side, Gérard Defaux and Patrick Dandrey on the other.

references that are too ingrained in the source culture had long been studied by Translation Studies critics, but when Theatre Translation as a discipline really took off in the late 1970s, critics insisted on the necessity to do so with greater assiduity. The ultimate way to operate cultural transfer is to relocate the plays in a setting more identifiable to a British or American contemporary audience. Since Harrison set his *Misanthrope* in 1966 for the National Theatre, about half of translations have been relocalised, possibly because it is believed that the satirical dimension of Molière's plays is more effective when the play has gone through a contemporary English makeover.⁹ Neil Bartlett set his *Don Juan* in a chic hotel (2004), Derek Mahon set *L'École des maris* in modern Ireland (1985), Martin Crimp's *Misanthrope* (1996) takes place in contemporary socialite London, Liz Lochhead proposed a radically Scottish Molière, and Andrew Hilton's and Dominic Power's recent *Tartuffe* (2017) takes place in Hampstead Garden Suburb in North West London. Occasionally adaptors have come up with inventive titles, which clearly point to cultural and ideological reshifting, reinstating a common practice of the Restoration. Amongst others, there are *The Laird o' Grippy* [*L'Avare*] by Robert Kemp (1987), Lochhead's *Miseryguts* (1986),¹⁰ *Tartuffe: Born Again* by Freyda Thomas (1997) with a televangelist eponymous character, *The Grouch* [*Le Misanthrope*] by Bolt (2008), *Kanjoos* [*L'Avare*] by Hardeep Singh Kohli and Jatinder Verma (2013), *A Wolf in Snakeskin Shoes* by Marcus Gardley, relocated in Atlanta, in which *Tartuffe* is a flamboyant southern American preacher singing Gospel (2015), and *Don Juan in Soho* by Richard Marber (2016).

Sometimes, when translations are not clearly relocalised, they can sometimes indulge in anachronisms that can have a powerful comic effect: Chris Campbell's *Tartuffe* appeals directly to its audience, thanks to several unexpected references to contemporary Birmingham, and *The School for Lies* [*Le Misanthrope*] by David Ives (1994), though still set in seventeenth-century Paris, is full of contemporary American slang. Conversely, comic effects can be created when the play is set in modern times, but intermittently echoes the original seventeenth-century French setting with the help of suggestive metatextual effects. Triggering an awareness of the dual temporality of the play is adopted with blatancy by Crimp: 'And surely as a playwright you're aware/of sounding like something straight out of Molière' (1996: 5).¹¹

The increasing success of Molière in English is not only indebted to cultural reshifting. Adaptation of cultural references – and historical relocation at the culmination of this practice

⁹ See notably Stevenson 2004: 108-109 on Lochhead's *Tartuffe*.

¹⁰ As Noël Peacock demonstrates in *Molière in Scotland*, this domesticating turn started in Scotland and spread to the rest of the country.

¹¹ See ch. III, 1.1. for other examples.

– is only one aspect of the domesticating processes commonly used in translations for the theatre. Bolt seems to suggest a second, yet necessarily related, aspect when he argues: ‘For me Tony Harrison was the flagship of the modern movement of translating’ (in Johnston 1996: 257). What Bolt calls ‘the modern movement of translating’ is a conscientious effort of translating for the stage rather than for the page. Renowned Theatre Translation critic David Johnston agrees: ‘I think Tony Harrison was one of the first translators to translate in terms of theatre and not in terms of words’ (*ibid.*). Harrison’s article ‘Molière Nationalized’ published in 1973, which was later reshaped to become the introduction to his *Misanthrope* in a 2002 edition, shows other ways of foregrounding reception in the translational approach, with a view to securing the efficiency of theatrical language (Ploix 2018). Harrison’s essay notably describes the importance of translating for a specific production, looking for contemporary idioms and natural-sounding speech patterns, incorporating the different theatrical signs into the script, and working with actors in revising the script during rehearsals. In line with this article, from the late 1970s Theatre Translation critics quickly began to advocate a semiotic and performative poetics of theatre translation, along with renegotiating the play according to the target culture. Strangely enough, Harrison’s article has not been cited in Theatre Translation scholarship; but the fact that critics’ and practitioners’ accounts converged towards the same views is no coincidence. A climate of cultural change emerged at this time: the United Kingdom’s joining the ECC in 1973, the beginning of globalisation, the creation of the academic disciplines of translation studies, cultural studies, post-colonial studies, and also the privatisation of culture with Reagan and Thatcher (Wu 2002), which called for domesticating approaches, can explain why critical scholarship and modes of production changed in the same direction.

Although I consider my work to contribute to the field of Theatre Translation, it does not do so directly, as I do not engage extensively with the key debates of the field. However, by briefly situating my work in relation to past and current scholarship, I shall show how my analyses of modern translations of Molière’s comedies will, indirectly, make an impact on the discipline and its theoretical development.

Cultural shifts and a poetics of theatrical language for the translated play-text have been the two central domesticating strategies advocated and commented upon in the field of Theatre Translation. Of the recent important collective books published in the field, several clearly define these topics in their titles, notably, *The Play out of Context: Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture* (Scolnicov and Holland 1989), *Acculturation of the Other: Irish Milieux in*

Finnish Drama Translation (Aaltonen 1996), *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation* (Upton and Hale 2000), and *Voices in Translation: Bridging cultural Divides* (Anderman 2007). The first collected book to be published in the field *The Languages of Theatre* (Zuber 1980), mainly discusses how the translation can be ‘actable and speakable’ (‘Introduction,’ xiv) and the issues of transposing drama into another cultural context. Concepts of ‘performability’ (or ‘actability,’ ‘stageability’) and ‘speakability’ have been coined in the 1960s to vindicate the free approaches being adopted towards the source texts by translators for the theatre. Although these concepts have been less explicitly heralded in the latest scholarship after the famous blow Susan Bassnett gave to the concept of performability in ‘Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability’ (1991), after speakability has been likewise questioned, notably by Sirkku Aaltonen (2000: 43), and after the interest in interculturality in the late 1980s has given greater agency to foreignising approaches, these concepts have remained popular in the field (Espasa 2000: 49-50). Most case studies have accounted cultural and formal transformations from the source text based on what the translator thought would comply with the norms of the target stage, and thought would ‘work’ smoothly for the target audience. Although the recent development of Theatre Translation has explored other topics, such as translation as a collaborative process with practitioners (Johnston 1996), translations as ideological and cultural products (Brisset 1990; Aaltonen 2000), the empirical process of translation and the collaborative practice (Baines, Marinetti, Perteghella 2011), multilingual translation and surtitling (Ladouceur, Nolette 2011; Nolette 2015), the same issues have remained a popular critical topic. In *Staging and Performing Translation: Text and Theatre Practice* (Baines, Marinetti, Perteghella 2011), half of the contributions touched more or less directly on theatrical efficiency and cultural adaptation. The important *Theatre Translation in Performance* (Bigliazzi, Kofler, Ambrosi 2013) also has several contributions directly focusing on features of the original and translated texts that offer challenges in the performance of the target text.

Although my thesis does not fundamentally depart from this line of scholarship, it does examine other strategies than cultural relocation and norms of accessibility. Little will be said on the historical and geographical relocation in Crimp’s or Lochhead’s translations. The modernisation of the idiom and colloquialisms in McGough’s or Mooney’s translations will not be central to this study either. The chosen corpus of study, indeed, proves that success can be achieved on the commercial stage even when the play is still set in Molière’s Paris with period costumes and written in conspicuous rhymed verse. The success of the translations analysed in this thesis can certainly not be accounted for by playwright Hampton’s view of a

‘good theatre translation’: ‘I tend to feel that [the translation] doesn’t work if it draws attention to itself’ (Baines, Marinetti, Perteghella 2011: 183).

Even though Harrison’s article points to the translator’s efforts to reconcile rhyming couplets with natural-sounding language, one could hardly maintain that Harrison’s language is thoroughly domesticated. The fact that the play is written in rhyming couplets, an unconventional form for the modern English stage, is still in itself a clear element of foreignisation. The foreignising approach is further promoted by the fact that rhymes are often deliberately conspicuous. Although to this can be opposed the often blatant domesticating topicalisation of his language, I maintain that the concomitance between foreignisation and domestication in Harrison and other translations lies elsewhere. Central to this thesis is the idea that while being inherently foreignising, conspicuous rhymed verse also contributes to domestication as it introduces a fresh verbal comedy to Molière’s plays, which particularly appeals to Anglophone taste. Strategies used to enhance speakability, notably by toning down prosody in various places; in other words, strategies to neutralise foreignisation in favour of domestication, do exist in almost all translations, and some of them will be discussed (ch. IV, 2.1). But translations have, even more strikingly, displayed a use of prosody that actively creates a self-conscious verbal humour attuned to the English comic tradition; a type of prosody that skilfully plays with the foreignisation-domestication dialectics. Indeed, neutralising foreignisation by choosing a low-key unrhymed verse system, or even thoroughly naturalistic prose, has proved to be a less common strategy. In fact, none of the translations studied in this thesis completely fall into this category. I posit that, through the translators’ rendering of Molière’s alexandrine, the preference for concurrently adopting the two approaches over opting for a happy medium has largely contributed to the revitalisation of Molière on the English-speaking stage.

The alexandrine has largely been held as being one of the responsible factors for the alleged untranslatability of Molière’s plays (see ch. I). This is less an issue with Molière specifically than with the fact that each language has its own prosodic parameters. ‘D’une manière générale,’ says Antoine Berman, ‘il faut poser la musicalité comme l’élément le plus intraduisible d’une œuvre’ (2008: 70). However, the mere fact that there are a great number of successful verse translations written and produced challenges this presumption. Rather than choosing between foreignisation or domestication to circumvent its apparent untranslatability, the successful solution commented upon in this thesis is the option that exploits both approaches, without neutralising either of them.

Focusing on translations that display innovative prosodic features amongst the string of successful English translations from Harrison to the current day will point to a new and under-researched poetics of theatrical efficiency in translation, and will in this way be a contribution to the discipline of Theatre Translation. In the next paragraphs, I shall further define the general approach and methodology, before introducing the corpus of study in greater detail and justify my selection, as well as introducing my main secondary sources.

Prosody encompasses a large scope of definitions: from its Greek origin *προσῳδία* (from *pros* ‘to, forward, near’ and *ōdos* ‘song, poem’), the term prosody is often translated as ‘song sung to music,’ ‘tone of syllable,’ and from its Latin etymon, ‘accent of syllable.’ Prosody is associated with speech as sound, language as musical form; it concerns the rhythm, intonation, inflexion, and stress patterns of language, and when such parameters are arranged in conventional structural units, it refers to metre and versification. As this thesis will mostly reflect on versification (the alexandrine in Molière, and the equivalents proposed by translators), the broadness of the term is narrowed down. This is obviously restrictive: prosodic analyses can legitimately be conducted on prose texts (Larthomas 2005: 50-80). Moreover, Molière’s own prose is tremendously rhythmic (Conesa 1983), and in his prose plays, the dialogue often becomes overtly cadenced (Garapon 1964). Although not central to this thesis, space will also be given to a discussion of some translators’ attempts to reproduce these instances of rhythmical dialogues, sometimes going even further than Molière in playing with rhythm and sound (ch. IV, 2.). This discussion seems necessary as it is argued that blatant manipulation of rhythm and sound strategically contributes to the efficiency of prosody (in the restricted sense of meter and rhyme).

The thesis will reflect on the different prosodic systems (mostly rhyming couplets, but also blank verse, rhymed tetrameters, rhymed dodecasyllables and rhymed irregular verse) chosen as equivalents to the alexandrine. However, prosodic systems are not fixed and rigid: there can be several forms or variegations for one system, depending on the degree of liberty the poet takes from the set rules.¹² The thesis will consider the translators’ different takes on the systems according to their own styles and emphases, and thus consider different prosodic forms within prosodic systems. One ought not to use the terms ‘prosodic system’ and ‘prosodic form’

¹² Indeed, there are different kinds of iambic pentameters: Miltonic blank verse, for instance, relies on heavy stresses, a strict metrical blueprint, and endstopped lines, while Shakespearian blank verse has a propensity towards metrical variegation and rhythmic disjuncture, and is therefore more suitable for the stage (for a typology of English verse forms, see Hobstaum 1996: 13). Likewise, heroic couplets, as practised by Dryden for example, relate differently to the metrical blueprint depending on their use for the stage or for the page. Dryden’s translations are written in more rigid and endstopped lines than his tragedies.

interchangeably: ‘system’ will be used to refer to the set of rules defining the metrical blueprint and ‘form’ to refer to how the system is appropriated by the poet’s rhythmical input.

As well as reflecting on the function of these prosodic systems and forms, and especially of rhymes in revitalising Molière’s plays, it will be important to discuss the aesthetic effects of the different verse systems – Molière’s alexandrine included. When performed on stage, poetic writing acquires considerable strength: all the sonorous traits present within the language, together with the rhythmic impetus originating with the set of prosodic rules, come prominently together. On stage, therefore, the different verse systems have the capacity really to transform the aesthetic identity of the text.

My analyses are mostly textual: from the printed texts, I compare the different prosodic systems and forms and identify each translator’s main strategies for emphasising comedy through verse and rhyme, and systematically compare these with Molière’s alexandrines. However, my analyses are always turned towards the potential actualisation of the text in performance. As most of the translations analysed in this thesis were prepared for performance, translators usually had some pre-defined ideas of how they wanted their texts to sound on stage; more specifically, what stage effects they were looking for with their prosodic experimentations. When analysing the translations, therefore, I try to determine how the texts seem to invite a particular kind of speech performance. The close relationship between translation and performance has gained support from a branch of theatre semiotics in the 1980s, which posited that theatre texts, and in our case, translations, contain a performance-subtext, which is more or less clearly encoded depending on the translational project. Famous playwright Antoine Vitez maintained the consubstantiality between translation and performance in ‘Le devoir de traduire’ (1982):

because it is a work in itself, a great translation already contains its *mise en scène*. Ideally the translation should be able to command the *mise en scène*, not the reverse. Translation or *mise en scène*: the activity is the same; it is the art of selection among the hierarchy of signs (quoted in English translation from Pavis 1992: 140).

This thesis does not, however, discuss how the translations might determine all aspects of performance and *mise en scène*: discussion will be limited to the performance of speech. To confirm my assumptions on how the texts might sound on stage and are received by spectators, I quote reviews and the translators themselves in interviews or in the introductions to their texts.

Given the high number of primary sources, it is necessary to justify the selection of plays that will make up the corpus of study, and present the main secondary sources that will support

my analyses. I choose to focus particularly on translations that display conspicuous and innovative prosodic features and that have been successful on stage. It is worth noting that these two criteria are linked: successful translations are most often worth commenting on for their prosodic experimentations. Success is determined by several factors. The first is the translation's reception and impact: has it been positively received by reviewers? Do reviewers of the performance mention the translation at all? Is it commented on by critics? Has it proved influential for subsequent translators, i.e. is the translation cited in other translators' introductions? The second factor concerns the impact and success of performance: does the translation originate from an important commission for a major venue, such as the West End and Broadway stages or the National Theatre? How long did the show stay on? Has a tour followed the premiere?

However, one has to admit that the success of a performance is not to be solely attributed to the translation; the director's role is prominent in the play's fate. A good translation does not automatically lead to a good performance and vice versa. The failure of Wilbur's *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre is an example of the absence of systematic correlation between the two, especially considering how many times the play has been successfully staged since. Nevertheless, this thesis will not comment on directors' choices with regard to *mise en scène*, or on actors' performances per se, other than how rhyming couplets are spoken by them on stage (ch. III, 1.2.). Deliberately disregarding the theatrical agents other than the translator in considering success might be contentious, especially as in reviews, comments on the director's choices, scenery, cast and actors' performances, usually appear more prominent. It is often only then that reviews mention the translation. However, generally, when efforts have been made to ensure that language is stageable, or more specifically, in our case, when the translators use various strategies to make prosody conspicuous in order to create verbal comedy, translations may not necessarily be successful in performance, but they nonetheless have the potential to be so. Furthermore, it can be argued that it is more likely for an insipid translation to lead to a successful production, than for a comic and inventive translation to lead to a poor production. The issue of text-performance relationship is, in general, a vexed one, which has spawned much scholarship;¹³ it will need to be further addressed in the thesis (ch. I, 2.5.d. and ch. III, 1.2.b.).

I analyse translations from various regions of the Anglophone world. Well-known British ones include Harrison, Crimp, Bartlett, Bolt and McGough. I also include in the corpus

¹³ See Veinstein (1992) for an overview of text-performance relationship and the relationship between the director's work and the text in the history of French theatre, Pavis (1992: 131-154) for a discussion of this topic in relation to theatre translations.

Lochhead's translations in Scots and the less famous Derek Mahon's *High Time*, a free Irish translation of *L'École des maris*. American translators such as Wilbur and Timothy Mooney will also feature significantly; the former because of his international reputation as a respectable Molière translator, the latter for his prolific production of Molière in English and the originality of his work. Less well-known, yet still very successful on stage, American Robert Cohen's *Misanthrope* and Justin Fleming's Australian translations will be extensively commented on, also because of the originality of their experimentations with prosody.

Discussion of the contextualisation of the translations and the verse systems in the theatrical tradition of the target culture will be more prominent with Britain than with other English-speaking countries. This is partly because British translations outnumber American ones, and for material reasons: access to British theatre archives for the consultation of reviews was more straightforward. However, as the evolution of English translations of Molière's plays seems quite consistent on the Anglophone stage, there is no reason to assume that the explanations for this evolution are very different across the different countries.

The famous pre-Harrisonian translations, notably Malleson's and Wilbur's translations, will be mentioned, and all the more so that they are interesting from the perspective of prosody. More recent translations that are (relatively) less well-known, including Robert David MacDonald's and Jeremy Sams's, will be occasionally quoted. This thesis will also devote a special space to an unpublished, little-impact translation: David Bryer's *Women on Top*, because of its innovative experiments with prosody. Some remarks will also be made on the unpublished *Tartuffe* by Stephen Benjamin, written as part of a Master's dissertation, because of the interesting reflections that frame his work, and *Women of Intellect* produced by John Edmunds. Finally, some published verse translations that have never been performed, or never outside university contexts in one-off student productions, and that may be considered to be less 'performable' than famous translations, will also be occasionally quoted as their prosodic forms are also worth commenting on. Such translations include Maya Slater's (2001), Maria-Cristina Necula's *School for Wives* (2009) and John Edmunds's *Misanthrope* (2013).

Because of the focus on English translations of the alexandrine forms in Molière, this thesis will not consider translations of all of Molière's plays. *Le Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe* will be prominent in the thesis as they have been amongst the most frequently translated plays: almost 60 translations have been published since 1950 (see Appendix), and many others have been produced. *L'École des femmes* and *Les Femmes savantes* follow as popular plays, also frequently translated (23 published translations since 1950). The other lesser-known rhymed plays by Molière, *L'Étourdi*, *Amphitryon*, *Le Dépit amoureux*, *Sganarelle*, *Les Fâcheux*,

L'École des maris, *Dom Garcie de Navarre*, *Mélicerte*, *Psyché*, have rarely been translated. Some of Molière's prose comedies, notably *Le Malade imaginaire*, *L'Avare*, *George Dandin* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin* will also feature in the thesis, as some translators, Malleson, Sams, Bolt, McGough, and most importantly, Mooney, have produced complete or partial rhymed adaptations of these plays.

On the presentation of the corpus, two further comments are needed: the first is on the absence of prose translations in this study; the second deals with the label 'translation' versus 'adaptation.'

Although it is argued that English rhyming couplets contributed to the rebirth of Molière on the English stage after centuries of absence, it must nevertheless be pointed out that most of Molière's great prose comedies, especially *Le Malade imaginaire*, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, *L'Avare* and *Don Juan* have been translated many times, and sometimes with great success. The National Theatre has put on five English productions Molière's prose plays: Alan Drury, *The Hypochondriac* (1981); John Fowles, *Don Juan* (1981); Jatinder Verma, *Tartuffe* (1990); Sams, *The Miser* (1991); Nick Dear, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1992). It is noteworthy that in prose translations, comedy tends to be supported by overt domesticating shifts including cultural renegotiations, relocations into modern times and modernisation of the idiom. Verse translations are generally less in need of being supported by cultural shift.

Although the recent history of Molière in English that this thesis outlines is therefore only partial, the increasing number of post-war verse translations of Molière's comedies compared with the beginning of the 20th century and the previous centuries demonstrates that verse has a significant role in this history, and justifies the chosen corpus. Of all the published translations of Molière's plays (prose and verse comedies), 3.18% are in rhymed verse (completely or partially) from the first English translation published in 1667 to 1945, and 44.22% are in rhymed verse from 1945 to now. There are 60 post-war published translations of the two most famous verse plays (*The Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe*), and 40 post-war translations of the two most popular prose plays (*Le Malade imaginaire* and *L'Avare*) (see Appendix). Moreover, the style of theatrical language that tends to be chosen in verse translations of these two plays find resonances in the style of writing adopted by prose translators. Efforts are often made to emphasise rhythm, puns and self-conscious alliterations in many prose translations with the aim of giving the texts a musical voice: Marcus Gardley's *A Wolf in Snakeskin Shoes* [*Tartuffe*] (2015), or Sean Foley's and Phil Porter's *Miser*, staged in the West End, are particularly notable examples.

Should all the plays within the corpus be referred to as ‘translations’ or ‘adaptations’? As pointed out by some critics, this question of terminology is more complex than it may seem. The common segregation between ‘translation’ and ‘theatre translation’ or ‘adaptation,’ according to Venuti, ‘betrays an ignorance of developments in Translation Studies over the past three decades’ (2007: 9), as this denies that critics have gone beyond discussions of faithfulness or fidelity (Krebs 2014: 2). Finnish translation scholar Riitta Oittinen has argued that ‘The main difference between translation and adaptation lies in our attitudes and points of view, not in any concrete difference between the two’ (quoted in Minier 2014: 13).

The issues of verse translation and the strong presence of rhymes in the English texts problematise this question further. One could contend that all rhyming-couplet translations should be called adaptations because of the way the compositional constraints force the translators to be creative, as suggested in Brian Logan’s article ‘Whose play is it anyway?’ published in *The Guardian* (12/03/2003). As Andrea Peghinelli argues, however, an adaptation also ‘requires a level of dramaturgical skill and creative vision, which, in a mere translation, are solely attributable to the original playwright’ (2012: 24). Apart from McGough’s *Tartuffe* and *Misanthrope* (see ch. V, 4.), and maybe Bolt’s *George Dandin* (ch. II, 2.1.c.), revitalising prosody does not have a significant impact on the dramaturgy of the play.

Should I then call ‘adaptations’ the works that are relocated in time, have added lines, dialogues, scenes or characters; and keep the term ‘translation’ for the ones with less dramaturgical intervention? This might be the most intuitive option, although the cut-off point is hard to define. However, this would belittle the creative and transformative dimension of prosodic domestication.

Another option, more objective, would be to call ‘adaptations’ the plays that are based on literals and ‘translations’ those directly deriving from the originals. This would have the advantage of giving a particular status to the literal translator, whose name often does not even appear on the programme notes. However, precisely because the literal translator is disregarded, it is difficult to find out. Not all translators are as open as McGough, who, about the composition of his *Tartuffe* confessed: ‘I didn’t take Molière’s original French text with me [...] but a direct prose translation, plus adaptations in verse by the American poet Wilbur, Bolt and Hampton, as well as Lochhead’s wonderful Scottish version’ (*The Guardian*, 05/02/2013). A third natural option would be to follow the use of the term appearing in the programme notes, in the edition of the play, or the term claimed by the translators in their introductions. However, as shown in ch. III, 3.1. there is not always a consistent use of terms. Given the methodological problems, and, more importantly, as there is no scope in this thesis

to propose a theoretical basis for the differentiation between translation and adaptation, I prefer to label all works ‘translations.’ I shall occasionally add the adjective ‘free’ when I judge it necessary, but without dwelling on it.

I have reviewed all relevant literature I could find on the different topics dealt with in this thesis. The greatest source of reflection on all these topics comes from translators themselves, in their introductions, prefaces or forwards. In these texts, translators justify their choices and strategies for addressing challenges, which are often reflected upon thoroughly. Reviews of performances are another significant part of the critical apparatus of this thesis. More than 50 reviews are quoted in the thesis, and about 200 have been consulted (online or at the National Theatre archives). They are an essential tool for assessing the success of a performance, the extent to which rhymes were conspicuous in performance, and also for providing valuable insights into generally held views on Molière and verse drama in Britain and elsewhere. There are a few prominent critics that deserve special mention here: the thesis benefits particularly from Noël Peacock’s scholarship, Peacock being one of the rare critics who has worked extensively on translations of Molière’s plays. He published a monograph entitled *Molière in Scotland*, four articles on translations of Molière’s plays, and short reviews of the main translations of Molière’s plays in the *Encyclopaedia of Literary Translation into English*. Bolt is another significant point of reference in the thesis, since, along with his many successful translations, he has also reflected on his translation practice and on English translations of Molière’s plays in general in an interview (Johnston 1996: 249-61), an article (Taylor, McMorran and Leclercq 1996: 89-94) and in his monograph *The Art of Translation*. His monograph is sometimes poorly conceptualised and referenced, but the intuitions and assumptions he makes often hit the nail on the head. Surprisingly, not much has been written on verse translation, despite the amount of scholarship produced on poetry translation,¹⁴ apart from a few famous articles (Holmes 1970; Bonnefoy 1979), or passing comments in works on poetry translation. Derek Attridge has, however, greatly contributed to the topic; the discussion of prosodic equivalence in Chapter I significantly builds on his work (see also Ploix 2016). As for the aesthetic effects of verse and prosody (ch. II and V), Clive Scott is one of the few critics who has touched on the question.

¹⁴ Of the many poetry translation critics, I tend to quote Barbara Folkart’s *Second Finding: A Poetics of Translation* often: her vigorous defence for a ‘writerly’ approach instead of a ‘readerly’ approach to poetry translation has greatly influenced my thinking and finds connections with the paradigmatic shift in post-war translations of Molière’s comedies.

Although the thesis, and in particular Chapter III, offers an overview of the history of English translations of Molière's plays, this is not the primary aim of this work. Chapters are organised thematically to focus on prosody. The first two chapters consider the different forms used by translators to transpose the alexandrine into English and will address the question of prosodic equivalence, the following chapters deal with conspicuous rhymes, and the last chapter examines the innovative prosodic experimentations of six particular translators.

The first chapter compares the formal features between the alexandrine and English traditional verse forms, and therefore a major element considered responsible for the untranslatability of Molière's verse plays. After identifying a number of problems and paradoxes associated with verse and metrical translations, I demonstrate the invalidity of transposing the alexandrine into the two forms commonly used in English poetry: blank verse and rhyming (or heroic) couplets, by pointing to their formal differences. As I posit a strong link between prosody and aesthetics, I therefore maintain the lack of aesthetic equivalence between source and target prosodic systems. Then, I focus on the existing attempts to reproduce the prosodic principles of the alexandrine closely in English rhyming hexameters. Similar conclusions are reached: the 'English alexandrine' will produce different effects to the source form and it is, furthermore, often regarded as a threat to stageability. Heroic couplets have often been chosen by translators for retaining the appealing rhythm of the original. However, many reviewers fail to see the translators' views as legitimate, and have roundly criticised the lack of stageability of this form. Owing to the greater formal constraints of English and the lack of tradition of rhymed verse drama, criticism has been more outspoken in England than in France. As this chapter aims at addressing all aspects of the translation of the alexandrine into English verse forms, I do not limit the discussion to Molière's plays; I use examples from translations of Racine's plays, and provide an overview of the reception of verse used for comic as well as tragic plays.

Chapter II attempts to bring a positive insight into verse translations, especially rhyming ones, by reflecting on what the alexandrine brings to Molière's drama (other than a purely formal pleasure). This chapter explores how, despite the reservations explored in the first chapter, blank verse and rhyming couplets can be used effectively in translation, and argues that the use of prose would lead to a regrettable aesthetic loss. This chapter fills a gap in Molière studies: surprisingly little has been written on the aesthetics and dramatic qualities of Molière's verse. I argue that the alexandrine, as exploited by Molière, contributes to argumentation, dramatic tension, the depiction of conflict and comic effects, which are all essential to the workings of comedy. At the same time, I reflect on how best these qualities can be retained in

translation. I argue that English verse forms work well provided they comply fully with the principles dictated by its own prosodic systems. In other words, prosodic equivalence is possible with the help of a kind of prosodic domestication.

The next two chapters will pick up on the point made on the comic effects created by the alexandrines, and explore how translators furthered the comic potential of Molière's verse into self-conscious and relentless comic rhymes. Chapter III provides a broad historical overview of the evolution of verse in translations of Molière's comedies. First, a sample taken from *Le Misanthrope* is compared with a series of modern rhymed translations, showing striking differences in terms of comic strategies, the evolution of translators' own engagements with prosody, the growing emphasis on rhyme in performance. This chapter is less concerned with a systematic comparison between translations and Molière's translations, and centres more on comparing translations between themselves, as well as on the position of the translations and the translator in modern theatrical culture. This chapter also contextualises the use of comic rhymes in the recent history of British drama, and comments on the need for translators to use rhyming couplets to gain visibility.

Chapter IV illustrates the use of conspicuous rhyme in modern translations in a methodical way and by analysing a selected corpus. The first approach is a quantitative study: the richness of vocabulary and sound quality of rhymes of *Le Misanthrope* is studied and compared with the translations by Harrison, Mooney and Bolt. This study provides some insights into how translators exploit the difference in formal properties between French and English rhymes. The second approach is qualitative and focuses on the strategies translators deploy to make a striking use of rhymes; notably, how translators tone down the presence of verse at strategic moments, and emphasise their sonorous dimension, signifying quality, and how rhymes are supported efficiently by other aspects of verse.

The final chapter departs from the analysis of rhymes to consider verse as a whole. It provides case studies of conspicuous verse forms in modern adaptations. It comments on the aesthetic effects of verse systems that are regular in their metrical principles but that are not standard rhyming couplets, and the dramatic and aesthetic effects of prosodic variations in the texts.

In the appendix I include a comprehensive catalogue of published English translations of all of Molière's plays and I indicate the prosodic form employed in each of the translations.

Chapter I

Prosodic Equivalence between the French Alexandrine and English Verse Forms: Theoretical considerations

1. A Paradox at the Heart of Verse Translation

It is no secret that translating verse literature poses a great challenge: numerous critics have reviewed the difficulties of poetry translation. The statement ‘Poetry is what gets lost in translation’ attributed to Robert Frost, has turned into a widely-known adage. Most translators of Molière’s comedies have deplored significant loss when coping with one of poetry’s essential components: versification. Therefore, the prosodic system adopted in translations of Molière’s verse plays needs to be the result of a careful and reasoned choice. Indeed, prosody has a major influence on meaning; not only because it presupposes, from a compositional perspective, a constrained choice of signifying units, but also in light of the general acknowledgement in literary criticism that the form and the substance of a text are indivisible. Choosing the prosodic system is also the very first decision that needs to be taken by the translator, even before putting anything on paper. But this choice is far from being straightforward, as it involves so many varied factors.

1.1. Faithful to what?

When the translation functionally parallels the form of the source-text conforming to the target-text’s poetic tradition, the translation will be essentially ‘form-derivative,’ to employ James Holmes’s terminology (1970: 95-7). If, on the contrary, a translator ‘does not take the form of the original as his starting point, fitting the content into a mimetic or analogical form as best he can, but starts from the semantic material, allowing it to take on its own unique poetic shape as the translation develops,’ the work will be ‘content-derivative.’ It often seems to be one or the other. The difficulty of providing a sense-oriented translation while coping with the constraints imposed by prescribed metrical rules has been pointed out many times. Poetry

translators usually express and justify their views in prefatory material, and no consensus has been reached on the issue. Holmes's view is eloquent: he compares a metrical translation of a poem to a kind of 'meta-literature,' being on the borderline between an act of interpretation of the source text, as a prose translation is, and 'a poem in its own right' (1970: 93). Interestingly, André Lefevere denies the poetic validity of metrical translation, equating it to purely literal translation, since both metrical and literal translations focus exclusively on a single aspect of the source text: 'Like literal translation it therefore succeeds only in distorting the sense, communicative value, and syntax of that source text. Like literal translation it fails completely to make the source text available as a literary work of art in the target language' (1975: 42). In the same vein, Barbara Folkart states that metrically correct translations lead to poetic inadequacy: 'deriving a poem in the TL [target language] can never be a matter of finding words to squeeze pre-existing surface structures and contents into' (2007: 29). Eugene Nida remarks that 'in general the form is usually sacrificed for the sake of the content' (1964: 157). French poet-translator Yves Bonnefoy is part of this trend, claiming that combining the two kinds of approach is tantamount to 'pure virtuosity' (1979: 377), he chooses an approach which seeks to produce a new poem according to the 'original intention and intuition [...], stripped of that fixed form which is only its footprint' (quoted in France 2000: 5).

Because of the difficulty of the task, verse translation vividly exemplifies the fallacy behind the notion of 'faithfulness,' a notion which has been appropriately contested within Translation Studies. In a way, attempting a metrical translation entails an essentially paradoxical position: the translator is split between the desire to remain faithful to the form of the source-text and the impossibility of reproducing all the sense-units lying within the original. Although the translator 'can claim "fidelity" by staying within the metre of the source text, thus more or less preserving its outward form' (Lefevere 1975: 37), it is quite undeniable that 'fidelity' is purely illusory when metre is privileged over sense. Vladimir Nabokov concisely identifies the dilemma faced by any verse translator: 'The problem, then, is a choice between rhyme and reason: can a translation, while rendering with absolute fidelity the whole text, and nothing but the text, keep the form of the original, its rhythm and its rhyme?' (in Venuti 2012: 119). In his preface to his translation of *Homer*, Alexander Pope believes in what could be seen as an impossible dogma: 'It is the first grand duty of an interpreter to give his author entire and unmaimed; and for the rest, the diction and versification only are his proper province, since these must be his own; but the others he is to take as he finds them' (1833: I, xxiv). This statement sounds blatantly contradictory: how can one leave the source material intact while putting one's stamp on the verse, which, in fact represents much of the overarching identity of the text?

1.2. An issue raised by translators of classical French plays

Reading prefaces and introductions to translations of French seventeenth-century verse plays shows that these issues are voiced by most translators attempting verse for the sake of faithfulness. For example, Maria-Cristina Necula's introduction to her rhymed translation of *L'École des femmes* dwells on the struggle between the 'tyranny of the two "gods" of rhyme and rhythm' and the other 'tyrant: faithfulness to the text' (2009: 'Preface'). Roy Clement Knight, in the introduction to his blank verse translation of Racine's *Phèdre*, speaks to the compositional challenge of rhymed translations: 'So, like most or all English translators, I take our traditional English line for serious verse, the decasyllable; but I do not attempt rhyme, [...] because English is poor in rhymes and it would be too difficult to reconcile rhyme with tolerable fidelity to sense' (1982: xiii).

Neil Bartlett, in his rhyming hexameter translation of Racine's *Bérénice* has primarily sought to preserve the rhythm of the original: 'I'm not translating on the level of "what does it mean?" but rather in order to reproduce, as accurately as possible, the theatrical cadence of a precise sentence' (in Johnston 1996: 6). In their Racine translations, Margaret Rawlings, Samuel Solomon and Wallace Fowlie, among many others, did otherwise by indulging in some metrical flexibility and discarding rhymes. Those translators who have managed to reconcile the two kinds of translation, notably, Richard Wilbur, Maya Slater and Geoffrey Alan Argent, generally do not fail to point it out in their introductions. Argent, winner of the 2011 American Book Award for his rhyming translation of Racine's complete plays (2010) – the third one, after Robert Bruce Boswell (1890) and Solomon (1967) – states: 'For the most part, I had no trouble in maintaining a couplet-for-couplet correspondence with the original; indeed, it was easier to remain faithful to the French than to depart from it' (2010: xxii). Although his translations certainly show prowess, this claim is debatable.

Although Robert Lowell's version of *Phèdre* (1961) is written in heroic couplets, in *Imitations* published the same year, the American poet and translator has a telling way of criticising metrical translations:

Strict metrical translators still exist. They seem to live in a pure world untouched by contemporary poetry. Their difficulties are bold and honest, but they are taxidermists, not poets, and their poems are likely to be stuffed birds. A better strategy would seem to be the now fashionable translations into free or irregular verse. Yet this method commonly turns out a sprawl of language, neither faithful nor distinguished, now on stilts, now low, as Dryden would say... (1961b: xi)

1.3. Dealing with verse compression

From a technical point of view, translating French alexandrines into what has asserted itself as its English counterparts, blank verse and rhyming couplets, is more difficult than strict metrical translation. Turning alexandrines into pentameters involves the challenging process of condensing the discourse by paring down the syllable count; by one sixth, as pointed out by David Bryer, a translator of Racine, Corneille and Molière (1996: 45). In seventeenth-century French drama, the majority of lines are endstopped, functioning as one prosodic, sentential or rhetorical unit, and therefore cannot overrun onto the next one. Although English is known for being a denser language than French, having a greater number of monosyllables, the challenge has still been commented upon by several translators. Although Solomon chose to translate Racine and Corneille (1967 and 1969) in eleven-syllable lines, he still had to cut the final ‘ly’ from adverbs and to jettison articles in order to pare down the syllable count. Lacy Lockert, in his rhymed translations of Racine (1936 and 1958), had to resort to blatant contortions of syntax. In order to avoid omissions, Bryer made the (more or less) cautious choice to opt for dodecasyllable lines with six stresses in his *Andromache* for the Cheek by Jowl Theatre Company (Bryer 1996: 50).

To illustrate this in a Molière translation, Orgon’s famous description of Tartuffe, ‘C’est un homme... qui... ha... un homme... un homme enfin’ (I-iv, 272), gives the impression of an artificial elongation, while respecting the syllable-count. Wilbur, famous for his accurate translations in rhyming couplets, in order to retain the meaningful hesitation, had to elongate the line with a succession of three anapaests, making the line very unrepresentative of his normally regular verse and adds a debatable adjective: ‘He is a man who... a man who... an excellent man’ (1964: 14). Looking at Bolt’s octosyllabic version of the same line vividly demonstrates this point. He comes up with a mere ‘He is a man... He *is* a *man*’ (2002: 33). Orgon’s vacillation, either betraying a suppressed awareness of Tartuffe’s true nature, or expressing great admiration is unpersuasively transformed into a bluntly affirmative statement, supported by a vocal insistence on the iambic rhythm thanks to the italics.¹⁵

Sometimes, translating into verse necessitates doubling one line, and creating a tercet. Argent, priding himself of his ability to combine heroic couplets with a faithful line-by-line translation of Racine’s plays (see quotation above), nevertheless admits to having occasionally

¹⁵ It might be noted, incidentally, that the implicit reference to the words *ecce homo* (‘behold the man,’ pronounced by Pilate in the Vulgate translation of John, when he presents Christ to the hostile crowd before his Crucifixion) is lost in these translations: the personal pronoun in ‘he is a man’ does not reproduce the more impersonal and demonstrative pronoun in ‘c’est un homme.’

transformed couplets into tercets when ‘squeezing a plump hexameter into a pentameter corset’ (2010: xvii) proved to be impossible. Wilbur, also indulging in a boastful statement in the introduction to his translation of *Phèdre* – ‘It is no triumph that my translation, like the original, has exactly 1,654 lines’ (1986: xv) – similarly makes use of tercets instead of couplets every so often in most of his translations in order to assume a close translation while coping with the prosodic constraints. However, for every solution there is a problem: adding an extra line often calls for some padding out. Supposing the pentameters are regular, a tercet takes the 24 syllables of the original couplet to 30. At times, as remarked by Hugh Chapman in his review of Wilbur’s *Misanthrope*, the translator occasionally repeats a thought in order to fill out an added line, as in ‘I’ll tear you limb from limb and joint from joint’ (1957: 176).¹⁶

On the other hand, translators of Molière keeping the same number of syllables in their lines with a view to indulging in more flexibility, sometimes face the issue of English being a denser language than French. Reflecting on the disadvantages of twelve-syllable rhyming couplets, Necula mentions the need for grammatical inversions, constrained licences, awkward break-ups and enjambments (2009: ‘Introduction’). More crucially according to Necula, a hexameter English translation of a French text in alexandrines occasionally requires the use of repetitions, as testifies to the examples she gives in her introduction.¹⁷

1.4. The necessary deviations in verse translations

Some reviews have picked up on some mistranslations or infelicities in verse translations, demonstrating that metrical translation can lead to ‘an approximation of the architectonics of the source text’ (France 2000: 95), affecting the fluidity of the target text. There is indeed no need to scrutinise the translations carefully or to read any reviews to substantiate the view that the danger of poor versification and spurious rhymes looms over rhymed translations: the numerous rhymed translations of Molière’s, Corneille’s and Racine’s plays offer a plethora of examples.

Poorly-crafted verse stands out awkwardly in translations of Racine’s tragedies. Although Bartlett’s *Bérénice* is undeniably a *tour de force*, the beginning of the play offers an example out of many:

¹⁶ See also Robert Stock’s analyses of Wilbur’s *Tartuffe* in his Master’s dissertation (2012: 30).

¹⁷ Necula translated *L’École des femmes* for the classroom, in her senior year at Purchase College, State University of New York. Despite the ‘amateur’ dimension of the translation, this is a brave undertaking, and praiseworthy for its readability. Necula can also be credited for her insightful introduction, which thoroughly raises the question of the verse translator’s dilemma. *The School for Wives* was performed in a student production in Christ Church University, Canterbury, in May 2016.

Hé bien, Antiochus, es-tu toujours le même? And so! Antiochus, can you carry this through?
 Pourrai-je sans trembler lui dire: je vous aime? Can I say, and not shake, say to her: 'I love you'? (14)
 (I-ii, 19-20)

Interestingly, one can also note deviations and infelicities that are more or less directly induced by the constraints of metre in translations that make no attempt to replicate strictly the sense units of the source texts. Lowell's and Harrison's image-laden translations of Racine's *Phèdre* (1961 and 1975) are two examples. Katherine Wheatley, in her preface to Solomon's second volume of *The Complete Plays by Jean Racine*, has passed unfavourable judgment on Lowell's translations of *Phèdre*, as well as Howard Hugo's (both 1961): 'These two versions of Racine's masterpiece constitute the ultimate indignity to Racine, who has suffered many indignities at the hands of English imitators' (1967: xvi). The couplet 'Quand ma bouche implorait le nom de la déesse,/J'adorais Hippolyte, et le voyant sans cesse' (*Phèdre* I-iii, 285-6) sounds pompous and forced in Lowell's translation: 'Alas, my hungry open mouth,/Thirsting with adoration, tasted drouth' (1961: 25). Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica* (1975) has also sometimes been subject to criticism. Derek Attridge notes an incoherence between the formality of prosodic system and the 'bizarre mixture of registers,' 'the uncertainty of the syntax' as well as some contrived rhymes (2013: 75).

2. Differences between French and English Verse Forms

This section will embark on a thorough comparison between the alexandrine and the iambic pentameter, unrhymed or rhymed. Although prose has sometimes been used in translations of Molière's verse plays (Robert Kemp 1947; George Graveley 1956; John Wood 1953-1959; Wallace Fowlie 1968; Simon Gray 1990; Prudence Steiner 2008), blank verse and heroic couplets have become very frequent in translations of French classical drama, especially in translations of Racine's and Corneille's tragedies.¹⁸

¹⁸ To mention only the blank verse translations of Racine's plays published in the twentieth century: John Masfield, *Berenice* (1922); Agnes Tobin, *Phaedra* (1958); Robert Henderson, *Andromache, Britannicus, Phaedra, Athaliah* (1959); Kenneth Muir, *Andromache, Britannicus, Berenice, Phaedra, Athaliah* (1960); George Dillon, *Andromache, Britannicus, Phaedra* (1961); Rawlings, *Phèdre* (1961); John Cairncross, *Iphigenia, Phaedra, Athaliah* (1963), and *Andromache, Britannicus, Berenice* (1967); Solomon, *The Complete Plays* (1967); Knight, *Phaedra* (1971); *Andromache, Iphigenia, Phaedra, Athaliah* (1982); Eric Korn, *Andromache* (1988); Edwin Morgan, *Phaedra* (2000); Tim Chilcott, *Andromache, Phaedra, Athaliah* (2000); Julie Rose, *Phaedra* (2001) [irregular verse, but mostly pentameters]; Timberlake Wertenbaker, *Britannicus* (2011); Alan Hollinghurst, *Berenice, Bajazet* (2012); John Edmunds, *Cinna, Andromache, Phaedra* (2013); Frank McGuinness, *Phaedra* (2016).

To conceptualise the notion of equivalence, Nida made the distinction between ‘formal equivalence,’ concerned with accuracy and correctness of form and message, and ‘dynamic equivalence,’ where ‘the relationship between the receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message’ (1964: 159). When this distinction is applied to the reflection on verse translation, formal differences between the prosodic systems will first be considered. Then the equivalence of dramatic and aesthetic effects (rather than message) produced by alexandrines and its reception, as well as the effects produced by English verse forms and their reception will be discussed. Comparing ways in which prosodic forms are received and accepted by the audience is a valuable indicator of prosodic equivalence.

2.1. Formal difference between blank verse and alexandrine

a. *Historical and cultural equivalence*

It seems logical to start by reflecting on blank verse. A great many English translators of Molière, Racine and Corneille have opted for blank verse, following the belief that iambic pentameter is the English counterpart of the French alexandrine. This association in part stems from a popular tendency to see Molière as the French counterpart of Shakespeare. As the French saying goes – based on the actual influence and prestige the two playwrights have enjoyed over time – English is *la langue de Shakespeare* and French *la langue de Molière*.¹⁹ Since this commonplace has elevated the two playwrights to the status of representatives of their own languages, it seems justifiable to establish a parallel between the two verse systems they respectively used.

More crucially, the historical significance of these two systems in each culture justifies this association. Blank verse was the standard medium for tragic drama in England from the end of the sixteenth century to (roughly) the beginning of the twentieth century, and, even after then, according to Kayla McKinney Wiggins, 547 plays were written in verse from 1935 to 1993 (the publication date of her book), although not necessarily all in regular iambic pentameters.

Translations of Corneille’s plays: Lockert, *The Cid, The Horatius, Cinna, Polyeucte, Rodogune, Nicomedes* (1952); Paul Landis, *The Cid, Cinna* (1959); Solomon, *Le Cid, Horace, Cinna, Polyeucte, Le Menteur, Rodogune, Surena* (1969); Cairncross, *The Cid, Cinna, The Theatrical Illusion* (1975); *Polyeuctus, The Liar, Nicomedes* (1980); Alan Brownjohn, *Horace* (1996).

¹⁹ This association has sometimes been the object of scholarly studies: see notably Paul Stapfer, *Molière et Shakespeare* (Paris: Hachette, 1899). This idea is also accepted in England, as testified by Matthews Brander (1910) and Nicholas Grene (1980). Comparison between Shakespeare and Racine has also been an area of interest: see notably Maskell 1993.

Similarly, the French verse form clearly outlived the seventeenth century, and while no similar study has been conducted for the modern use of the alexandrine in new plays, the verse has found a comfortable fortune in modern times. Playwrights such as Edmond Rostand, Miguel Ramacoïs, Francis de Croisset, Maurice Donnay, or later, André Roussin, have all peppered their plays with alexandrines (Corvin 2008: 1409-10). Although exceptional in contemporary theatre, Alain Didier, Hippolyte Wouters, Jean Latourre, Paul Arcault, Bruno Loret and Jean Hautepierre have all written whole plays in alexandrines (Hautepierre 2014). Used more for comic and fantasy purposes, however, or as a pretext to exhibit a form of superficial virtuosity deriving from the *théâtre de boulevard*, its presence on the twentieth-century stage yet testifies to the fact that the alexandrine is a deeply ingrained form in French literary tradition. As Jacques Charpentreau powerfully observes in his *Dictionnaire de la poésie*, more than a convention, the alexandrine has become ‘the national cadence,’ to borrow Mallarmé’s famous comparison:

La permanence de l’alexandrin dans la poésie française depuis 800 ans est étonnante – et troublante. [...] à ce titre, l’alexandrin a formé l’oreille de la génération vieillissante; l’alexandrin fait tellement partie des habitudes culturelles qu’il semble devenu ‘naturel.’ (2005: 23-4)

Consequently, John Cairncross said about his Racine translations: ‘there is no alternative, in my view, to the adoption of blank verse of ten syllables as the medium for the English version’ (1967). Donald Frame, in his introduction to his *Tartuffe*, reasserts this commonplace: ‘Fidelity in metre seems clearly to mean putting Molière’s alexandrines into English iambic pentameter’ (1967: xiii) even though he chose rhyming couplets.

Although the equivalence between blank verse and the French alexandrine may be relevant in light of their historical and cultural use, they significantly differ in their forms, which means that they lend themselves to different aesthetic effects. Not to disregard the fact that different delivery practices exist in both cultures and numerous directors opt for playing down the metrical resonance of verse plays in performance, it can be argued that the risk of a potential aesthetic transformation remains. I have already commented on the formal and aesthetic difference between the two prosodic systems elsewhere (Ploix 2016: 104-6). In the next paragraphs, I shall go back to the main points and pursue the reflection.

b. Accentual and syllabic forms

Contrary to English, French does not have fixed syllable stresses in its substantial parameters. Poet Paul Claudel maintains that verse is nothing but the stylisation of language (1965: 8). This point animates much of Attridge’s reflections in his recent book, *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry* (2013). Indeed, the two traditional verse systems of each

language, the alexandrine and the iambic pentameter, embody this fundamental difference: one is syllable-count and the other one accentual-count.

Metricists have, however, discussed the presence of accents in French verse, and have sometimes been at a loss as to determine whether the alexandrine is purely syllabic or ‘syllabotonic’ (Beaudouin 2007: 38). However, overall there seems to be a consensus on the fact that accents in French are not essentially metrical, but are the result of syntagmatic constructions: they fall on the last syllable of each syntactic grouping. About the stress in French verse, Meschonnic states: ‘Sa prédictibilité y est de l’ordre du discours, non de la métrique.’²⁰

Since they generate accents in French verse, syllabic groupings are the basis of French prosody. Relying essentially on its syllable-count quality, the alexandrine, as employed by seventeenth-century dramatists, aspires to a sense of balance, affecting every structural scale of the line: the two hemistichs are often subdivided into two halves, each comprising three syllables. The structure of the classical alexandrine is dominated by stress group of three syllables, e.g. ‘Et la mort, à mes yeux dérochant la clarté,/Rend au jour qu’ils souillaient toute sa pureté’ (3.3/3.3//3.3/3.1.5) (*Phèdre* V-vii, 1643-4).²¹ The symmetrical division, together with the ternary substructures emphasise the length and formality of the line.

The construction of the alexandrine is also informed by a strong connection between syllable groupings and meaning: Boileau has commented on the interrelation between metrics, prosody and meaning in Chant I of the *Art Poétique* (1674): ‘Que toujours dans vos vers, le sens, coupant les mots,/Suspende l’hémistiche, en marque le repos’ (1961: 162). The containment of meaning within a prescriptive frame confers an epigrammatic dimension on the alexandrines. In a way, thanks to its balancing caesuras and internal structural rhythm, the alexandrine constitutes a sort of reasoned meta-commentary on its content: ‘L’alexandrin est déjà une pensée constituée, un discours tenu sur l’émotion, non l’émotion même’ (Crunelle-Vanrigh 2007: 66).

While in French verse, accents stem from syllable groupings, and rhythm is generated by their regularity, in English, accents are already present in the language, and therefore do not need to rely on syllabic regularity. Moreover, the fact that English contains long and short vowel sounds rules out the syllabic dimension as a valid prosodic principle. English verse has thus had to rely on a stylised arrangement of word stresses, which diverted it from the need for

²⁰ *Critique du rythme*, Paris: Verdier, 1982, 229-30, quoted in Beaudouin 2007: 36.

²¹ Valérie Beaudouin, through her computer-aided analysis of Corneille’s and Racine’s texts, reveals that in fact regular metrical patterns like 001001 or 010101 appear with greater frequency in the second half of each line (2007: 342).

balance and regularity. Since the iambic pattern works in sets of two syllables, the line is not divisible into two identical halves, unlike the French alexandrine. The medial pause generally falls after either the second or the third foot, which leaves the line unbalanced, and so creates a kind of dynamism. The dissymmetry, the panting rhythm, the absence of rhyme in the case of blank verse, and the frequent metrical variations propel the line with an organic energy. Blank verse has been frequently likened to heartbeats.²² Contrary to the contained expression of the alexandrine, the iambic pentameter creates a dynamic impulse, or a ‘driving impetus’ to borrow translator Edmunds’s words (2013: xl) that lends itself to perpetual movement and instability.

It can be argued that regular syllabic groupings are more appropriate than an unremitting stress pattern to convey an aesthetics largely based on argumentation: ‘Molière’s language being free of metaphor, derives much of its richness from argumentative virtuosity’ observes Wilbur in his introduction to *The Misanthrope* (1958: xi). Wilbur avers this to justify his use of rhymes, pointing to their rhetorical quality (see ch. II, 2.2.), and implicitly, to criticise blank verse translations. However, notwithstanding this informed choice, one does have to point out that the formal divergence between syllabic and accentual verse forms may undermine the speeches’ argumentative quality.

The fact that not only does the transposition of the alexandrine into blank verse not always go smoothly, but the opposite also tends to be deemed unconvincing confirms the prosodic and aesthetic non-equivalence between the two forms. As French translator Jean-Michel Déprats observes: ‘et puis Shakespeare, quand on le traduit en alexandrins, cela sonne un peu comme du Corneille de mirliton...’ (*Le Monde*, 18/12/2008).

2.2. Different effects on stage

a. Blank verse and verisimilitude

Although the alexandrine has sometimes been seen as problematic in France with regard to dramatic efficiency (see below, 2.4.a.), the canonical dimension of playwrights like Molière, Racine and Corneille cements the alexandrine as an accepted form by the audience. The canonical dimension of Shakespeare, by the same token, compensates for the difficulty in staging blank verse and makes it tolerable to audiences. However, an audience is less likely to

²² It is tempting to quote Claudel’s words, referring to the iambic pentameter as a ‘pulsation qui ne cesse de compter le temps dans notre poitrine’ (1965: 7).

show forbearance when regular verse is employed in recent creations, written by playwrights who do not stand as authoritative figures.

Although many will agree that blank verse is a fairly ‘speakable’ form, advocates of Molière in prose generally point to the artificiality of the metrical system and contest its suitability for the stage. Roger Herzog, introducing Steiner’s prose translations, reflects on the clash between the literary tradition represented by the iambic pentameter and its cultural acceptance on the contemporary stage: ‘The rhythms of English speech do not lend themselves as well to a regular stress pattern; unless the actor is very careful, a verse translation can sound bouncy in a way that the French does not’ (Steiner 2009: xxxiii). Prose translator Haskell Block, denying any aesthetic correspondence between French and English verse, in his preface to *Tartuffe* argues that ‘the language of present-day prose is much closer to [Molière’s] idiom than that of verse’ (1958: xii). Folkart pithily sums up these translators’ fears: ‘the niceties of prosodic convention are at loggerheads with the rhythms of the spoken language’ (2007: 27). Folkart goes on to say that ‘nowhere is the process of cliché-formation more evident than in the way the prosodic conventions are operative at any given time [...] lag behind the patternings of the spoken language’ (*ibid.*).²³

In fact, regular verse was soon to be discarded on the English stage for new plays, as Martin Duffell observes, in the *New History of English Metre*:

In the struggle to make dialogue sound natural and to find language that could convey even the most destructive human emotions, polished verse inevitably was eclipsed by prose. In subsequent centuries many English poets attempted to revive blank-verse drama, and even today Elizabethan verse plays can still draw large audiences. But in modern drama prose, as the most naturalistic medium, is now unchallenged. (2008: 146)

Translators opting for metered verse, rhymed or unrhymed, have generally been conscious of this and aimed at gearing their verse towards a resonance appropriate for the stage. Blank verse can be more or less suitable for the stage, depending on the strictness accorded to the metrical blueprint. Wilbur, writing in rhyming couplets, argues that the main danger is not so much the rhymes; but too metronomic a pattern, ‘which is particularly fatal on the stage’ (1971: xiii). Peter France, comparing Cairncross’s metrical straightjacket with Eric Korn’s looser iambic pattern in his *Andromache* (1988), states: ‘Cairncross is perhaps more faithful than Korn to the ritualistic aspect of Racine’s poetry, but the price he pays is a high one’ (2004: 11).

²³ However, objecting to the beliefs of most twentieth-century poets, the metrical theorist Alfred Corn willingly defends the accentual-syllabic verse: ‘no reader of the body of poetry in English can really believe that traditional prosody has always been a barrier to sincere or authentic speech’ (1997: 137). Corn maintains that even in our modern period, accentual-count verse is not to be discarded, and can still be employed for published or performed poetry, provided the poet judiciously uses metrical and rhyme variations to avoid aural monotony. Other critics have championed the notions of speakability, sincerity and authenticity of versified prosody (Trilling 1972). These critics, however, reflect on poetry, and not on theatre.

France also comments on Douglass Dunn's avoidance of monotony in his version of the same play (1990), thanks to 'broken lines, enjambments and occasional unexpected stresses' (*ibid.*).

Speaking from another perspective, translator F. Anstey, after invoking the commonplace belief that Molière's aesthetics cannot work in modern Britain, asserts that verse tends to hamper creativity on the part of the translator. In his opinion, prose prompts the translator to be more flexible with the source text:

Any rendering in verse, too, would entail strict conformity with the original construction in every scene and each entrance and exit, while the result – unless the adapter happened to be a poet of the highest genius – would probably prove insufferably tedious both to readers and listeners. (1933: viii)²⁴

b. Shakespeare's shadow

According to several critics, what seems to lie behind the irrelevance of blank verse in English translation is the fact that blank verse bears within it Shakespeare's shadow. Attridge points to the cultural discrepancy between blank verse and the alexandrine:

[The alexandrine] carries no very specific associations of genre, nor is it especially closely linked to any one author. [...] blank verse has much more definite associations, and its use has been confined to a relatively limited range of genres. What is more, anyone writing dramatic blank verse since Shakespeare has found it difficult to escape his overshadowing presence, as the theatrical attempts of all the major Romantic poets testify. (1979: 60)

In the same vein, invoking both aesthetic and cultural motives in his defence of rhyming couplets, Noël Clark, translator of Corneille and Molière, insisted on using rhymes in an attempt 'to come to terms with the apparent forbidding austerity of the neo-classical tradition' (1996: 33). According to him, but also to Dunn, an English version of a French play in blank verse would suffer from comparison with Shakespeare and Milton, and, unless adding exuberant images to the restricted vocabulary of French tragedy and the fairly abstract language of French comedy, the form would disappoint expectations (Oxley 1991). In other words, staging Racine and Corneille in blank verse would provoke an unwelcome cultural clash. One could argue that an accentual prosodic system, focusing on the line as a process, makes it quite disposed to deploy a colourful language, whereas a syllabic system, focusing on the line as a unit, will restrain its exuberance to optimise the sense of structure. This is, in fact, what made Robert David MacDonald choose the somewhat risky dodecasyllable in his translations of Racine and Molière, although he did not discard the iambic pattern: 'Part of the trouble seemed to lie in the adoption of the rhymed five-foot heroic couplet, making everything sound like a succession of final distichs in some Shakespearian forgery' (1985: 7). By the same token, Paul-

²⁴ This position runs counter to the view of several translators, who argue that translating in verse sparks creativity (see ch. II, 2.3.).

Emile Deiber, who directed William Packard's *Phèdre* (1966), also written in iambic hexameters, stated:

It seems impossible to substitute the language of Shakespeare for the language of Racine. To this impossibility, however, the poet, William Packard, addressed himself, and he deserves much credit for retaining the spirit of Racine while preserving the difficult, but absolutely necessary alexandrine rhythm.²⁵

The Shakespearian weight throws into question the cultural equivalence between blank verse and the alexandrine maintained above. Indeed, one does not associate the alexandrine with a monopolistic literary figure, possibly because the French stage has seen many geniuses writing in alexandrines – Molière, Racine and Corneille naturally, but also Voltaire and Hugo – while the prestige of Shakespeare clearly outshone his contemporaries. Furthermore, since several of Molière's best-known plays are in prose, the alexandrine cannot be Molière's signature.

2.3. Difference between rhyming couplets and alexandrines

Many maintain that acknowledging the full musical identity of the alexandrine calls for the use of rhyme. In the twentieth century, a certain acknowledgment of the aesthetic dimension of the alexandrine arose, which came with the awareness of the need to retain rhymes in translations. Wheatley argues that rhymes help to retain the 'authentic tone' (1967: xxxiii) and the 'magic of the Racinian alexandrine' (xi). Kenneth Muir, a translator of five plays of Racine, who speaks to the untranslatability of Racine because it has 'a charm and music of its own' and translated into blank verse, admits: 'I am only too well aware that the beauty of Racine's poetry [...] has largely evaporated in my translation' (1960: vi). In the same vein, Lowell, who produced an influential translation of *Phèdre* in rhyming couplets (1961) was also driven by the formal beauty of the verse: he states that Racine's verse has 'a diamond-edge' and praises the 'justness of its rhythm and logic' (1961b: 8). However, like Muir, by seeking naturalness in speech delivery, with the use of run-on couplets and a flexible metre, he deplores the loss in epigrammatic resonance in his translation (*ibid.*: 7) and admits to the 'unRacinian humour and bombast' of his verse (8). Argent also defends the epigrammatic quality of the alexandrine (2010: xxxviii). On the choice between versification and prose, Bryer mentions a 'gut choice' (1996: 45), suggesting that personal taste also comes into play in choosing a verse system in translation.

²⁵ <http://www.poetscraft.com/education/handouts/transphedre.pdf>. Packard made the effort to keep the mid-line caesura, in order to stay as close as possible to the original rhythm.

However, if the equivalence between the alexandrine and English blank verse is a fallacy, the rapprochement between the alexandrine and the English heroic couplet (rhyming iambic pentameters) is, as several critics pointed out, even more wide of the mark.

a. Necessity of French rhymes and artificiality of English rhymes

The classical alexandrine often functions as a fully-fledged unit. It avoids being a collection of isolated segments that are not functionally related to the sense-unit deployed within the line. William Howarth has criticised a passage from Voltaire's *L'Orphelin de la Chine* (IV-iv), in which the alexandrines sound like a monotonous succession of six-syllable segments because of too prominent breaks between the two hemistichs (1983: 344). In well-constructed alexandrines, words are often placed as part of an organic ensemble which culminates in the last syllable, introducing the rhyming word in a perfectly logical manner.

When the lines run through, rhymes are given a demarcative function. In this couplet from *Le Misanthrope*: 'Une telle action ne saurait s'excuser,/Et tout homme d'honneur s'en doit scandaliser' (I-i, 13-4), the mid-line caesuras are not underlined by punctuation marks. As there are no patent sub-rhythmic entities, and as the ear cannot easily register the syllabic uniformity in run-on alexandrines, rhymes assume much of the prosodic identity of the couplet. Jacques Roubaud observes that rhyme contributes to securing the unity of the alexandrine and to preventing it from sounding like a succession of six-syllable units: '[la rime] "désambiguïse" l'appartenance des segments métriques à un vers ou à un autre' (1978: 93-4). As Beaudouin similarly remarks: 'Le vers français, défini par un nombre de syllabes et l'existence d'une césure, ne serait pas identifiable en tant que tel, et la rime viendrait compenser la faible structuration métrique (l'absence de pied)' (2007: 83). Attridge, in the same vein, comments on French rhyme: 'Far from being an ornament, rhyme is a vital part of the metrical organization' (2013: 59).²⁶ As Hugo puts it in his preface to *Cromwell* (1827), rhyme is a 'générateur de notre mètre' (1968: 95).

Contrary to French verse, which focuses more on the line as an entity and, thereby, concentrates on the phonic elements that have a closing function, English verse focuses more on the line as a process, involving a set of prosodic features occurring *within* the line. Therefore, English verse does not perforce require a demarcative feature. While the alexandrine aspires to be a self-contained entity, the Shakespearian pentameter is always in movement. End pauses

²⁶ Chapter III of the book *Moving Words* (51-76), from which the quotation is taken, is a replica with a few developments of an article published in 1979, 'Dryden's Dilemma, or Racine Refashioned: The Problem of English Dramatic Couplet,' to which I shall refer later on.

in blank verse have a much smaller structural role: they are in fact mostly contingent. English rhymes, performing no structural or prosodic function, are therefore an illegitimate artifice: rhymes are ‘no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse’ claims Milton in his introduction to *Paradise Lost* (2005: 11). The superfluous prosodic function of English rhyme, as opposed to French rhyme, accounts for its relative infrequency in English poetry.

Furthermore, in French alexandrines, rhymes alternate between the ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ form, corroborating the sense of balance created by the structuration of the discourse in regular syllabic groupings: each line and each couplet functions with the next one.²⁷ Quatrains – that is, two couplets – lend themselves to construction as autonomous sense-units, often quotable on their own. In English, masculine and feminine rhymes, based on the stress falling on the penultimate or last syllable, have never been a traditional prosodic principle. It would set too big a constraint for translators: monosyllables would have to be excluded, and the scarcity of English words stressed on the last but one syllable excludes this possibility. The alternation between the two rhyme forms was given a structural significance only sporadically in English poetry (Reuven: 2013). To date, no English translations of French seventeenth-century verse plays have attempted to reproduce the complete original rhyme pattern. Therefore, one can argue that none of them has captured the same epigrammatic dimension that French couplets and quatrains are able to generate.

b. Difference of effects: the sonorous dimension of English rhymes

The stress pattern of the English language emphasises the rhyming word. Consequently, not only does English rhyme carry out no real metrical and structural function, but its resonance is made cumbersome by the iambic pattern. Its over-resonance also stems from the fact that English is poor in rhyme, contrary to French, which is a highly inflectional language. Hampton, in the preface to *Tartuffe*, reflects on the fact that English offers fewer possibilities than French to achieve rhymes:

The French language has a much more rigid and defined phonetic structure than English; and when one takes into account, additionally, the inflected endings, the regular participial formations, the silent plurals and the verb forms, whether infinitive or conjugated, it will be clear that the business of finding a rhyme is infinitely simpler and more natural in French than it can ever be in English. (1984: ‘A note on the translation’)

Because of the lesser compositional constraints in creating French rhymes, poets have imposed strict restraints, such as the *consonne d’appui*, which English does not need to create

²⁷ The rule of the alternating genre does not allow for rhyme schemes involving a three-sound sequence, such as ABCABC; more flexibility with rhyme schemes is thus observed in English poetry than in French poetry.

acceptable rhymes. As Attridge remarks, ‘the mere repetition of a final stressed vowel is regarded more as a matter of assonance than of true rhyme, and where the English ear is perfectly happy with *flea* and *tree*, the French ear is less than satisfied with *allée* and *épée*’ (1979: 63). Even though French compensates for the abundance of rhyming possibilities in this way, English rhymes are still deemed more eye-catching and aurally striking, in comparison with the alexandrine. Herzel believes that English couplets sound ‘self-consciously clever’ (in Steiner 2009: xxxiii), making them hardly reminiscent of naturalistic language, and even more so than French alexandrines. Because of this, according to Anstey, translator of Molière, heroic couplets fail to fulfil their mission: ‘[heroic couplets] could hardly hope to preserve any of the music of the original lines’ (1933: viii).²⁸

As for the existing translations in unmetered-rhymed verse, notably undertaken by Martin Crimp (*The Misanthrope* 1996), Liz Lochhead (*Educating Agnes* 2008) and Roger McGough (2008, 2009 and 2013), rhymes are less prominent at times because they are not supported by metres, but they do not escape their conspicuous nature even so. In these translations, many rhymes have also been made especially inventive and catchy for comic effects (see ch. III, 1. and IV, 2.).

2.4. Rhymed verse: a hazardous choice for the stage

a. Comparing the reception of the alexandrine and rhyming couplets

The alexandrine has been criticised in France for being a threat to dramatic verisimilitude. Influential seventeenth-century critics who pointed to this risk were, notably, d’Aubignac (see introduction to his prose tragedy *La Pucelle d’Orléans* (1642)) and Charles Sorel (1671: 218). Such criticisms gained momentum in the eighteenth century, with Houdar de La Motte’s *Discours sur la tragédie* (1754) and prominent playwrights such as Beaumarchais in his ‘Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux’ (1767) (see 1988: 133), Diderot (1959: 216), and Marivaux (see Larthomas 2005: 22-3). These writers aspired to a language that conforms to Pierre Larthomas’s definition of dramatic language: ‘dans ses suprêmes réussites, c’est un langage dont on oublie qu’il est langage; inséparable des autres éléments du spectacle et si bien fondu en eux qu’on finit par ne plus le voir; il devient transparent...’ (2005: 306). In the nineteenth century, verse almost disappeared from the major creations, and was severely attacked by Stendhal in *Racine et Shakespeare* (1825) (see 1996: 99-100). It persisted in some plays by

²⁸ Ch. IV, 1., by way of a scrupulous analysis of the morphology of rhymes, will account for the greater sonorous dimension of English rhymes than French rhymes.

Hugo, who promoted a more discreet alexandrine in his preface to *Cromwell* (1968: 95; see also Rosa 2000).

Even though the alexandrine gradually disappeared and suffered increasing criticisms, in the twentieth century, the appeal of the musicality of the verse was still strong. The alexandrine still has its staunch defenders: Pierre Fortassier, for instance, states that it is ‘typiquement un vers de théâtre – le vers de théâtre’ (1984: 80). Several modern directors, such as Louis Jovet, Antoine Vitez and Arianne Mnouchkine have tended to emphasise the verse in their productions, and have often promoted an almost musical experience through a deliberate stress on verse in performance, even before trying to tie the prosodic form closely with dramatic situations and characterisation (Pavis 1996: 402). There are many other directors who have made a case for spotlighting the musicality of the verse. *L’École des femmes* staged by Eric Vigner at the Comédie-Française in 1999 is a vivid example of a slow and emphatic delivery of the alexandrines. Anatoli Vassiliev, directing *Amphitryon* in 2002, also at the Comédie-Française, asked the actors to stress rhymes.

The alexandrine, it must be pointed out, has also several times been held to be the closest existing verse system to prose. Darnell Roaten transcribes a tirade taken from Racine’s *Phèdre* into prose, and shows that not many changes were needed (1960: 170). ‘L’alexandrin, nous dit-on, est la plus naturelle des mesures, celle qui suit le mieux les rythmes de la phrase parlée’ (Howarth 1986: 342). Gabriel Conesa, through his analyses of language in Molière’s plays, demonstrates that prose and verse share many formal aspects: the sentence length, structure, and the rhythmical deployment are very often similar in the two forms (1983: 57-8, 400-8). According to d’Aubignac’s *La Pratique du théâtre* (1657), the alexandrine is a ‘vers commun’: ‘Les grands vers de douze syllabes, nommés *Communs* dans les premiers auteurs de la poésie française, doivent être considérés au théâtre comme de la prose’ (2001: 262), being purportedly often used in daily conversation without the speaker being aware of it.²⁹

It would be hard to conceive similar statements for rhyming couplets. While opinion is divided on the stageability of alexandrine on the French stage, there is no debate on the fact that English heroic couplets pose significant challenges. The disapproval of the alexandrine in

²⁹ Corneille disagrees: in ‘Examen,’ introducing *Andromède* (1650), he maintains the difference between prose and regular verse. Corneille thinks that it is the mixture of alexandrines and octosyllables, found in stanzas, that approaches prose (*Œuvres complètes*, vol 2: 448). He also disagrees with d’Aubignac on this very point, as the latter thinks that stanzas sound less natural than alexandrines. As Corneille, Racine was also a proponent of an elevated declamation: ‘[Racine] n’approuvait point la manière trop unie de réciter, établie dans la troupe de Molière. Il voulait qu’on donnât aux vers un certain son qui, joint à la mesure et aux rimes, se distingue de la prose....’ (‘Quelques particularités sur M. Racine,’ *Cahiers Raciniens*, vol. 2, 1957, 63-8, quoted from Mongrédien 1965: vol. 1, 252).

France has generally been less consistent and less outspoken than criticism of English couplets in translations of seventeenth-century French theatre (Jones 2016: 89), which substantiates the non-equivalence between these two forms. The mere fact that even blank verse, an established prosodic system in English theatre, is often attacked because of its alleged lack of stageability, rules out rhyming couplets as an acceptable form.

In his introduction to *Andromache*, Wilbur, on the subject of rhyming couplets, naïvely advises that ‘all this is so remote from our contemporary stage that “adaptation” could not possibly bring it near. Our best hope, I think, is to see whether maximum fidelity, in text and in performance, might not adapt us to it’ (1982: xiii). Not all translators, critics and reviewers have willingly agreed to adapt themselves to rhyme, and have in fact often spoken against it harshly. As a matter of fact, it is the rhymed translations of those plays that have been the most severely criticised by some reviewers (yet, paradoxically, also the most praised by some others). This brings to light divergent appeals of verse between, on the one hand, composition, that is, poets and playwrights, and on the other hand, reception, that is, critics and reviewers. However, in Britain, the defenders of the musicality of rhymed verse are outnumbered by the general consent that verse is unfit for the modern British stage.

b. Historical difference

The historical difference between French and English rhymes speaks for itself. Even though the alexandrine has met criticisms on the French stage over the last centuries, as stated above, it is still respected as a legitimate theatrical verse system. It is valued as an asset to classical French drama (especially tragedy), rather than as an obstacle to stageability. As Herzel puts it: ‘The long tradition in French drama of rhymed verse makes it familiar and therefore inconspicuous; in English it is a novelty and a distraction’ (2009: xxxiii). The rhymed pentameter was prominent for a few decades during the Restoration, which, indeed, saw a string of adaptations in heroic couplets, including Katherine Philips’s *Pompey* and *Horace* (1663), John Crowne’s *Andromache* (1675), and Thomas Otway’s *Titus and Berenice* (1676). However, they still were not considered very successful (Stewart 1969: 234). Apart from specific popular genres, such as musicals or pantomime, rhyme has deserted the ‘serious’ stage ever since Dryden revised his initial laudatory statements about rhyme in the Prologue to *Aureng-Zebe* (1690).³⁰ The numbers given by Nicoll are telling: she counts eighteen plays in

³⁰ Contrary to his preface to *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), in which he confidently maintains that the use of rhymes in tragedy is undisputed, the 1690 prologue suggests a lassitude towards ‘his long-loved mistress, Rhyme’ (quoted in Attridge, 1979: 56). Even as early as in 1667, in the Restoration period, voices emerged against

heroic couplets written in the 1660s, twenty-four in the 1670s, and only one in the 1680s (1959: 100). Most of Molière's first translators, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, preferred prose over verse (Jones 2016: 74). Strikingly, Attridge argues that 'the failure of the English dramatic couplet' is a case of 'the extinction in the evolutionary struggle of a species unfitted for its environment' (1979: 76-7).

Notably thanks to the influential Wilbur translation of *Le Misanthrope* in 1955 for the Poets' Theatre in Cambridge,³¹ post-war translations were soon to become the sole bastion of rhyme on stage, re-emerging after a very long absence, and much to the annoyance of some theatre critics. Clive Barnes, for instance, stated in *The New York Post*: 'Speaking as a language, we dislike poetic couplets, and have done so, I suppose, since the Age of Alexander Pope. This must surely be the reason why the English-speaking theatre so thoroughly distrusts, and neglects, the plays of the great French playwright Jean Racine' (15/12/1988, quoted in Astley 1991: 194). John Weightman, reviewing Lowell's *Phaedra* in *The Times Literary Supplement* is left to reconcile himself to blank verse: 'And since the couplet has never been a great success on the English stage, for the translator of Racine there is no real alternative to blank verse' (26/12/1963, quoted in Bryer 1996: 45).

As a consequence of the artificial reintegration of an extinct practice, just as some critics have warned against the immediate association of blank verse with Shakespeare, rhyming couplets risk echoing second-rate Reformation or Jacobean writings, and indeed, pantomime. Reading reviews of modern rhyming translations and preliminary statements of prose or blank verse translators of Molière's verse comedies actually shows that such associations are common (Bryer 1996: 45; Edmunds 2013: xl).

Because of the insignificance of rhymed verse drama in English theatre history, the material on the reception of heroic couplets on the English stage is more limited than that of the French alexandrine. Twentieth-century English translations of classical French plays provide the main source of rhymed verse drama in Britain; consequently, criticism on this prosodic system mainly comes from modern translators themselves and journalistic theatre reviewers.

c. Rhymes as an obstacle to dramatic efficiency

Opinions on rhymed verse on stage are often outspoken. To quote but two, translators Charles Hubert Sisson and Simon Gray respectively deemed 'frankly absurd' (1987: xvi) and

rhyme (Rothstein 1967, ch. II). In his preface to *Paradise Lost*, Milton famously exposed 'the jingling sound of like endings,' and 'the invention of a barbarous age.'

³¹ <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/poetry/wilbur.htm>

‘ultimately tedious’ (1990: ix) the use of heroic couplets as a metrical correspondence for the alexandrine. This section will review the main arguments put forward to decry the form.

Because the combination of rhyme and syllabic uniformity is noticeably less conspicuous than the combination of rhyme and accentual regularity in speeches performed out loud, heroic couplets, worse still than the alexandrines, inevitably prompt the audience to be very conscious of language: for this reason, Attridge deplores the ‘persistent chime that rapidly tires the ear’ (1979: 73). A few metricists like Philip Hobsbaum, indeed, believe that the Popeian couplet is not capable of revival, on the grounds that spectators will focus less on the content of speeches and shift their concentration onto the formal characteristics of the performed language, leading to a weakening of the theatrical illusion (1996: 34). Thus, when a play aspires to convince an English-speaking audience with a foreign, ancient and little accessible play, rhyme can be regarded to be a handicap.

Poetry, virtually being a self-centered and aesthetic end in itself, clashes with the demands of an effective theatrical performance, in which language should be a mere medium to convey actions. Larthomas states: ‘s’il y a un homme dont la pratique de son art prépare très mal à écrire une œuvre dramatique, c’est bien le poète. [...] il se résout mal à adoucir et parfois à supprimer les richesses qui, au théâtre, ne peuvent être que de fausses richesses’ (2005: 363). Not only does verse pose an obstacle to *vraisemblance*, but it compromises the ultimate aspiration of dramatic speech, which is to sound as if it has never been written or thought before being spoken (*ibid.*: 21).³² It is, indeed, now generally agreed that theatrical discourse should promote the direct understanding of the plot, and smooth the process from word to action, especially when it stages an aesthetics that is foreign to the target reception. In other words, in translation for the stage and not for the page, ethical considerations towards the form of the original matter less than a poetics of effective theatrical language.

Some examples of criticisms of rhymes in translations of Racine and Corneille have been cited in the previous paragraphs. Many others could be quoted. Common criticisms point to the fact that the tragic content and expression is undermined if the audience is struck deaf by the numbing presence of regular rhyming couplets. More specifically, rhymes are judged incontrovertibly unsuitable for tragedy as their heaviness makes them conducive to comic effects (see notably Muir 1960: vi; Astley 1991: 194; Lochhead 2008: 6; Swinden 1997; Ploix 2016: 110-11).

³² See also Sir Robert Howard’s preface to *Four New Plays* (1665).

Although less frequently than in translations of tragedy, the use of rhyming couplets in Molière translations has been similarly condemned by reviewers, blank verse and prose translators. They point to the way the presence of rhyme leads to a shift in attention that is highly detrimental to the intended aesthetic effect and to an immediate understanding of what is being said. For some critics, because of its formal dimension, rhyme is better suited to set-pieces than to the swift interaction between the characters. Herzel avers that ‘even though many of the characters in *The Misanthrope* spend a good deal of couplets trying to be clever, the sense of lightness that rhymed couplets often convey risks overshadowing the genuine bite in the characters’ conversation’ (2009: xxxiii). Gray, author of a prose adaptation of *Tartuffe*, subscribes to this: ‘In, for instance, Wilbur’s and Tony Harrison’s translations of Molière we mostly hear the poet’s skill in pulling off unlikely rhymes in order to avoid the likely ones. After a time, whoever the character, whatever the dramatic urgencies, we seem to hear only the same skilful voice’ (1990: xi) – a surprising comment, as Harrison’s rhymes are very different to Wilbur’s (see ch. II, 1.a.). About the newly staged version of *Tartuffe* by Wilbur at the National Theatre (1967), *The Daily Telegraph* mentions an ‘uninspired jog-trot translation recalling Victorian pantomimic “doggerel”’ (undated). *The New York Times* (May 1999) regretted that in Mark Ax’s production of *Tartuffe* with Wilbur’s translation, ‘many of the actors frequently fall into a sing-song pattern of delivery for the rhymed couplets.’

Some critics have pointed to the discrepancy of tones between the alexandrine and heroic couplets, which creates an issue when used in Molière, for whom theatrical illusion is essential. The highly constrained form of heroic couplets sometimes creates a strong aphoristic quality that ‘can almost suggest that the lines of verse are already wearing quotation marks or, at least, could slip into them very comfortably’ (Argent 2010: xlviii). While the translator approves this particular resonance for Racine in English, one can question the legitimacy of such a quality in translations of Molière plays, in which lines generally cannot be quoted on their own, being intimately integrated to their dramatic context. William Becker, commenting on Wilbur’s *Misanthrope*, regrets the fact that ‘Expressions that are merely witty in the original tend to become epigrammatic in his translation’ (1956: 287-88). Contrary to tragedy, where the style is homogeneous and the themes recurrent, comedy stages characters of various social classes, and thereby embraces a much greater range of modes of expression, namely casual dialogue, lofty diction, poetic set-pieces, or raging diatribes. Since it minimises the variations in style between these different characters, verse poses a problem for effective

characterisation.³³ The translators of the *Select Comedies* of 1732 spoke to the clash between regular verse forms and the ‘common conversation’ in Molière’s drama in strong terms:

In one respect, indeed, he [Molière] was very unfortunate, which was, being under a Necessity of writing in *Rhyme*. He knew better than approve of such a villainous Practice, but ’twas the Taste of *Moliere’s* Judges then, as ’twas of *Dryden’s* in *his Time* [...]. *Rhyme* in *Tragedy* is ridiculous enough, but to put *Comick Humour* and *Common Conversation* into Epick Verse and Gingling [*sic*] Couplets, is such a monstrous Absurdity, that ’tis inconceivable how so polite and judicious a Nation could endure it, much more demand it.³⁴

d. A global problem on the English-speaking stage?

For some reasons, rhyming couplets seem to be less easily tolerated in England than in America and Scotland.³⁵ While Wilbur’s debut at the National Theatre was quite disappointing, his translations were successful as soon as they reached the American stage. Rhyming couplet translations of seventeenth-century French plays seem to be more frequently American than British (see Appendix). The fact that British translations have a tendency to migrate to the US also substantiates this point. MacDonald’s *Britannicus*, Harrison’s *Misanthrope* (1973) and *Phaedra Britannica* (1975) were staged in the US, while only Wilbur has assumed an American presence on the public British stage. It may be that the difference of accent and the fact that American English tends to mark the consonants less plays a role in the acceptability of rhyming couplets. Perhaps another explanation seems to be that pantomime, a strong British tradition, is less common in America; the risk that rhymes will evoke this genre is thus higher in Britain. Another way to account for this difference is indirectly given by American translator Packard when he proposes an explanation for the success of his *Phèdre*, produced for the Greenwich Mews Theatre:

Perhaps one factor which was operating in favor of the production, was the absence in the American theatre, of any tradition whatsoever, which might have served as a guide for the use of alexandrine lines. There is no ‘cliché’ way for American to do these alexandrines, as there is a ‘cliché’ way for them to do blank verse; one can always imitate Gielgud or Olivier or the Old Vic, and bluff one’s way through Shakespeare; but who is there to imitate, in speaking alexandrines? The Americans were on their own, entirely.³⁶

The fact that Packard refers to British actors, and by extension, ‘British declamatory practice,’ is telling of the fact that the theatrical identity in Britain is presumably stronger than in America. One can thus assume that in America, particularly in off-Broadway venues,³⁷ the

³³ For further comments on the disadvantages of rhymes in translations of Molière’s plays, see ch. III, 3.b.

³⁴ Quoted in Jones: 2016: 75. Running counter to this preface, Suzanne Jones, in her thesis, and myself, in the next chapter, argue that this clash frequently contributes to comic effects. As noted by Jones, Molière’s supposed discomfort with rhyme is exaggerated by the translators to justify their choice of prose (*ibid.*).

³⁵ For Molière in Scotland, see Peacock 1993.

³⁶ <http://www.poetscraft.com/education/handouts/transphedre.pdf>

³⁷ ‘Racine is not, as he has often been portrayed in the past, an exclusively French phenomenon, who defies the appreciation of those outside the hexagon. In the cross-cultural climate of the twenty-first century, Racine has

audiences are more open-minded than in Britain, where sets of canonical plays and authoritative figures create less space for experimenting with the classics.

Be that as it may, rhyming couplets have, nonetheless, attracted much criticism in America: the numerous disapprovals quoted above from New York newspapers testify to the common view that rhymes do not work well on the English-speaking stage.³⁸ A remark about the Australian stage also seems to vindicate this: ‘Australian audiences are very suspicious of rhyme, to them it always sounds artificial, fake, forbidding, as if cleverness is overwhelming content’ (Nowra 1984: 15).³⁹

2.5. Metrical mimesis: an English alexandrine?

a. Prosodic systems and language-specificity

The point of Sisson, translator of Racine into blank verse, summarises the above sections: ‘Nothing can adequately represent in English the movement of the French alexandrine.’ He goes on to say that ‘A poet-translator has always to start from the forms of his own time, as he has to start from his own language’ (1987: xvi). Indeed, forcing a prosodic parameter into a system to which it is inherently resistant can make the verse sound forceful in performance, hence the illegitimacy, according to some critics, of verse forms imitating the alexandrine too closely. Holmes argues that mimetic forms in verse translation entail a challenge for reception: ‘Rather than interpreting the original in terms of the native tradition, the mimetic metapoem requires the reader to stretch the limits of his literary sensibility, to extend his view beyond the bounds of what is recognized as acceptable in his own literary tradition’ (1970: 97-8).

In fact, there is no real equivalence between different prosodic systems, which are fundamentally language-specific: ‘no verse form in any language can be entirely identical with a verse form in any other, however similar their nomenclatures and however cognate the languages’ (Holmes 1970: 95).⁴⁰ In *The Art of Translating Poetry*, Burton Raffel also persuasively maintains that ‘it is impossible to re-create the prosody of a literary work composed in one language in another language’ (1988: 83). He goes on to criticise some blank verse translations of Baudelaire’s poetry and demonstrates the differences between seemingly two similar prosodic systems, blank verse and German iambic verse. He suggests that the only

been presented in English by experimental groups in off-Broadway venues in New York City, as well as in performances in French from Brooklyn to Berkeley’ (Argent 2010: xii).

³⁸ For further comments on the difference between American and British rhymes, see ch. IV, 1.3.

³⁹ Louis Nowra explains that he had to renounce translating Rostand’s *Cyrano de Bergerac* in rhyming couplets, even though rhymes underlie the play’s aesthetic and parodic project.

⁴⁰ See Kochol 1970: 106-11, for a reflection on the necessary rhythmic substitutions in metrical translations.

solution is to discard the original metrical system and to pursue an equivalence for the source effects, as much as possible within ‘the true movements of the host language’ (*ibid.*: 89). However, Joseph Brodsky, almost self-contradictorily, speaks both to the non-equivalence of prosodic systems and to the necessity of retaining the prosodic form of the original: ‘Metres in verse are kinds of spiritual magnitudes for which nothing can be substituted. They cannot even be replaced by each other, and especially not by free verse. I don’t mean that by rejecting metre in translation the translator commits sacrilege, but he is certainly deceiving the reader’ (1974: 14). As much as translators are aware of the formal differences between prosodic systems, the fact is that translations of verse literature are majorly concerned with the search for a metrical equivalent. The prosodic system is seen as one crucial element which the translation should address. Brodsky’s image ‘spiritual magnitudes’ is thus well chosen.

Not only, argues Claudel, are prosodic systems the stylisation of their respective languages, but they are the more or less direct reflection of a culture. After describing what he believes to be the French nature, Claudel accounts for the length of the verse and its constraints (rhyme and caesura) in a compelling yet quite adventurous way:

La même horreur du hasard, le même besoin de l’absolu, la même défiance de la sensibilité, qu’on retrouve encore aujourd’hui dans notre caractère et nos arrangements sociaux, ont modelé notre grammaire et notre prosodie. Il fallait empêcher l’air d’entrer, il fallait exclure toute espèce de jeu et de décalage, il fallait serrer les mots par une contrainte extérieure et intérieure si forte, entre des coins si durs, que la ligne acquit l’immobilité définitive et infrangible d’une inscription, pour l’éternité. (1965: 6)

In the same vein, Any Crunelle-Vanrigh states: ‘il en va de la métrique d’une langue comme de sa syntaxe: c’est un mode d’appréhension du monde’ (2007: 66). This makes, in itself, the translation of prosodic systems a lot more complicated than it may at first seem. As prosodic systems are intrinsically language-specific, one can therefore be sceptical of metrical mimesis. Therefore, I shall avoid referring to attempted imitations of the seventeenth-century French prosodic system as ‘English alexandrines,’ and shall use ‘dodecasyllabic couplets’ or ‘rhymed hexameters’ instead.

b. Criticisms of dodecasyllabic couplets

There have been rare yet notable uses of the hexameter in English poetry: Sidney’s sonnets (1580s) notably, but also Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590), in which lines divided into two six-syllable halves are used as the concluding line of the nine-line stanzas. This form was imitated by Byron and Shelley (Duffell 2008: 181; Stewart 1969: 235). Dryden’s poetry also occasionally employs twelve-syllable lines to extend a couplet.⁴¹ Duffell notes that a few

⁴¹ See <http://www.poetscraft.com/education/handouts/transphedre.pdf>.

ambitious admirers of French poetry of the Romantic period, some of whom were schooled in Latin quantitative verse, wrote in lines of six feet, notably Algernon Charles Swinburne and Ernest Dowson (2008: 182).⁴²

But Pope has famously derided these attempts in *An Essay on Criticism* (1711): ‘A needless alexandrine ends the song/That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along’ (2014: 356-7) and rejected the Greek hexameter in preference for ten-syllable lines in his translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.⁴³ After the heyday of the hexameter, of which Sidney was a leading figure, the form lost in popularity during the Elizabethan and Jacobean age, and has, by and large, been limited to the role of ‘vers à effet’ – as the occasional elongations of Otway’s rhymed pentameters in his translation of *Bérénice* (1676) illustrate (Stewart 1969: 236).

While the syllabic dimension of French verse justifies the number of syllables in the alexandrine, the dodecasyllable only adds cumbersomeness in English accentual verse. As opposed to the French alexandrine, which generally bears two fixed stresses and two non-fixed lighter ones, the dodecasyllable usually carries six fixed stresses, which are all the more emphasised as they pre-exist in the language. Furthermore, the mute e’s in the French verse, metrically valid, also soften the prosodic presence (Stewart 1969: 237).⁴⁴

The length of the hexameter, although offering more room than the pentameter to retain the original material, is almost unanimously regarded as unfit for the English stage: ‘The syllabic alexandrines do not and cannot exist in English’ says Lowell peremptorily (1961b: 7), echoing Muir, who argued that they sound ‘flabby and foreign’ (1960: vi). Bolt, a few decades later, reiterates this point, stating that the form is ‘not acceptable to an English ear’ (1994: 19). Edmunds judged the hexameter ‘too stately for drama’ (2013: xl). Being often held to be in great part responsible for the untranslatability of Racine’s dramatic language, the rhymed hexameter has, therefore, rarely been used in translations of French seventeenth-century plays.

c. Examples of rhymed hexameter translations

Slater’s volume of five plays by Molière published in the ‘Oxford World’s Classics’ series (2001), however, retained the original verse form in the interest of a ‘flavor of the original’

⁴² See also John Keats’s *The Eve of St. Agnes*, 1820.

⁴³ Centuries of translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have fuelled the debate surrounding the aptness of English hexameters (see notably Newman (1861) and Arnold (1914)). Although there are a few relatively recent translations of Homer’s two epic poems in hexameters, notably Murison (1933), Lattimore (1951 and 1965), Brian Kemball-Cook (1993), Rodney Merrill (2002, 2007), they are clearly outnumbered by the prose and blank verse ones.

⁴⁴ See *ibid.* for comments on the disappearance of the ‘alexandrine’ on the German stage in this period.

(2001: xxv). Although Slater denies that these translations were mainly aimed at publication,⁴⁵ her dodecasyllabic translations have yet to be performed, and so their stageability is yet to be confirmed. One can, as a matter of fact, hypothesise a somewhat awkward performance – unless the cast is very experienced. As seen above, twelve-syllable verse, as opposed to the decasyllable, has some advantages from a compositional perspective: the length of the line enables Slater to make an extensive use of logical connectors and repetitions, punctuation break-up clauses within the line, and thereby to produce a clear, flexible and aerated discourse. However, such a language can run the risk of slowing down the pace, and sounding ponderous and artificial in performance. Comparing Wilbur's more run-on decasyllables in *The School for Wives* with Slater's alexandrine version sheds light on the fact that long lines, in a denser language, diminishes the efficiency of language. To quote famous lines from the first scene of *L'École des femmes* as an example:

You won't believe this, but the other day She came and asked me in a puzzled way, And with a manner touchingly sincere, If children are begotten through the ear. (Wilbur 1971: 14)	The other day (I tell you, this you won't believe), She was in quite a state, came to me, all naive, And in her innocence, I swear it was all sincere, She asked if women made their babies through the ear. (Slater 2001: 7, 161-4)
---	--

Although it can be argued that, in this specific case, the delay created by the multiple clauses breaking up the lines dramatises the revelation and makes it funnier, it is, on the other hand, very possible for the actor playing Wilbur's Arnolphe to slow down speech delivery in performance without drawing on textual features. Moreover, the fact that the rhythm in these lines is quite representative of the rest of Slater's text, and indeed, her collection of translations, undermines any potential striking effect in this instance or others.⁴⁶

In Racine translations, there have been three notable undertakings to bring dodecasyllables to the English stage. Packard's *Phèdre* was certainly the first attempt to offer Racine in English in the original verse form. Albeit somewhat limited in influence (it has never been mentioned by subsequent translators), this translation is worth noting, not least thanks to its pioneering quality. Packard is aware of the bravery of his attempt:

It is not as if the alexandrine line had never been used in English literature; it has, and sometimes to great effect. But it is not in our pulse, the way Shakespeare's blank verse line is in our pulse. Just as the Italians have their terza rima, and the Japanese have their 17-syllable haiku, so the

⁴⁵ 'Molière insisted that plays are written to be acted. I have kept this in mind, when translating him, aiming to produce not just a reading text, but one that would work in performance' (2001: xxiv).

⁴⁶ Bartlett has also translated *The Misanthrope* and *The School for Wives* in dodecasyllables (see ch. V, 2.).

French have their alexandrine and the English have their pentameter; it is the unique expression of a civilization, and it cannot really be accounted for.⁴⁷

Although Michael Durrell, who played Hippolyte in the 1966 production, claims to get quickly acclimatised to the rhythm of the dodecasyllable, the actor still acknowledged that the verse posed, at first, a real challenge:

Breathing has been an enormous problem for me. This experience has made me realize that we are not properly trained, in the American theatre, to breathe correctly, and to know how to use the playwright's punctuation – the comma, the semi-colon, and the colon. And so it all becomes a matter of plotting and planning, to find the appropriate breath-pause in each line.⁴⁸

The issue of breathability when the text is written in twelve-syllable lines has also affected some of the actors of Cheek by Jowl Theatre Company, performing Bryer's *Andromache*, who 'had complained of the line length, had found themselves having to grab for breath' (Bryer 1996: 51). Aware that the English alexandrine proved to be too artificial for the audience and actors reared on blank verse, Bryer did not reuse the form when two years later the same company commissioned him to produce a translation of *Le Cid*.

After Packard, Scottish dramatist MacDonald was the second significant translator who brought Racine on the British stage in rhyming hexameters, with his *Phedra* at the Old Vic (1984) and *Britannicus* at the Almeida (1998), which was subsequently brought to Broadway. To justify the verse form used, MacDonald points out that 'a simple calculation will show that the incidence of rhyme in hexameter rhythm as opposed to the pentameter rhythm of normal English blank verse is somewhere in the ratio of 8:10...' (1985: 7). The translator also ignores the mid-line caesura and extensively employs half rhymes. In order to compensate for the length of the verse, MacDonald divides 'his hexameters into a series of short, staccato phrases that make plain the ferocity below the surface of the words' (Short 2000: 1148).

Despite these precautions, the alexandrine was met with a mixed reception: 'A sixth foot, rhymed to boot, clanks hobnailed across our ears' (*The New York Theatre*, 28/01/1999). It is worth noting that MacDonald's translation was coupled with Ted Hughes's free verse translation of *Phèdre* (1998) at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Majestic Theatre. Hughes's play, which had enjoyed a triumph at the National Theatre, London the previous year, might have acted as a bait for the less discriminating members of the public. In January 1999, Hughes's *Phèdre* got ten performances and MacDonald's *Britannicus* only six.

MacDonald exerted great influence on Bartlett (see Johnston 1996: 71), who produced an acclaimed dodecasyllabic free translation of *Le Misanthrope* premiered at the Red Shift,

⁴⁷ See Packard's article reprinted from *Drama Critique*:
<http://www.poetscraft.com/education/handouts/transphedre.pdf>

⁴⁸ <http://www.poetscraft.com/education/handouts/transphedre.pdf>

Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh (1988), *The School for Wives* (1989) at the Derby Playhouse, and of *Bérénice*, staged at the National Theatre (1990). Trusting Racine's dramatic language as it is, Bartlett prefers not to impose a metrical pattern foreign to the original, by giving

strict attention to Racine's use of punctuation. It is the placing of the commas, full stops, colons, exclamations, proper names and especially the placing or stressing of the mid-line break that makes the original lines so extraordinarily forceful, and so dramatic. It is the punctuation, rather than the imagery, which makes them dramatic, i.e.actable, full of identifiable theatrical tensions. (1990: 8)

One can indeed notice Bartlett's effort to make his verse purely syllabic: the mid-line caesura is respected in most of his lines and his lines tend to scan as four anapaests, as a way of respecting the rhythm of the alexandrine and avoiding the cumbersomeness of the hexameter. However, like MacDonald's, Bartlett's metrical imitation of the alexandrine has been criticised (Swinden 1997: 214). The strength of English stresses sometimes compromises the elegance of the anapaests and makes the occasional iambs striking. MacDonald and Bartlett have, however, been influential: their Racine translations have been republished in 2007 in a collective book by Oberon.

Apart from these three relatively successful attempts to bring the alexandrine to the Anglophone stage, translators have remained conscious that twelve-syllable verse is alien to English poetic tradition and the iambic hexameter is hazardous on stage. Unless having, like these three translators, a considerable experience of the stage, either as an actor (Bartlett), as a director (MacDonald and Bartlett) or as a prolific playwright (Packard, MacDonald and Bartlett), transposing a language-specific prosodic system directly into another language can be, for many, a risky undertaking. Indeed, even though Packard sought to reproduce Racine's aesthetics by preserving rhyme and the original syllable-count, his claims to fidelity are delusional. The inherently selective dimension of metrical translation and, indeed, the fact that English and French have different prosodic parameters undermine any aspiration to faithfulness: the French alexandrine cannot produce the same aesthetic effects as the English alexandrine.

d. The significant role of performance agents

Just as it is possible to make a success with English translation in alexandrines, one should not fail to acknowledge those successful productions of rhymed verse translations of seventeenth-century French theatre. Although some critics show reserve towards the couplets

in Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica*,⁴⁹ most reviews are more charitable. Harrison has proven that when handled skilfully, rhymes *can* yield satisfying results in performance.⁵⁰ Robert Cushman writes: 'Mr Harrison's may be the first serious success of any English dramatist in rhyming couplets' (*The Observer*, 14/09/1975, quoted in Astley 1991: 193). By the same token *The Arts Guardians* maintained that Harrison has restored the couplets 'to the serious English stage after years it's been the stuff of pantomime' (9/09/1975). *The New York Magazine* was conquered: 'If they allow the clip-clop of the rhymed couplets to be heard faintly but persistently, that is as it should be; it is an adorable sound, like that of a far-off tennis game across a lazy summer afternoon' (31/03/1975). Another reviewer, at first slightly resistant to rhymes, eventually tolerates them: 'Harrison's play at the outset is somewhat hampered by the slow and pedantic tempo of Racine, though it must be admitted that after a brief period one completely forgot the rhymed couplets' (*Dorrani's*, 11/09/1975). Harrison's *Misanthrope* has likewise been celebrated for the wit of the rhyming couplets. To give only one example, *The Sunday Times* maintained that 'Their metrical balance and impeccable rhyming are throughout the evening the source of continuous joy' (25/02/1973).

With the exception of Hughes's adaptation of *Phèdre*, the fact that modern successful stage-oriented translations of Racine other than Harrison's tend to be in rhyming couplets, as witness Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica* (1975), MacDonald's *Britannicus* (1986) and Bartlett's *Berenice* (1990), shows that rhyming couplets seem to have asserted themselves in translations of Racine's theatre. On the other hand, the most influential academic translations, essentially reader-oriented, tend to be blank verse, namely Cairncross's (1963), Solomon's (1967) and Knight's (1971) translations. Their verse forms have, in fact, been criticised: Peter France deemed Solomon's verse 'plain and lifeless' (2000: 265), and, although less critical about Cairncross's translations of Corneille (1975), the critic still believes that his blank verse plays down the playwright's rhetoric (*ibid.*). These successes show that many translators and critics are in the wrong when putting forward uncompromising normative views about translations of verse texts, that is, when rejecting prosodic forms for their purported incompatibility with modern stage. Theatrical success *can* be created from a text that is challenging for actors and spectators.

It would not be fair, however, to give full credit to the playwrights in the success of rhymes, however crucial their role is. Although Slater's texts may provide much material to speculate

⁴⁹ *The New York Times* avers that 'Mr. Harrison's fluent translation of alexandrines into pentameter couplets worked better for Molière than for Racine' (12/10/1975); a point to which Attridge subscribes (1979: 66, 76).

⁵⁰ See Ploix 2018 (forthcoming), on the method used by Harrison to favour the speakability of his verse.

on a disappointing performance, one should not rule out all possibility that a successful performance featuring gifted actors might disprove this speculation. Solely relying on textual features to assess the stageability of a play is short-sighted. Famous actress Diana Rigg, playing Célimène and Phèdre in Harrison's two adaptations with John Dexter's company, commented on the importance of the performing agents, and how the actors put great care in speaking the lines with dynamism: 'The first three weeks of rehearsal consisted of reading, voice classes and breathing exercises – this verse demands four lines without taking a breath' (*Evening Standard*, 5/09/1975). Although the success of MacDonald's and Bartlett's dodecasyllabic translations, to some extent, call into question the alleged unstageability of the 'English alexandrine,' the positive reception is largely owed to the productions, which put great care into making the text performable for a modern audience. Jonathan Holloway's production of Bartlett's *Misanthrope* emphasised pace in order to offset the length of the dodecasyllable, resulting in critics describing the performance as 'superbly fast' (*The Scotsman*, 20/08/1988), 'fast and furious' (*Financial Times*, 3/09/1988) or mentioning 'a terrific rate' (*The Times*, 25/08/1988), (quoted from Peacock 1993: 154-5). In Robert Fall's production of the same play, the stateliness of the verse is counterbalanced with a radical retopicalisation of the play and modernisation of the idiom. In the same vein, *The Encyclopaedia of Literary Translation into English* says about Bartlett's *Berenice* (Short 2000: 1148):

What marks out this translation especially is the almost breathless pace that carries the dialogue along, giving to this tragedy, which has sometimes been criticized for being too static, an urgency and drive that bring out with great clarity and force the nature of the tragic problem at core.

In *The New York Times* (19/01/1999), a reviewer describes his experience of reading MacDonald's *Britannicus*, and reveals that the text can potentially yield disappointing results if it is poorly performed – which, he says, is not the case in the American production. The reviewer makes a telling comparison between Hughes's free verse translation and MacDonald's strict metrical translation. The difference in performance quality of the two productions, according to the critic, lent itself to different appreciation of the plays:

Curiously, Mr. Hughes's 'Phèdre,' which reads beautifully, plays as if it were five hours long instead of the actual 1 hour and 45 minutes. On the other hand, Mr. MacDonald's 'Britannicus' plays like a breathless melodrama written yesterday, though it is nearly impossible to read. When you see the words on the page, you can be astonished by the Tin Pan Alley rhymes, and defeated by the meaningless extra words stuffed into the lines to satisfy the demands of the meter. You don't hear them in performance.

In the following chapters, I shall bring more positive insights into the use of rhymed verse on stage, by commenting on the translations of Molière's comedies in which rhymes have been virtually unanimously applauded. Rather than impeding the dramatic effects of the original, rhymes can bring a new vitality to the texts.

Chapter II

The Dramatic Qualities of Alexandrines and Translators' Responses

1. Molière and Verse

1.1. Molière's ability to rhyme

The admirers of Molière's rhyming abilities have been numerous. Boileau is one famous representative, notably in his *Satire II* (1665):

Rare et fameux esprit, dont la fertile veine
Ignore en écrivant le travail et la peine;
Pour qui tient Apollon tous ses trésors ouverts,
Et qui sais à quel coin se marquent les bons vers:
Dans les combats d'esprit savant maître d'escrime,
Enseigne-moi, Molière, où tu trouves la rime.
On dirait quand tu veux, qu'elle te vient chercher:
Jamais au bout du vers on ne te voit broncher;
Et, sans qu'un long détour t'arrête ou t'embarrasse,
A peine as-tu parlé, qu'elle-même s'y place. (1966: 29)

Perhaps confident in his ability to rhyme well, Molière makes several of his characters judge between good or poor rhymes, or stress the importance of knowing how to rhyme well in order to obtain recognition: Vadius insults Trissotin by calling him a 'rimeur de balle' (III-v, 1016), the latter has the privilege 'de rimer à latin' (IV-v, 1432). As a way to condemn Agnès to ignorance, Horace plans to deprive her of the ability to rhyme (I-I, 96-9), and in *Les Précieuses ridicules*, Mascarille is ridiculed by admitting 'Je fais toujours bien le premier vers; mais j'ai peine à faire les autres' (sc. xi). Should we understand Philaminte's idiom 'Monsieur n'y trouverait ni rime, ni raison' (IV-iii) as a play on words on Clitandre's use of rhymes? Alceste's stance on poor rhymesters is irrevocable:

On ne doit, de rimer, avoir aucune envie,
Qu'on n'y soit condamné, sur peine de la vie. (IV-i, 1553-4)

In seventeenth-century culture, the alexandrine was often equated to a formal conversation (Truchet 1993: 755), or thought to resemble prose (see above, ch. I, 2.4.). A common bank of rhymes was readily available, out of which talented versifiers could draw at will. Molière was

known to be able to craft verse easily, and sometimes even improvise orally in verse. This ability is clear in his plays: Molière's verse sounds natural and spontaneous, wholly unlike the 'mauvais mécanicien qui fait entendre le bruit choquant de ses poulies et de ses cordes' (Voltaire, *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, 2013: 158).

Occasionally, for that reason, Molière's rhymes have, directly or indirectly, been negatively critiqued: Molière has been referred to as a 'plat rimailleur' (Gevrey 2008: 30). Some remarks have remained famous: as La Bruyère, who stated: 'Il n'a manqué à Molière que d'éviter le jargon et le barbarisme, et d'écrire purement' (1839: 14). Or Fénelon who writes:

En pensant bien, il parle souvent mal. Il se sert des phrases les plus forcées, et les moins naturelles. [...] J'aime bien mieux sa prose que ses vers. Par exemple, l'*Avare* est moins mal écrit que les pièces qui sont en vers. Il est vrai que la versification française l'a gêné. (1844: 438)

The danger of poor versification was in fact a concern for seventeenth-century playwrights and often served as a motive for criticism of verse forms in theatre (Ayres 1974: 134-6). Less condemnatory, modern critics such as Howarth implied that Molière's rhymes, like rhymes in seventeenth-century France in general, were not as rich as Scarron's (1986: 351). The defenders of Molière's language, in response to such criticisms, justify its imperfections in the name of verisimilitude: 'Il eût écrit moins bien, s'il avait mieux écrit' states Brunetière (1898: 835). The alleged lack of richness in Molière's rhymes should not be regarded as a shortcoming. Molière cultivated naturalness, both in his theatrical language as a playwright and in performance as a leading actor in his troupe.

1.2. Justifying verse

Accounting for the choice between verse and prose in seventeenth-century plays is not easy. First, although a general tendency can be noted regarding the choice of prosodic system in Molière's plays – prose tends to be employed in one-act and three-act comedies and verse in the longer works – this tendency is not systematic. Furthermore, the choice between verse and prose was not the subject of much critical writing in the seventeenth century. Although it occasionally aroused resistance, verse was taken for granted, drawing on medieval practice, in which 'literature and verse remain more or less synonymous terms' (Ferrier 1966: x). The debate between prose or verse in drama was discretely launched in the 1630s, and was of a much lesser significance than the discussion about the three unities (Corneille 1984: 1401). Even after the success of Molière's prose comedies, there was a long-standing preference for verse in comedies, and verse almost had the monopoly of the tragic genre. The fact that the practice of verse remained generally unquestioned resulted in the absence of any

comprehensive theoretical reflection on the aesthetic use of versification in drama (Ayres 1974: 21-36). The prefaces to Molière's, Racine's and Corneille's plays and to those of other seventeenth-century playwrights generally contain no detailed justification on the prosodic form employed. Likewise, the major treatises of the seventeenth century, notably *La Pratique du théâtre* by d'Aubignac, *Le Traité du récitatif* by Grimarest, and Corneille's *Discours*, provide virtually no reflections on the aesthetic relevance of verse or prose in relation to the genre or tone of the play.⁵¹ Boileau's *Art Poétique* makes no mention of prose drama. This has led Jacques Scherer to state that there was no 'esthétique de la pièce de théâtre en prose' (1960: 197). This is why the reasons justifying the alleged superiority of verse over prose seldom went beyond commonplace remarks evoking a greater formal pleasure: habits, conventions and taste dictated norms.

Be that as it may, the fact that Molière's verse comedies have been most readily accepted as part of the classical canon invites us to reflect thoroughly on the advantages of Molière's verse from an aesthetic and dramatic perspective. In another respect, irrespective of the occasionally-propounded view that Molière's alexandrines virtually sound like prose, it would be illegitimate to consider verse and prose as interchangeable and to let the conventional nature of verse preclude us from focusing on the way powerful dramatic effects were drawn from the use of alexandrines. Thoroughly reflecting on the dramatic quality of the verse form seems indeed relevant inasmuch as verse is often regarded as a major constraint in modern productions and an impediment to stageability. This study is also relevant because any literary work is to be regarded as a cohesive object, whose various stylistic and thematic elements are interdependent and influence one another. Reflecting on an element – especially if it is as fundamental to the work as its prosodic form – with no account of its role in the work's overarching matrix, is short-sighted. It is, in other words, quite indisputable that a message, an idea or an aesthetic experience can be ontologically different, or, at least, can be perceived differently, depending on the way it is conveyed.⁵² One only has to compare Molière's *Dom Juan* and Thomas Corneille's rewriting of the same play in verse, or read *La Princesse d'Elide*, written half in verse and half in prose as the author lacked time to complete the versification,

⁵¹ This is quite surprising as d'Aubignac did speak against verse in, notably, his introduction to *La Pucelle d'Orléans*. Existing theories on why *L'Avare* and *Dom Juan* were written in prose tend to be based on biographical factors, rather than on aesthetics; one has too often heard contestable accounts that Molière lacked time (Mesnard 1880, vol. 5: 213-4; Ayres 1974: 101). These suggest that verse served no function other than tradition.

⁵² The idea that form can be separated from content is something mainstream aesthetic and semiotic theories have resisted or denied, from Walter Pater, to Ferdinand Saussure, New Critics and structuralists (Elliot 2003: 133-4).

to have an idea of the way different forms lend themselves to different appreciations of the play as a whole.

The reasons lying behind the prosodic form employed in each play have generally not been central to critical studies of Molière's language. In Jacques Scherer's *La Dramaturgie classique en France*, apart from a few lines on irregular verse (1960: 361), no section is devoted to the question. Apart from rare studies, notably, Robert Garapon (1964) and Conesa (1983) who have commented on the ability of verse to structure the characters' arguments, and Clive Scott (1988) and Charles Bernet (2004), who provides useful quantitative data of Molière's rhymes, notably in terms of the characteristics of their lexis, no extensive study exists on Molière's use of verse. When focusing specifically on Molière's language, critics sometimes limit their remarks to reproaching the dramatist with often poor and awkward versification. By comparison, rhymes in seventeenth-century tragedy have been the object of more critical attention, notably thanks to the works of Jean-Gabriel Cahen (1946), William Howarth (1986), and more comprehensively, Valérie Beaudouin (2002), in addition to Scott (1988) and Bernet (2004).

1.3. The translators' critical input and prosodic domestication

Introductions and prefaces written by translators are very valuable; they contribute the most to the analysis of the dramatic qualities of the verse. Verse translators have often provided rich reflections on the effects and the necessity of verse in the original and in translation, and seldom limit themselves to mentioning a simply formal pleasure. This is not surprising: contrary to most French theatregoers, who have studied Molière at school, rhyme is foreign to the Anglophone theatrical tradition, and thereby triggers much criticism. If used by a translator, rhyming couplets, therefore, need special justification. More crucially, analysing the translations themselves, where the theoretical statements are put into practice, contributes to the scholarship on the genre-specific benefits of verse from an aesthetic and dramatic perspective. Journalistic and academic critics commenting on verse translations also often make similar insightful remarks.

Although no model of poetry translation has been unanimously approved, many post-war translations of Molière's verse plays seem to favour a definite approach to rhymes and meter: they tend to privilege respect for form over content. However, when a translator decides to produce a rhyming version, there is generally more to it than the mere desire to respect the source form. Opposing form-derivative translation to content-derivative translation makes, in

itself, little sense. A translation in rhyming couplets, making use of unavoidable distortions to sense units within the original text, is, in a way, not necessarily 'content-deviant,' if one considers 'content' beyond sense-units. This chapter will show that the choice for verse in translation can interact widely with the dramatic substance of Molière's plays. The fact that a number of translators opted for heroic couplets shows that they valued the pursuit of a kind of equivalence, however partial or delusionary it may be, which differs from semantic closeness. In other words, claiming that the emerging preference for constraining prosodic forms suggests that translators have tended to hold the concern for the refinement of the form of the source play-text in higher regard than its dramatic efficiency is, for many translators, wide of the mark. As Folkart insightfully states:

The decision to translate into fixed forms, or metered-unrhymed, or rhymed-unmetered, or unmetered and unrhymed verse is an organic, not an a priori one. What matters is that the end product of the translation process be a poem whose formal features are utterly appropriate to its imagery and feeling. (2007: 124)

While absolute aesthetic sameness is a fallacy between the French and English systems owing to their formal dissimilarities, and while the equivalence of effects is not fully valid because of the different reception French and English verse systems commonly have on stage, this chapter will nonetheless argue that English verse is more effective than prose to recreate the dramatic effects of Molière's alexandrines. This will lead us to study the ways in which the dramatic qualities of verse are carried across in translation. If trusted to a gifted poet-dramatist, and if performed by an experienced company, verse in translation can reenact some effects of the original, and in some cases, make them even more powerful.

This chapter will also demonstrate that achieving in Molière's verse translations what Nida called 'dynamic equivalence,' that is, reproducing certain effects of the source text without necessarily relying on formal closeness, involves a form of prosodic domestication. It is argued that English verse forms that fully comply with the principles dictated by their own prosodic principles are more efficient in reproducing the effects of Molière's alexandrines than those that try to reproduce the form of the alexandrine.

Argent's approach to metrical translation can be quoted to describe what underlies prosodic domestication, and although he has only translated Racine, it informs much of the style chosen in these translations of Molière's comedies:

My guiding principle has been that if one is translating into an English verse form, then one should try to remain as faithful to that form as possible; exploit its strengths, rather than try to hide its weaknesses; allow it to do what it can do so well, rather than try to bring it into closer conformity with an alien verse form. (2010: xxxix)

Blank verse and rhyming couplets, which are alien systems for the modern Anglophone stage, and thus, which pertain to a foreignising aesthetics, need to be paradoxically domesticised to be dramatically effective. The following section will examine five dramatic effects of Molière's alexandrine, and study the translation strategies deployed by verse translators to recreate these effects.

2. Verse in Molière's Comedy and its Translations

Although prose has undeniable advantages when it comes to cultivating theatrical illusion, and this often proves essential to the success of comedy, verse, in some significant ways, can greatly contribute to Molière's dramaturgy. Molière's verse embodies a strong linkage between form and content, obviously for different reasons than in tragedy, yet just as – if not more – significantly. As comedy is a versatile genre and less attached to the unity of tone than tragedy, there is a multiplicity of ways of describing the dramatic quality of Molière's verse, depending on the dramatic context.

2.1. Verse and detachment from reality

a. General considerations

Although dramatic verisimilitude (*vraisemblance*) was a major aspiration for seventeenth-century dramatists (Scherer 1960; Larthomas 2005), Molière's comedies do not always reveal a scrupulous desire to imitate real life.⁵³ Although Molière sought to propose a faithful representation of the vices of his century,⁵⁴ verse, stylised dialogues – or 'ballets verbaux,' as Garapon calls them (1957: 236-41) – farfetched *quiproquos* and surrealist *deus ex machina* endings vividly suggest that *vraisemblance* was not Molière's utmost priority. Molière's comedies offer many situations when the artificiality of verse or its self-conscious dramatic

⁵³ About 'vraisemblance,' Georges Forestier pinpoints the lack of rigor surrounding this notion in seventeenth-century criticism: 'La vraisemblance est donc moins ce qui semble vrai que ce qui est acceptable comme ressemblant au vrai' (in Corvin 2008: 1428).

⁵⁴ Although Brécourt can safely say in *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, 'l'affaire de la Comédie est de représenter en général tous les défauts des hommes' (sc. iv), claiming that comedy stages faithful portraits of mankind is somewhat naïve. Comedy is very far from naturalist drama, and generally magnifies human vices and flaws to excess with a view to make the audience laugh. Beaumarchais observes, 'Si la tragédie doit nous représenter les hommes plus grands, et la comédie moindres qu'ils ne sont réellement, l'imitation de l'un et l'autre genre n'ayant pas une exacte vérité, leur langage n'a pas besoin d'être rigoureusement asservi aux règles de la nature' (1988: 131-2).

significance leads to a very welcome threat to *vraisemblance*. This is put forward by many translators, notably Slater, who states that 'it is natural in comedy for language to draw attention to itself' (2001: xxv). In the same vein, Harrison propounds: 'The rigorous form of the verse, though, is necessary to create the detachment from reality so essential to the workings of comedy' (2002: 9). Claudel's justification of the use of regular verse is worth quoting:

La principale [raison] me paraît le désir de créer dans l'esprit du lecteur un état de facilité et de bonheur. Il est porté en avant sans effort par un mouvement attendu auquel il n'y a qu'à s'abandonner. Il est constitué dans un état harmonieux. Il sent ses mouvements et ses pensées adoptés par l'ordre éternel. Il est détaché du hasardeux et du quotidien. Il dort. Il habite un lieu durable où les êtres et les choses lui sont présentés dans un langage soluble. (1965: 7)

Wilbur, in his introduction to *Tartuffe*, mentions a 'purely formal pleasure' to justify the use of rhyming couplets. He also points out the performance aspect to rhymes proves particularly welcome on various occasions, notably to 'support the "ballet" movement of the close of Act II' (1964: xii).

When rhymes in English translations do not fully assume these effects, they are at higher risk of sounding unduly obtrusive. Slater's alexandrine translations, as mentioned in the previous chapter (2.5.c.), aspire to be a reliable resource for non-French speakers. Published in the 'Oxford World's Classics' series, Slater has accompanied her translations with considerable editorial work, namely a long introduction, a bibliography, endnotes and line-numbering. Although occasionally indulging in eccentric departures from the original, by and large, she remains within the range of the source text, both in register and style.⁵⁵ As mentioned above, her style aims at clarity: she relies heavily on logical connectors, redundant repetitions and line break-ups. One can contend that the superimposition of rhymes onto a resolutely pragmatic style sounds like an illegitimate intrusion, and generates an incoherence in the aesthetic project. By contrast, the density of Wilbur's and Harrison's decasyllabic verse in their translations, resulting from the richness of the vocabulary, the stylishness and 'fluidity' of the lines, gives more authenticity to the rhymes. In a language that assumes its poeticity and that shuns naturalistic tone, rhymes are more welcome.

In many plays by Molière, the prosodic form used is highly justifiable. *Les Femmes savantes*, especially, because it stages pedantic well-read characters, and more significantly, because of its metalinguistic focus, would lose much of its dramatic interest and meaning if the play were in prose rather than in alexandrines. Indeed, in this comedy, the 'linguistic usage is the measure of the spiritual being,' and 'act[s] as a moral hygiene' (Scott 1988: 191): the servant Martine is dismissed because of her improper use of language. Language aspires to be

⁵⁵ *The Guardian* judged her translations 'fizzless' (21/07/2001).

de-functionalised; in other words, to free itself from its subservience to the signified (*ibid.*: 194). III-ii stages the paroxysm of the sublimation of words into eroticism: the ladies feel physical pleasure upon hearing Trissotin's words.⁵⁶

b. Challenging verisimilitude through prosodic variations

Translators have occasionally drawn attention to language through occasional prosodic variations. Prosodic variations are more common in English classical theatre: the intertwinement of prose, blank verse and rhyming couplets, as practised by Shakespeare and Renaissance playwrights, leaves greater scope for prosody to take up a strong dramatic significance. This resource was unavailable to seventeenth-century French playwrights: prosodic variations are virtually non-existent in Molière's verse plays: only letters, billets, or texts read out, such as the maxims Agnès recites in *L'École des femmes* allow a shift to prose, and only poetry quoted by characters gives occurrences of verse in prose plays, as in *Les Précieuses ridicules*. Exploiting a resource customary in English verse theatre and alien to French theatre is in itself a form of prosodic domestication.

Miles Malleon, the first playwright to have successfully revitalised Molière on the British stage in the 1940s and 1950s, wrote a series of Molière translations in thoroughly modernised free verse. However, he was also conscious of the way rhyme can be a powerful conveyor of both what Harrison calls 'the detachment from reality so essential to the workings of comedy,' and comedy per se. At the end of each act, a few heroic couplets resound, heavily endstopped, expanding the source text's closing lines with humorous traits, a trait that Edmunds also uses in his blank verse translations, although less ostensibly. In Malleon's *Tartuffe*, rhyming couplets are used for the Exempt's eulogy of the King, a purple passage that is often problematic in performance because of its length and its being a pause in an otherwise intensely dramatic episode (Peacock 1993: 70-3).

To give another example, this time, from a lesser known translation, Stephen Benjamin, as the Director of Theatre Arts for the Garfield Heights City School, produced an adaptation of *Tartuffe* for his students, which uses similar prosodic variations. Averse to an integrally rhymed play, both on account of the alleged lack of tolerance towards rhyme by modern audiences and the inexperience of his company, not capable of handling a whole evening in verse, Benjamin decided to keep the rhyming verse at occasional points, specifically to highlight meaningful phrases or moments of poignancy (2013: 68-70). The association he makes between songs in

⁵⁶ See Scott 1988: 194, for remarks on how language dematerialises everything in the play, even money.

musicals and passages in rhyming couplets is interesting: 'Just as musicals take the liberty with their musical numbers when actors break out into song, I chose to include rhyming in my version when someone is trying to express a philosophy in a nuanced way' (68). Rhyme is given this overt artificial dimension, compromising the suspension of disbelief. The prose dialogic exchange between Pernelle and Dorine in the first scene is interrupted when the former recites a poem of five quatrains, followed by a curtsy. Tartuffe also recites a rhyming poem, in an attempt to seduce Elmire. In one of Cléante's long argumentative speeches, in the scene with Orgon, the conclusion is given in two rhyming couplets, summarising the character's whole point in an epigrammatic way.

Because of the focus on language verse generates, when scenes in prose plays have set major difficulties for modern directors owing to their lack of realism or their dramaturgical content, such as the opening of *L'Avare*, using verse has proven helpful. Mike Alfred, in his farcical adaptation of *L'Avare* (1990) for the Oxford Stage Company, provides a case in point. As remarked by Peacock, 'The world of romance is conveyed by rhyming couplets' which 'preserve, albeit in a less subtle form, Molière's parody of the lover's earnest protestations: "I know I must do what I'm told/Fathers know better because they're old", or "Ignore this scandal/Your father is the one we have to handle"' (1994: 86). Jeremy Sams, in his version of *L'Avare* written for Stephen Pimlott's production at the National Theatre in 1991, also uses prosodic variations. The first and last scenes of the play, verse (sometimes rhymed) appears, creating a striking contrast with the rest of the play. As the author comments:

Thus the opening scene (which could be Corneille) is in rhythmic verse which creeps into rhyme from time to time. The second scene, though in prose, retains an iambic flavor which bleeds out in time for Scene Three: low comedy and bad language. The process is reversed for the final scenes where the emotional temperature rises again with the arrival of Seigneur Anselme. (1991: v-vi)

Here again, the change in register and prosodic form highlights the thematic structure of the play, by clearly separating the world of love and money (Peacock 2000: 960). The out-of-this-world beginning, where love, before Harpagon appears, is still free to hope innocently for an optimistic outcome, and the otherworldly *deus ex machina* ending, suddenly reuniting lovers, are given, through the presence of verse, a certain form of legitimacy.

c. A case study: Ranjit Bolt's *George Dandin*

George Dandin adapted by Bolt, performed at the Redshift Theatre in 1995, gives another striking example of prosodic variations. *George Dandin* is quite an unusual play for the number of its monologues. The main character laments his plight alone on stage at the beginning of the

play and at the end of each act,⁵⁷ along with I-iii and II-vi, whenever he suffers severe humiliation. Monologues were either frowned upon by some seventeenth-century theoreticians for their lack of *vraisemblance*,⁵⁸ or just tolerated, provided they are justified by a strong psychological and dramatic purpose.⁵⁹

However, Molière is not always mindful of current taste and tradition. The recurrence of these monologues emphasises their structural role, and creates an expectation after each blow the protagonist undergoes. While playwrights have tended to subdue the artificiality of the monologue by making it veer towards a self-conducted dialogue, with, notably, apostrophes, questions and refutations (Larthomas 2005: 377-9), the kind of dialogue Molière creates in *George Dandin* further highlights the peculiarity of these monologues. The main character speaks to himself in second person: ‘George Dandin, George Dandin, vous avez fait une sottise la plus grande du monde’ (I-i) or ‘Hé bien, George Dandin, vous voyez de quel air votre femme vous traite’ (I-iii).

In Bolt’s translation, rhyming couplets perform the oddity of the original to some greater extent, suggesting a total surrender of verisimilitude. Bolt chose to leave the opening monologue in prose, so as to keep the audience in total surprise when the first rhymed monologue occurs in I-iii. Furthermore, the frequent vulgarities peppering the dialogue does not set the scene for the more elevated form of rhyming couplets. The prominence of these passages is also stressed by their length, as Bolt significantly elongates Molière’s monologue. For example, the closing monologue of Act I is more than quadrupled in terms of word count in Bolt’s translation.

Larthomas comments on the highly conventional nature of the monologue and accounts for the reasons lying behind its lack of *vraisemblance*: ‘[le monologue] est parole et le langage est alors détourné de sa fonction fondamentale de communication, [...] ou il est pensée verbalisée, et il est alors une sorte de transposition artificielle, dans la mesure où la “pensée” ne saurait être parlée et devient immédiatement autre chose dès qu’elle l’est’ (2005: 373). This observation is interesting in relation to the monologues in Bolt’s translation. While these monologues, like those of the original, are moments of *pensée verbalisée* with all the contradictions this entails, Bolt’s monologues also become *langage* at the same time, thanks to the sudden intrusion of the poetic form. In Bolt, these monologues virtually veer towards the

⁵⁷ I-vii; II-viii; III-viii. Although the original text doesn’t specify that George Dandin is alone on stage in his last speech at the close of Act II, the soliloquy can be performed as a monologue.

⁵⁸ D’Aubignac, *La Pratique du théâtre*, book 3, ch. VIII.

⁵⁹ Jean Chapelain, ‘Lettres sur la règle des vingt-quatre heures,’ (Duprat 2007: 225-234). See Cuénin-Lieber on Corneille (2002: 80-81, 94-96).

Corneillian stanzas. Wary of the artificiality of monologues, Corneille was less so with stanzas: according to him, the aesthetic qualities of the obtrusive poetic form brought a pleasurable experience that was worth the loss of verisimilitude.⁶⁰

In *George Dandin*, prosodic variation is not used purely for aesthetic effects: Bolt switches to rhyming couplets to corroborate the dramaturgy of the play. The protagonist's monologues are not the only instances of rhyming couplets: they are also used at strategic points by George Dandin's wife, Angélique. In these instances, rhyming couplets come to embody deceitful and hypocritical speech. In II-viii, Angélique is caught with her lover Clitandre by George Dandin and her parents, the Sotenvilles. To avoid being chastised for her infidelity, she cleverly acts as if she has not seen them coming and pretends to dismiss Clitandre, telling him sternly that he is not welcome in her husband's house. This artful trickery is spoken in rhyming couplets, as a way of pointing to her duplicity and the others' naïveté. In III-vi, George Dandin has managed to lock himself in the house before Angélique, leaving her unable to get in. He patiently waits for the Sotenvilles, who are on their way, in order to prove her adultery to them. Angélique sets out on long apologetic speeches, admitting her faults, but blaming them on youth. Again, in Bolt's translation, she switches into rhyming couplets. The audience is now aware that speeches in rhyming couplets are just a veneer of earnestness, which actually signals out-and-out deceit. George Dandin's incredulous replies, 'Oui vous le dites, et ce sont de ces choses qui ont besoin qu'on les croie pieusement' and 'Ah! Crocodile, qui flatte les gens pour les étrangler' are, thanks to the prosodic contrast, even more meaningful in English.⁶¹ Angélique then threatens to stab herself if he does not let her in straight away. Comparing the way she fakes her agony in the original and in the translation is revealing:

Hé bien puisqu'il le faut, voici qui nous
contentera tous deux, et montrera si je me
moque. Ah! C'en est fait. Fasse le Ciel que
ma mort soit vengée comme je le souhaite,
et que celui qui en est cause reçoive un juste
châtiment de la dureté qu'il a eue pour moi.
(sc.vi)

All right, you leave me no choice. Now you'll see
If I'm in earnest: this is going to be
A blessing for us both. Ah! I expire!
Oh, Heaven! Grant me the vengeance I desire
And may the man who brought this death on me
Be justly punished for his cruelty!
The world knows what a fiend my husband is –
Let him be held responsible for this –
Pay with his life for my untimely death –
I curse George Dandin with my dying breath! (163-4)

In Molière, the text is rather neutral, steers clear from hyperbolic vocabulary and pompous syntax; the actor is free to adopt a pathetic style of delivery, or on the contrary remain detached with irony. In Bolt, however, Angélique almost sounds like a character from a Restoration

⁶⁰ *Examen d'Andromède*, in Corneille 1984: 454.

⁶¹ Respectively, 'A likely story!' (161), 'Hypocrite! You're not going to deceive me. Not this time [...]' (162).

tragedy, or delivering a Racinian tirade translated with bad taste. Not only is the audience aware that rhymed speeches are but a meretricious signpost of irony, but the mawkish elongation of the original in the last lines, heavily endstopped, undermines any risk of tragic potential. The last couplet, especially, thanks to the hackneyed rhyme pair ‘death/breath,’ rendered gaudy thanks to the pleonastic effect ‘death/dying breath,’ together with her flatulent malediction expressed artificially in the third person, concludes the speech in a bathetic fashion.

2.2. The contribution of verse to argumentation

Argumentation is central to Molière’s fully-developed five-act comedies: the dramatic tension derives majorly from conflicts between obstinate fools and those who try to reason with them. Several critics have regarded the alexandrine as a medium conducive to strong argumentation, starting with Charles Sorel in 1671, who speaks of the way verse makes the tone ‘vigorous’: ‘Plusieurs s’imaginent que [...] comme la voix resserrée dans le canal d’une Trompette, a un son plus aigu que quand elle est poussée dans un air libre, ainsi les paroles enfermées dans les mesures des Vers ont plus de vigueur que quand elles sont épandues dans un champ vague’ (1671: 184). In the same vein, in *Vie de Molière*, Voltaire comments on the way verse makes simple ideas stronger thanks to the embellishment which they confer: ‘...il y a peut-être plus de difficulté à réussir dans ce style ordinaire, où l’esprit seul soutient l’auteur, que dans la versification, qui par la rime, la cadence et la mesure prête des ornements à des idées simples que la prose n’embellirait pas’ (1999: 441). Hugo, in his famous preface to *Cromwell* (1827) develops this idea and dwells on the ability of the alexandrine to structure ideas effectively, without necessarily undermining ‘la nature et le vrai’:

le vers embrasse l’idée, s’y incorpore étroitement, la resserre et la développe tout à la fois, lui prête une figure plus svelte, plus stricte, plus complète, et nous la donne en quelque sorte en élixir. Le vers est la forme optique de la pensée. Voilà pourquoi il convient surtout à la perspective scénique. Fait d’une certaine façon, il communique son relief à des choses qui, sans lui, passeraient insignifiantes et vulgaires. Il rend plus solide et plus fin le tissu du style. C’est le nœud qui arrête le fil. C’est la ceinture qui soutient le vêtement et lui donne tous ses plis. (1968: 94-5)

Similarly, Claudel reflects on the way the alexandrine is conducive to argumentation: ‘le vers classique a l’allure d’un homme qui discute, qui distingue et qui explique. Il est éminemment approprié à notre tournure d’esprit nationale qui aime à résumer une situation par une sentence bien frappée, une espèce de proverbe’ (1965: 11).

Cléante’s tirade in *Tartuffe* (I-v), commonly judged unpalatable in performance, nevertheless has features that secure the intelligibility of the line of reasoning. Conesa, in *Le*

Dialogue moliéresque convincingly sheds light on the relation between Molière's argumentation and the structure of his lines (1983: 56-9). As Conesa observes, in Cléante's speech, the two hemistichs are often antithetical; the first is about hypocritical bigots and the second describes genuine faith:

Entre l'hypocrisie/et la dévotion? [...]
Égaler l'artifice/à la sincérité,
Confondre l'apparence/avec la vérité
Estimer le fantôme/autant que la personne,
Et la fausse monnaie/à l'égal de la bonne? (333-38)⁶²

The comparison between Steiner's prose translation with Hampton's verse translation of these lines gives an idea of the way 'le vers embrasse l'idée,' to borrow Hugo's expression:

[...] respect the mask as highly as the face,
consider sham the equal of sincerity,
confuse appearance and reality,
value a ghost as much as someone living
and forgeries no less than genuine coin?
(Hampton 1984: 24)

Can't you tell the difference between
hypocrisy and true piety? You treat them
as if they were identical; you respect a
mask as if it were a real face. Do you think
that pretense and sincerity, appearance and
truth, phantom and reality, counterfeit and
real currency are all the same?
(Steiner 2009: 28)

Even if Hampton's translation is in blank verse, the fact that each line has the same syntactic structure and is heavily endstopped generates significant rhetorical strength in comparison with Steiner's translation. It is, moreover, arguable that the horizontal disposition of the words on the page will invite the actor to emphasise the regular structure in performance. In Hampton, Molière's internal rhythm is transposed differently into English. Since blank verse is stress-syllabic and not syllable-count, structuration of meaning cannot be reproduced with the same prosodic parameters, i.e. drawing on the mid-line caesura. Hampton deploys another line of attack to convey a strong a rhetorical speech; far from attempting to assimilate the English prosodic system to the French, the translator, as a matter of fact, makes the most of the parameters of English prosody. The presence of strong word-stresses, notably the monosyllables 'mask,' 'face,' 'sham,' 'ghost,' 'coin,' which, almost function as signposts in these lines, is an adequate substitute to Molière's rigorous symmetry. This example shows that, paradoxically, an efficient way to propose a sound equivalence between different prosodic systems and successfully to retain the effects conveyed in the source text is to seek to optimise

⁶² Although Conesa demonstrates that Molière likewise uses this rhetorical strategy in prose, peppering the speeches with balanced blank verse opposing two conflicting ideas (1983: 57), it can be contended that when the structuration of ideas is presented overtly in alexandrines, the effect is more effective because it is underscored by rhythmic precision. Conesa makes other insightful remarks on the fact that the organisation of language into verse allows a rigorous structuration of ideas. In Cléante's speech, lines criticising 'Pharisees' and those describing genuine believers are given the exact same number. This reflects the role of the character as a *raisonneur*, advocating the happy medium, and certainly also reflects the sensitiveness of the subject-matter in Molière's time (1983: 52).

the use of the prosodic parameters of the target language. It can be contended that the way Molière and Hampton use the prosodic principles of their respective verse system to the full in order to structure discourse helps the audience to assimilate this long speech more readily.

Prose, one can contend, creates a more diffuse line of reasoning, especially when the speech is long, since it hardly allows certain words to be elevated to the status of argumentative signposts, as Lefevere in *Translating Poetry* remarks: ‘Because of its very form, prose is unable to direct the reader’s attention towards certain words the way poetry can: it can neither make a word stand out through its position in the line, nor can it, without its quality of elegance, repeat a word too often’ (1975: 43). If prose *can* emphasise certain words, Lefevere goes on to say, it often does so in a way that breaks the rhythm of the source text by employing longer sentences (*ibid.*). And if the prose translation stays close to the original sentence syntax and rhythm, ‘the communicative value’ of the words, and, inevitably, of the target text as whole will diminish (47). Although Herzel is a defender of prose, the critic, indeed, admits that ‘the verse patterns help shape the rhetorical builds’ (2009: xxxiv). In comparison to Hampton’s version, prose in Steiner makes these lines sound quite verbose. Furthermore, the transposition from verse to prose makes Cléante’s long speech less of a purple passage. Therefore, the comic metadramatic effect in Orgon’s retort ‘Monsieur mon cher beau frère, avez-vous tout dit?’ is significantly diminished.

Rhymes, when they are used in this kind of argumentative verse, add considerable strength. Running counter to commonplace statements about the greater intelligibility of prose as opposed to English rhyming couplets, Wilbur, in the preface to his *Misanthrope*, contends that rhymed verse actually contributes to the clarity of the argument. The translator maintains that the recourse to repetitious reasoning in Molière’s comedies, brilliantly serving the argumentative virtuosity in rhyme, sounds purely prolix in prose: ‘Molière’s logic loses all its baroque exuberance in prose; it sounds lawyerish; without rhyme and verse to phrase and emphasise the steps of its progression, the logic becomes obscure like Congreve’s, not crystalline and followable as it was meant to be’ (1958: xi). Bolt, also points to the welcome structural role of rhyme:

I think it’s something to do with the way the couplet form reinforces the ethos of the play, the message of the play. There is often a rhetorical use you need to fathom; for example, you’ll have antithesis A,B – on the one hand this, on the other hand that – which the couplet suits particularly well. (In Johnston 1996: 251)

Although English reviewers tend to frown upon the predictability of rhymes,⁶³ when used occasionally, they can be very satisfying for the audience. In the following couplets taken from the same tirade, one can easily guess the rhyming words in the second lines before they occur, either thanks to a close signifying relationship between the two rhyming words ('miracles/oracles'), or because of an expected antithetic combination ('fausse/bonne'). In addition to contributing to the clarity of the point, predictability makes the couplet memorable: it endows the couplet with a pleasing epigrammatic dimension and enhances the authority of the argument:

Ses moindres actions lui semblent des miracles,
Et tous les mots qu'il dit, sont pour lui des oracles. (I-ii, 197-8)
Estimer le fantôme, autant que la personne;
Et la fausse monnaie, à l'égal de la bonne? (I-v, 337-9)

Maynard Mack points to 'the couplet's natural bias for debate, assessment, organized eloquence, and persuasion [...]' (1967: lxiii). Argent's remarks on the structuring quality of Racine's rhymed verse also apply to Molière's: 'The rhymed couplet, moreover, has its own inner logic; it is a "valid argument": the first line sets up the "premise" (the sound pattern to be echoed), the second presents the "conclusion," inexorably dictated by the first' (2010: xl).⁶⁴

Analysing *Le Misanthrope*'s lines with the same rigorous method, Conesa shows that couplets lend themselves very logically to binary structures. In the following lines from *Le Misanthrope*, Alceste devotes one line to describe Célimène's demeanour, the other line exposes its consequences (1983: 59-60). A translation in regular couplets can easily retain the same commanding argumentation:

Et sa douceur offerte à qui vous rend les armes Achève sur les cœurs l'ouvrage de vos charmes. Le trop riant espoir que vous leur présentez Attache autour de vous leurs assiduités; Et votre complaisance un peu moins étendue De tant de soupirants chasserait la cohue. (II-i, 469-74)	By a most melting and receptive manner, And so enlist their hearts beneath your banner. It's the agreeable hopes which you excite That keep these lovers round you day and night; Were you less liberally smiled upon, That singing troop would very soon be gone. (Wilbur 1958: 40)
--	---

⁶³ 'Couplets which are elegant and natural in French sound clumsy with the thumping predictability of English rhymes' (*London Magazine*, March 2002).

⁶⁴ Argent goes on to say that 'Racine's characters, typically placed in situations that produce emotional turmoil, are often pulled in opposing directions, often forced to *balancer*, to weigh their options [...]. Racine's protagonists are masters of ratiocination, adept at convincing themselves or others, as the case may be, of whatever seems expedient to them at the time' (2010: xxxix).

2.3. Verse, high-tone and hypocrisy

Anstey speaks of the dramatic quality of verse: ‘the most brilliant dialogue, if rendered *verbatim* into English, will lose its ease and lightness, chiefly because the original cadences, without which all stage dialogue will hang fire, are necessarily lost’ (1933: vii). By the same token, in his introduction to *The Misanthrope*, Harrison states that verse ‘helps to create the tensions and panics of high comedy’ (2002: 5). Harrison stresses the role of rhyme as

a time-bomb ticking away behind the desperation of Alceste and Célimène’s fear of loneliness. [...] But the silence, when the ticking stops, is almost deafening. There is an almost Chekhovian tension between farce and anguish. To create this vertiginous effect verse (and rhymed verse) is indispensable. Neither blank verse nor prose will do. (*ibid.*)

This ‘Chekhovian tension’ is particularly palpable in III-iii of *Tartuffe*, when the eponymous character attempts to seduce Elmire. The use of hackneyed rhymes with the same grammatical category and close signifying relationship and between the two words reinforces the tension of the scene: as Howarth notes (1986: 352), rhyming pairs such as ‘éternelles/temporelles,’ ‘pareilles/merveilles’ and ‘créature/nature’ emphasise the illusion of a carefully calculated rhetoric set out in a cold-blooded way, and contribute to the oppressive atmosphere.

Le Misanthrope offers many compelling reasons to translate into rhyming couplets. The elevated form of the alexandrine is welcome on account of high comedy’s focus on society circles, where abstract keywords such as ‘esprit,’ ‘humeur,’ ‘feu,’ ‘affection,’ ‘beauté,’ ‘ami,’ ‘maîtresse,’ ‘discours’ are prevalent (Müller 1967: 140), which enables sharp contrasts with *lazzi* scenes. Alceste’s heroism – genuine, according to Eliante: ‘Et la sincérité dont son âme se pique,/A quelque chose, en soi, de noble, et d’héroïque’ (1665-6), and parodic, according to a number of critics including Martin Turnell (1964) and Peacock (1987), recalling a ‘Cornelian tirade’ – also calls for verse. The heroic dimension of Alceste, and the Cornelian vocabulary peppering his speeches are, as Peacock notes, ‘comic when applied to the comparatively petty issues of *Le Misanthrope*. [...] Alceste’s tragic performance is rendered ineffectual by his atrabilious temperament, and is deflated by Célimène’s laughter’ (1987: 82). Heroic couplets, indeed, because of their often inherently comic dimension, can easily be used as a parody of tragic expression.

The *scène des portraits* (II-iv), or the subtle, yet ferocious irony in the tense dialogue between Célimène and Arsinoé (III-iv) would lose much of their strength without the alexandrines. In these scenes, verse establishes a blatant distance between the lofty diction and the fierce sarcasm. The acerbic tone that *comédie de mœurs* achieves at its best directly stems from the disciplined constraint of versification. Consider this quatrain, spoken by Arsinoé at

the end of her diatribe against Célimène, then word-for-word repeated by the latter, also as a conclusion of her repartee. The formality of the lines exacerbates a sense of fake politeness:⁶⁵

Madame, je vous crois l'âme trop raisonnable,
Pour ne pas prendre bien cet avis profitable,
Et pour l'attribuer qu'aux mouvements secrets
D'un zèle qui m'attache à tous vos intérêts. (III-iv, 909-12)

Célimène keeps the same tone in her reply: 'Madame, j'ai beaucoup de grâces à vous rendre:/Un tel avis m'oblige, et loin de le mal prendre, [...].' This scene is a good example of the way the alexandrine sets a gap between the form and the content: the refined tone is a subdued display of a bogus amity, a sham attempt at diminishing the violence of the criticism. The alexandrine, corroborating the character's ironic graciousness, is, in this case, conducive to great dramatic tension.

Comparing Frame's translation, which manages to retain the source text's formality, with the Wood/Coward⁶⁶ prose version shows that stripping this passage of the artificiality of verse and rhyme leads to a regrettable weakening of the ironic tone, even though the two translations are very close in terms of syntax and vocabulary:⁶⁷

Madame, I think you have too wise a heart Not to accept this counsel in good part, And to suspect a motive in my breast Other than fervor for your interest. (Frame 1959: 55)	You are, I believe Madame, much too sensible not to take this useful advice in good part or to believe that I have any other motive other than concern for your best interests. (Wood/Coward 2000: 120)
--	--

The almost pompous register in Frame's translation, with the heavily meaningful terms 'heart' and 'breast' placed in the rhyming position – as equivalents to the more abstract and less protruding 'âme' in the source text – lends itself to an affected speech delivery in performance. The metrical scansion of these lines also contributes to setting the appropriate tone for this hypocritical address. The fourth line deviates from the regularity of the pentameter. It starts with two anapaests before resuming with the iambic pattern: '/Other than /fervor for /your inte/rest.' The metrical curtailment and the swiftness of the anapaests could be compensated with a noticeable drag on the stressed syllables 'your' and 'interest' in order to retain an overall balance. The fact that the iambic pattern resumes with the word 'your' is significant: the sudden change in tempo underlines the hypocritical effort Arsinoé makes to show consideration for Célimène. In Wood's translation, the absence of verse provides the actors with less guidance and fewer opportunities for vocal breaks and tempo variations to

⁶⁵ Opening the quatrain with the apostrophe 'Madame' is a trait that sets the tone of courtesy; the vocative 'Madame,' albeit rare in comedy (Müller 1967: 140) is found 19 times in this scene.

⁶⁶ David Coward republished John Wood's translation (1959) in a slightly modernised version.

⁶⁷ There is a close similarity between Frame's and Wood's translations at several points. These lines are one of the cases of when one can assume Frame used Wood's translation as a basis.

occur in performance: speech delivery is likely to run on, reducing the impression of a cautiously controlled address. In Célimène's glacial retort, Frame further demonstrates the dramatic benefits of regular couplets:

Madame, do not misjudge my attitude:
Advice like yours is cause for gratitude:
Now let me show my deep appreciation
By counsel that concerns your reputation. (1959: 55)

Cahen in *Le Vocabulaire de Racine* (1946: 169), and then Scott in *The Richness of Rhyme* (1988: 29-30) call it '*isométrie des mots-rimes*' when rhyming-words have the same number of syllables. Thanks to the stateliness of this perfectly mastered response and the use of isometric (or in the case of the second couplet, near isometric) rhymes, the tone of Frame's lines almost recalls Racine's. Far from diminishing the fierceness of the underlying slander, the restrained form conveys bitter sentiments with great intensity, akin to 'caged tigers,' to borrow the image used by Argent to describe Racine's verse (2010: xxxviii). Indeed, if the cage keeps the tigers under control, it does not necessarily make them less violent, quite the contrary.

Harrison's version of the same lines, although very different in tone, aims at achieving similar effects. The conversational register that Harrison pursues in his *Misanthrope* (1973) does not deprive verse of its dramatic rationale:

Honestly, I'm grateful for your kind concern,
so grateful, let me straightaway return
the favour done to me, and, since you've been so nice,
let me offer *you* some advice (2002: 72)

Harrison also skilfully exploits metrical variations. The first and third lines contain each an extra metre. The metrical elongation, together with the heavy presence of comma, the use of repetition ('I'm grateful/so grateful,' 'kind/nice') and the link words ('and,' 'since') create a delay that dramatises the final line. Moreover, from the third to the fourth line, there is a drop of four syllables, which emphasises the curtness of the final line. The succession of two stressed syllables in the last line ('you,' 'some') necessitates a vocal caesura between the two words and accentuates the resonance of the pronoun. The metrical stress on 'you' corroborates the typographical one, which, altogether, substantiates the pragmatic significance of the word: the deixis 'you,' calling for a pointing gesture, vividly marks the turning point in Célimène's speech.

Conveying the particular dramatic tone discussed here, which seems quite suitable to formality of the alexandrine, calls for the exploitation of the target system's prosodic parameters that are unavailable in French verse; here, metrical variations. Being form-derivative, or mimetic, translations whilst drawing on different verse strategies, is an instance

of the prosodic domestication-foreignisation dialectics that encapsulate many modern translations of Molière's plays. The next section (and the next chapters) will give other insights into this.

2.4. Verse and domination

On stage, drama always ensues from conflicts. The theatrical tradition has built itself upon the representation of personas that embody antagonistic worldviews, and the alternation between episodes of character conflict and scenes of relief. As Hegel puts it in *Esthétique* (1832):

L'action dramatique ne se borne pas à la calme et simple réalisation d'un but déterminé; au contraire, elle se déroule dans un milieu fait de conflits et de collisions [...]. Ces conflits et collisions engendrent à leur tour des actions et réactions qui rendent, à un moment donné, leur apaisement nécessaire. (1965: 322)

When confronted, opponents usually try to promote their point of view, and either embark on long argumentative speeches, or, when the dramatic urgency or the character's dogged bigotry requires otherwise, have a heated exchange. In theatre, stichomythia is the most visible form of conflict: several components of dramatic language come together to build up tension, namely prosody, pace and often syntax, as the characters often try to outsmart each other by borrowing each other's words or syntactic structures.

Rhymes unify the two characters' speeches more conspicuously than syntactic borrowings, to the point of endangering dramatic credibility. In his introduction to *Four New Plays* (1665), Sir Robert Howard criticised rhymed stichomythia, judging that speeches should be the 'answer of one' rather than the 'design of two' characters 'holding intelligence together' (quoted in Dryden 1903: 81). Scott comments on the peculiar effect of this pointed out by Howard, and argues that it can create theatrically effective scenes:

Rhyme is essential to the punctual, associative mechanism we call 'wit,' where a first line is the shoulder upon which the second line climbs, where the first rhyme is a bid which the second rhyme outbids. In the struggle for power and intellectual ascendancy which comic dialogue is, occupation of the second line and rhyme of the couplet is crucial... (1988: 182)

In other words, rhyme is a powerful feature to increase tension and to assert one's authority: on the 'verbal swordplay' of Racine's *Britannicus* (III-viii), Argent observes that rhyme plays a significant role in the etherealisation of words into the sphere of embellishment and power: 'it seems to be the rhyme at the end of the line that makes the sword prick; removing the rhyme is like bating the tip of the sword' (2010: xxxvii). This remark is thoroughly relevant in rhymed translations of confrontational scenes in Molière's plays. The stichomythic exchanges between Trissotin and Vadius in *Les Femmes savantes* (III-iii, 969-1044) are

relevant examples of the shift from the use of alexandrines as a mere way of setting a refined tone to a fully-fledged dramatic medium embodying competition and the will to assert one's authority.⁶⁸ The two characters first laud each other in one-line speeches, and quickly use them to score points off each other, in an intensely confrontational scene. The shift from duet to duel between the two characters directly originates from the verse form:

VADIUS – Mais laissons ce discours, et voyons ma ballade.
 TRISSOTIN – La ballade, à mon goût, est une chose fade.
 Ce n'en est plus la mode; elle sent son vieux temps.
 VADIUS – La ballade pourtant charme beaucoup de gens.
 TRISSOTIN – Cela n'empêche pas qu'elle ne me déplaie.
 VADIUS – Elle n'en reste pas pour cela plus mauvaise.
 TRISSOTIN – Elle a pour les pédants de merveilleux appas.
 VADIUS – Cependant nous voyons qu'elle ne vous plaît pas.
 TRISSOTIN – Vous donnez sottement vos qualités aux autres.
 VADIUS – Fort impertinemment vous me jetez les vôtres.
 TRISSOTIN – Allez, petit grimaud, barbouilleur de papier.
 VADIUS – Allez, rimeur de balle, opprobre du métier.
 TRISSOTIN – Allez, fripier d'écrits, impudent plagiaire.
 (III-iii, 1005-17)

In Molière, the stichomythic exchange opens on an impersonal tone thanks to the use of the third person singular and the delay of the second person. Moreover, the debate, at first, is about literary trends and tastes, before moving on to direct criticisms, and, eventually, veering into the insults. The crescendo also originates from a prosodic disruption in the last lines: the anaphora 'allez,' breaks up the regularity of the two hemistichs and creates a rhythmic contrast with the six previous lines, which are all run-on. To some extent, the way Vadius, in the last lines, systematically replicates Trissotin's linguistic structures reveals a will to dominate his interlocutor. Such stylisation of the text would be arguably less effective in English verse: the readily noticeable parameters of English rhyming couplets are less based on regularity than on the conspicuousness of rhyme. Because it is flashier in English than in French, rhyme is an efficient way for the character to stand out. In Bolt's version, *The Sisterhood* (1989), the pursuit of domination can be seen in the pursuit of the strongest rhyming word. There is an undeniable gradation between the first pairs of rhyming words, which are quite banal: 'say,' 'day,' 'though,' 'know,' the more meaningful substantive 'hack,' 'cell,' 'hell,' and the closing rhyming pair 'farce/arise':

VADIUS – Surrealist in flavour, I should say.
 TRISSOTIN – I fear Surrealism's had its day.
 VADIUS – It's hardly new – it's got a following, though.

⁶⁸ In *Les Femmes savantes*, language is omnipotent. As stated above, it dictates moral norms, social codes. It is also the prime medium for ownership and self-assertion. The pairing of 'péripatétisme' with 'platonisme' in a rhyme blatantly advertises the prominence of language as such in the play: the mere act of saying words becomes an act of appropriation (Scott 1988: 193).

TRISSOTIN – I think it stinks, if you really want to know.
VADIUS – That's reassuring, coming from a hack.
TRISSOTIN – Talk about the pot calling the kettle black!
VADIUS – 'Poets' like you deserve a prison cell.
TRISSOTIN – They could read your verse to punish souls in hell.
VADIUS – Your last book was demolished on TV.
TRISSOTIN – At least they bother to demolish me.
VADIUS – You're like a braggart in a Roman farce.
TRISSOTIN – You can stuff your wretched Classics up your arse!
(1989: 107)

Edmunds, aware of the quarrelsome potentiality of rhymes, in his blank verse translation of the play (*Women of Intellect*), shifts to heroic couplets in this scene. At the start of the exchange, the prosodic change sounds like a pleasing interlude, but soon the tension increases as the rhymes continue to resonate. The final couplet of the exchange is the crowning achievement of a categorical change in register:

VADIUS – My pen will prove to you the man I am.
TRISSOTIN – And mine will show you I don't give a damn.
VADIUS – I'll roast you in Greek or Latin, verse or prose.
TRISSOTIN – Ditto in quartos or in folios

It is worth noting that, in performance, the abrupt outbreak of heroic couplets, overthrowing reserved and flexible blank verse, is corroborated by the fact that Edmund, who plays Trissotin, and the actor playing Vadius blatantly flaunt the rhymes, by considerably stressing end-syllables and end-stops.⁶⁹

Thus, successions of short rhyming speeches in English give credence to Harrison's description of Molière's dramatic language: 'The salient feature of Molière's verse is its vigour and energy, rather than any metaphysical density or exuberant invention, and it is this which gives his verse plays their characteristic dramatic pace' (2002: 5). Bolt's and Edmunds's rhymes in these examples, indeed, emphasise the 'vigour and energy' of Molière's verse, which are fundamental qualities in a genre staging quarrelsome rivals, struggling for dominance.

2.5. Verse, rhyme and comic effects

One can argue that by creating a fantasy atmosphere, which both compromises dramatic plausibility and prompts the willing suspension of disbelief, rhymes lend themselves well to light drama. Mesnard has commented on the long-standing preference for Thomas Corneille's *Le Festin de Pierre* to Molière's *Dom Juan* by both actors and audience, based on the alleged ability of rhyming couplets to enhance comic effects in performance (1880: 51). Not to say that they are unsuited to tragedy: one can hardly conceive of Racine without the alexandrine, but

⁶⁹ I am grateful to John Edmunds for sharing a recording of the performance of his translation with me.

one tends to appreciate Racine for the perfection of the verse, the balance and density of the lines rather than the rhymes.⁷⁰ Molière's verse is more flexible than Racine or Corneille; the caesura is less marked, the lines are more endstopped and the ternary rhythm or stress regularity less present. A close perusal of Molière's verse comedies demonstrates that the playwright was aware of the comic potential of pairing up words with a peculiar sonority or with an unexpected semantic relationship.

Although comic effects in Molière's language have been thoroughly documented, the comic use of Molière's rhymes has escaped critical attention, maybe because self-conscious comic rhymes are sporadic and they are outshone by other comic effects. There is no scope to give a full catalogue or typology of comic rhymes in Molière's works, but a few examples might reflect the variety of their use.

Outlandish rhyme can discredit the speaker and create comic effect. Scott, about *Les Femmes savantes*, notes: 'How frequently she [Bélise] provides the bathos which brings Philaminte's attempted sublime to its knees,' because of a rhyme that 'fall[s] painfully short of tastefulness' (1988: 184). He gives an example of such rhyme:

PHILAMINTE – Mais j'entends là-dessous un million de mots.
BÉLISE – Il est vrai qu'il dit plus de choses qu'il n'est gros. (III-ii, 792-3)

As Scott remarks, 'the punctual rhyme of wit is very much the rhyme of risk, the leap at appropriateness which may fail because it falls short of its target, or because it is wide of the mark, or because it is ludicrously in excess' (*ibid.*: 183). Théodore de Banville in *Petit traité de poésie française*, advocates creating rhymes with different parts of speech, different morphology, meanings or lengths in order to avoid an unwanted sense of artificiality. The pair 'péripatétisme/platonisme' (III-ii, 877-8) is an arresting example of what Banville would reject in his poetry. The poet points out that adverbs, particularly, if not for deliberate comic effect, have to be avoided as a rhyming pair (1872: 67). It is therefore with great relish that Molière indulges in the couplet:

J'aime superbement et magnifiquement;
Ces deux adverbs joints font admirablement. (III-ii, 769-70)

Rhymes can also contribute to bridging high and low diction and to creating a parody of tragic speech. *Sganarelle ou le cocu imaginaire* offers a vivid example of the way terms that usually belong to the tragic genre ('douleurs,' 'affligé,' 'courage') are perverted into the heroic-comic register:

⁷⁰ Although Scott has written a chapter on the importance of rhyme in Racine's tragedies as 'it binds language inevitably to the forces of destiny and limits the protagonists' room for movement to the demands of its own outworking' (1988: 149), most Racine translators argue that the aesthetics of Racine's style derives from metrics and rhythm rather than rhyme in their preliminary materials.

LÉLIE – D'où vous peuvent venir ces douleurs non communes?
 SGANARELLE – Si je suis affligé, ce n'est pas pour des prunes. (vi, 365-6)

SGANARELLE – Dessus ses grands chevaux est monté mon courage
 Et si je le rencontre, on verra du carnage. (xxi, 512-3)

Although one could not reasonably expect tragic diction from Sganarelle, who is a resolutely comic character, one is still taken aback by such inept rhyming.

In the following lines uttered by Arnolphe in *L'École des femmes*, Molière likewise shows that he is very aware of the way unexpected rhymes provoke burlesque effects:

Je prétends que la mienne, en clartés peu sublime,
 Même ne sache pas ce que c'est qu'une rime;
 Et s'il faut qu'avec elle on joue au corbillon,
 Et qu'on vienne à lui dire, à son tour: 'Qu'y met-on?'
 Je veux qu'elle réponde, 'Une tarte à la crème' (I-i, 95-8)

Arnolphe, here, wants to push Agnès's ignorance to the extreme, by keeping her away from the ability to rhyme. In the fantasy world of a verse play where rhyme is part of normality, being unable to speak in rhyme would irremediably make one an outcast. The comic effect stems from the way a failed rhyme occurs within a versified speech. Thus, rhymes in these four lines almost reflect on themselves.⁷¹

More frequently in Molière's verse comedies, the tension between the controlled verse form and the character's anger results in a comic effect, especially when the eccentricity of rhymes cuts off all risks of tragic potentiality. Mme Pernelle's irate tone, in the opening scene of *Tartuffe*, would certainly be more natural in prose, but the containment of the snappy reproaches within disciplined alexandrines introduces a comic discrepancy. The gap between the low register of idiomatic speech and the heightened prosodic form, supplemented by an original combination of rhyming words, makes it hard, for example, not to find it funny when she yells: 'Allons, vous, vous rêvez, et bayez aux corneilles./Jour de Dieu! Je saurai vous frotter les oreilles' (I-i, 169-70). The surprising rhyming combination 'corneilles/oreilles,' as inelegant and off the beaten track as it is, contributes to the eccentric characterisation of Mme Pernelle. The humorous quality of Molière's rhyme also draws on the occasional novelty and indiscretion of its sonorous resonance: when Tartuffe says lustfully to Elmire 'Je tâte votre habit, l'étoffe en est moelleuse,' the peculiarity of the rhyme she uses provides a certain self-

⁷¹ A prose rendering would, therefore, lead to the loss of the underlying metatextual dimension. Overcoming the difficulty of translating these lines, Wilbur paraphrases the original ingeniously:

And who indeed, if she were asked in some
 Insipid parlour game, 'what rhymes with drum?'
 Would answer in all innocence, 'a fife.' (1971: 8)

consciousness, which somewhat adds to the awkwardness of the situation: ‘Ah! de grâce, laissez, je suis fort chatouilleuse’ (III-iii, 917-8).

Although many other examples of rhymes that lend themselves to comic effects could be quoted, Hampton still states: ‘It’s impossible to imagine, for example, a rhyme in a Molière play causing laughter in itself’ (1985: ‘introduction’). Hampton maintains this to justify his own choice of blank verse in his translation of *Tartuffe*. Nevertheless, as will be seen in the rest of the thesis, the intrinsic comic spirit that French rhymes may have is far from being enough for English translators; translators have developed these comic strategies to a new level.

Notwithstanding the formal differences between prosodic systems, and more significantly, despite the often-heard condemnation against verse on the English stage, English verse and especially rhyming couplets often prove to be more efficient than prose in recreating the overarching aesthetics the alexandrine conveys in Molière’s verse comedies. However, one might contend that the inevitable change in tone and aesthetics occurring when transferring a text into different prosodic systems negates the validity of promoting prosodic forms other than the original. But any cultural transference necessarily entails a reappropriation of the aesthetics. Modern approaches to and comprehension of the alexandrine in French modern productions is different from that of a seventeenth-century audience; any modern stage production of a classic is, to some extent, an act of adaptation.⁷² In other words, attempts to reenact the believed-intended aesthetics of the source text will necessarily involve an act of selection and appropriation according to the recipient culture. In our case, the reappropriation of the source text involves different prosodic emphases in translation: translators, in the excerpts analysed above, have aptly departed from syllabic regularity, and fully and effectively made use of accentual stresses, metrical variations and the intrinsic conspicuousness of English rhyme. Prosodic domestication rather than strict metrical imitation – or in other words, a translation focusing on the principles of the target prosodic system rather than strictly reproducing the metrics of the original – guarantees a successful reenactment of the dramatic effects of Molière’s alexandrine. The next two chapters will focus on the last dramatic effect of verse commented upon in this chapter – verbal comedy. They will review how translators draw on all the resources of the English verse systems to accentuate a verbal comedy that is more intermittent and latent in Molière’s own writing than in that of the translators.

⁷² Some critics have used the term ‘translation’ to refer to the cross-cultural processes involved in modern productions of classical plays (Gostand 1980: 1-19; Zuber-Skerrit 1984).

Chapter III

Molière in Modern English Rhyming Couplets

The question of translating the prosodic system used in seventeenth-century French tragedy is a complex one, on which no consensus can be reached. As seen in Chapter I, 2.4.c., the question is still a thorny one in translation of comedy, but it seems to be less so for many translators and critics. In comedy, rhyming couplets have a more defined purpose than in tragedy and create a kind of aesthetics attractive to most modern translators.

1. Conspicuous Rhyming Couplets in Modern Translations of Molière's Plays

1.1. A post-war drive towards light verse

In many translations of Molière's verse comedies in the last 60 years or so, blank verse and prose have been used less frequently in translations of Molière's verse comedies, and have given way to light, self-conscious and obviously comic rhyming couplets. Folkart's description of light verse is useful for evoking the effect of rhyming couplets created by modern translators:

Form, in light verse, is freestanding, and ostentatious. Its deliberately intrusive nature is part of what makes light verse fun. Systematic end-stopping ensures that the presence of the line is felt, line after line; rumpy-pumpy scansion makes the metrical grid inescapable; rhymes are as outlandish as possible, with maximal phonetic overlap and grotesque rather than enlightening lexical overlaps. [...] Form, in light verse, is its own function; its sole purpose is to be form – blatantly, unmistakably so: light verse *s'avance en se désignant du doigt*. (2007: 423)

Still in Folkart's words, the effect and objective of conspicuous forms in poetry is to 'put us into unmediated contact with the instant' (2007: 43). Rhyming couplets have become highly self-conscious, prompting the audience to have a constant ear turned towards the sonority of language.

As the most glaring characteristic of English rhyme is commonly said to be conspicuousness because of its sonorous quality and its uncommonness in English theatrical repertoire, if Argent's principle quoted in the previous chapter (1.3.) is fully adopted and the translator

remains ‘faithful to the [English] form’ and ‘exploit its strengths,’ English rhyming couplets will sound resolutely strong and elicit constant surprise within the audience. In other words, when the uncommonness of this form is given free rein, pairing up rhyming words involves overt creativity, wit, humour and outlandishness. To adapt Schleiermacher’s famous description of the domestication-foreignization dichotomy in translation, one can argue that the way in which most translators have advertised conspicuous verse brings the form closer to an English tradition rather than bringing the readers and audiences to the aesthetics of the French alexandrine.

a. A case study

Comparing a variety of translations of the same passage from Molière across the last decades is a compelling way to demonstrate the aspiration of rhyming couplets to be creative and comic. The passage when Oronte’s sonnet is decried by Alceste in *Le Misanthrope* is a good example because of its metatextual dimension: as Alceste criticises Oronte’s style, the audience is tempted to compare his criticisms with Alceste’s own way of speaking.

Molière	Vous vous êtes réglé sur de méchants modèles, Et vos expressions ne sont point naturelles. [...] Ce style figuré, dont on fait vanité, Sort du bon caractère et de la vérité: Ce n’est que jeu de mots, qu’affectation pure, Et ce n’est point ainsi que parle la nature. (I-2, 377-88)
---------	---

From a character who has accustomed the audience to fiery language, one could be surprised to hear a certain restraint in his expression. Here, Alceste almost adopts Philinte’s poise, using no interjections, rhetorical interrogations or exclamations, and no emphatic enumerations such as ‘indigne, lâche, infâme’ (25), or ‘fourbe, infâme, et scélérat maudit’ (135). Wilbur follows the same line in his translation:

Richard Wilbur (1955)	You’ve chosen the worst models to imitate. The style’s unnatural. Let me illustrate: [...] This artificial style, that’s all the fashion Has neither taste, nor honesty, nor passion; It’s nothing but a sort of wordy play, And nature never spoke in such a way. (1958: 29)
--------------------------	---

Wilbur’s *Misanthrope* became the first famous version of the play in rhyming couplets on the modern stage. *The Misanthrope* was also Wilbur’s first translation of a Molière play, and marked the start of an admired series of verse translations of Molière. For his first work on Molière, Wilbur aimed at producing a close translation of the original in regular heroic couplets

more than translating specifically for performance, let alone for a specific production (Honig 1976: 1093). To some extent, the rhymes in this passage show a relative prudence: in each couplet, the two rhyming words have the same number of syllables and belong to the same grammatical category. This practice is usually avoided in French poetry, as this runs counter to the rule of variety that should govern rhymes (Banville 1872: 66-7). Although the strong parallelisms may easily result in a certain heaviness in performance, any comic effect is avoided in these lines. It can be said that Wilbur's way of preserving discretion in rhymes enabled justice to be done to the content of the original and to the verse system of the original, given that rhymes in French are said to be less sonorous than in English.

Harrison, commissioned by the National Theatre to produce a translation of the same play, adopted a different style – a welcome change considering the semi-failure of Wilbur's *Tartuffe* at the National a few years earlier.⁷³ The directness of Alceste's reaction to Oronte's sonnet has prompted him to produce an eccentric translation:

Tony Harrison (1973)	Jesus wept! It's bloody rubbish, rhythmically inept, vacuous verbiage, wind, gas, guff. All love-struck amateurs churn out that stuff. It's formless, slack, a nauseating sprawl, and riddled with stale clichés; that's not all. 'Thirst worse' cacophonous, and those 'eks eks' sound like a bullfrog in the throes of sex. (2002: 45)
-------------------------	---

Not only have translators often attenuated the certain tension between the linguistic expression of Molière's Alceste in this passage and his general character, but the nature of Alceste's message has been altogether transformed. While Molière's (and Wilbur's) Alceste reproaches Oronte for not speaking like 'nature,' often the Alcestes created by modern translators are in a bad position to make such a criticism.

In Harrison's translation, the verse form becomes much less rigid than in Wilbur: although still in iambic pentameter, the verse employs metrical variations liberally. The choice of rhyming words in this passage suggests that the rhymes in the rest of the play too have a rich and unconventional vocabulary range, much more so than in Molière's play. The fact that the lines are all endstopped contributes to underlining the rhymes. The last two lines are worthy of comment: they invite the audience to perceive rhymes as pure sound, thanks to the onomatopoeias 'eks eks.' Moreover, the final word is unexpected thanks to its incongruous association with the word 'bullfrog.' Creating incongruous semantic relationships is a comic

⁷³ Out of the fifty reviews or so of Wilbur's *Misanthrope* in the National Theatre archives, London, about two-thirds of them express reservations; and out of the fifty reviews or so of Harrison's *Misanthrope*, none is negative.

technique profusely used in recent English rhyming translations of Molière's comedies (see ch. IV, 2.3.).

Famous playwright and poet Liz Lochhead, a national treasure in Scotland, produced a free translation entitled *Miseryguts* in an English heavily influenced by Scots, one year after her successful *Tartuffe* (1985). The rowdy and rhythmic sonorities of Scots support a histrionic style that emphasises phonic effects:

Liz Lochhead (1986)	You call this a sonnet, Oscar? Fine! One, three, seven, thirteen – where's the fourteenth line? Some sonnet! It does not rhyme. Except sporadic'lly, by accident. The metre lurches spastically 'Orgasmic odours <i>obtrude</i> towards oblivion'? See when you wrote this, Oscar? What were you on? The alliteration's overdone, admit it. A half-assed consonance that kinda comes and goes... No assonance! No resonance! (2002: 21)
------------------------	--

In Lochhead's translation, the verse liberates itself from a strict metrical system, but the rhymes do not become any softer. Although, as in Wilbur, three out of the four rhyming pairs are isometric, the effect is very different to Wilbur's text, as isometricity seems to be expressively sought after. The fact that the word 'sporadically' appears in a contracted form proves, indeed, that isometricity is no coincidence. This assumption is supported by the striking difference in syllable-count between 'fine/line' and 'sporadic'lly/spastically.' Finally, the 'rule' that no two words belonging to the same part of speech should rhyme together is here deliberately flouted: two adverbs having the same suffix are bound to resound vigorously, and indeed, with the same number of syllables and starting with the same phonemes /sp/. The heaviness that these rhymes are bound to create is not unfortunate as it would be in Wilbur. As France appropriately remarks: 'Molière's rhymes are not usually comic in their own right, but the same is not so true of those of Tony Harrison or Liz Lochhead' (2000: 264).

Language can be made sonorous in more formal registers, as Bartlett's translation illustrates:

Neil Bartlett (1988)	Your whole approach to verse is hopelessly dated; Your syntax lax and your images inflated. [...] Being so rich, how dare you to pretend You have no petty cash at all to spend? This populist style which you think is in fashion Has no integrity, no honesty, passion. All this affected slang, this attempt to 'relate' Do you think that's how real people communicate? This modern love of cliché is cheap and dirty; They did things better in nineteen-bloody-thirty! (1988: 75-76)
-------------------------	---

Surprisingly, in this translation, not only is the verse very regular, but the lines are mostly dodecasyllabic. The form used in this translation is commonly judged to be formal and to

impede efficient comic effect (see ch. I, 2.5.). However, this excerpt does display a certain attempt to place emphasis on rhymes, notably thanks to the heavily endstopped lines and the inventive last couplet. Although it is definitely not in Bartlett's translation that one will find the boldest rhymes, the relative formality and restraint of the expression has an aesthetic rationale that will be commented upon in ch. V, 2. The free translation was further adapted for the American stage (California) by Robert Fall the following year.

In 1994, the American stage was treated to another successful and highly entertaining translation of *Le Misanthrope* intermingling literate pungency and modern colloquialisms, by Robert Cohen. The translator uses an astute way to bring prosody to attention:

Robert Cohen (1994)	Unnatural, mere verbiage, corrupt! Your hackneyed phrasings make my blood erupt! And what is 'trust my hope' supposed to mean? Or 'Holds my joy upon her shores?' Obscene! [...] You're grabbing for a rhyme! And that 'well!' Well, It's just a stall for time! It's just a nonsense syllable To make the meter 'metri-fillable!' (1994: 189)
------------------------	--

Although this translation was written by a professor for students at Trinity University and the University of California, Irvine, a reviewer of *The Los Angeles Times* argued that Cohen's *Misanthrope* competed with Wilbur's translation on the American stage (31/01/1997). In this extract, the exclamation marks make the rhymes vigorous, as well as the isolation of the rhyming words 'corrupt,' 'obscene,' 'well,' and 'metri-fillable' thanks to the punctuation and the inverted commas. While Alceste's reaction is intrinsically metatextual in nature, Cohen, with great ingenuity, cultivates metatextuality even further. Not only do the words 'rhyme' and 'meter' appear, but Cohen makes a deliberate and ostentatious departure from regular iambic pentameters in order to act out the neologism 'metri-fillable.'

In Crimp's West End free translation (Young Vic Theatre, London, 1996), revived in 2009 at the Comedy Theatre, London, the verse is even less conventional, producing interesting effects:

Martin Crimp (1996)	Your dialogue I'm afraid is the verbal equivalent of industrial effluent i.e. the tedious platitudes of emotional self-indulgent middle-class attitudes – the kind of waste that unfortunately we can't legislate against. (1996: 23)
------------------------	--

The freedom of Crimp's verse, presumably chosen to attenuate the presence of rhymes, creates an interesting clash with the often long, sonorous and eccentric words that the

playwright chooses for his rhymes, as this excerpt illustrates. The isometric rhymes in the first two couplets are quite representative of his often-pungent form. In this freely adapted play set in contemporary London, in which Oronte does not recite a sonnet, but Covington reads an extract from a play, rhyming couplets are arguably the only patent echo of the fact that the play is based on Molière's comedy. Occasionally, as noted in the introduction, allusions to the artificiality of the original play appear in the text: or 'This evening's little party. The theme's Louis Quatorze –/The kind of thing an American in Europe just adores' (1996: 61), or 'I mean could you really bear to [...] watch an audience gratefully reacting/to yet another *tour de force* of classic over-acting?' (63).

Bolt's translation has also had a notable impact on the London stage, although Bolt was much lesser known than Crimp at the time. His translation, produced by Sir Peter Hall at the Piccadilly theatre, London, served as the basis of an even more daring version, performed at the National Theatre in 2008 (see ch. V, 1.):

Ranjit Bolt (1998)	Look, you should lock it in a bottom drawer, Or better still, just burn it – it's... it's <i>trash</i> ! 'I pant and palpitate!' That just won't wash! 'I wither wilt and wait!' – who am I to mock? But that's not poetry, it's poppycock! (1998: 34)
-----------------------	--

Very much akin to rhymes in Harrison and Cohen, in this extract, Bolt's rhymes are propelled with a razor-sharp vocabulary, an emphatic endstopping punctuation, and the tendency of rhyming words to stand isolated in the lines: the punctuation helps the rhymes to stand out too.

These examples show that verse has tended to depart from Wilburian elegance and finesse to become more and more loaded with verbal brilliance, self-consciousness and bold charisma.⁷⁴ About Wilbur's *Misanthrope*, Frame said 'I miss the accents of Molière' (1967: 'Introduction'). In comparison with Harrison's *Misanthrope*, Wilbur's translation was sometimes critiqued unfavourably: '[...] ultra poetic translation, which for my money lacks the marvellous edginess of Tony Harrison's' (*Punch*, 1981, quoted in Peacock 1993: 139). In fact, Harrison pays a mixed tribute to Wilbur's *Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe*, by referring them to 'hard polished closet drama' (1973: 169).⁷⁵

⁷⁴ This selection of translations has displayed a few specific strategies used by translators to place emphasis on rhymes; they will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

⁷⁵ It would not be fair to deny any comic effects added by Wilbur in his translation. Wilbur was critiqued favourably in Bolt's *Art of Translation*, and Peacock commented on the comic effects of some of Wilbur's rhymes (1996).

Perhaps preceded by Frame, who in 1967 occasionally pursued comic effects in his *Tartuffe* (although to a lesser extent), Harrison can be said to have launched the trend. Harrison's influence on subsequent translations has been reported; Bolt maintains 'Maybe it was with his [Harrison] *Misanthrope* that the English really came out of their "ivory tower" and started looking at foreign drama' (1996: 257). He is more assertive in a later interview: 'Since that wonderful Old Vic production, adaptation has become a theatrical tic in this country' (*The Guardian*, 9/02/2008). Since Harrison, translators have pursued this kind of verse much further than he did, and have, throughout their translations, proposed an unrelenting fusillade of punchy and witty two-liners. The way modern playwrights have managed to circumvent the unfortunate drawbacks of rhyming couplets regarding stageability seems now to be self-consciousness rather than discretion.

b. Methodological issues

While this case study is revealing, it only offers a partial view of the development and the significance of prosody in modern translations of Molière's comedies. First, it is challenging to select a single passage for every translation that would be both representative of the evolution of rhymed verse over the last decade, and representative of the style deployed in each translation. I have not included Roger McGough's *Misanthrope* (2013) in the list above, as Alceste speaks in prose in the chosen passage (see ch. V, 4.). David Ives's *The School for Lies* (2011) could not be included because of the liberal structural changes, although they both display very conspicuous rhymes throughout. Furthermore, the evolution is not strictly linear: as the efficiency of rhyming couplets in a given translation is solely attributable to the translator-poet's talent and does not originate from a pre-constructed chronology, the order of publication of these translations does not perfectly fit the 'evolution.' For example, Bartlett's *Misanthrope* came out after Lochhead's but his rhymes are not as conspicuous and comic as in the Scots translation. Despite Crimp's linguistic inventiveness in rhyme pairings, his very irregular lines do not bring out the rhymes as much as the other translations.

In the same vein, choosing to focus exclusively on translations of *Le Misanthrope* has entailed not mentioning several translations whose prosodic forms are very much in line with this general evolution. As an example, Irish poet Derek Mahon's *High Time* [*L'École des maris*] (1985) and *The School for Wives* (1986) also received critical acclaim for their comic verse (Haughton 2002). In the preface to *High Time*, Mahon acknowledges the influence of Harrison's 'creative relationship with foreign tongues' (1985: vi). Similarly, MacDonald wrote *The School for Wives* in dexterous rhymed dodecasyllabic lines for the National Theatre in

1987. Although the resonance of the couplets was sometimes judged subtle,⁷⁶ most reviewers found the rhymes amusing.⁷⁷ David Hirson's *La Bête* inspired by *Tartuffe*, first performed on Broadway in 1991, and revived in the West End, London in 2010 before returning to Broadway, is also entirely written in witty rhyming couplets.⁷⁸ The four translations by Australian playwright Justin Fleming, one of the latest theatrical successes for Molière in English rhymes, are written in dazzling rhymed verse that has earned many positive reviews (see ch. V, 5.). Had Fleming written a *Misanthrope*, he would surely have been featured in the list above.

The list also provides a partial picture of the evolution of rhymes because it is ordered according to the date of publication and first performance of the works (the two dates are usually close to each other), and does not show that some translations exerted a continuing influence, which should also be taken into account. However, factoring in the revivals rather than solely considering the creations and publications would make the overview slightly inaccurate. For example, premiered in London, Harrison's *Misanthrope* has been performed several times in Scotland, in the US, revived in 1989 at the National Theatre in coproduction with the Bristol Old Vic, then again by the Bristol Old Vic in an updated version in 2010. Comparatively, Cohen's *Misanthrope* can be said to have had a limited impact, as it was not performed and revived in major venues in the US, and has been relatively unknown in the UK. Wilbur's translations, albeit not typical of the contemporary style for rhymed translation, are by far the most frequently performed nowadays, especially in the Americas. However, this can notably be explained by the fact that Wilbur is a well-known poet in American culture and his name has a strong commercial impact. Furthermore, internationally known to be exceptionally close to the source texts despite the prosodic constraints, it is understandable that some institutions and universities tend to choose Wilbur over free translations.

Even though it is debatable to argue for a strictly gradual increase in sonorous and comic rhymes, it is nonetheless undeniable that since Wilbur, rhymes have generally become more conspicuous. The new propensity for modern translators is to be assertive in their prosodic

⁷⁶ 'Although intermittently funny, the play fails to take off completely as a comedy. Gentle humour, a mild sense of justice, *School for Wives* is ultimately an incongruously smooth evening' (*Fairly Serious Monthly*, April 1987).

What's On found the lines 'neat and often subtly witty' (12/02/1987). And *The Sunday Express* found them 'free-flowing' (01/02/1987).

⁷⁷ 'The clever rhymes trigger a laughter signal in the brain, which is a lot more than the straight translations on the page ever did' (*Midweek*, 12/02/1987). 'The witty, new translation by Robert David MacDonald boasts some mercilessly funny rhyming couplets which some of the actors still seemed to be getting to grips with' (*The Stage*, 5/02/1987).

⁷⁸ In the introduction, Hirson says: 'Despite the rigorous demands of the verse, *La Bête* should be enormous fun for actors and audiences alike. It must be played with exuberance and, particularly in the case of Valère, an abandon that is both thrilling and dangerous' (1992: 7).

choices, and as we shall see, the new propensity for directors and actors is to flaunt these choices in performance.

1.2. Rhyme in performance

As translations studied above were all prepared for performance, the director's appropriation of the play and the audience's response should also be considered. While it is legitimate to analyse the texts, studying the way the actors handle rhymes in performance is indeed an essential indicator of the increasing prominence of prosody.

a. Flaunting rhymes in performance

In the numerous revivals of Wilbur's translations, especially *The Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe*, the favourite plays for American college productions, emphasis is sometimes laid less on potential verbal humour than simply restoring and disseminating the works of Molière.⁷⁹ Although some of Wilbur's rhymes do lend themselves to comic effects (Peacock 1996), directors may choose to tone down the resonance of the form, possibly with a view to highlighting the content of the play. While this may also be the case in some productions or revivals of those contemporary translations that follow the trend for bold prosodic forms, most often actors have tended to flaunt rhymes and metrics almost throughout, at the risk of irritating some members of the audience.

To give a few examples, about the Pearl Theatre Company's comic revival of Frame's *Tartuffe*, *The New York Times* expresses a frustration that suggests that the actors were flaunting the rhymes: 'Now, if someone could convince most members of this cast that the rhymes in Mr. Frame's couplets will be heard clearly without any effort by the speaker to produce a monotonous clangor... but that might be demanding too much' (16/09/1991). In the performance of Bolt's first version of *Tartuffe* (1991), at London's Playhouse Theatre, directed by Sir Peter Hall, the actors – particularly those with the main parts, John Sessions [Tartuffe], Paul Eddington [Orgon] and Felicity Kendall [Dorine] – were encouraged to emphasise the rhymes vocally by end-stopping pauses (Peacock 2006: 183). To quote the example given by Peacock:

I must say my [pause]
Erotic tinder isn't half so dry.

⁷⁹ Rhymes can also be artificially emphasised because of poor skills by the actors. Numerous student productions available on You Tube testify to this, e.g.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DHAt7vpHHQ> or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKm7_CFNI8

What earthly happiness is equated to [pause]
 The happiness of being loved by you.
 Look at him he's totally besotted [pause]
 If there's Tartuffomania he's got it! (*ibid.*)

Heaviness in the performance of verse has been generally well-received in the productions of Bolt's translations of Molière's plays. Hall also staged Bolt's *The School for Wives* (1997), which ran in the West End for six months, and *The Misanthrope* (1998) at the Piccadilly Theatre, London, which enjoyed a run of more than four months. For *The School for Wives*, the director went for the same style of speech delivery: one reviewer said about the performance: 'One can almost hear Peter Hall urging his actors to respect the verse form and line endings.'⁸⁰ Reading reviews of *The Misanthrope* reveals the use of the same recipe: for example, *The Telegraph* (30/03/1998) found them 'vigorous' as well as 'fleet-footed and funny,' and although *The Spectator* (11/04/1998) gave a bland review of the production, it nevertheless noted that the rhyming couplets were 'rather relentless.'

The performances of McGough's translations directed by Gemma Bodinetz also display an unapologetic emphasis on metre and rhyme. In *The Misanthrope*, the alternation between verse and prose (see ch. V, 4.) is rendered striking thanks to the actors' performances. Prose tends to be spoken much faster and at lower pitch than rhyming couplets.

It is striking to see to what extent the actors make no effort to subdue the presence of heroic couplets in the performance of Timothy Mooney's *Misanthrope* at the Greenwood Community Theatre⁸¹ and *Tartuffe* at Lake Forest College.⁸² This is not on account of poor acting, this is a deliberate choice: Mooney directed his two plays and played Alceste in *The Misanthrope*. Alceste's lecture to Oronte on how to make good rhymes is thus highly self-contradictory:

These mannerisms, currently the mode,
 Create a sort of artificial code,
 Which borrows phrasings that some feeble hack lent;
 But nature never spoke with such an accent. (2008: 26)

Indeed, Mooney, in performance, artificially separates the two syllables 'ac-cent' to stress the rhyme. If this self-conscious vocal emphasis is an illustration of what needs to be avoided, one is led to wonder why the actor carries on in the same vein throughout the performance. Mooney's performances of the leading roles in his own translations and productions show a correlation between the emphatic rhymes in the text and the emphatic delivery. The relative sobriety of the *mise-en-scène*, together with the stiffness of body postures in performance pave

⁸⁰ http://www.chaseside.org.uk/theatre_casts/1996789/schoolforwives.html

⁸¹ The play is freely accessible on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBkgEcLxSFY&list=PLBAF0FBB8A121B846>

⁸² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBAdLFIDty4>

the way for a dedicated attention to the textual voice. In Mooney's performances, the form supersedes the emotion: Alceste's anger is not credible and Tartuffe is not menacing.

Examples could be listed further and developed at some length, but the success of these translations, and the fact that their use of prosody has been mostly positively received on the English-speaking stage sufficiently indicate that ringing rhymed verse has become an effective ingredient for success. Although rhyme in tragedy requires considerable poetic skills and theatrical experience in order to limit unwanted witty effects, in comedy, rhyme has greater chance of being tolerated if it is overtly emphasised and fully acknowledges its intrusive nature.

b. Text-performance relationship

The way rhymes tend to be strongly marked by actors in performance is not so surprising; in a way, the conspicuousness of some translators' rhymes seems to encourage a speech performance that is in keeping with such overt textual features. The heavy vocal emphasis on rhymes in Mooney's productions is in keeping with the fact that, in the texts, lines are mostly endstopped by punctuation marks and frequently end with long words (see ch. IV, 2.2.). One even notices a greater stress on rhymes in his speeches than in those of the other actors. Like Molière, Mooney always plays the eccentric characters and seems particularly mindful of emphasising their comic dimension.

However, from a theoretical point of view, to posit straightaway a strong text-performance relationship is somewhat inconsiderate. Some theatre semiotics, from the Prague theatre school of the late 1970s to the heyday of the discipline in the 1990s, notably with the works of Patrice Pavis (1989), have been wary of theories arguing for a prescriptive and fixed reading of performance through the text. Anne Ubersfeld has argued against the concept of 'semantic equivalence' between the written text and its performance, averring that the context of the expression changes when transferred from the linguistic sign system to a system of performance signs (1978: 15-6). The 'poietic' level of works, which comprises the processes that precede and enable the creation; the 'immanent,' or the set of formal configurations characterising the artistic object, and the 'aesthetic' level, or how the object is perceived and transformed by reception, are rarely reunified in theatre performance.⁸³ It should always be remembered that if some textual features lead us into anticipating a particular type of

⁸³ This terminology comes from the 'tripartition' model, theorised by the musicologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez (Nattiez 1975). Nattiez's main contribution to semiotics and anthropology of music lies precisely in the non-convergence of these three levels.

performance, the director is not always obliged to follow these anticipations. This supports the reflection on the significant role of the performing agents made at the end of the previous chapter. Just as success can come with a text that seems little conducive to success, text and performance can have different aesthetics.

It can nevertheless be safely argued that in our corpus, rhymes, as processed in the playwright's mind, as actualised during performance and as perceived by the audience are likely to be analogous. Whilst Ubersfeld's distrust of the 'semantic equivalence' in text-performance relationship is valid, here, the transfer from prosody in the text to prosody in performance is more a question of 'formal equivalence.' The lack of 'semantic,' or, to use and adapt Nida's terminology, 'dynamic' equivalence, in other words, the lack of stable transfer of meaning or aesthetics between text and performance because of the director's heuristic and aesthetic input, can coexist with a more stable kind of 'formal equivalence,' which is first of all the actors' responsibility, rather than the director's. Wilbur's *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre provides a case in point that buttresses the idea of a stable formal equivalence between rhymes on the page and rhymes in performance. The mixed reviews the play received reveal that such an emphasis in performance only functions well when rhymes in the text are conspicuous. A lack of self-consciousness in rhymes in the text is likely to make vocal stress on rhyme in performance sound like a cumbersome incoherence. About the delivery of rhyming couplets, *The Guardian* maintained: 'Some of the cast could handle them. Others made them ache like the punning in a pantomime by Planché. The standard seemed to me well below the National Theatre average' (22/11/1967). As the principle objective of Wilbur's rhymes is not to induce comedy, the performance style of some of the actors was judged irrelevant. *The Daily Telegraph* goes in the same vein:

Just one thing seemed to me to be altogether wrong, and that was the uninspired jog-trot translation by Richard Wilbur. Rhymed couplets are not an easy medium to work in. Unless they are skilfully handled they are apt to sound like the doggerel which used to be reeled out by the hack-writer who used to sling together the 'books' of Victorian pantomimes. The National Theatre company are skilled verse-speakers, but hardly any of them last night could persuade the stuff they were condemned to speak to seem supple or natural. (22/11/1967)

This criticism points to an interesting phenomenon. Many positive critics and translators have referred to Wilbur's translations in laudatory terms. Although the refinement of Wilbur's lines precludes anyone equating them legitimately with doggerel, in the reviewer's opinion, the inadequate delivery led to a downgrading of the verse quality. Furthermore, the pantomime-like delivery clashed with Tyrone Guthrie's production, which highlighted the darker tones of Molière's play and downplayed its farcical elements.

Another important element that needs to be added is that translators are often fully involved in the collaborative process leading to the performance, especially those high-profile translators with a track-record of theatrical successes. By attending rehearsals and by having their say with the director, translators can make sure the effects of their texts are fully exploited in performance.⁸⁴ As will be commented on at some length below (2.2.), conspicuous rhyming couplets contribute to the translator's visibility. The translator, present in rehearsals, is likely to encourage a stagey emphasis on their best rhymes.

2. The Purpose of Conspicuous Rhyme

Before I examine more closely the characteristics of rhyme in several modern translations and their innovative verse systems in the next chapter, a broad contextualisation of the increasing use of conspicuous rhyming couplets is required.

2.1. Rhyming couplets and the commercial stage

a. The magnetic power of comic rhymes

Jean-Marc Lanteri has commented on the subordination of theatrical creation to market forces after Thatcher's election in 1979. Her election marked the end of the welfare state for culture: her arts minister, Norman St John Stevas, quickly prompted theatrical institutions to turn to private sponsorship, announcing that there would be 'no candle-end economies in the arts' (*The Guardian*, 8/04/2013). After the 1987 election, the same policy was advanced by Richard Luce, Stevas's successor, who, referring to theatre houses, declared that 'the only test of our ability to succeed is whether we can attract enough customers' (*ibid.*). No big change could be seen in 1997 when Labour came to power. This confirmed and entrenched the new phenomenon of 'spectator-consumer.'

Foreign drama is not usually considered to be the most attractive to the public. As translated plays represent only a small fraction of the total number of staged productions in the UK, the pressure to meet with the box-office's requirements arises with productions of translated plays to some greater extent even. Susan Bassnett has stated: 'the key factor is the size of the audience

⁸⁴ For more on the collaboration between translators and theatre company, and on Harrison's presence in the rehearsals as a case in point, see Ploix 2018 (forthcoming).

and the price they are willing to pay for tickets, certainly not the ethics of translation' (1991: 102). Bolt insists on a practice that seems to have become an established paradigm for translating comedy: 'If there is one thing I have learnt during that time it is that theatrical tastes have changed. [...] It is therefore permissible for, if not incumbent upon, modern-day translators to tweak and change in an effort to extract extra humour from what would otherwise be, line for line, rather a dreary dialogue' (2010: 31).

In the box office-oriented theatrical programming of post-Thatcher Britain, funny rhymes have proven to be a successful recipe that meets the demand for high economic returns on the commercial stage. Although, as we shall see below, rhymes are beneficial to playwrights, they firstly proceed from directors' choices through the commissions they send to playwrights and through their feedback on and approval of the sample translation they get sent back. Although the English post-war theatre has not experienced the advent of the director's reign that the French stage experienced, British directors have still enjoyed an institutional hegemony, and have had the upper hand when deciding on the repertoire of the theatre institution they work for. As Lanteri puts it: 'Le metteur en scène britannique aurait moins propension que son homologue continental à s'appropriier l'écriture dramatique, à l'inféoder à sa propre écriture scénique mais il n'en reste pas moins qu'il occupe, autant qu'en France, des positions de pouvoir exclusives' (2002: 8).

Very often, nowadays, when a rhymed verse translation is commissioned by a director, it is not essentially out of respect for the prosodic system of the original; rhyme is a mark of a deliberate provocation, an artifice that does not go unnoticed. Although the intrusive dimension of rhyme can still meet negative reviews, most often, their comic dimension tends to be regarded more as an asset than as a flaw. Advocates of rhyme in translations of French verse comedy claim that blank verse is too unremarkable and so does not have the potential to be effective on stage. Frame, for example, judged Curtis Hidden Page's blank verse *Misanthrope* (1908) 'colourless' (1967: xii). In spite of the great qualities of Hampton's *Tartuffe*, performed at the RSC in 1983 and on BBC TV two years later, his blank verse translation was labelled 'neutral,' 'unflashy,' 'low-keyed,' 'hardly noticeable' by reviewers (Peacock 1996: 47). Rhymed translations of Molière's comedies, even though they do not win unanimous support, are never taxed with this sort of vocabulary. Harrison, who aspired to invigorate verse in his translations, has remarked on the frequent failed attempts to turn versified speeches into a performable theatrical script: 'The trouble with many versions of verse plays done by poets is that publication tends to be primary and performance secondary' (2002: 6).

Rhyme makes the text more memorable and transforms a potentially flaccid performance into a lively and funny evening. As verse adapter Raymond Blankenhorn puts it in *The Guardian*: ‘You might even argue that the audience is more likely to remember specific quotations, repeat them to friends, and thereby increase ticket sales’ (11/11/2011). Justifying his rhyming couplets, Bryer states that ‘In the highly competitive small world of theatre translation, seduction is the name of the game’ (1996: 52). Distrusting the dramatic values and rhetorical effectiveness of French classical verse on the modern British stage, Bolt invokes the necessity of adding verbal humour as a salvaging compensation:

For example, Corneille’s and Molière’s audiences would have relished long, rhetoric-laden [sic] speeches. [...] Take, for example, the homilies that Molière puts into the mouths of his *raisonneurs*... To a present-day audience, these set pieces can veer dangerously close to tediousness at times, and can also appear hamfisted from a dramatic point of view, as well as theatrically inept. Modern English and American audiences, reared on a faster, wise-cracking brand of verbal comedy, will not stomach these speeches in an un-diluted, or un-adapted, form. At some point – be it stage one, during the initial translation process, or stage two, during rehearsals, or even, if one is caught napping, stage three, during previews – the scissors will, more often than not, have to come out, and probably the pen too. (2010: 31-32)

To quote a telling simile coming later in *The Art of Translation* and illustrating Bolt’s conviction about the enlivening dimension of rhymed verse: ‘Imagine watching a translation of the wonderful scenes in which Tartuffe attempts to seduce Elmire, not played in couplets. It would be like eating meringues without the sugar’ (2010: 49). This shows that although some critics are suspicious of the ability of rhymes to serve a full-length play positively, and although some spectators might indeed be annoyed with them at some points, self-consciously funny rhymes are likely to leave an overall positive memory with the audience: ‘For the rhymes, if allowed to assume the exaggerated importance that is their tendency, will crowd out the more subtle linguistic effects that are the real delights of the translation’ (Becker 1956: 288).

Why are rhyming couplets so seductive? Part of the answer naturally derives from their formal heaviness, their marked resonance and the compositional challenge they represent which make them sound pungent and clever. Directly linked to these, is the cultural association that rhymes have in the English-speaking world. Contrary to France, where rhyme is firstly associated with serious poetry, English poetry is not necessarily rhymed; blank verse actually has enjoyed a higher prestige. English speakers tend to associate rhymes with short forms, sometimes trivial, like pantomime, nursery rhymes⁸⁵ and songs.⁸⁶ While the association with

⁸⁵ The mere fact that the phrase ‘nursery rhymes’ includes the word ‘rhymes’ suggests an emphasis on them, as opposed to the French ‘*comptines*.’

⁸⁶ One can also note the heavy presence of rhyme in some of the genres of music that emerged in the 1970s, in which lyrics are spoken rather than sung, notably hip-hop, RnB and rap.

pantomime has nourished condemnations of rhyming couplets – Wilbur’s *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre has been ironically described in a review as ‘A pantomime for the highbrows’ – in many reviews, one can read positive associations with pantomimes: ‘Ranjit Bolt [...] takes a wicked delight in mixing contemporary lingo with panto-like pun’ (*What’s on*, 13/03/2002). Rhymes have an irresistible charm attached to them; a charm culturally formed in each individual’s early years. As Peter Evans, Artistic Director of Bell Shakespearian Companies says about Justin Fleming’s rhymed translations of Molière’s plays: ‘There is a game inherent in the rhyming scheme that creates a connection between the actor and the audience. It is childlike, our delight. It taps into something we learn when we are first learning’ (in Fleming 2016: v).

Furthermore, the surge of theatres devoted to musical comedies, numerous in the West End, the most popular venues for the public at large, certainly have some relevant connections that subconsciously favoured the success of rhyming couplets. Indeed, musicals and modern translations are the only two genres that have consistently used rhymes. In their rip-roaring prose free translation of *L’Avare* that rocked the West End in March 2017, adapters Foley and Porter interspersed the show with occasional instances of sung rhymed verse, to the greatest delight of the audience. Similarly, Malleson, in his 1950s prose translations of Molière’s comedies, rounds off each Act with passages in rhyming couplets. These passages are spoken and not sung, but the effect recalls that when characters of a musical break into song (see above ch. II, 2.1.).

b. Experimental forms on the commercial stage

There has been a gradual advent of verse drama onto the commercial stage, as noted by Wiggins, in the introduction to *Modern Verse Drama in English*. Wiggins remarks that after their 1930s departure from coterie-drama based on myth and history, verse plays turned to subject-matters more relevant to modern preoccupations. However, they remained uncommon, and verse was often irregular and virtually always unrhymed. The critic notes that verse was often seen as the relevant medium to produce a genuine expression of human existence and to explore deeper truths.

This being said, translated plays have the monopoly of rhyming couplets used throughout: the form is still extremely rare in original plays in English. There is no evidence of a recent increase in tolerability towards traditional prosodic forms in theatre and a change in the cultural and formal discrepancy between French rhyme and English rhyme. Indeed, the mere fact that

rhymes are mainly used as a powerful comic device is a sign of a degree of outlandishness inherently attached to them. Furthermore, although these translations have mainly enjoyed critical praise, rhymes have almost never won over critics unanimously. The fact that in tragedy as in comedy, when the play is in rhyming couplets, all reviews have a (positive or negative) remark about rhymes proves that they still have a strong capacity to capture attention.

Should one assimilate the advent of conspicuous verse forms on stage through translations to the recent advent of formal experimentation on the British stage? Do they derive from recent decades' post-modern attraction to a classical legacy, while pursuing experimental aesthetics? One may be tempted to associate the recent popularity of rhyming couplets in translation with the flourishing aesthetic development of post-war British theatre,⁸⁷ which, in the last few decades has inflicted an unprecedented assault on traditional linguistic systems. Formal experiments converged into creating a theatre of verbal virtuosity, which made use of a deconstructed dramatic language, fraught with self-conscious rhythmic microstructures, poetic language, and a violent textual voice on stage. Although the comic spirit of modern translations of Molière's plays and the elevated and structured language of classical French tragedy radically differ from the violent assault on language and the darkness of plays by, notably, Howard Barker, Harold Pinter, Edward Bond, Sarah Kane and Mark Ravenhill, they all share a drive to depart from naturalistic language. MacDonald, Bartlett and, in particular, Crimp, embody the correlation between the two trends: these playwrights have found in their experience with the French classics a continuation of their own kinds of formal experimentations in their own plays.⁸⁸

While the comparison is tempting in some respects, one should not straightaway propound a significant influence between the evolution of modern British theatre and translations of Molière – and even translations of French tragedy, for that matter. Not least because the two genres mostly frequented different kinds of theatrical institutions. Although Molière in English couplets made its début at the National Theatre, a subsidised institution, rhymed translations have proved successful on the unsubsidised commercial stage from the 1980s. The formal experiments carried out by translators of Molière's plays and those experimental playwrights

⁸⁷ The thriving post-war dramatic output has been described as a second Renaissance of drama: 'We have the makings of a cultural renaissance, based on a new generation of young talent that is being recognized nationally and internationally' (Hewison, 'Rebirth of a Nation,' *The Times*, 19/05/1996, quoted in Khamphommala 2010: 10).

⁸⁸ See Angel-Perez 2002 for comments on Crimp's logo-centred language and on metatextuality in some of his plays. Ch. V, 2. will comment on Bartlett's experimental aesthetics in his *Misanthrope*.

are poles apart in nature and they do not have the same purpose. Although prosody in modern translations highlights the physicality of language, this is never to weaken the intelligibility of the fable. Furthermore, if rhyming couplets can be sometimes destabilising, the *mise-en-scènes* chosen by directors never attempt to destabilise the audience. In fact, productions tend to increase the accessibility of Molière for contemporary English audiences.⁸⁹

However, the drive to formal experimentation in language has also influenced some popular forms of British theatre. Lanteri has remarked that stage directors have not enjoyed the same prominence in the aesthetics of performance as their French counterparts: ‘les praticiens du théâtre entretiennent plus qu’en France une conception en efficacité, retenue et discrétion, de la mise en scène...’ (2002: 8). The discretion of the *mise-en-scène* has created room for dramatic language to display a form of conspicuous virtuosity. Akin to *théâtre de boulevard* in Paris, many political and social comedies in Britain have been dominated by verbal humour, puns and rhythmical catch-phrases, of which Alan Ayckbourn is one of the many representatives.

Establishing a parallel between modern translations of Molière and political theatre, the most popular theatrical genre in Britain during the second half of the twentieth century, is more valid as the two genres are more likely to share the same spectatorship. In fact, political theatre usually constitutes a large part of the repertoire of directors staging Molière. Harrison’s transfer of his *Misanthrope* into 1966 Paris, creating a parallel between Louis XIV Court and the ‘Court’ of Charles de Gaulle, the emphasis on political networking to access social advantages in Bolt’s *Misanthrope* (2008), the topicality of Mahon’s *School for Wives* (1986) in the context of tension between Unionists and Republicans in the North of England (McCracken 1992: 190), and the political campaign as a backdrop in Bartlett’s *Misanthrope* are notable cases in point. Although Molière has sometimes satisfied the demands of a *théâtre à message*, in accordance with governmental policies on art and culture, striking at targets in the contemporary social and political fields has not been the primary aim of all retopicalised translations or productions. Many of the translations set in modern times have the sole aim of enhancing the comic spirit; and if political references are inserted, they often only serve the pretext of adding a joke. In

⁸⁹ To give three examples, a reviewer criticised the obvious parallels between the play and scenery in Bolt’s 2002 *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre: ‘The walls also carry words lit up in neon: Zealotry, Jansenist, Jesuit, Fanaticism. I am impressed that the designer has done his homework, but I do not like being lectured by the set’ (*What’s on*, 13/03/2002). Harrison’s *Phaedra Britannica* performed at the National Theatre, set in nineteenth-century India, had a scenery which vividly emphasised the new political tensions: a Victorian throne and a statue of Shiva formed a highly symbolic background. Similarly, the *mise-en-scène* strongly illustrated the cross-cultural nature of the Bartlett’s *Misanthrope* staged by Robert Fall, set in modern Hollywood (Carmody 2007).

other words, it is not simply Molière's moral and political resonance to contemporary society that has prompted his recent revival on the British stage.

British plays that convey a political message and depict the class system have often veered towards sheer naturalism. The phrase 'kitchen sink drama,' coined to refer to some of these plays reveals the nature of the language, radically veering towards verbatim. While prose translations such as John Fowles's *Don Juan* performed at the National Theatre are in line with this tradition, it would seem irrelevant to propound this genre as an explanation for the success of some rhyming couplet translations.

2.2. Rhyming couplets and translators' visibility

a. Raising the translators' profiles

While it can be argued that the success of the translations stems in great part from the writers' linguistic mastery and their ability to thrive on constraints, their success also stems from the fact that they follow a particular paradigm. High-profile names, known by the public at large for their rhymed poetry, such as Harrison, Lochhead and McGough, are likely to attract large audiences with pre-conceived expectations. These expectations will naturally invite audiences to compare the translation with the writers' known poetic style. As it is arguable that many people come to the theatre more to see an adaptation by these celebrity translators rather than to see Molière, there is a need for these poets to 'engage visibly with the original author,' as Geraldine Brodie puts it in her study of celebrity translators for the London stage (2012: 232). The audience is more likely to expect an adaptation than a work scrupulously respecting the aesthetics of the original texts: 'the visibility of theatre translation, resulting from the appointment of high-profile interpreters, points to overt intervention in the translation process. The loud voice of the celebrity translator queries the act of translation as mediation' (*ibid.*).

When the translator is not a famous figure, rhyming couplets serve as a way to advertise the poet's voice, being a great wherewithal of self-display. Noël Clark admits that his choice of verse was motivated by 'a lingering, childish wish to impress'⁹⁰ (in Johnston 1996: 23). When high-profile poets produce a translation for the stage, they are under pressure to create funny

⁹⁰ Personal pleasure also outweighs thoughtful dramatic justifications in Anstey's translations: after admitting that verse calls for a verse form in English, and after speaking to the dangers of a verse translations, the translator admits that he primarily went for prose 'because it would not have amused me in the least to hamper myself by either rhyme or metre' (1933: viii).

and witty lines, both because of the demands of commercially-driven theatres and for the sake of their own reputation.

Rhyming couplets involve a form of resourceful virtuosity that almost allows translators to claim ownership to the play. McGough mentions this in an interview:

When it was first advertised it was Molière's *Tartuffe* adapted by Roger McGough. And then it became more like Roger McGough's Molière's *Tartuffe*. That was purely commercial, it was nothing to do with me... But my being involved in it was never not going to be transparent, that was always part of it. (quoted in Stock 2012: 53)

Bolt contends: 'and the rhymes, are yours, not Molière's or Corneille's or whosoe'er it be' (2010: 9). Bolt dropped a securely remunerated career as a freelance translator for the City, and turned to the 'perilous, precarious' field of theatre translating (2010: 7). While this change of career could once have been regarded all the more risky given his aspiration to create for himself a theatrical identity as a rhymester, rhymes were actually conducive to his wide success and raised his profile as a creative theatrical agent. Indeed, he has acquired a reputation of a 'translator as star' according to the *Financial Times*, following the successful performance of many verse translations from classics of the Greek, Russian and French theatres; a few of them at the National Theatre and by the RSC. Bolt's following remark is very telling of the way rhyme has become a *sine qua non* for recognition and visibility: 'My reviews hardly ever mention me when I'm doing a prose play. [...] However, with the verse there'll almost always be a paragraph about the translation, and that is interesting. They'll always spend more time on the translation if it's in verse' (in Johnston 1996: 253). Scrutiny of all the reviews available of the different Molière translations produced at the National Theatre archives – five in prose and four in verse – confirms this.

b. Rhyming couplets as a stimulating challenge

Venuti, in his famous book *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), wages war against the domesticating, assimilative and conformist use of language in translation, leading the translator to recede into the background. He advocates foreignization as a way for the translator to be more visible and the translation to be richer. Although the way modern translators have tackled rhymes equates to a kind of prosodic domestication, this does not disqualify the fact that the rhyming couplets are uncommon on the English-speaking stage. Following the distinction between form and system given in the introduction, it can be argued that the form is domesticated but the system remains foreign. While the prosodic system is a challenge that forces language to be resourceful, the domestication of the form, contrary to Venuti's understanding of domesticating translation, does not imply impoverishing the stylistic and

lexical resources available to the translator either, quite the contrary. Bolt's axiom, 'if poetry... is what is lost in translation, then it is also, or can be, what is added' (2010: 39), which he also invokes elsewhere (in Taylor et al. 1996: 94), points to the connection between the constraints of verse translation and creativity.

While translators choose rhyme to appeal to the ear, they also do so owing to the pleasure of the compositional process, involving a vitalising challenge. Mahon's views on the challenge of verse translation shed light on the reasons lying behind the pleasure the reader and audience take in his translations: 'I enjoy the sense of struggling against a form, and that provides the creative tension that tells me that this is a real poem that I'm writing' (in McCracken 1992: 191). This is possibly why out of the ten plays of Molière that Wilbur translated, only one, *Don Juan* (1998) is in prose.⁹¹ It is also probably why Mooney's seventeen translations of Molière's comedies are all in rhyming couplets. Creating witty lines demands a great deal of experience and resourcefulness. As one reads in Marcel Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann*: 'la tyrannie de la rime force [les poètes] à trouver leurs plus grandes beautés.'⁹² About the composition of *Tartuffe*, Lochhead says she has taken great relish in the challenging exercise and reveals it has helped to spark her creativity: 'Words I didn't know I knew just jumbled out as I got on with the enormously good fun of my first attempt at a whole play in rhyming couplets' (2002: xi). Resourcefulness is not simply a choice or an aim, it is a requirement. On Fleming's translations of *Le Tartuffe*, *The Australian* deplored a lack of creativity that compromised his appreciation of the play:

But more often it's staid, with a stilted vernacular featuring rather too much forced and clunky rhyme (varied, apparently, between quatrains and couplets, but all with the same punishing rhythm). To sustain rhyming couplets for any length of time in English – a language with very few rhyming words – requires the linguistic dazzle of a Byron. Fleming is simply not that inventive. (14/11/2015)⁹³

Many of the translators studied in this thesis have taken on performance-oriented translations of Molière's comedies in rhyming couplets only after a successful career as a poet. McGough, nicknamed 'Liverpool's own Poet Laureate' by *The Daily Post*,⁹⁴ suggests that his

⁹¹ This play is seldom performed and the language is not as remarkable as in the other plays (<http://www.themontserratreview.com/americanStage/moliere.html>). In his introduction, Wilbur notes that there are several instances of the rhythm of the alexandrines concealed within Molière's prose, which he reproduced in translation (2001: xiii).

⁹² Jean Mily (ed.), Flammarion, 1987, 118.

⁹³ One may be surprised by such a review, as Fleming's translations do display great inventiveness (see next chapter). The reviewer's high exigency with regard to rhymes confirms that rhyming couplets are a hazardous choice of the stage.

⁹⁴ <http://www.uktouring.org.uk/rogermcgough/>

forty-year career as a poet has been a kind of apprenticeship that served him well for translating Molière:

My own work was definitely a help in doing *Tartuffe*. I've written plays and done a lot of theatre work, but I couldn't have done this in my 30s, and I wouldn't have attempted it. I've reached a stage in my life for some years now where I find it easier to write in verse than prose, so this is the right time for me to be doing this. (Stock 2012: 12)

In another interview, McGough confirms this and justifies his choice of translating a Molière text. He argues that Molière offered him some ground to experiment with language and to incorporate his experience and his poetic style into his translation:

As an occasional playwright myself, I have always been more interested in language than characterisation, in imagery over plot. But faced with a Molière text – with its characters so clearly drawn and its plot, though often creaking, still believable within the context of the world he created – I was free to concentrate on rhyme. Suddenly, all those years spent writing verse in a lonely garret paid off. (*The Guardian*, 5/02/2013)

Wilbur and Lochhead, both poet laureates, as well as Harrison, who declined the opportunity to replace Ted Hughes as a poet laureate, have the same kind of relationship to Molière's plays. Drawing on their ability of crafting verse from their respective poetic practices, they have acquired a reputation of eminent verse translators. With a wealth of experience as poets, one understands why the translators instilled their own style into Molière's texts: McGough's lines in *The Misanthrope* sound very McGoughian, and likewise for Harrison's and Lochhead's translations.

Some translators of classical French theatre belong to the opposite category: revered playwrights such as Crimp, Bartlett and MacDonald were new to rhyming couplets when they started translating classical French plays. This also suggests that verse translation may be an area for experimentation, or may represent the ultimate challenge in a theatre translator's career. Verse translation is well known for fostering inventiveness: there are countless examples of well-known writers who started with poetry translation as a kind of formative activity, before starting to produce original works. T.S. Eliot's translations of Saint-John Perse, which precede his poetry, are a famous case in point (see also Sisson 1994).

As a matter of fact, Wilbur falls within both categories, as his translations of Molière's works span across most of his poetic career, from *The Misanthrope* in 1955 to *Lovers' Quarrels* in 2009. Robert Stock commented on how Wilbur approached Molière as a way of 'honing his own skills as a poet, within the safe confines of another poet's subject matter' (2012: 11), 'at a

time when he felt frustration after attempting to write poetic plays of his own' (12), giving him the confidence, in Wilbur's own words, to 'be more open and dramatic in [his] own poetry.'⁹⁵

c. The evolution of translators' own experimentation with prosody

The fact that translators have often gone for bolder and bolder verse over their successive translations confirms the idea that translating in rhyming couplets is an enjoyable and promising apprenticeship. Bolt's noteworthy devotion to short prosodic systems, both for the stage and for publication with *Losing it* (2001), following his initiation to verse with *The Sisterhood* (1989), but also Corneille's comedies *The Liar* and *The Illusion* (both 1989), is representative of the post-war paradigmatic shift in Molière translations. *Les Femmes savantes*, scattered with intense stichomythic episodes, which Bolt reinforces with ostentatious rhymes in *The Sisterhood* (see above, ch. II, 2.4.), set the ground for bolder prosodic experimentations. Although Bolt lauded the naturalness of iambic pentameters in the programme notes of *Le Cid* at the National Theatre (1994),⁹⁶ and reiterated his case for this form two years later in an interview – 'I definitely think that's the line, the Shakespearian line, you should use' (in Johnston 1996: 251) – Bolt was, however, soon to abandon it. While most will agree that rhyming pentameters sound anything but 'natural' on stage, they are certainly too much so for Bolt: in 2002, he rewrote his 1991 *Tartuffe*, and changed the rhyming iambic pentameters into regular and mostly endstopped rhyming tetrameters for the National Theatre. Following the audience approval and critical acclaim of this retranslation, Bolt did likewise with *The Misanthrope*: he reworked his 1998 version and proposed a much faster play in octosyllables, *The Grouch*, which was performed at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds, in 2008. In the new millennium, Bolt devoted himself to prosodic systems that demonstrate considerable technical skill: in 2001, he published *Losing It*, a long poem of 154 pages entirely written in octosyllables; in 2005, he adapted *The Lysistrata* by Aristophanes for the Arcola Theatre, London (also a revised version of an earlier work, performed at the Old Vic in 1993), and employed a mix of octosyllables and heroic couplets, along with various instances of rhyming trimeters in the choruses.

⁹⁵ Butts, William (ed.), *Conversations with Richard Wilbur*, Jackson, MI and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1990, 13, quoted in Stock 2012: 12.

⁹⁶ 'I tried to find some example [of iambic pentameters] from *The Independent* this morning and the first line I looked at was, "We sat in Arthur Miller's hotel suite," which is a perfect pentameter. I think that you find that we speak in pentameters all the time. [...] I think it's very much a unit with which we're familiar and in which we all think.'

Although Wilbur's rhyming couplets never lost their elegance and their closeness to the original texts, over the course of his long career as a translator of classical French theatre, the poet also demonstrated a certain growing emphasis on prosody. After building a reputation as a distinguished translator of Molière in rhyming couplets with *The Misanthrope* (1955), *Tartuffe* (1961), *The School for Wives* (1971), *The Learned Ladies* (1977), *The School for Husbands* (1991) and *Sganarelle, or the Imaginary Cuckold* (1993), and after confirming his skills with the even more demanding Racine's *Andromache* (1980) and *Phaedra* (1986), he took on his greatest challenge with *Amphitryon* in 1995.⁹⁷ While, in this play, Molière shows a relatively flexible approach to verse, scrupulously respecting the variations in syllable count in translation, is, on the contrary, a formidable constraint that demands great linguistic virtuosity. In an almost ironic fashion, the more Molière indulges in prosodic freedom by varying the stanzas,⁹⁸ the more difficult it is for the translator, who certainly does not experience this flexibility in the same way – quite the contrary. Wilbur's *Amphitryon* is compelling proof of the poet-translator's dexterity, as the English rendering remains very natural, readable, and most certainly, stageable. The translation was in fact successfully produced by the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston in March 2001, and was only preceded on the English-speaking stage by a free-verse free translation entitled *Jupiter Translated* (1933) by Australian poet W. J. Turner, which had a very modest run at the Mercury Theatre (Dukes 1942: 181), and by a prose free translation by Oscar Mandel (1976), performed in an off-off Broadway theatre in 1991. Unlike these two versions, Wilbur's *Amphitryon* is the only one which has observed by the line-by-line syllable variations of the source text, and it is the only one which has enjoyed a posterity, having been occasionally performed over the recent decades, notably in student productions.⁹⁹

The three Molière translations written by Lochhead are all very different from one another. The difference, however, does not involve the poet's engagement with prosody: her rhymes have the same degree of self-consciousness and lines tend to be equally endstopped in the three translations. They are written in different shades of Scottish vernacular. Her first translation, *Tartuffe*, prepared for Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, combines lowland Scots

⁹⁷ *The Bungler* [L'Étourdi] (2000) and *The Lovers' Quarrels* [Le Dépit amoureux] (2007) are recent additions to Wilbur's repertoire of Molière translations.

⁹⁸ The claim that free verse is easier to write than regular verse is questionable, however. In *Vie de Molière*, Voltaire did argue that crafting good free verse is not that easy: 'Les vers libres sont d'autant plus malaisés à faire, qu'ils semblent plus faciles. Il y a un rythme très peu connu qu'il y faut observer, sans quoi cette poésie rebute' (1999: 440). Wilbur comments on the fact that the vers libre is used in a very efficient way in *Amphitryon*, 'the reader will note the numerous ways in which this versatile form enforces one or another tone,' mentioning 'inexhaustible eloquence' (1995: 145).

⁹⁹ See for example <http://gallatin.nyu.edu/utilities/events/2015/02/amphitryon.html>

and Glasgow Patter: it is ‘full of anachronisms, demotic speech from various eras and areas; it’s proverbial, slangy, couthy, clichéd, catch-phrasey, and vulgar; it’s based on Byron, Burns, Stanley Holloway, Ogden Nash and George Formby...’ (Lochhead 1985: ‘Introduction’). The compositeness of the Scots and the variety of registers make the dramatic language inherently eccentric. In a way, rhyming couplets, being themselves a form of eccentricity, fit into the vernacular in a coherent fashion. Furthermore, the verse is given ‘a cavalier and rather idiosyncratic rhythm that I justified to myself by calling it the rhythm of spoken Scots’ (*ibid.*). Lochhead seems also to suggest that rhymes fit nicely with Scots: ‘even varieties of the Scottish accent and usage, without very much in the way of special Scots vocabulary is arguably still a lot more robust than “standard English” as a medium for the translation of comic rhyme’ (2008: 7). Last but not least, by rooting her translation strongly in a Scottish setting, she builds on a strong heritage of successful Scots translations of Molière’s plays: Robert Kemp, Victor Carin, James Scotland, Gordon Croll and Hector McMillan, have all brought Molière effectively into Scots (Peacock 1993).

Although all her translations were prepared for Scottish actors, her last translation, *Educating Agnes* [*L’École des femmes*], is written in more standard English. The juxtaposition of one of Pernelle’s first speeches in Lochhead’s *Tartuffe*, written in energetic and rowdy Scots¹⁰⁰ and the first quatrain spoken by Chrysalde at the opening of *Educating Agnes* illustrates this:

That auld-fashioned. So awfy-shy. Sae douce!
Butter widnae melt, she wouldny boo a goose.
Lukkin’ oot thae big blue een and never blinkin’ –
Ah bet your daddy’s never shair whit you’re thinking (2002: 89)

We’re here by our ain two sel’s, sir, overheard
By nobody, nowhere. So permit me just a word?
As your true pal, my friend, I worry for you.
If you insist on going through with this I’m sorry for you. (2008: 11)

This dialectal change can be regarded as somewhat more ambitious as, in *Educating Agnes*, rhyming couplets appear more prominent: they are less supported by the ‘cavalier and rather idiosyncratic rhythm’ Lochhead mentions in her introduction. This may suggest that Lochhead became confident that rhyming couplets can stand for themselves, that they are suitable to be staged outside of Scotland and to win over Southern audiences, less indulgent towards classical French theatre.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Lochhead set her play at the end of the First World War, at her grandmother’s. Her grandmother’s way of speaking provided inspiration for Pernelle (Lochhead 2002: xi).

¹⁰¹ A couple of London reviewers criticised Lochhead’s *Tartuffe* for being incomprehensible (Peacock 1993: 10).

Rhyme became more comic in Bartlett's second translation of Molière's plays. A difference can be noted between *The Misanthrope* (1988) and *The School for Wives* (1990), which was restaged at the White Bear Theatre, London, 2013. The points in both plays where a long build-up delays a revelation – Alceste's criticism of the sonnet in *Le Misanthrope* quoted above and the 'ribbon disclosure' in *L'École des femmes* (II-v) – are representative examples, as the comic use of rhyme is more prominent in the second excerpt:

ORONTE – But what do you think I should do with my sonnet?
 ALCESTE: – Look; drop it in a bin and put the lid on it.
 Your whole approach to verse is hopelessly dated;
 Your syntax lax and your images inflated. (1990: 75)

ARNOLD – God save me!
 AGNES – Hand in my hair and took the ribbon you gave me.
 I just couldn't help it. I've not done it before!
 ARNOLD – Never mind the ribbon. I just want to be sure;
 When he'd kissed your arms did he kiss... another spot?
 AGNES – Is there something else that people do?
 ARNOLD – No there's not! (1990: 145)

In the second quotation, several features that enhance the presence of rhyme, notably the marked pause between the verb and the object at the end of the last line but one and the emphatic punctuation marks can be noted.¹⁰² Furthermore, the restructuring of the line '[Mais je voulais apprendre,] S'il ne vous a rien fait que vous baiser les bras' (581) is noteworthy: unlike the original, Bartlett's line starts with the known and finishes with the unknown information. Moreover, Bartlett creates a paratactic effect by discarding the linking conjunction 'si' at the head of the line, which allows the formation of a direct question, and stresses the words 'another spot.' These kinds of stylistic features and strategies are more abundant in *The School for Wives* than in *The Misanthrope*.

It also seems that in the course of McGough's three theatrical encounters with Molière, emphasis has been placed on what the audience particularly enjoyed. Akin to Lochhead's translations, rhyming couplets were already very conspicuous from McGough's first translation, *Tartuffe* (2008). However, conspicuous prosodic forms particularly stand out in the second and third translations. In *The Hypochondriac* (2009), McGough repeatedly verticalises the text by shortening the couplets, making dialogic exchanges highly cadenced, akin to Molière's *ballets verbaux*, but which are, in addition, rhymed. Concluding the Molière trilogy – or the 'McGoughières' – with *The Misanthrope* (2013), where prosody is given a powerful

¹⁰² In the original, 'Je souffre en damné' (577) and 'non pas' (582) appear with a full stop instead of an exclamation mark.

metatextual dimension (see Ploix 2016: 118-20, and below, ch. VI, 4.), similarly bears witness to a more upfront engagement with verse on the part of the adaptor.

Last but not least, the evolution of verse in recent decades finds, to some extent, a crowning achievement in Mooney's translations. Although his rhyming couplets are much less funny than, say, David Ives's or McGough's, in some plays, they stem from even greater boldness. Mooney entirely rewrote comedies originally written in prose into rhyming pentameters, notably *L'Avare*, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, *Le Malade imaginaire*, *Le Médecin malgré lui* and *Dom Juan*, for performance in the 1990s. McGough did likewise with *Le Malade imaginaire* in 2011.¹⁰³ While the French stage has had occasional verse rewritings of originals in prose – a well-known example is Thomas Corneille's *Dom Juan* (1677) – such undertakings are exceptional in the history of English theatre, and almost surprising, considering that rhyming couplets are uncommon.

3. Source- and Target-text Relationship

3.1. Questioning the status of the works: translations or adaptations?

In the introduction, I addressed the difficulty of labelling the works studied in the thesis as either 'translations' or 'adaptations' and referred to critics who have also spoken to this conundrum.¹⁰⁴ This section will see that the boundary between translation and adaptation is also ill-defined because it depends on what is meant by fidelity, which varies according to translators. While acknowledging overt departures from the source text, McGough seems very confident of not betraying the original: 'with three scenes written and the commission accepted, I mulled over the original French text, compared it to what I was concocting, and convinced myself the man himself would have approved' (*The Guardian*, 5/02/2013). Bartlett, likewise, surprisingly claims: 'My translations are very faithful. Even the apparently outrageous liberties are inspired by a need to accurately recreate the original' (1990: 8). Aware of the boldness of the language used in his texts, he nevertheless states that it is 'inspired by the need to find

¹⁰³ In a public lecture given at the British library, London, in February 2016, McGough claimed that he was not aware that *Le Malade imaginaire* was in prose. He had based his translation on a couple of English translations, and discovered, with surprise, that the original was in prose.

¹⁰⁴ The word 'tradaptation' is sometimes used by critics when the work is regarded as being midway between translation and adaptation (see e.g. Hoenselaars 2014).

socially exact modern parallels with the now-useless original jokes' (*ibid.*). The same is argued by Crimp, who incidentally undermines traditional understandings of the notion of 'fidelity':

And if, three hundred years later, reflecting the contemporary world has meant taking certain 'liberties' with the text, this is only in the belief that – at this distance in time – reinvention, rewriting of one writer's work by another, is 'fidelity' of the truest and most passionate kind. (2009: vi)

Labelling the works of the corpus as 'translation' or 'adaptation' is even more problematic as there tends to be no consistency in the use of the terms between the translators and the other theatrical agents. Although one would hesitate to qualify all the works quoted in this chapter as 'adaptations,' there is a tendency for celebrity translators and theatre houses to promote the works as adaptations rather than translations. Brodie commented on this phenomenon in contemporary British theatre, and the fact that the label 'adaptation' virtually suggests co-authorship of the play and therefore foregrounds the visibility of the 'translator' (2012: 228). Interestingly enough, as remarked by Brodie, although English theatre translators often show a willingness to engage visibly with the authors, and although performances tend to be advertised accordingly as 'adaptations,' some celebrity translators claim the status of their work as 'translation' in the published version (*ibid.*). The front covers of the published versions sometimes show the words 'translation' or 'translated by,' suggesting a reader-oriented approach. This is confirmed by Hampton in an interview (2011: 183-4).

This is in part a marketing strategy: while academics or students in literature will be very careful to choose a close translation if they cannot read the original in French, some of the public at large wishing to purchase a recent published translation in order to find out more about a foreign author, might trust the word 'translation' appearing on the cover, and feel all the more confident when they happen to know the 'translator.' The published version of Bolt's *The School for Wives* indicates 'translation' on the front cover, yet the play is referred to as an 'adaptation' by the London Theatre Archive, and was advertised as a 'modern adaptation' in its restaging by the London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art in 2012.¹⁰⁵ Bolt's *George Dandin* was similarly advertised as an 'adaptation' by the Red Shift Company, even though the published cover says otherwise. Similarly with Lochhead's translations: 'A Translation into Scots from the Original Molière' appears on the cover of the 1986 publication of *Tartuffe*, and the 2002 republication of the play alongside *Le Misanthrope* proposes the slightly more cautious yet still ambiguous title *Misery Guts & Tartuffe: Two Plays by Molière*. However, inside the book, the word 'adaptation' appears as the subheading on the title page (2002: 1).

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.lyric.co.uk/production-archive/entry/lamda-the-school-for-wives/>

To give a third and last example of a recurrent phenomenon, Bartlett's *Misanthrope* was advertised as an adaptation by the Red Shift Company (1988), and so was *The School for Wives* by the Derby Playhouse (1989-90), but the introduction to these plays claims fidelity.¹⁰⁶ The recurrent editorial practice of advertising a publication as a 'translation' is, in fact, supported by a number of translators themselves.

3.2. Questioning the legitimacy of rhymes: impoverishment of Molière's comedies?

The apparent confusion as to what the status of these works is, is in part to be linked to the issues of verse translation. As Chapter I discussed, the constraining exercise of verse translation implies a paradoxical tension between a desire to stay close to the original and a necessary creative engagement with it. In other words, questioning whether a work is a translation or an adaptation leads us to reflect on the difference in aesthetics that mettlesome rhymes create between the original plays and the translations. Although most of the post-Wilburian eccentric rhyming couplets do convey aspects of Molière's aesthetics that would be missing in a prose translation, it is doubtful that these translators are firstly driven by aspiration to faithfulness, or by some kind of neo-literary paradigm in theatre translation.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the comic spirit is very different: while much of the humour derives from the wit of the rhymes in modern translations, Molière's lines do not convey the same sparking effect. Herzel argues that Molière has 'a different approach to comedy: when a line in his plays draws a laugh from the audience, it is not because the line is witty but because of what it reveals about character and situation' (in Steiner 2009: xxxii). I have already quoted Bolt's cruder way of putting it: 'line for line, Molière is not a funny writer,' on the grounds that 'his comedy is almost exclusively either psychological or situational, rather than verbal' (2010: 31). Furthermore, alongside shifting the comic paradigm into a new area, pungent rhyming couplets might play down the moral implications of Molière's plays. As noted in Peacock's conclusion to his book *Molière in Scotland*, what seems to be prevailing in English translations of Molière's plays is 'pure joyous escapism rather than ideological agendas' (1993: 233).

The mere fact that the strong sonorities of English rhymes tend to be mirth-inducing on stage has also been said to be a handicap because it may compromise the expression of

¹⁰⁶ The introduction to Fall's collaborative rewriting of Bartlett's translation states 'this version of the play is both extremely faithful to the original and very contemporary' (1990: 2).

¹⁰⁷ This is arguably the case of Wilbur's verse, however: his long explanations of the Molièresque effect of verse in his introductions to *Tartuffe* and *The Misanthrope* and his restraint with regard to blunt wit in his translation testify to this (see ch. II, 2.2.).

emotions. In Molière's plays, characters are frequently smitten with strong passions, namely anger, frustration, jealousy, sometimes sadness, etc. There are countless sinister French productions of *Le Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe*; even farces are sometimes turned into a tragedy, as was done by Catherine Hiegel to *George Dandin* at the Comédie-Française in 1999. The expressive side of Molière's comedies is invariably harder to achieve in English, when they are in rhyming couplets. *The Harvard Crimson*, about Wilbur's *Tartuffe*, has a way of suggesting it: 'characters tended to lapse into a regularity more faithful to the translator's iambics than their own emotions' (04/12/1965). Although Molière might not have approved of productions emphasising the darker tones of his plays, theatre critic Michael Billington has repeatedly criticised modern English productions of Molière, notably recently Sean Foley and Phil Porter's free translation of *L'Avare*, for limiting the potential of the play by privileging sheer slapstick entertainment (*The Guardian*, 13/03/2017). In the same vein, some critics judge rhyming couplets unwelcome: 'For pure comedy, this might work, but *Le Misanthrope* is a tragic-comedy, and at the very subtle climax of the play, when one set of values is placed in the balance against another, the neat turn of a couplet raises a wave of laughter that quite swallows up the moment's revelation!' says *The Glasgow Herald* (26/02/1973). As mentioned above, director Tyrone Guthrie, in his production of Wilbur's *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre, chose not to put emphasis on farce, but to highlight the darker tones of Molière's play. Reviews were mixed, and many pointed to the unpleasant sing-song resonance of rhymes. Translation and production choices seems to have created a conflict that may have been responsible for some disappointed reactions to the play.

But does it really matter, after all, if the spectator of *The Misanthrope* is more struck by the bulky presence of rhymes than by any alleged moralising content, and laughs out loud rather than laughs 'dans l'âme,' as Donneau de Visé famously put it? While it does not for most theatre directors – if they take the risk of staging a foreign play, they certainly could not afford an insipid translation – it may matter for some purists. To quote one review of Bolt's *Tartuffe* (2002), whose attitude towards the funny touches introduced by the translator's rhymes is highly deprecatory:

When I recall how other Molière translators have put the words 'fuck' and worse into Molière, I ought to be more grateful for Bolt than I am. But when I hear him turn Orgon's simple exclamation 'j'enrage' (about his mother's pigheaded loyalty to Tartuffe) into 'Why is matricide a crime?' (it rhymes, you see, with her remark 'Our ears deceive us all the time'), I lose patience. (*Financial Times*, 07/03/2002)

According to a reviewer in *The Times*, Bolt should be ‘taken to the top of the tallest tower in the City and thrown off it,’ for having disrespected the original *Les Femmes savantes* (quoted in Bolt 2010: 38).

However, these purists ought not to be so categorical. Even those translators who went the furthest in pursuing overtness in verbal humour, and who nonetheless maintain that they do not fundamentally undermine the true spirit of Molière have a legitimate point. Theatre Translation critics have argued that a creative departure from the source text, a retopicalisation and the modernisation of the idiom is necessary to create the same effects that the original plays provoked on their audience. Even though one can doubt the fact that the revitalised theatricality that prosody has elicited brings modern English translations close to the true spirit of Molière, it does so to a greater extent, certainly, than when a translation generates remarks such as the following: ‘Close translations of his comedies, especially his verse masterpieces, have often struck British audiences as rather unfunny’ (France 2000: 267).

Chapter IV

Rhymes and Verbal Humour

Chapter I studied the formal differences between French and English rhymes, and in Chapter III, an extract from *Le Misanthrope* compared with a series of modern rhymed translations demonstrated the difference in style between Molière's verse and that of modern translators. This chapter will further compare Molière's rhymes with rhymes in English translations. First, in a quantitative study, the lexical and phonologic characteristics of all the rhymes of *Le Misanthrope* will be analysed and compared with those in translations by Harrison (1973), Cohen (1994), Mooney (2008) and Bolt (2008). This study will provide some insights into what underlies the stylistic differences in rhymes between Molière and his translations. In doing this, it will also contribute to the discussion on the intrinsic differences between French and English rhymes.

The second part of this chapter will examine texts more closely and review the strategies deployed to foreground burlesque rhymes. Far from laying claim to reviewing every single comic strategy in the translations and adaptations, this chapter will nonetheless attempt to give a typology of the most striking and recurring ones, and analyse lines that seem representative of these strategies. Faced with such a wide corpus of study, a special focus will be given to a selection of translations and adaptations of *Le Misanthrope*, notably by Harrison, Cohen, Lochhead, Bolt, Crimp, Mooney, McGough. Passing references to other translations will also be made.

1. Quantitative Study of Rhymes in *Le Misanthrope* and in Some Translations

The study of the different translations of the same lines from Molière's *Misanthrope* conducted in the previous chapter should invite us to be cautious as to the conclusions given. In general, one should be careful when reflecting on a prosodic system in any translation: a verse system is never strictly uniform; it always alternates between conspicuous end-stoppings and enjambments, between a run of a strict metrical pattern and more liberal rhythmic variations.

Only a large-scale investigation can determine with certainty if the rhymes in translations have this inventiveness throughout or if the extracts of Alceste's reaction to Oronte's sonnet quoted in Chapter III might be misleading. Furthermore, a larger-scale study will allow us to define more precisely the characteristics of rhymes in English translations in comparison with French rhymes in Molière, and will provide insights into how different metrical strategies are intertwined in translations. With a view to answering these last points, this section will bring some complementary insights into the difference between Molière's use of rhyme and rhymes used in English translations.

This section proposes to study rhymes in a full play, with quantitative analysis, and compares the results with those found in a selection of translations. *Le Misanthrope* will be used for the purpose. Even though Britt-Marie Kylander's study of Molière's vocabulary showed that *Le Misanthrope* is Molière's second poorest verse play in terms of lexical variety after *Dom Garcie de Navarre* (1995: 36-7), *Le Misanthrope* occupies the exact middle position in the list in terms of lexical richness in rhymes (Bernet 2004: 157).¹⁰⁸

This study will first focus on Harrison's, Cohen's and Mooney's translations of *Le Misanthrope*. As stated in the previous chapter, Harrison appeared to be the first virtuosic rhymester in the thriving post-war generation of English translators of Molière's comedies, and has been an inspiration to several translators: Bolt admits having been 'dazzled by Harrison's rhyming couplets' (*The Guardian*, 09/02/2008). Cohen deserves special attention both because he was regarded as the first translator to revive the play on the American stage after Wilbur's 1955 *Misanthrope*, and because Cohen's legacy as a Molière translator has been less recognised than that of the other translators featured in the list in the previous chapter, and quite undeservedly. This can possibly be explained because *The Misanthrope* is Cohen's only translation in rhymes, and he only produced one other Molière translation after that, *The Bourgeois Gentleman* (1996). As for Mooney's *Misanthrope*, premiered in 1999 and published in 2008, it came after a series of successful verse adaptations of prose plays, and so after Mooney had created a reputation for himself as a prolific and successful American rhymester.

I shall start by analysing lexical richness in rhymes: in the extracts listed in the previous chapter, verbal inventiveness appeared to be the most striking discrepancy between the translations and Molière's play. Secondly, as it can be argued that a rhyme is a sonorous phenomenon first, and a signifying word second, the richness of sound will also be analysed

¹⁰⁸ According to Bernet's study, *L'Étourdi*, *L'École des femmes*, *Les Fâcheux*, *Tartuffe* and *Le Dépit amoureux* (in order) have richer rhymes than *Le Misanthrope*. The five remaining plays in alexandrines have poorer rhymes (2004: 157-8).

and compared. Analysing rhymes as pure sounds is justified as English rhymes are considered to be very sonorous. Furthermore, this would be in line with Banville's *Traité*, which insists on the sonorous quality of rhymes:

on n'entend dans un vers que le mot qui est à la rime, et ce mot est le seul qui travaille à produire l'effet voulu par le poète. Le rôle des autres mots contenus dans le vers se borne donc à ne pas contrarier l'effet de celui-là et à bien s'harmoniser avec lui, en formant des résonances variées entre elles, mais de la même couleur générale. (1872: 42)

After Harrison, Mooney and Cohen, this section will focus on Bolt's two translations of *Le Misanthrope*. While Bolt has been regarded as a bold rhymester, the results found are significantly different, which might invite us to consider other approaches to the appreciation of rhyme. The contrasting results reflect a different strategy in emphasising rhymes, which can only be fully appreciated when looking at rhymes in their immediate context, something that a quantitative analysis cannot do.

This study is, however, very valuable as it determines to what extent rhymes in English translation are richer than in the original and reveals two different strategies to accentuate rhymes. Furthermore, this study opens up a more general discussion of the differences in formal properties between French and English rhymes. Last but not least, comparing the results between the four translations brings another argument to the view that American audiences must be used to tolerating rhymes better than British audiences in full-length plays (see ch. I, 2.3.).

1.1. Lexical variety

The table below compares the total number of rhyming words (rW) in the original and the translations, and the number of different forms (rF) in the rhyming position:

	rW ¹⁰⁹	rF
MOLIÈRE	1778	1046
HARRISON	1866	1046
COHEN	1745	1223
MOONEY	1824	1276

As the number of lines is different between the original and the three translations, it is necessary to calculate the ratio between rW and rF in order to make sense of these figures.

¹⁰⁹ Although, in Oronte's sonnet, rhymes are more eccentric in the translations than in Molière, Oronte's sonnet and Alceste's recitation of archaic verses in I-ii have been taken out from the word count. In Mooney's translation, the reading of Célimène's *billet* in the final Act is adapted into verse: the rhymes in this passage are included in the word count, which in part explains the higher number of rW. The occasional unrhymed lines, or when the rhyme is purely graphic (e.g. 'society/comply,' Harrison 2002: 29) have been taken out from the word count.

A number between 0 and 1 is found, the nearer it is to 1, the greater the variety of forms can be found in rhymes:

	rF/rW
MOLIÈRE	0.588
HARRISON	0.561
COHEN	0.701
MOONEY	0.699

In all plays, more than half of the rhymes are different, but there are still many identical rhymes: the inventiveness is therefore uneven. Mooney's and Cohen's translations clearly display a greater number of rhyming forms, but surprisingly, Harrison is behind Molière. However, only relying on rW and rF provides a very partial picture of the richness of rhymes, for two reasons. The obvious one is that there can be many forms that are derived from a single word, called lemma ('fasse,' 'faisait,' 'ferai' are derived from 'faire'). Therefore, to retain the lemmas, one needs to eliminate all affixes, conjugated forms, and discard the adjectives derived from substantives.¹¹⁰ In order to take account of the spectator's appreciation of vocabulary, substantives and verbs sharing the same form count as one lemma; when they have different forms, they count as two lemmas. One notices that the ratio rW/rL in each play looks quite different:

	rW	rL	rL/rW
MOLIÈRE	1778	814	0.457
HARRISON	1866	1027	0.550
COHEN	1745	1048	0.573
MOONEY	1824	1085	0.594

The gap between the original and the translations widens. Harrison is now in front of Molière and Cohen and Mooney are far in the lead, which vividly shows that these American translators made a real effort to vary vocabulary in their rhymes. From a mere reading of McGough's *Misanthrope*, one would expect even more striking results than in Mooney but the fact that the main character speaks in prose precludes carrying out this analysis. Judging from Fleming's four translations of Molière's comedies, one would also expect more striking results, if Fleming had produced a translation of *Le Misanthrope*.

¹¹⁰ For example, 'proud' would be discarded, and 'pride' would be retained in the rL count.

1.2. Sound variety

a. Taking into account the '*consonne d'appui*'

The other reason why rW/rF fails to give a reliable idea of the richness of rhymes is that in English, all inflectional suffixes are pronounced and sound different, contrary to French: for example the two different forms 'avoue' and 'avouent' sound the same. Not only do more forms exist in Cohen's and Mooney's translations, but these lend themselves to a greater sound variety. And indeed, it is when studying the sonorous quality of rhymes that we find the most telling results: the total number of different rhyming sounds (rS) is much higher than in the original:

	rW	rS ¹¹¹	rS/rW
MOLIÈRE1	1776	84	0.047
MOLIÈRE2	1776	191	0.107
HARRISON	1866	231	0.124
COHEN	1745	377	0.216
MOONEY	1824	374	0.205

This table gives two numbers under rS in Molière. The first (84) is the one found when applying the same criteria between the original and the translations for determining rS, which is the minimum required to form a rhyme. The last tonic vowel of the rhyming word together with the consonantal sounds following it are solely retained in the first count: what is usually called the *consonne d'appui* is left out. For instance, in the pair 'sentiments/compliments' (71-2), only the phoneme /ã/ (and not the combination /imã/) is counted, as later in the play 'méchants' rhymes with 'gens' (429-30). Similarly, in English, the last vowel carrying the metrical stress and the phonemes following it are retained to define the rS: in 'platitudes/attitudes' (Mooney 2005: 17), only /u:dz/ is counted. When, however, in the following couplet: 'Alceste, you can't just change the world around you/By proving that hypocrisies surround you!' (Cohen 1994: 185), the pentametric system makes the last stressed syllable fall on the last word but one. Therefore, the rhyming sound in for this couplet is /'aʊndju/.

One finds that in Molière, there are, strikingly, almost a quarter of the number of rhyming sounds found in Cohen and Mooney. While applying the same analytical criteria in the count may put Molière at a disadvantage, one also needs to remember that English rhyming syllables are stressed and this study does not take this into consideration. In other words, leaving out the

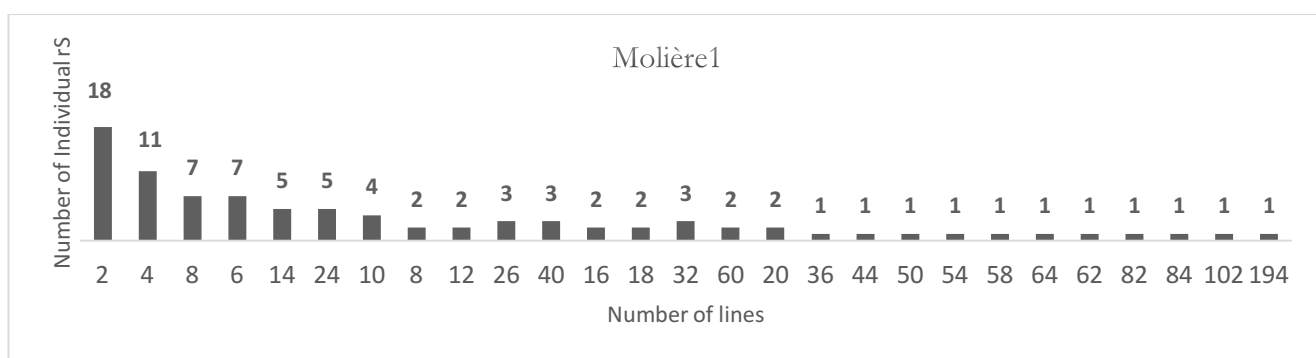
¹¹¹ The numbers given for translations in this table need to be interpreted cautiously: no difference is made between full rhymes and half rhymes: while 'books/luck's' (Harrison 2002: 50) or 'love/prove' (68, 100) is acceptable as rhymes in Harrison's northern accent, 'well/respectable' (80) is more questionable as a rhyme in /el/, even though the last metrical stress falls on *respectable* according to the prosodic rule.

consonne d'appui, to some extent, boils down to the same thing as determining the average number of common phonemes without factoring in the extra sonorous presence that English rhymes have. If, despite this, this is still judged unfair on Molière, the table shows a second rS number (191), which counts the last common vowel plus any common sounds following as well as preceding it. Although this gives Molière an advantage over the others, Molière still lies far behind the other three.

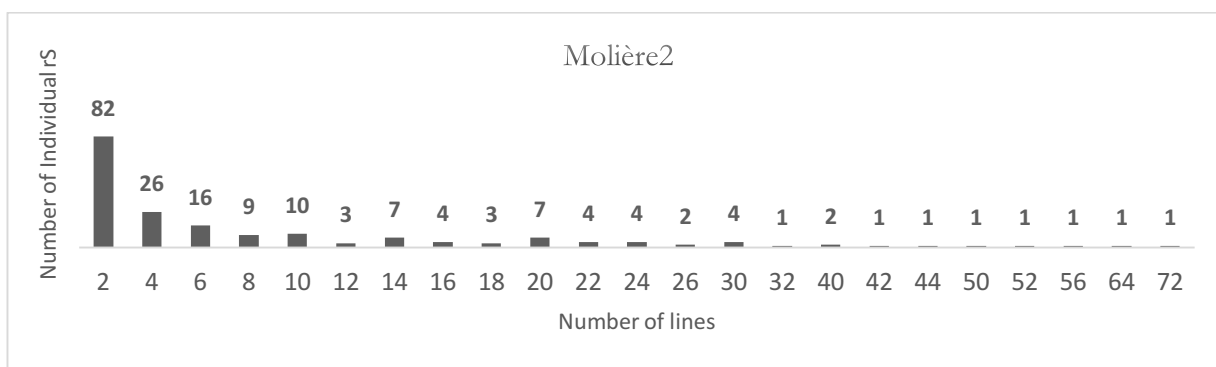
The difference between the results for Molière and the translations may in part confirm what is often said about rhymes being more difficult to create in English than in French: the fact that in English there are more words that rhyme differently makes it more difficult to find matching words. The choices are more limited, making rhymes more constraining in English. This, in turn, may explain why English translators use more rhyming forms than Molière.

b. The distribution of rhyming sounds

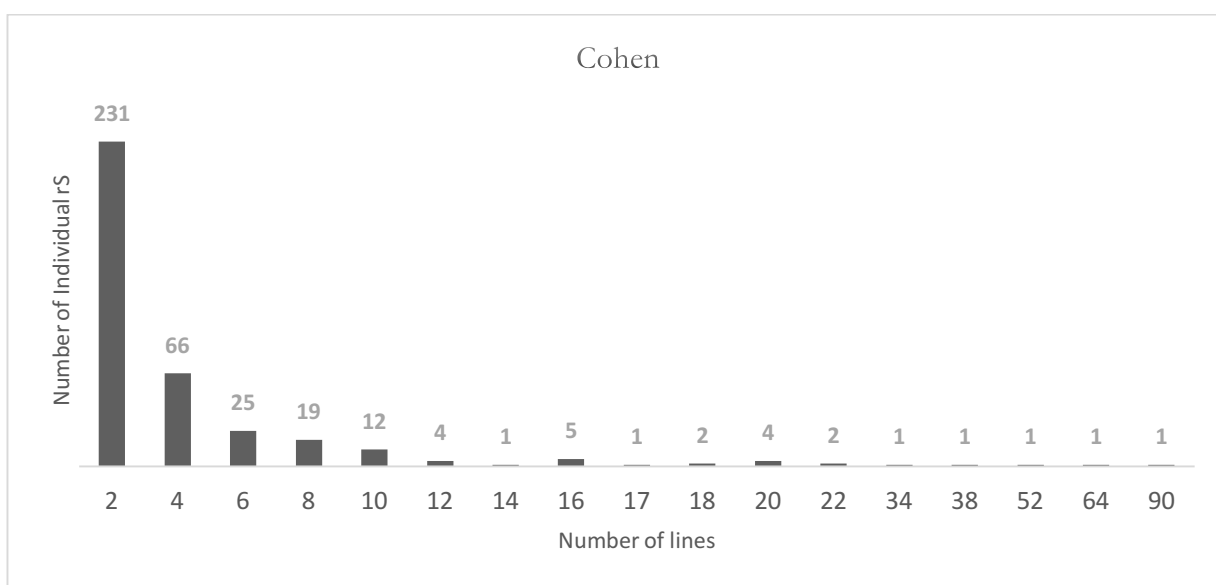
The distribution of rhyming sounds within the plays also reveals striking differences. The graphs below visually represent how the rhyming sounds are distributed in the original and the translations: the y-axis gives the number of individual rS and the x-axis lists the number of lines in which the corresponding number of rS occurs. For example, in the first graph below, 18 different rS occur in 2 lines only (or in a single couplet) and 1 rS (the sound /e/) occurs in 194 lines (or 97 couplets). The higher the curve is vertically and the shorter it is horizontally, the greater is the density of rare rhyming sounds.



The second graph represents the distribution of rS in *Le Misanthrope* when taking account of the *consonnes d'appui*:

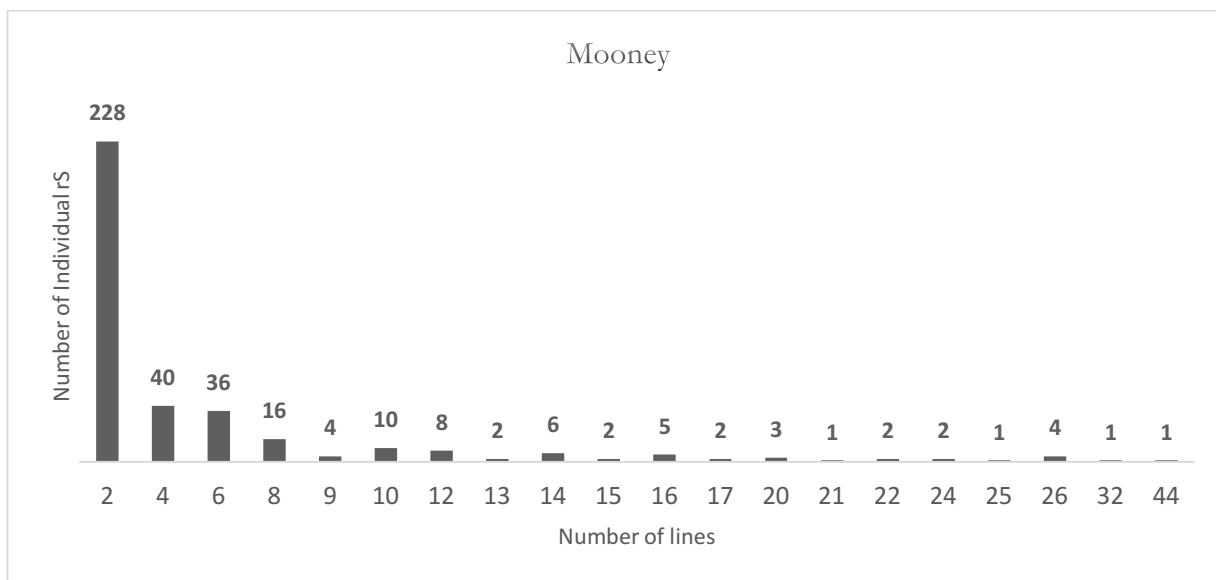


While this second graph looks quite different to the first one, the distribution of rhyming sounds in English translations is even more different:¹¹²



As expected, the first few bars go much higher in Cohen. The great number of rare sounds occurring in one or two couplets explains why a very high number of rhyming sounds can be found in this translation. Even more interestingly, although Mooney has a smaller number of different rS than Cohen according to the table above, Mooney shows an even greater density of rare rS in his translation:

¹¹² There are odd numbers in the x-axis in Cohen's and Mooney's graphs because triplets are occasionally used instead of couplets. Harrison's graph is not given to save space, but the results are somewhere in-between Molière's and Cohen's graph (closer to Cohen than to Molière).



In Mooney's translation, rhyming sounds are even more unequally distributed: there is a high number of rare sounds, and a low density of frequent sounds. The most frequent rhyming sound (/əʊ/) only occurs 44 times (or in 22 couplets), therefore, much less often than the most frequent sound in Molière and Cohen. The sum of couplets that have four or fewer sounds in common (480) is superior to the sum of the rest of the couplets (432).

Mooney comments on how creating inventive rhymes is of paramount importance to him:

Not all rhymes are created equal. There are the very typical rhymes that we hear in almost every pop song on the radio of which we grow quickly tired. An audience may forgive a handful of these through the play, but it is incumbent upon the poet to find new rhymes whenever he can.¹¹³

In view of these results, when Mooney says the poet should 'find new rhymes,' he certainly means novelty both in terms of vocabulary and in terms of sound. Avoiding using the same rhyming sound too frequently, Cohen's and Mooney's verse resonates with what Folkart champions in 'writing-in-translation': 'Writing is forward-moving, in-augural: there are no grids or plumb-lines chalked out in advance, no blessings or commandments, no priests offering prophecies as you push off for where you've never been before' (2007: 13).

Jean-Louis Aroui comments on the two main approaches available to poets when creating rhymes, which are, according to the critic, representative of two cultural appropriations of poetic writing:

Sur un plan strictement cognitif, des rimes identiques revenant trop souvent perdent de leur saillance, d'où l'absence de rimes dans les poésies du latin classique ou du japonais, langues pour lesquelles les terminaisons disponibles sont en nombre trop restreint. Pour une langue comme le français, il y avait théoriquement deux façons d'éviter le retour trop fréquent des terminaisons les plus courantes: 1. Eviter d'utiliser trop souvent les dites terminaisons; 2. Enrichir ces terminaisons par une équivalence dans le contexte gauche de la dernière voyelle masculine. L'esthétique française classique a opté pour cette deuxième solution. La tradition arabe, par

¹¹³ <http://moliere-in-english.com/moliere.html>

contre, opte pour la première. Choisir entre ces deux options, c'est déjà faire un choix culturel. (2005: 214)

Unlike Molière, translators seem to have opted for diversity over pursuing extended sonorous equivalence. But clearly, these results show that Molière put less effort into varying rhymes.

I am not including the graphs representing the distribution of rW in the plays here, but there is a certain correlation between how rW and how rS are distributed in Mooney and Cohen, whereas they look quite different in Molière. Therefore, in English translations, rare words in rhymes statistically have a greater chance of also having a rare sound, unlike in the original, where the few rare sounds are not necessarily on the rare rhyming words. The surprise effects are consequently stronger in English.

c. *Phonetic weight*

One last factor that ought to be added to complete our reflection on rhymes in this corpus is to study the number of common phonemes shared by rhyming words – what could be called the ‘phonetic weight’ of the rhymes. Rhymes with two common phonemes ‘fit/split’ will be considered less weighty than a rhyme with three common phonemes ‘catch/match.’ The phonetic weight in each play has been calculated by listing all the rhyming sounds in their phonetic transcription and calculating the average number of phonemes per rhyming sound.¹¹⁴ Long vowels, like /i:/, count as two phonemes, and so do the diphthongs. In the case of half rhymes, only the smallest number of common phonemes have been counted: in the pair ‘fortune/portion,’ only /ɔ:ʃən/, so five phonemes are counted. Same with the pair ‘silence/violence’ (/saɪləns-vaɪələns/): only the six common phonemes are retained (/aɪləns/). As above, the first figure given for Molière is found by using the same criteria applied for English translations: in the first pair of Molière’s *Misanthrope*, ‘prie/bizarrie,’ only the sound /i/ is counted. The second figure includes the *consonne d’appui* in the count. As expected, the results are quite contrasting:

MOLIÈRE1	1.672
MOLIÈRE2	2.110
HARRISON	2.702
COHEN	3.260
MOONEY	3.325

¹¹⁴ Small differences occur between the American and the British transcriptions, notably when a word ends with an ‘r.’ The word ‘over’ counts five phonemes in American English and four in British English. However, adopting the same transcription system would have only changed the figures insignificantly.

This table explains the results found in the table under rS/rW, and they point to general differences between English and French rhymes. The very high numbers in Cohen's and Mooney's translations can be explained by the fact that these plays have a high number of feminine rhymes (141 in Mooney, over a hundred in Cohen). The higher the phonetic weight, the rarer the rhyme becomes, which explains why Cohen and Mooney have numerous rhyming sounds occurring in single couplets.

Again, the results need to be treated cautiously. Not all phonemes are equal: /ə/ certainly has less weight than the vowel sound /æ/. Even in French, some vowels are more prominent than others because they are rarer (Beaudouin 2002: 149). However, the wide gap between the numbers still makes the outcome of the study valid. These numbers reveal that not only are rhyming sounds more numerous in English translations, but they are also clearly more prominent on average. As I said above, the high number of feminine rhymes in Cohen's and Mooney's translations explains why they are again far in the lead.

One tends to assume that the English accentual metrical system is mostly responsible for the fact that English rhymes are more aurally striking than French rhymes. But this study has demonstrated that the rich variety of lexis and sounds and the prominent phonetic presence of English rhymes have a contribution to make too.

A reason that in part explains why there is a poorer sound variety in French rhymes is that French rhymes are constrained by a rule that does not affect their sound variety. As Beaudouin demonstrates (2002: 118-20), French poetry has traditionally pursued graphic equivalence as well as phonic equivalence in its rhymes: for example, at least under the rules followed by seventeenth-century playwrights, 'avouent' cannot rhyme with 'secoue'.¹¹⁵

A more compelling reason to explain these results is the fact that French classical drama tradition pursued a self-sufficient situational and character comedy, which does not need outlandish rhymes to bring extra comic effect. Although there is a lot of verbal comedy in Molière, especially when dialogues become rhythmically stylised, these are always closely tied to the dramatic situation. Discreet or 'tame' rhymes that content themselves to abide by the basic rules seem appropriate in Molière's comedy, in order to let the unexpected twists in the drama have their full effect. Most seventeenth-century poets, in fact, did not make inventive rhymes their priority. Although Banville is less condemnatory towards Molière's dramatic

¹¹⁵ Although one might have to qualify the fact that French rhymes are less constrained than English rhymes because of the *rime pour l'œil*, this section has not taken this constraint into account in studying richness in rhymes, because I analyse variety in rhymes from the perspective of reception in performance.

verse, he still deplores that ‘Les grands hommes du XVII^e siècle vivaient dans un temps où on avait perdu la science de la rime, c’est-à-dire de ce qui permet au vers de rester libre’ (1872: 81), and encourages poets to enrich the vocabulary of their rhymes: ‘Mais vous ne devez n’employer jamais que des rimes absolument brillantes, exactes, solides et riches...’ (65-66, see also 60). Molière’s comedies are heavily geared towards dramatic build-ups and turnarounds, therefore another source of surprise from comic rhymes can potentially diminish certain dramatic effects. English comic tradition has sought other ways to surprise and deceive expectations.

However, in the light of the last section in Chapter II, it would not be judicious to argue that Molière always remains in the safe zone of ready-made rhymes. If critics have commented little on Molière’s use of rhymed verse (which Chapter II does), it is arguably because it has been taken for granted that Molière uses customary rhymes throughout, making of versification a mechanical convention. These safe rhymes, or *rimes de sécurité* often serve as a backdrop against which comic rhymes will sound vigorous. In the same way as comedy often needs to infringe the established conventions in order to surprise or provoke, rhymes occasionally need to strike a strong note, even in Molière. The dialectic between discretion and conspicuousness is further evidenced in the quantitative study of Bolt’s translations.

1.3. The case of Ranjit Bolt’s *The Misanthrope* and *The Grouch*

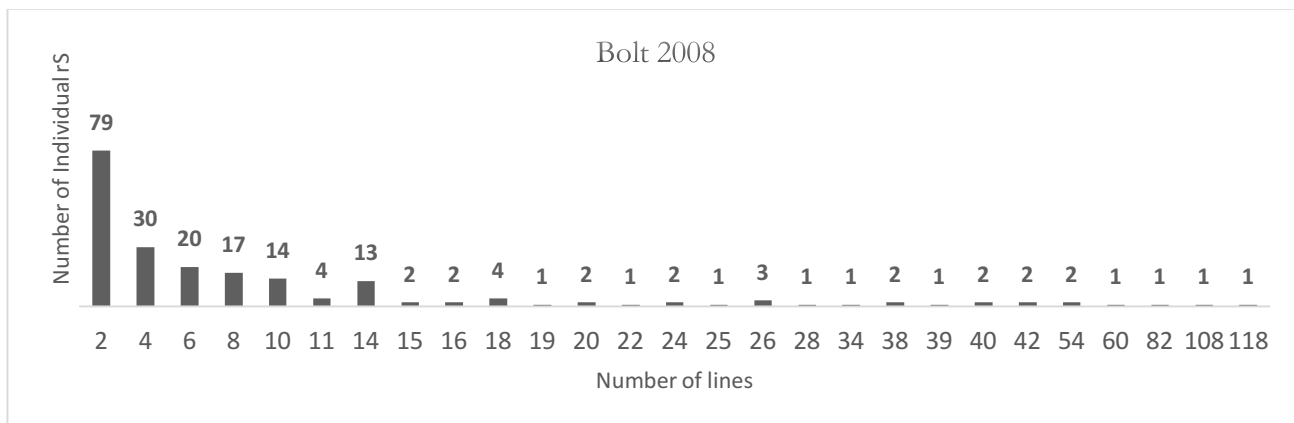
Bolt’s two versions of *Le Misanthrope* (1998 and 2008) are interesting inasmuch as the study of their rhymes gives very different results to Harrison’s, Cohen’s and Mooney’s translations. In fact, comparing lexical variety and sound variety reveals that Bolt is closer to Molière than to the other three translators:

	rW/rF	rS/rW	Phonetic weight
MOLIÈRE1	0.588	0.047	1.672
MOLIÈRE2	0.588	0.107	2.110
HARRISON	0.124	0.124	2.702
COHEN	0.216	0.216	3.260
MOONEY	0.205	0.205	3.325
BOLT (1998)	0.417	0.103	2.202
BOLT (2008)	0.496	0.101	2.362

Although Bolt varied his rhymes further in his 2008 retranslation, the variety of rhyming words and rhyming sounds is still smaller in this second translation than in the original. It is however worth pointing out that despite this, the average phonetic weight of rhymes in Bolt is

still higher than in Molière, which substantiates the general claim that English and French rhymes have different formal characteristics.

The graph representing the distribution of rhyming sounds in *The Grouch* confirms that rhymes in the play resemble the way rhymes are used in Molière:



Bolt's graph has a very different shape to Cohen's and Mooney's: one notices a significant elongation of the x-axis in comparison with the other translators, which indicates a greater number of sounds that are frequently repeated in the rhyme position. In Bolt's *The Grouch*, only 79 different rhyming sounds appear in a single couplet. One sound (/u:/) is found 118 times, making 59 couplets sharing it. Therefore, there is a certain inconsistency in the prominence of Bolt's rhymes thanks to a more even distribution of rhyming sounds than in the other translations.

It is surprising to note that even though Molière's and Bolt's rhymes have much in common, several English reviewers regarded Bolt's rhymes as very prominent. Notably, a review of Bolt's 2008 translation is unfavourably entitled 'All rhyme, but no reason in glossy Grouch' and judged the rhyming couplets 'modishly up-to-the-minute' (*The Guardian*, 24/02/2008). Why such an inconsistency between the reality of Bolt's text and the reviewers' (and the reader's) appreciation of rhymes? One thing that needs to be borne in mind is the fact that there can be a difference in the way rhymes are perceived in performance or by the reader and how they actually appear in the text. Rhymes are not purely mechanical constructions: their sonorous weight does not necessarily determine their effect in context. Kylander has remarked more generally that statistical data on a literary text does not necessarily correspond with one's subjective appreciation of the work:

Une source d'erreur qui peut adhérer à une analyse purement subjective de la richesse lexicale d'un texte donné est que le lecteur risque de croire, à tort, qu'un ouvrage qui présente quelques

accumulations isolées de vocables rares, exotiques ou techniques aurait, automatiquement, une grande richesse lexicale, alors que son vocabulaire, en gros, est peu varié. (1995: 24)¹¹⁶

This reveals that in order to enhance verbal humour in translations, not all rhymes need to be eccentric: comic rhymes should only stand out at key moments in order to retain their whole strength. Even though Harrison, Cohen and Mooney consistently achieve higher numbers, it is not guaranteed that spectators will necessarily deem their rhymes more sonorous than Bolt's in performance. As this thesis is primarily concerned with the impact of rhymes on the English stage, this study needs to be complemented with a qualitative approach in order to appreciate what strategies underlie the effects of rhymes in a verse play.

Indeed, Bolt's translations shed some light on the strategies used in many English translations with a view to keeping the full force of rhyming couplets all the while avoiding the risk of creating an irritable continuous sing-song. In his translations, Bolt creates a background of discrete rhymes by making frequent use of the same rhyming sounds and rhyming words. In Bolt's two translations, one notices a great number of grammatical words that recur frequently in the rhyme position (and also elsewhere in the lines): 'you' (58/40),¹¹⁷ 'me' (45/40), 'be' (21/20), 'way' (21/19), 'do' (20/16), 'say' (28/15), 'see' (21/15), 'so' (21/14), 'to' (21/11), 'it' (18/14). Grammatical words placed in the rhyme position often introduce an enjambment. These words have, furthermore, a weak semantic and phonetic weight, which conceals the rhymes even more.

To give one example out of many of how this 'light background' can prove to be a great run-up for conspicuous rhymes, at the beginning of Act IV, Philip [Philinte] reports what he has seen from the altercation between Alan [Alceste] and Orville [Oronte]:

'Sorry,' he answered, 'but no way
Will I retract a word. But hey,
Why is the man in such a stew?
It was his *verse* I laid into
Not him! His poem sucked. So what?
Is that so awful? Surely not?
I said he lacked poetic style
Not that he was a paedophile,
Or'd wrecked his life with drugs and booze
Or hung about in public loos; (2008: 58)

Many of the rhymes in this short excerpt are quite flat: 'way,' 'into,' 'what,' 'not' and 'style.' These words are used many times as rhyming words and some of them introduce an

¹¹⁶ Kylander refers to some critics being surprised to discover their quantitative studies have disproved what they assumed from a mere reading of the works.

¹¹⁷ The first number given is the number of occurrence in Bolt's 1998 translation, the second is the number of occurrence in Bolt's 2008 retranslation.

enjambment. Consequently, the ‘rare’ words ‘paedophile,’ ‘booze’ and ‘loos’ stand out brazenly. Crimp’s and McGough’s translations are very much like Bolt’s in that respect: efforts are often made to make verse sound like prose, and at strategic moments in the speech, rhymes are vehemently thrown into relief. A skilled versifier can manage low density in richness of rhyming words with great effects.

Measuring the richness of French rhymes and defining a typology has sometimes divided critics. After providing a review of the debate, Aroui proposes a method that incorporates different approaches, and takes into account the reader’s subjective appreciation of rhymes in context: he argues that there are ‘quatre facteurs susceptibles de jouer un rôle dans l’“enrichissement” des rimes: le linguistique, le métrique, le culturel et le cognitif’ (2005: 209).

This study has thus shed light on two different strategies for impressing the audience with conspicuous rhymes. Cohen and Mooney pursue constant variety; they keep the audience alert and conscious of the prosodic form throughout. The constant variety, in itself, creates a certain lightness in the dramatic language, more than vigorous comic effects. In fact, Cohen’s, and especially Mooney’s rhyming words tend not to have as many eccentric rhyming words as Bolt’s and Harrison’s translations, as well as the other translations listed above. Apart from occasional words that may sound incongruous in a Molière play, Mooney generally prefers to keep his rhymes interesting in a different manner. Bolt creates strong contrasts, powerfully marks the rhymes in some places and tones them down in some others. Harrison stands somewhere in-between. These two strategies to make rhymed verse self-conscious are in opposition, yet they are closely intertwined in most translations.

There may be two ways of explaining this difference of strategy between Bolt and Harrison on the one hand and the American translators on the other. Cohen’s and Mooney’s *Misanthropes* are both set in French seventeenth-century society, while Bolt’s and Harrison’s versions are set in modern times. A lighter presence of rhymes was chosen for a contemporary setting, while highly conspicuous rhymes may seem a better fit for a play assuming its foreignness. The second potential explanation draws on the points made in Chapter I on the alleged greater tolerance of American audiences for rhyming couplets than British audiences. Modern American translators of Molière’s comedies seem to indulge more freely in pursuing constant creativity, while British ones tend to play down rhymes in some passages, and make others unapologetically patent. Pursuing this analysis for more translations and more plays by Molière would certainly be useful, but from a purely qualitative reading Australian translator

Fleming putatively stands on the Mooney-Cohen side, while one could expect most modern rhymed translations to have results close to those of Harrison.

The contrasting results between Bolt and Mooney-Cohen confirm that quantitative analysis only provides a partial indicator of the richness of rhymes, and it is not complete without a literary analysis. Another compelling way to show this is that the vigorous rhymes are not only the ones that are rare. Even if the rhymes in /əv/ recur 61 times (in 30 couplets and 1 triplet) in Harrison's *Misanthrope*, vigorous effects can still be created depending on how the rhyme is brought out:

[...] I couldn't, no.
O please do what you like, and, go, please, go! (2002: 54)

Or

Silence itself 's a sort of answer though.
I take it silence means quite simply: NO! (102)

One should also note that the rhyming words in these two couplets are not rare at all, and in fact, 'no' and 'go' recur respectively 7 and 13 times in the end position in the play. This calls for further investigations into the different strategies deployed by successful translators in order to introduce verbal humour.

2. Strategies Deployed to Advertise the Presence of Rhymes

In this section, I shall select and analyse lines that seem representative of recurrent comic strategies used in modern verse translations of Molière's comedies. Although some translators seem to have their own preferences and strengths in emphasising verbal comedy through rhymes, frequently, the comic strategies identified recur in most translations. In this section, rhyme will sometimes be taken in a broader way than in the first part of the chapter: in the same way as the resonance of the whole word is affected when placed in the rhyming position, even though rhymes only concern one syllable, in some cases, when several words function closely as one sense-unit, they can be identified as a 'rhyming group.'

First of all, when providing case studies of the strategies deployed by translators to foreground rhymes, it is important to keep in mind that, although the comic rhymes identified in the following sections are used frequently, they remain local. As the quantitative study of Bolt's rhymes carried out above reveals, many rhymes are not particularly funny in themselves,

or do not seek the limelight. Pursuing discretion constitutes an integral part of the strategies deployed to advertise conspicuous rhymes. It seems therefore judicious to start by reviewing a few techniques used to play down rhymes and steer clear of an unrelenting singsong that might damage any comic effects. Finally, this section will review some of the ways the sonorous and signifying value of rhymes are reinforced.

2.1. Prosodic flexibility

a. Loose rhymes

Anticipating the disapproving reviews quoted in Chapter I, all translators have toned down their conspicuous verse system – to various degrees. In order to avoid using dazzling rhymes throughout, the most common strategy is to make a liberal use of half-rhymes. All translations contain a few instances of half-rhymes; some, especially Mahon's translation of *L'École des maris* (*High Time*, 1985) and Lochhead's three Scots translations, feature a great many of them.

Harrison's *Misanthrope* has been celebrated for the quality of the rhymes: *The Sunday Times* maintained that 'Their metrical balance and impeccable rhyming are throughout the evening the source of continuous joy' (25/02/1973). One can nonetheless question the reviewer's qualification of Harrison's rhyming couplets as 'impeccable,' since the poet often uses half rhymes. As Peter Levi notes, half rhymes prove very welcome in a translation prepared for performance:

'Want' gets rhymed with 'Oronte,' and 'for' with 'Prix Goncourt,' but the play is sufficiently good-tempered that none of this matters: indeed, Richard Wilbur is an example that a long, continuous dazzle can be boring, so here even the rhyme of 'contretemps' and 'along' comes as a relief. (1991: 161)

Harrison, on some occasions, even overtly defies the prosodic constraints, and gets away with rhyming 'try' with 'sincerity' (2002: 41), or writing half of the word in the end position, and the other half in the next line, making the rhymes very difficult for the audience to perceive:

Or is it his giggle and his shrill falsett-
O hoity-toity voice makes him your pet? (50)

This trick is also shamelessly used by Crimp: 'forgot/-en [...] what' (1996: 48). This is in keeping with his frequent use of the slash (/), explicitly to mark the point at which one speaker interrupts another, with the effect of concealing the rhyme from audiences:

ALCESTE – The suggestion's totally / *appalling*.
JOHN [Philinte] – But who's going to photograph the judge kerb-crawling? (9)

Enjambment is another common technique used to conceal the presence of rhymes. Akin to half-rhymes, some translators seem more prone to this technique than others, but all translations use enjambment significantly more than Molière. As humorous lines tend to be endstopped, augmenting the number of run-on lines ensures that comic effects are powerful. In the first Act of *Le Misanthrope*,¹¹⁸ 21 lines have no sign of punctuation at the end of the line (in the Pléiade edition). However, one counts 85 in the first Act of Wilbur's translation, 48 in Cohen's and Congdon's versions, 57 in Mooney, 138 in Lochhead, 109 in Harrison, 137 in Bolt (1998) and 189 in Bolt (2008). Most lines are run-on in Mahon's *High Time*, Hilton and Power's *Tartuffe* (produced by Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory in April 2017, Bristol). The fact that, though still higher than in Molière, one finds a surprisingly low number of non-endstopped lines in Mooney, Cohen and Congdon may further support the putative view that rhymes are more tolerated in America than in Britain.¹¹⁹

Grammatical rhymes, or rhymes made up of link-words such as in the pairs 'appraisal/says I'll' (Bartlett 1988: 73), 'proposal/suppose I'll' (McGough 2009: 11), 'grateful/state. I'll' (Crimp 1996: 1) or 'it is/niceties' (Lochhead 2002: 7) call for the couplets to be run through. Interestingly enough, Crimp uses an unnecessary enjambment in this couplet: 'You're beginning to worry me. Any/Other man would surely... (12). 'Any' could have been placed in the second line without invalidating the couplet. This gratuitous enjambment can be regarded as a feature to prompt a fast and flowing speech performance. It is also worth pointing out that in Mahon's *High Time*, Harrison's *Misanthrope*, Lochhead's *Miseryguts* and McGough's and Crimp's versions, lines do not start with capitalised letters (unless, of course, the previous line ends with a full stop), suggesting that actors should not artificially endstop the lines throughout.

Some translators, notably Mahon, McGough and Crimp, are not always strict with the chosen rhyme scheme: sometimes, alternate rhymes, orphan lines and even occasional sequences of unrhymed lines disturb the continuity of the prosodic system.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Again, I have not included Oronte's sonnet and Alceste's song in the count.

¹¹⁹ One finds 71 run-on lines in Bartlett's *Misanthrope*. As it is written in dodecasyllables, the longer length of the line makes it easier to match the phrase structures with the verse structure. More importantly, Bartlett's aim exceeded a mere commercial adaptation: he sought to achieve a foreignising aesthetics, which might explain the low number of non-endstopped lines (see ch V, 2. for further comments on Bartlett's *Misanthrope*).

¹²⁰ Unsurprisingly, all of these strategies are extensively used in translations of Racine's plays. To give just a few examples, judging the Drydenian heroic couplet 'distasteful because of its monotonous swing and heavily clashing rhymes' (1936: xi), Lockert makes use of medial pauses in order to avoid conspicuous end-stoppings and employs imperfect rhymes. Similarly, Mahon makes an extensive use of half rhymes in his *Phaedra* (1996). Craig Raine attempted to tone down the obtrusiveness of rhymes by using the ABAB rhyming scheme in *Andromaque* (1953).

b. Loose verse

In the introduction to his *Misanthrope*, Harrison championed the reconciliation of rhyming couplets with a natural-sounding and efficient theatrical language: ‘Above all, it seemed to me that, if Molière was to work in English, the verse, while retaining his sort of formality, should be as speakable as the most colloquial prose’ (2002: 7). Bolt aimed to create the same illusion with his verse: ‘My golden rule is that if you wrote it out, it should just sound like prose dialogue without a single seam or stitch dropping’ (in Johnston 1996: 252). Actors performing his version of Corneille’s *Le Menteur* (1989) purportedly made it sound like people chatting (*ibid.*).

Harrison used an innovative methodology to enhance the efficiency of the text, and to bring the energy of natural prose into verse. As a way of keeping his mind on performance rather than on the page, Harrison translated from a recording he played continuously as he worked. He also argues for the need to test translations on the stage in rehearsals, and to cooperate with the different agents of the theatrical project in order to sustain the energy in the speeches (Ploix 2018). More crucially, the poet infuses his text with some typographical devices that seem to be indications to speed up speech delivery, convinced as he is that the efficiency of the theatrical speech derives from a pace of elocution that impedes the iambic pattern from resonating forcefully. To some extent, speed in verbalisation corroborates the velocity with which action changes, and while it may compromise clarity of the line, it corresponds to the tone of comedy. Although there are many counter-examples, in music, fast tempo is indeed generally used for joyful atmospheres.

The extensive use of what he calls the ‘floating s’ – which is the typographical separation of the subject from the auxiliary contraction – is a relevant example of a feature that guides the actors’ speech performance. The following lines spoken by Arsinoé illustrate this aspiration:

Tous ceux, sur qui la cour jette des yeux propices,	Not everybody honoured by the State
N’ont pas, toujours, rendu de ces fameux services.	’s done something to commemorate.
Il faut l’occasion, ainsi que le pouvoir;	Know-how counts, the right time and right place.
Et le mérite, enfin, que vous nous faites voir,	That your talents ’re passed over ’s a disgrace.
Devrait... (III-v, 1157-61)	(2002: 77)

These floating contractions, scattered throughout Harrison’s *Misanthrope*, as well as *Phaedra Britannica*, are in this extract voluntarily made conspicuous: a disconnected verbal contraction is placed at the head of the line, before appearing twice in the fourth line. While in the source-text, the recurring commas considerably contain Arsinoé’s speech flow – which goes hand in hand with her prudishness and her wish to distinguish herself morally from the flirtatious Célimène – Harrison prefers to speed up her lines, and thereby to favour dynamism

over characterisation. Thanks to the floating contractions and the non-segmented lines, Harrison clearly distances himself from Molière's style, in which adjectival enumerations and words isolated by punctuation may thwart dynamic oralisation.

In all rhymed translations, even those with the most regular verse, as Wilbur, Frame, Congdon, Bolt and Mooney, many metrical variations abate the redundancy of the verse structure. Other translators such as Lochhead, McGough, Fleming and to a greater extent Mahon and Crimp, opted for lines that are very flexible in their prosodic principles, by not always using the same number of feet.

The metrical scansion of McGough in the first scene reveals that the lines are contained within a certain range, however: they rarely exceed fourteen syllables, and never go under eight; and in general, they tend to contain either nine, eleven or thirteen syllables, and often either four or six metres. Therefore, interestingly enough, McGough seems to stay on the frontier between the alexandrine and the iambic pentameter structures. This almost derisive attitude towards the canonical prosodic systems of both cultures is to some extent a reflection of the position of the adaptor as a cultural negotiator. Alongside the desire to avoid the risk of aural monotony, the absence of standard pentameters can be construed as a refusal to orientate the text towards sheer domestication. This goes hand in hand with the constant and conspicuous intrusion of French words into the text (see below, 2.2.a.).

Crimp adopts an unprecedented level of prosodic flexibility. His lines are unscrupulously irregular, ranging from one syllable to around twenty. The prosodic arrangement of the lines seems to be solely motivated by the creation of rhyme, entailing a continuous arrhythmic verse, to the extent of making many rhymes virtually inaudible in performance and exist solely on the page. However, T.S. Eliot, in his 'Reflection of *Vers Libre*' argues that the choice of free verse should not necessarily be understood as an attempt to lessen the prominence of the rhyme:

And this liberation from rhyme might be as well a liberation of rhyme. Freed from its exacting task of supporting lame verse, it could be applied with greater effect where it is most needed. There are often passages in an unrhymed poem where rhyme is wanted for some special effect, for a sudden tightening-up, for a cumulative insistence, or for an abrupt change of mood. (1917: 138)

Indeed, extreme free verse leaves Crimp the possibility of emphasising prosody when regularity is restored. An arresting example is the recitation of Covington's [Oronte] piece in II-ii, written in heavily endstopped lines, with a hammering iambic pattern:

MAN – Remember all the good times that we had.
 WOMAN – The times that you call good now all seem bad.
 MAN – Let's dine out at my restaurant. The limousine is ready.
 WOMAN – I'd rather stay at home and cook my own spaghetti. (1996: 19)

All these strategies aim to prevent dramatic verse from falling into the trap of dullness. Akin to rubato in music, speech delivery is at times speeded up, sometimes slowed down. Camouflaged rhymes, enjambments and metrical variations make the pace gather momentum, before a sonorous comic rhyme will suddenly cut it short. While this chapter focuses on comic rhymes, one should keep in mind that most often, at least in some translations, no rhyme is underlined except when it is a joke.

Before moving on to identifying comic rhymes, one last technique used to play down the presence of rhymes needs to be mentioned.

c. Rhyme as one element of the sound-texture

This technique radically differs from the previous two: it involves over-charging the lines with a dense network of rhythmic, assonantal and alliterative features, with a view to ‘diluting’ the resonance of rhymes. Competing with a salient sonorous background, rhyming words lose their privileged status and only become one element of the many making the rich sound-texture of the play. In other words, since alliteration is conducive to the liveliness of performed speeches, they create a kind of emulation with the resonance of verse and rhymes. Although deliberate assonances and alliterations are used in most translations, this technique is only used consistently by those translators who are first of all poets, namely Lochhead, Harrison and McGough (Wilbur, albeit a poet, has not pursued this). Harrison’s *Misanthrope* abounds with words that stand out not for their phonic dimensions. Sonorous words or phrases, such as ‘knickerbockers’ (2002: 50), ‘hoity-toity’ (50), ‘tittle-tattle’ (54), ‘world’s worst bore’ (56), ‘hush-hush’ (57), ‘pooh-poohed’ (58), ‘put-on pout’ (72), ‘hoi polloi’ (73), ‘slapdash and slipshod’ (80) etc. stimulate the audience’s appreciation of the phonic strength of speeches. Every now and then, sonorous tropes are deployed throughout a line – here, a couplet: ‘The latest tittle-tattle, all the chat,/the two of us swap gossip, tit for tat?’ (74). Bolt is also playful with language, as testifies to the lines ‘With blobs of dip and bits of stew’ (2008: 35) or ‘The pious, pompous, puffed-up git!’ (2002: 23), to quote only two examples – the latter was welcomed with warm laughter in the National Theatre production. The heavy alliteration reinforces the rhyming word ‘git,’ which is itself a comic rhyme (see below, 2.3.).

McGough also makes frequent use of words or phrases that are mainly chosen because of their alliterative resonance: ‘[...] dumpity-dump, but I am a speaker and a seeker of [...]’ (2013: 24); ‘Oh Damon is your man for the tittle-tattle,/the Emperor of Babble, the Prince of Prattle’ (31). To Alceste’s lines ‘it would enhance his reputation for gossip and idle prattle,’ Philinte wittily replies: ‘True, he’s the tit at the start of the tittle-tattle’ (65). Others like ‘So,

you cracked your skull, skulking in the scullery?’ (2009: 5) translate a self-conscious verbal playfulness that is perhaps more pungent than the rhyme itself. Does it matter, in the following, that the last line is unrhymed?

Why, a friend of mine, just the other day,
A professor in fact, was moved to say
That in this Tower of Babel everyone jabbers and babbles,
And babbles and gabbles, and mutters and stammers...
And... (2008: 8)

Similarly, would anyone mind the pair ‘looby/booby’ and notice the absence of rhyme in the last line here?

ANGÉLIQUE – A muggins -
CLÉANTE – A noodle and a looby
ANGÉLIQUE – A lopdoodle, a dunderhead, a pigsconce and a booby -
CLÉANTE – A clinchpoop, a gobermouche, a snollygoster, a gongoozler -
ANGÉLIQUE – A lickspigot, a fuzzduty, a jobbernowl, an ass – (2009: 43)

In the three ‘McGoughières,’ verbal playfulness concerns much more than just rhymes: a great many words are invented, and many lines, sometimes entire speeches are structured on a heavy rhythmic pattern, rather as Molière does in his *ballets verbaux*, but to a greater extent (Ploix 2016: 120-1).

2.2. Emphasis on the sonorous quality of rhymes

Because of their privileged position, and the structural predictability of regular verse, rhymes are a resonant formal device. As discussed in Chapter I, English rhymes are more obtrusive than French rhymes, notably because of the iambic pattern and the fact that English is an inflectional language, making the task of finding rhyming words harder. When the word or sound has an incongruous sonority, the effect is all the more reinforced. Many English translators have taken the intrinsic self-consciousness of English rhymes as an opportunity to overdo the sonorous effects of their rhymes, for comic effect. To some extent, when the sonority of the rhyme is funny in itself, its sonority will be all the more reinforced when laughter in the audience obliges the actor to pause, leaving the rhyme to resonate.

a. *Subservient rhymes*

Boileau, in the *Art poétique*, mentions the well-known difficulty of crafting verse that both accords with sense and rhyme: ‘Que toujours le bon sens s’accorde avec la rime;/L’un l’autre vainement ils semblent se haïr,’ but then adds that rhymes should be subservient: ‘La rime est une esclave, et ne doit qu’obéir’ (Chant I, 28-30). This position is the opposite of Banville’s,

for whom ‘la rime se place en premier, le vers vient ensuite’ (1872: 52). Taking advantage of the fact that rhymes are inherently incongruous, English translators make some of their rhymes sound deliberately forced by artificially distorting the rhyming word according to need. These rhymes are thus the ‘esclave’ of the verse, but to an extent that Boileau would, of course, never have approved.

In Mahon’s *High Time*, in order to rhyme with ‘honour’ the term ‘wonder’ appears in the text with distorted spelling: ‘wonhour’ (1985: 33). This is especially significant as the character using this rhyme is directly addressing the audience, reinforcing the metatextual effect. In Mooney’s *Misanthrope*, at one point, the actor modifies the vowel sound and the position of the stress ‘seriously,’ pronouncing it as such /sɪərɪˈʌsli/, to rhyme with ‘thusly.’ In the same vein, throughout Lochhead’s translations, rhyme also displays the translator’s creativity, by sometimes imposing itself forcibly. The mixture of local dialects employed in the translations sometimes blends with invented words, creating highly comic occurrences of ‘adjusting rhymes’:

TARTUFFE –	Ah! mon Dieu, je vous prie,	TARTUFFE –	Afore ye speak tae me tak’ this hanky
	Avant que de parler, prenez-moi ce mouchoir.		In the name o’ a’ that’s holy and religious –
DORINE –	Comment?	DORINE –	Whit fur?
TARTUFFE –	Couvrez ce sein, que je ne saurais voir.	TARTUFFE –	To cover up yir... yir... whidjies
(III-ii, 858-60)			(2002: 131)

As Peacock remarks about this couplet: ‘In Molière, Tartuffe’s embarrassment is allegedly visual, with the emphasis on *voir*. In Lochhead, the embarrassment is verbal, with the inadequate rhyme, which with the gesticulative implications in the script, needs no dictionary gloss to facilitate comprehension!’ (1996: 50).

Several other examples could be quoted from Mooney’s, Lochhead’s, Harrison’s and others’ translations, but it is in McGough’s translations that such rhymes are the most frequent, to the point of almost making them an idiosyncratic feature of his style. McGough relishes in having his characters misfire, trip-up and self-correct, and distort the rhyming words. ‘Shadenfreude/annoyed(ë),’ ‘uncouth/Tartooth’ (instead of ‘Tartuffe’), ‘cadaver/ra-ver’ (instead of ‘rather’), ‘tooth/illness-prooth’ are examples amongst others of distorted rhymes found in the McGoughières (Ploix 2016: 115, 117). The only instances of such rhyme in Molière is the memorable pair ‘confié/tartuffié’ (II-iii, 673-4) and from *Amphitryon*: ‘Et l’on me des-Sosie enfin,/comme on vous des-Amphitryonne’ (III-vii, 1860-1).

As a way of suggesting the necessity of having recourse to unorthodox resources to create rhyme, many translators use a French word as the end-stopping term. The use of French terms

as rhyming words produces a strong outlandish effect. Once again, it is McGough who has used this comic technique the most. Although French words crop up in his three translations, they are especially numerous in *The Hypochondriac*. Toinette introduces Argan fittingly enough: ‘Then while you’re waiting to say a prayer/For here comes her father, *le malade imaginaire*’ (2009: 26). Other instances of French rhyming words in the play include ‘*mon cher/mon père*’ (8), ‘*agree/oui*’ (9), ‘*accompli/oui*’ (10), ‘*pass on/passant*’ (21), ‘*rien de [sic] tout/you*’ (23), ‘*alouette/duette*’ (39), ‘*aussi/saucy*’ (47), ‘*imaginaire/me there*’ (63), ‘*enfer/unfair*’ (71), ‘*prepare/salade imaginaire*’ (93). To Cléante’s *galant* address to his beloved

Enchanting, or *enchanté*, if I may,
If you please, Miss, or Ma’melle, *s’il vous plaît*,
Look deep into your heart, or *ton Coeur*,
And sing to me, or *chante*, what is there. (2009: 41)

Angélique appropriately retorts with an irritated: ‘Your bilingual tongue confuses, not amuses.’

Running counter to the common practice in adaptation which tends to favour the complete effacement of the source culture, the privileged position of French words emphasises the intercultural nature of his adaptations – hence the popular term ‘McGoughières’ used to refer to these plays. In other words, in keeping with the metrical system that frequently walks a tightrope from pentameter to alexandrine, this kind of rhyme emphasises the borderline position of the translation between French and English culture, and the comic effects that can be derived from this. It can be contended that his *Misanthrope* and his two other Molière plays are in line with the long-standing habit of mutual mockery within the French-English cultural relationship, which has always been appreciated by popular culture, supported and fuelled by many artists, humourists and other cultural agents, as a topic particularly conducive to amusement.¹²¹

While distorted pronunciation, modified suffixes, or completely invented words show that rhyme is acclimatising itself to the text, to some extent, it also imposes its presence onto the text with uncompromising authority. In other words, while these rhymes are categorically *esclaves*, the text still completely bends under the sonorous weight of the rhymes. Having to compromise, being obliged to stoop to distorting themselves, they appear empowered, and reinforce the presence of the textual voice. As Boileau adds in the *Art poétique*: ‘Mais,

¹²¹ In Harrison’s *Misanthrope* and other translations, instances of comical intercultural echoes sometimes come up, as testified to by the following very stereotypical reference to French and English cultural habits placed in the rhyming position: ‘It’s his little finger like a *croissant*,/crooked at *Angelina*’s where he sips his tea’ (2002: 50).

lorsqu'on la néglige, elle devient rebelle,/Et, pour la rattraper, le sens court après elle' (Chant I, 35-6). The signifying quality of such rhymes is indeed weakened: these phonetic and lexical adjustments promote the prominence of the signifier and a withdrawal of the signified.

b. Feminine rhymes

In French, phonetically weighty rhymes are seen as aesthetically pleasing. In English they can be seen as heavy, or, in good hands, comic. Feminine rhymes, or rhymes stressed on the last but one syllable tend to have a playful effect, and are consequently rarely used in English poetry. It is also noticeable that the longer the rhyming words are, the more comic they tend to be, and especially so when they are isometric, i.e. when they have the same number of syllables. This is notably why there is a tendency in English to use monosyllables in rhyming pairs. Bolt reflected on this in an interview, remarking that pairs such as 'me/see,' 'too/you,' 'trot along and pass muster' (in Johnston 1996: 254) and that compounds such as 'I did/prided' are funny. Bolt adds that he would therefore be careful when using longer rhymes like 'Proclamation/sophistication' in tragedy (*ibid.*).

Mooney uses lots of rhyming words that combine length in terms of syllables and in terms of prominence of rhyming sounds. Long feminine pairs such as 'manipulate/equivocate' (2008: 18), 'falsetto/stiletto' (*ibid.*: 32), 'declaration/consideration' (33), 'evacuating/excruciating' (36), 'influence/congruence' (42), 'idiosyncratic/emphatic' (62), 'abasement/replacement' (63) are very common in all his translations. Mooney actually seems to privilege these heavy rhyming words over the grammatical operators with no semantic referent in themselves (to, you, it, this, etc.).

Although less frequently than Mooney, Crimp also pulls off conspicuous rhymes in this way, using endstopped and weighty rhymes like 'paracetamol/acceptable' (1996: 2), 'satisfaction/ interaction' (3), 'insanity/humanity' (5), 'reality/morality' (7). The length of the rhyming words counteracts the absence of structural predictability of the rhymes, and thereby the attempt to play down their presence. One can note a greater density of such rhymes in the *scène des portraits*, which creates a fitting sense of affectedness.

As the last syllable of feminine rhymes is unstressed, it sometimes only consists of a suffix or a grammatical word which carries no strong semantic value: 'Screwing me/suing me' (Cohen 1994: 185), 'dammit/cram it' (*ibid.*: 198), 'scold you are/old you are' (200). Forty-nine pairs of such compound rhymes can be found in Cohen's *Misanthrope*. Translators often take advantage of the lesser significance of the last syllable to further the potential comic effect and to use the unstressed final syllable as a cheeky addition: 'how can it be, with all of her

wrongdoing/The two of you are always rendezvous-ing' (Cohen 1994: 186); 'You'll find her armed quite well with such coy fusses,/To spurn an army of Diafoiruses' (Mooney 2005: 25); 'She is absolutely correct. Spot on/This poor body of mine is wrecked... rotten' (McGough 2009: 28). These kind of suffixes or morphemes typically do not add meaning to the line, but are only playful gap-fillers. These artificial additions are in line with the propensity of English comic rhymes to 'adjust themselves' to the requirements.

Finally, it needs to be pointed out that although long rhyming words stand out more than monosyllables, when those come up after a series of polysyllabic or feminine rhymes, they will acquire a conspicuous pungency, as in Alceste's following words: 'For those who say so – aren't worth a fart!/I'll be insulted if they thought me smart!' interrupted a sequence of lines ending with long words (Cohen 1994: 185).

c. Repetitive rhyming sounds

The enemies of English rhymes on stage invoke an unrelenting singsong that prevents the audience from concentrating on the action. As feminine rhymes are ponderous in themselves, a series of uninterrupted feminine rhymes is at high risk of creating a singsong effect. Although certainly conscious of this, Mooney occasionally peppers his plays with an aurally striking series of the same feminine rhyming sound, or uses a particular feminine rhyme very frequently in a short passage. In the following excerpt from Mooney's *Tartuffe*, in which Tartuffe villainously attempts to persuade Elmire to satisfy his lust, there is a series of feminine rhymes ending with the sound /ɪfn/ or /efn/, creating a threatening sonorous insistence that corroborates the intensity of the episode:

If this seems contradictory position
Fix blame upon the object of my mission,
For no amount of earnest flagellation
Could keep my keen desire from graduation.
Your love did spark my holy veneration,
While weaker thoughts you drove to penetration.
If you might stoop to give your benediction,
Relieving me of manly predilection. (2005: 55)

French (notably Banville 1872: 66-7), as well as English (Wimsatt 1944: 328 et seq) prosodists have argued that two rhymes should not be of the same part of speech, or have the same grammatical function. Here, the shameless hammering of substantives contributes to the intensity of the passage. It is difficult to assert whether the purpose of this surprising series is to enhance the menacing dimension of the character in this situation, or on the contrary, to discredit his speech and remind the audience of the comic genre. Whatever the original

intention was, and whatever the director decides, the unwieldy rhymes do call for a particular performance choice.¹²²

Although the repetition of rhyming words in a series or in a short passage is mostly used in Mooney's translations, this comic strategy is also used in other translations: Crimp's Oronte enters on stage with short lines and a redundant rhyme in /i/, which actively contributes to his characterisation:

Hello. I'd arranged to meet Jenny
here after the screening
but a message down at the desk said that now this evening
is the earliest she can manage. Pity.
But then they told me
(rather begrudgingly)
that you had use of the key
(of course that's nothing whatsoever to do with me –
I mean: the key
why should it be?
obviously.)
But then I thought, well why not take this opportunity
of coming to see
a man
I've always dreamed of taking by the hand
(1996: 13)

Single-word sentences ('pity,' 'obviously') and lines comprising partial phrases ('I mean: the key,' 'of coming to see') make the versification highly artificial. Moreover, Oronte's awkward and long digression about the key, the absence of punctuation in the first lines and the use of asyndetons ('the key/why should it be?') combine to corroborate the anarchic versification, and, to all intents and purposes, Oronte's clumsiness. While in the original, Oronte only spends two lines talking about trivial things 'J'ai su là-bas que, pour quelques emplettes/Éliante est sortie, et Célimène aussi' (I-ii, 250-1), before addressing Alceste and going straight away to the point of his presence, Crimp's Oronte displays his awkwardness during an entire speech. His confusion echoes his inability to handle versification with naturalness.

Instances of rhyming sounds found in a long series or in high density are relatively rare in our corpus of study. However, rhyming sounds do not need more than a tercet to gain a visible presence. Absent in Molière, but frequently used in translations to facilitate composition, they

¹²² In Mooney's production at the Central America University, recorded on 21 October 2011, the actor playing Tartuffe noticeably slows down speech delivery, lowers his voice and comes closer to Elmire when saying these lines. However, the vocal emphasis placed on meters and rhymes, as well as the funny rhyming words evacuate any serious potential. See:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKiDZvs_IPA&index=6&list=PL28C667FFD1B48E9D

also have potential for comic effects. Cohen provides an interesting example: in his fury, Alceste expresses his discontent in a mechanical tercet, in which the lines start with an anaphoric pattern. The last line distorts the rhythmical pattern, but the same starting words create an expectation of the same rhyming sound:

There's no participating honestly
 In all these treacherous deceptions!
 I hate society receptions!
 I hate this place!
 I hate your face!
 I hate the wholly-stinking holy-human race! (1994: 184)

Alceste's criticism of Oronte's sonnet in Cohen's *Misanthrope* quoted in the previous chapter was an instance of metrical variation, which created a comic metatextual effect. This one is another instance, not metatextual, but here, purely sonorous.¹²³

d. Verse fragmentation

Scott argues that 'There is no such thing as an inherently good or an inherently bad rhyme. There are only rhymes made good or bad by the lines which support them' (1980: 126). Some rhymes are made comic or conspicuous more owing to the way they are brought out by the lines, than thanks to their intrinsic quality. The use of punctuation to isolate rhyming words or rhyming groups at the end of the line is a common feature in several translations, especially in Bolt's ones. The verse structure and punctuation make Alceste's points categorical:

[...] Of course I won't.
 Perhaps you think my case is weak. I don't.
 [...]
 I shouldn't *need* to help my cause one bit.
 I'm either in the right or not. That's it. (Bolt 1998: 26)

Punctuation and verse structure can also be used to create a delay that builds up expectation. It is worth noting that in the line 'You wench! You jade! You Jezebel! You pest!' (2005: 24, also quoted below), Mooney emphasises the comic effect by creating an anticipation for a rhyming name-calling, thanks to its position at the end of a build-up. The same goes for 'The pious, pompous, puffed-up git!' (Bolt 2002: 23). The fragmentation of the line leading to a dramatic ending is indeed a strategy frequently used by translators:

PERNELLE – Your advice is not something I place any store on;
 DAMIS – But –

¹²³ Some prosodic variations in Cohen's *Misanthrope* are semantic in nature, as when Philinte abruptly shortens the lines, which plays on the meaning of the verb 'to err':

And affable Arsinoé still strikes you
 Fair,
 unless I err... (1994: 186).

PERNELLE – And you, dearest boy, in a word, are a moron. (Fleming 2016: 68)

Or the interruption of the flow, asking the audience to recall the presence of prosody:

Downstairs just now, what did I see you do?
You hoist your glass and hail, not hail, *halloo*
Some person [...] (Harrison 2002: 28)

Also frequently used is the ellipsis to create an artificial delay:

PHILINTE – You really hate mankind, don't you, Alceste?
ALCESTE – My God, Philinte! How did you know...? YOU GUESSED! (Cohen 1994: 186)

Cunningly, in the *scène des portraits* of McGough's *Misanthrope*, when it is Cleonte's turn to be slandered, McGough uses an ellipsis, not to create expectations, but to create surprise:

We laughed so much we almost wept.
And at standing upright he was not adept
So we threw him in the fountain... where he slept. (2013: 31)

Here, the ellipsis is not really creating an expectation in the audience, as the third line could have stopped after the word 'fountain.' McGough's lines being quite irregular, the third line could very well end after eight syllables (as it is the case in the first line, for that matter). The audience could not have expected the recurrence of the same rhyming sound after the preceding couplet. The ellipsis reinforces the sonorous value of the tercet, as well as the inherently funny dimension of this unexpected ending.

2.3. Emphasis on the semantic quality of rhymes

a. Semantic value of rhymes

Rejecting rhymes which are essentially a 'sound for sound's sake' overlap, Folkart argues that 'Rhyme, in any authentic poem, is an important heuristic tool, one that makes a very significant contribution to the meaning of a poem – not a matter of scrabbling after words that will match the sounds at the end of some other line in the vicinity' (2007: 121). Rhymes are indeed prominent both phonetically and semantically. In light of Paul Valéry's description of poetry as 'une hésitation prolongée entre le son et le sens' (1960: 637), one can argue that in rhyming couplets, sound and sense mutually add strength to each other. Wilbur, conscious of the legitimacy of his versification and the aesthetic qualities in rhymed verse, is aware that the privileged position of the rhyming word emphasises its sonority, highlights its signifying resonance, and endows it with richer meanings. As he puts it, 'There is no question that words, when dancing with such patterns, are not their prosaic selves, but have a wholly different mood and meaning' (1958: xi). Although modern rhymed translations of Molière's comedies can hardly be considered to be an 'authentic poem,' and rhymes hardly have a real heuristic function, and indeed seem to be 'scrabbling after words that will match the sounds,' rhyming

words do often have a strong signifying value, which translators exploit for comic effects. One can also contend that the fact that English rhymes on stage enjoy a greater resonance than French rhymes provides them with a stronger semantic charge.

Many examples of rhymes lending themselves to a strong signifying resonance can be quoted from modern translations. These rhymes tend to reinforce the meaning carried in the speech. Some notable instances have been appropriately noted and commented on by critics and reviewers: for example, Maryvonne Boisseau, in an article on sound and sense in poetry, comments on the free rendition of Léonor's lines in Mahon's *High Time*: 'Qui vous a fait de moi de si belles peintures/Et prend soin de forger de telles impostures?' (III-viii, 1075-6) becomes 'What *is* this rigmarole? And Who is 'Val'?/Has someone been creating *un scandale*?' (1985: 56), spoken as the two last lines of the scene. As Boisseau remarks, Mahon uses a word whose meaning is heavily loaded for an audience still permeated with puritan and protestant culture (2005: 65). The use of French, making the word stand out even more, reinforces the effect.

In Mooney's *Tartuffe*, the comedy of Cléante's sardonic reaction to Orgon's statement is enhanced, thanks to the privileged position of the antiphrastic adjective 'sincere,' referring ironically to Orgon's remark:

OR – Et je verrais mourir frère, enfants, mère, et femme,
Que je m'en soucierais autant que de cela.
CL – Les sentiments humains, mon frère, que voilà!
(I-v, 278-80)

OR – And even death of wife would bring no tear!
CL – A lovely thought, dear Brother, how ... sincere!
(2005: 22)

In Molière, the two key terms, the verb 'soucier' and the noun group 'sentiments humains,' although placed at the end of the first caesura, do not have the same strategic positioning as in Mooney, and therefore not the same resonance.

In this excerpt of the opening scene of Fleming's *Tartuffe*, Pernelle, infatuated with Tartuffe, uses a very different register to Damis, who is at war with him. The difference in register is brought out by the rhyming words: Pernelle's words 'heaven's gate' and 'emulate' contrast with Damis's rhymes. The semantic values of words of contrasting registers are strengthened by their privileged positions, which enables the audience to appreciate them in relation to the others:

PERNELLE – To live a good life, you should sit at his feet
For he knows the highway to heaven's gate.
A man my son should force you to emulate.
DAMIS – Pardon me, Grandma, while I quietly throw up.
I mean, this guy really takes the cup.
And a father who'd want his kids to be like this
Would have to be one piddle short of a piss.
And like you, Grandma, I can also be blunt:

The day is fast approaching when I'll thump that runt. (2016: 69)

In Bolt's *Tartuffe* (2002), the couplet Elmire uses in the seduction scene to deter Tartuffe is worth quoting, as Bolt prides himself on it in the *Art of Translation* (2010: 35), and was also quoted by *The Guardian* (06/03/2002) as representative of Bolt's 'deft, verbal comedy': 'And now you're rushing to the sweet/Before we've had the soup and meat' (2002: 86). Elmire is trying to stall for time, seeing Tartuffe rushing his sexual advances. This couplet is one of the many examples existing in rhymed translations of Molière's plays that make a playful use of metaphors in the rhyme position. In this case, the word 'sweet' refers to a reality that decorum prevents Elmire from naming directly. A metaphor has, by nature, a heavily-charged meaning, which is enhanced when placed at a strategic position in the line.

Some reviewers have however maintained that the cumbersome sonority of rhymes on stage impedes the smooth understanding of meaning; and indeed, there is a risk that the sonorous and semantic value of the rhyming word might affect the unity of the verse as a whole. But translators often deliberately pursue this effect: standing out above the rest of the words thanks to sonorously- and semantically-charged rhyming words can prove to be an efficient comic strategy. Vulgarism used in rhyming words can have this effect: coarse words, highly significant in themselves, have their semantic weight strengthened as rhyming words. Comic vulgar rhymes as in 'You're so reasonable you make me sick./You'd stay cool while someone sliced off your prick' (1996: 8) abound in Crimp's *Misanthrope*.

Although in Bolt's adaptations, language is overall quite formal, and occasionally verges on the archaic, a few swear words are peppered throughout *Tartuffe* (2002) and *The Grouse* (2008), and almost always placed at the rhyme position, creating a violent contrast in register particularly conducive to comic effect. When coarse language is rarely used, it becomes stronger: 'A *brilliant* stanza... I was quite *moved* by it' says Philinte, to which Alceste dramatically replies under his breath 'How dare you! Liar! Moved? By that... that shit?' (Bolt 1998: 32).

From the first to the second translation of *Tartuffe*, Bolt has moved away from the purely 'metrical humour,' solely relying on the intrinsic incongruity of rhyme and occasional subdued added jokes, to a more downright type of humour. Bolt once said 'I would never use phrases that make people laugh automatically and in a very base way. It's very easy to make a hundred people out of seven hundred laugh just by saying 'You silly fat bastard.' You *could* do it and someone *would* titter. But my primary rule is to avoid such easy laughs' (in Johnston 1996:

Coarse language is not necessarily used as insults directly addressed at other characters, it is sometimes used very playfully: a startling effect arises in Mooney's *Tartuffe*, when Cléante, who is supposed to embody moderation and temperance, finishes Tartuffe's line and, in fact, dramatically concludes IV-i with a swear word:

Given the relatively formal register permeating the text, quite close to that of Molière on the whole, the signifying dimension of the rhyming word stands out. The comic effect of rhyming an English word with a French word gives another example of how sound and meaning can be brought out together.

In various instances, rhymes are not mere homophonies, or signifiers (in the Saussurian meaning of the term). Especially owing to their sonorous and semantic weight, English rhymes ‘bring together in a single act of apprehension two different units of meaning which language normally holds separate’ (Attridge 1979: 64).¹²⁵ The emphatic sonority of English rhyming couplets on stage has the potential to create strong semantic rapports, which in turn, adds meaning to the text: according to Folkart, ‘The valency of rhyme is the extent to which phonetic overlap induces a semantic overlap that contributes to the construction of the poem’s truth-value’ (2007: 60). Again, it is not very relevant to talk about the ‘poem’s truth-value’ when focusing on the ‘light verse’ written by modern English translators of Molière’s comedies. However, translators do sometimes pursue semantic overlaps in order to achieve particular effects.

¹²⁴ Comparing his first and second version of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* confirms this: in the 2005 version, the play opens with: 'where the fuck *are* these women?'

Because most English rhymes involve the root rather than the inflectional ending or suffix (*looking* rhymes with *booking* but not with *liking*), the semantic contrast or parallel between the two words is more prominent than it is in French; and this aspect is emphasized by the frequent monosyllabic rhymes in English, where the semantic element and the rhyming element are both concentrated in one syllable. (2013: 61)

In Bolt's rhyming pair 'sweet/meat' quoted above, not only are the two words strongly semantically-charged, being comic metaphors, but they are obviously strongly linked, belonging to the same lexical field. The couplet also functions as a two-liner, and the rhymes are endstopped: the structural tightness of the lines and, therefore its epigrammatic dimension reinforces the link between the two rhyming words. Finally, the 'rhyme relationship' is reinforced by the fact that they are monosyllables. The semantic link between the two rhyming words, be it synonymic or antagonistic in nature, in turn further reinforces the epigrammatic dimension of the couplet.

The nature of the created semantic rapport is non-prescriptive; it hinges upon individual responses to the union: for each couplet, there is no single answer to the questions Reginald Gibbons asks in his article entitled 'On Rhyme': 'How might rhyme think? What kind of cognition can rhyme achieve?' (2006: 64).

When two rhyming words refer to a character, the signifying bond between them can contribute to characterisation. Using the pair 'Oreste/funeste' six times in *Andromaque*, Racine strengthens the connection between the character and his tragic fate. In translations, opportunities have been sought to take advantage of the possibilities English offers to add to characterisation. In almost all versions of *Le Misanthrope*, many instances of 'Alceste' rhyming with 'detest,' 'protest' and sometimes 'depressed' and 'obsessed' can be found, as a way of stressing the misanthropic and contesting nature of the character. In several translations, Alceste also frequently rhymes with 'best' (6 occurrences in Cohen and in Harrison). This is noteworthy considering the pseudo-heroic nature of the character, always concerned about standing out from the rest of society.¹²⁶

By the same token, in English, aptly enough, 'Célimène' rhymes with 'men' (6 occurrences in Harrison and 9 in Cohen). This rhyme coupling, used repeatedly in all translations, directly reflects on her being constantly surrounded by men. Next in line in regard to frequency, is the word 'again,' alluding to her unchangeable character. It is also worth pointing out that Molière uses proper names much less than English translators in his rhymes; 'Alceste' does not appear in the rhyme position in Molière's play, and 'Célimène' only appears twice. In comparison, 'Alceste' appears 18 times in Harrison, 20 in Cohen (including the pairs 'arrested/Alcested,'

¹²⁶ See Wimsatt 1944: 335-6, for examples of humorous bindings of proper names with rhymes in poetry.

‘attests/Alceste’),¹²⁷ 5 in Mooney, 9 in Bolt (1998); ‘Célimène’ is rhymed 12 times in Harrison, 11 in Cohen, 3 in Mooney, and 8 in Bolt (1998).

As said above, being usually colloquial, if not vulgar, insults are given a reinforced semantic weight when placed in the rhyme position. In some cases, they also contribute to characterisation. One can argue that this is particularly true when insults are addressed to a character in their absence, whereas insults directly addressed to the co-speaker present on stage tend to characterise the speaker himself, since the act of insulting displays a lack of control. For example, in Mooney’s *The Imaginary Invalid*, Argan, by finishing his line with the word ‘pest’ characterises himself more than Toinette:

ARGAN – Not sick! Not sick! How dare you suggest!
You wench! You jade! You Jezabelle! You pest! (2005: 24)

The entrance of Alceste [Frank] in David Ives’s *The School for Lies* (2011) offers an arresting example:

FRANK – [from offstage] No, I will NOT, the answer’s NO, you blank,
You frog-faced fob, you perfumated plank,
You cringing idiot!
PHILINTE – Ah. That sounds like Frank. (2011: 6)

On the contrary, in the following couplet from Bolt’s *Tartuffe*, the structural arrangement of the words in the line brings out the implicit association of Tartuffe with Hell, and brings a comic touch to a desperate Marianne, subjected to the incessant taunt from Dorine.¹²⁸

[...] Consider it Hell enough,
Don’t add the torment of Tartuffe! (2002: 80)

As the words ‘Tartuffe’ and ‘Hell enough’ (which can here be understood as one sense-unit) are connected semantically, this line contributes to the characterisation of Tartuffe.

Translators especially tend to make a great use of this characterisation technique in their rewriting of the *scène des portraits* (II-iv). While in the original, only two couplets use rhymes that negatively describe the characters ‘Parbleu, s’il faut parler des gens extravagants,/Je viens d’en essayer un des plus fatigants’ (575-6), ‘[...] Ô l’ennuyeux conteur!/Jamais, on ne le voit sortir du grand seigneur’ (595-6), in translations, there is often a greater density of such rhymes in this scene, and in the whole play, for that matter. In Harrison’s translation, 4 such couplets can be found in this scene, 5 in Lochhead’s *Miseryguts*, 7 in Bolt’s and McGough’s versions,

¹²⁷ Changing the name ‘Alceste’ into a verb or a noun, as in Molière’s ‘tartuffié,’ a process called antonomasia, is an efficient characterisation strategy. The pair ‘arrested/Alcested’ provides another example of funny artificial feminine rhyme.

¹²⁸ The effect is regrettably somewhat diminished in the performance at the National Theatre (directed by Lindsay Posner) by the fact that the actress playing Marianne does not try to adjust the pronunciation of ‘Tartuffe’ to match the word ‘enough.’

and 10 in Cohen's *Misanthrope*. This count only includes the adjectives or nouns that refer to the character as a whole, and excludes other rhyming adjectives and nouns describing a particular aspect of the character's behaviour or physical appearance, which tend, again, to be more frequent in translations than in the original. This is evidence that English translators aim to be more incisive and cutting in their verse, arranging the words with a view to maximising the comic potential of the lines.

Cohen's *scène des portraits* starts with great bravura, thanks to a run of four sets of 'characterising rhymes':

CLITANDRE – Your friend CLEONTE was absolutely CRASS!
 That fool ROUTINELY makes himself an ass!
 CÉLIMÈNE – It's true; while in details he's quite meticulous
 In overall behavior, he's ridiculous!
 ACASTE – But there's an even more outrageous dunce
 Who's never known a single thought: not once!
 It's blabbermouth Damon! With no idea –
 But with this ghastly VERBAL diarrhea! (1994: 193)¹²⁹

Molière was nevertheless aware of the strong effect created by the use of invectives with pejorative terms belonging to the farcical register placed in the rhyme position, and more so than Corneille. Bernet (2004: 153) provides an inventory of such rhymes in Molière's verse plays: 'damoiseau' (6/9 – 0),¹³⁰ 'cocu' (3/12 – 0), 'fripon' (3/10 – 0), 'cornu' (2/2 – 0), 'coquin' (2/15 – 2), 'faquin' (2/6 – 0), 'jocrisse' (2/2 – 0), 'pécore' (2/2 – 0), 'pendard' (2/8 – 0), 'poltron' (2/5 – 3), 'vaurien' (2/2 – 0), 'apôtre' (1/1 – 0), 'carogne' (1/2 – 0), 'chattemite' (1/1 – 0), 'cornard' (1/1 – 0), 'drôle' (1/5 – 0), 'étourneau' (1/1 – 0), 'gueux' (1/5 – 0), 'hère' (1/1 – 0), 'péronnelle' (1/1 – 0), 'scélérat' (1/9 – 1).

The list would be too long if the same study were to be conducted in all modern translations of Molière's comedies. In *Le Misanthrope*, however, the invectives placed at the rhyme position have nothing of the farcical register of the terms above. The rhyming invectives in the play are: 'infâme,' 'empoisonneur au diable,' 'traître,' 'extravagant,' 'impertinent au diable,' 'traîtresse,' amounting to a total of 6 occurrences, a very insignificant number compared to the abundance found in translations. The following quatrain taken from Bolt's *The Grouch* is representative of how translators wallow in this type of rhyme:

Partout, il est connu pour tout ce qu'il peut être;	[...] His veneer
Et ses roulements d'yeux, et son ton radouci,	Fools no one - it is crystal clear
N'imposent qu'à des gens qui ne sont point d'ici.	To everyone who knows the man

¹²⁹ While it is debatable as to whether the final couplet applies, it is still possible to understand 'diarrhea' as encompassing the character on the whole thanks to the ambiguity of the determiner 'this,' which can be emphasised in performance.

¹³⁰ The numerical indications after each word are: the frequency in the 11 verse comedies by Molière in the rhyme position/the total frequency in the same plays – the total frequency in the 8 comedies by Corneille.

On sait que ce pied plat, digne qu'on le confonde,
 Par de sales emplois, s'est poussé dans le monde:
 Et, que, par eux, son sort, de splendeur revêtu,
 Fait gronder le mérite, et rougir la vertu.
 (I-i, 126-132)

That he's a fraud, a charlatan,
 A lying, scheming hypocrite,
 A total, twenty-carat shit (2008: 13)

Although insults and name-callings in modern translations are more frequent and sometimes more violent than in Molière, especially in Crimp, Lochhead and Bolt, most instances, in fact, pertain more to amusing name-callings than serious insults, steering clear of the vulgar register. Again, to quote only a few examples from translations of *Le Misanthrope*, rhyming pairs such as 'megalomaniac/attack' (Harrison 2002: 58), 'buffoon/swoon' (Bolt 1998: 21), 'oaf/loaf' (Mooney 2008: 38), 'aunt Nelly/smelly' (Cohen 1994), 'walking joke/laughing-stock' (Lochhead 2002: 32), 'suit/hoot' (Bolt 2008: 15), 'tittle-tattle/Prince of Prattle' (McGough 2013: 31), are plentiful.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that in some instances, the comic effect of such light slurs can have a dramatic function. In this excerpt taken from Mooney's *Tartuffe*, comparing the original with the translation confirms the greater function given to rhyme in English versions: in this tense scene, in which Tartuffe is about to rape Elmire, the structural place given to these colloquialisms and name-callings, drawn from American slang ('rube,' 'boob'), almost creates comic relief:

Qu'est-il besoin pour lui, du soin que vous prenez?
 C'est un homme, entre nous, à mener par le nez.
 De tous nos entretiens, il est pour faire gloire,
 Et je l'ai mis au point de voir tout, sans rien croire.
 (IV-v, 1523-6)

Your husband? Why concern about that rube?
 He drinks in every story like a boob!
 If he caught us, *en* [sic] *flagrante*, that dull lout,
 He'd offer up to God a joyful shout!
 And even when he realized, that clown,
 He'd chastise you, be careful of your gown!
 (2005: 77)

2.4. Expectations and comic effects

a. Feedline and punchline

One common criticism made against rhyming couplets on stage is that they lend themselves to predictability. Some translators, once again, often turn this potential handicap into a comic strength. In the same way as Chapter II, 2.2. demonstrated that rhyming couplets can clarify ideas and favour the efficiency of rhetorical discourse, the binary structure can reinforce the efficiency of a joke. Bolt comments on the advantage of rhyming couplets as opposed to other rhymed verse in enabling a feedline/dialectics that underlie verbal humour:

a joke will be of an A,B, form, and if you have a couplet it works better because the feedline ends in one rhyme and the punchline ends in the second and you would have the same clipped aphoristic quality that Molière or Corneille would have been aiming at. (in Johnston 1996: 251)

When a strong signifying, or an unusual-sounding term appears at the end of the punchline, especially when the feedline has not played the role of setting the proper expectation, its comic resonance will be strengthened. Bolt has exploited the comic potentiality of rhyming couplets to the full. Comparing the text of his second translation of *Tartuffe* in the Oberon edition and the performance at the National Theatre in 2002 shows that the text was at times altered to optimise the comic effect of rhyme. One of the most recurring changes is the inversion of the two lines in a couplet, in order to secure the dialectical effect. In the published text, the translation of Orgon's line 'Il l'admire à tous coups, le cite à tout propos' (I-ii, 196) appears in a full couplet as such:

If he broke wind he'd bottle it
He quotes from him like holy writ (2002: 29)

In the performance, however, one can hear:¹³¹

He quotes from him like holy writ
If he broke wind he'd bottle it

The gag was received with hearty laughter by the audience and has been quoted in a review published in *Variety* (28/03/2002). Even if the comic effect does not directly stem from the rhyming word, the line is structured as a single unit, and naturally enough, laughter will occur after the full line is spoken.

As stated in Chapter I, in alexandrines the alternation between the masculine and feminine forms works as a binding force between the two rhyming lines. Consequently, it would not be true to state that translators' couplets really work as two-liners, and Molière's are a succession of rhymed individual lines. Molière's rhetorical efficiency significantly stems from the way his dramatic language is organised in sets of two lines. The rarity of non-endstopped lines in his work reveals how Molière structures discourse in couplets which almost work as diptychs. While translations do not altogether improve Molière's rhetoric, they add to it the poetics of comic rhymes identified in this chapter. This combination lies behind the witty dimension of rhyming couplets often praised in English translations:

Et l'on ne peut aller jusqu'à vous satisfaire, And now you're rushing to the sweet
Qu'aux dernières faveurs on ne pousse l'affaire? Before we've had the soup and meat (2002: 86).
(IV-v, 1457-8)

The nature of feedline/punchline dialectic is however not prescriptive: comic effects can arise from a predictable punchline just as well as when the rhyming word appears as a surprise, thanks to its randomness, or thanks to the fact that the feedline sets deceptive expectations.

¹³¹ A video recording is available at the National Theatre archives.

b. Creating unexpected semantic relationships

The relationship between the two rhyming words is not always close, synonymic, predictable, or even meaningful. In fact, comic effects often arise when couplets create an incongruous bond between two rhyming words. According to Banville, creating a kind of ‘variety within unity’ (1872: 8) in rhymes should be ‘la première condition de la rime (pour ne pas endormir!)’ (67). Etienne Brunet remarks that the rhyming couple is a place of tension: ‘Face au monde extérieur il offre un front uni et parle d’une seule voix. Mais dans l’intimité les membres du couple font entendre leur différence et l’égalité n’y a pas cours.’¹³²

One way to create this tension is to vary parts of speech in rhymes, avoiding a too obvious semantic relationship, such as antitheses and synonyms, and cliché couples like ‘jour/amour.’ William Wimsatt, in the influential ‘One Relation of Rhyme to Reason: Alexander Pope’ demonstrates the flat and inexpressive effects that can be produced by rhyming words belonging to the same part of speech (1944: 328 et seq.), and champions the ‘wedding of the alogical with the logical,’ whereby the fortuitous parallel in sound contradicts or qualifies the disparity in meaning (337). The incongruity or unlikelihood inherent to the pair creates a pleasurable surprise, and awakens our consciousness of the physical quality of the words (see also Hunter 2006: 183-9). Gibbons also argues that rhymes must have a surprising, improvised quality to them, ‘for constraints to be artistically productive’ (2006: 63).

Again, one can question the ‘artistic’ value of the lines in our corpus, in the sense given by those critics in their study of poetry: the purpose is not the same in ‘light verse’ as in more ‘serious’ poetry: translators do not seek to create innovative semantic bondings as an expressive heuristic feature. However, quoting these critics is relevant insofar as, although the aim is humour rather than poetic expression, the poetics of efficient rhymes remains similar.¹³³

Many of the rhymes proposed in modern translations aspire to unpredictability rather than security, and tend to be gestures of ‘linguistic disobedience,’ to borrow a phrase by Brodsky about rhyme used in Russian poetry (1986: 136). Self-conscious eccentricities in rhyming combinations accentuate the intrinsic incongruity of English rhyme, creating instances of verbal provocation. Conesa, whose book *Le Dialogue moliéresque: étude stylistique et dramaturgique* comments on the way Molière keeps varying rhythm, tone and registers in order to keep the dialogues animated, evokes a theory of communication positing a strong link

¹³² *Le vocabulaire de Victor Hugo*, Paris: Champion, 1988, 165, quoted in Beaudouin 2002: 81.

¹³³ Flesch devotes a few paragraphs to commenting on comic rhymes with the same analytical methodology (1991: 44-6).

between occurrences of unexpected stylistic features and the weight of the information conveyed:

L'expressivité du procédé est d'ailleurs accrue par son caractère inattendu: si l'on se souvient que, dans la théorie de la communication, la valeur d'une information est fonction de son improbabilité, on conçoit que l'improbabilité de la rupture de ton, que rien ne permet de prévoir, valorise l'information qu'elle contient. (1983: 366)

Although Conesa convincingly demonstrates that Molière's dramatic language is imbued with a sense of diversity and contrasting stylistic effects, Molière does not pursue this with his rhymes, as few rhymes that are strikingly and deliberately provocative can be found in his plays.¹³⁴

Different ways are explored by modern translators and adaptors to surprise with rhymes. A classic technique is to confront two conflicting ideas represented by the rhyming words. The pair 'world/curled' is a confrontation between the universal and the particular, altruism and self-interest, the dignified and the futile. This counter-semantic thrust in rhyming pairs is characteristic of comic effects in rhymed modern translations of Molière's comedies:

PHILINTE – Well, I'm not perfect, nor are you!
And we've got better things to do
Than remoralize the world!
Like – get our hair-wigs curled! (Cohen 1994: 186)

Wimsatt makes an interesting point in his essay: he argues that incongruous rhymes of different parts of speech will sound especially prominent if the two lines are closely related, semantically and structurally (1944: 329). In the last two lines, indeed, there is a strong structural parallelism.

Drawing on Boileau's *Art poétique* which alludes to the difficulty of reconciling reason with rhyme, Banville is categorical: 'on ne saurait sacrifier la raison à la rime' (1872: 54). Translators have not always followed this directive: very often, comic effects arise when rhyming combinations are actually quite far from any logical underlying signifying rapport. Indeed, another typical technique is to take advantage of the challenge of composing a text in rhyming couplets in order to indulge in pulling off rhymes that seem random, which creates a comic sense of self-consciousness. When for, example, there is a pause before the rhyme, it sometimes suggests the character is looking for an appropriate rhyme, and so it creates a kind of metatextual effect:

¹³⁴ As Attridge remarks, they are even less frequent in Racine: 'When we look at Racine's use of rhyme, we find that he makes little attempt to sharpen the semantic effect by seeking contrasts or parallels of meaning into rhyme' (2013: 61). Guiraud has calculated that some 40% of Racine's rhymes rely on grammatical forms, as opposed to only 2% of Hugo's (1953: 123). Although I am not aware of a similar study on Molière's rhyme, one can expect a greater number of semantic rhymes in modern English translations.

ORONTE – Now, little man, just watch your manners, please.

ALCESTE – Don't take that tone with me, you... Hercules! (Harrison 2002: 47)

McGough also relishes playing with randomness. After Dorine tells Marianne 'You're at the centre of this whole caboodle,' to create a rhyme she is left to choose an unidiomatic term: 'Will you be pushed into marrying this... noodle?' (2008: 26). Similarly, the unexpected end-stopping word is dramatized by the pause. In Cohen's *scène des portraits*, the way the line finishes with the name of a Malian city sounds quite arbitrary:

CÉLIMÈNE – She just sits there! I have to string together
 These idiotic questions on the weather
 'Think it will rain?' Or. 'Warm enough for you?'
 'I hear they're having a fog in Timbuktu!' (1994: 194)

c. *Playing with expectation with rhymes*

Sometimes providing grounds to criticise rhyming couplets in theatre, the sonorous weight of rhymes may prompt the spectator to be constantly waiting for the next rhyme to come. When rhyme and reason are in strong connection, or when the second half of a verse uses a frequently employed collocation, rhymes fall smoothly and satisfy the spectator's anticipation. However, translators occasionally defy expectations by switching the predicted word with another. By deliberately breaking the prosodic system, Bolt sometimes uses this technique with no great subtlety for comic purposes:¹³⁵

ALCESTE – [...] Speak always from the heart, and *only* from it.
 Your sycophancy makes me want to...
 PHILINTE – Look
 A man comes up to you – embraces you –
 Seems overjoyed to see you – what d'you do? (1998: 20)

Not only is the fact that rhyme suddenly stops comic in itself, but the effect is reinforced as the predicted rhyming word would have been ludic even if it had appeared as it normally might. Here is another example:

ORONTE – Do *I* write badly? Am I like them, then?
 ALCESTE – I didn't say that. Now to *him* I said:
 'You don't write verse to earn your daily bread
 So why on earth d'you have to publish it?
 There's only one excuse for writing... *stuff*

¹³⁵ It is worth quoting another example from Bolt's translations, but this time, from his translation of Corneille's *Le Menteur* (*The Liar*, 1989), as the following lines were very successful: the last line was applauded with a burst of laughter every night:

Why did he bother spouting all that tosh?
 He surely must have known it wouldn't wash.
 He lies to everybody willy-nilly.
 Whoever heard of anything so stupid? (in Johnston 1996: 252-3).

Like this, and that's to keep the wolf at bay. (1998: 33)

In the following noteworthy extract from Crimp's *Misanthrope*, when Célimène [Jennifer] is waiting for Arsinoé [Marcia] to arrive, the rhyming combination between 'glitch' and 'which' is significant insofar as the audience will understand 'witch,' given the way the term is introduced. Placing the rhyme as a transition between the two scenes, belonging to both, owing to its homonymic quality, is an ingenious rewriting of this passage:

Enfin, je n'ai rien vu de si sot, à mon gré,
Elle est impertinente au suprême degré;
Et...

Ah! Quel heureux sort, en ce lieu, vous amène?
Madame, sans mentir, j'étais de vous, en peine.
(III-iv, 871-4)

I used to respect her as a teacher – but there's a glitch
– she's become a totally intolerable malicious...
(*Marcia appears*)

... which
way did you come up? Security
has only just this minute gotten on to me. (54)

This chapter has attempted to provide a wide review of comic and conspicuous rhymes based on stylistic features recurring frequently in a variety of translations, but it must be pointed out that this review is by no means comprehensive. In fact, when commenting on a comic rhyme, it is difficult to ascribe a category to it, as the comic dimension arises from a network of features, which explains why certain examples have been quoted several times. Most importantly, comic features are only truly comic in context. It is methodologically challenging to analyse comic rhymes in light of the dramaturgical context. Also, the comedy of the textual features identified is dependent on the actors' performance. Therefore, the identification of these strategies and instances of comic rhymes from a textual point of view has little value in itself. However, the abundance of examples of these textual features available for quotation or analysis in modern translations written in rhyming couplets does reveal how Molière's verse has been revitalised.

Chapter V

Case Studies of Six Translations Written in Non-Standard Rhymed Verse

In this chapter, the focus will move from rhymes in English translations to the use of verse forms in general. Innovation in modern rhyming translations of Molière's plays has not solely concerned linguistic creativity in rhyming words: in some translations, the revitalisation of Molière's comedies is indebted to original verse systems. More precisely, this chapter will reflect on the various translations of Molière's comedies written in a form of rhymed verse that differs from 'standard English couplets'; in other words, different from rhymed iambic pentameters. While it is undeniable that rhyming couplets are far from a being 'standard' form for the contemporary English stage, some translators have chosen even more unusual prosodic forms. The principal aim of such translators is to make dramatic language very self-conscious. This chapter will thus exclude translations in rhymed free verse, as free verse is mainly chosen to attenuate rather than to advertise the presence of rhyme.

This chapter will see that different verse systems lend themselves to different dramatic and aesthetic effects. Bolt's octosyllabic lines will be analysed first. Being a common form in light poetry, the tetrameter emphasises comic effects on stage and creates a rhythm that supports dramatic intensity in several ways. I shall then comment on a contrasting verse system: Bartlett's rhyming dodecasyllabic lines. As it can be argued that the resonance of prosody is stronger on stage than on the page, this chapter will show that a difference of four syllables per line radically transforms the aesthetic impact. The following three sections will look at examples of translations that use a variety of forms innovatively: Bryer's trilingual dodecasyllabic couplets, McGough's mixture of prose and verse and Fleming's varying rhyming scheme. Far from using different verse forms randomly, these translators maintain a coherent system in their texts, which enables the listener to expect prosodic changes and to focus on language. Last but not least, a space will then be devoted to Mooney's translations, even though his rhyming couplets are very 'standard.' His decision to translate prose plays into English couplets is a very unusual one, and needs comment.

1. Ranjit Bolt's Octosyllables in *Tartuffe* (2002)

In 2002 and in 2008 respectively, Bolt rewrote his pentameter translations of *Tartuffe* (1991) and *Le Misanthrope* (1998) into tetrameters for new commissions. Although practically never used in drama, Bolt's verse form builds on 800 years of poetic tradition. Dolniks – as one usually calls lines in which a four-beat pattern is felt regardless of the number of syllables – have mainly been used throughout this time as light verse,¹³⁶ or as a way of emphasising the presence of rhythm in poetry¹³⁷ (Attridge 2013: 147-87). Unlike common understandings of the English dolnik, Bolt's tetrameters are not purely accentual: they can be said to be accentual-syllabic, as they rely on a fairly regular and standard iambic rhythm.

As Attridge explains, this verse appeals to the ear because it is built on 'rhythmic doubling,' lending itself to strong predictability and rhetoric:

A beat is added to a beat to form a two-beat group; to this is added another two-beat group to form a four-beat group; to this is added another four-beat group, producing the first two lines of the poem; and to this eight-beat group is added another eight-beat group (itself of course generated by the same process of doubling) to realize the full sixteen-beat structure. This process of doubling provides places for rhymes, for potential emphases, and for rhythmic breaks; and it makes the conclusion feel strongly conclusive. (2013: 151)

By retaining syllabic count in his dolniks, Bolt makes full use of the rhythmic potential of the verse. While in the pentameter, the caesura cannot create two hemistichs each containing five syllables without splitting up a foot, in Bolt's verse, the caesura can have the same structuring function as in the alexandrine. Many 4+4 structures – themselves often dividable into (2+2)+(2+2) and grouped into larger units of 2x((2+2)+(2+2)) – can be found in the text, endowing the couplets with a strong rhetorical effect. In the following excerpt from a speech by Tartuffe, in which the character slyly attempts to persuade Elmire that sins are acceptable if the intentions are believed to be pure, Bolt replicates the balancing presence of the caesura in the original. Although Bolt does not separate the two hemistichs with commas, a similar effect of entrapment is created by the strong metrical framing, an effect enhanced by the slow delivery and the vocal emphasis on meters in Martin Clunes's performance of these lines at the National Theatre:

¹³⁶ As Attridge points out and demonstrates, children's verse and nursery rhymes make extensive use of dolnik rhythms. Popular contemporary poets who employ the dolnik for comic effect include Wendy Cope and Sophie Hannah (2013: 183).

¹³⁷ Among those poets using dolnik variations to heighten rhythmicity are Edward Lear, Henry Sambrooke Leigh; several Victorian poets, notably Algernon Charles Swinburne, Rudyard Kipling, Thomas Hardy, Walter de la Mare.

Contentez mon désir, et n'ayez point d'effroi,	Simply accede to my desire,
Je vous réponds de tout, et prends le mal sur moi.	Try to forget about hellfire,
Vous toussez fort, Madame. (IV-v, 1495-7)	And if you <i>are</i> wrong, giving in,
	I'll take upon myself the sin
	And make quite sure that you're let off –
	My goodness, what a nasty cough! (2002: 87)

As the iambic octosyllable has a strong rhythmic identity, a systematic use of this structure is likely to provoke a sing-song effect that compromises the dramatic intensity. Like Molière (Conesa 1983: 395-409), Bolt avoids using the same metrical rhythm for too long without variations. In the excerpt above, a comma disrupts the regular rhythm in the third line, even though the italics on the word 'are' might invite a strong iambic pattern, and thus the overall rhythm. Indeed, if the word 'are' is performed as a downbeat, it would be metrically tied to the preceding word. The word 'wrong' would then be transformed into an upbeat, and tied metrically to the following hemistich. Unlike the ambiguous third line, the last line, in the original as in the translation, provides an indisputable rhythmical variation, which corroborates the sudden break in the rhetorical discourse.

Many other instances of heavy binary structures can be found, sometimes to great effect, especially when they are framed by punctuation marks: 'Forgive Damis? Of course I do!/How could I not? God tells me to' (2002: 77) says Tartuffe when lectured to by Cléante in IV-i.

There is no need, however, of recurring 4+4-structures to make Bolt's verse catchy. In itself, octosyllabic verse makes rhymes very prominent. Indeed, rhymes recur at short intervals, allowing no possibility of ignoring them. In addition, the syllabic uniformity and the shortness of the verse guarantee that the lines sound very regular. This reinforces the predictability of rhymes, even more so than in the case of standard rhyming couplets, or indeed, alexandrines.

David Scott, commenting on Mallarmé's octosyllables in his sonnets in comparison with the alexandrine, notes that the shortness of the verse entails some restriction in syntactic possibilities:

Pierre Guiraud, in his study *Langage et versification d'après l'œuvre de Paul Valéry*, suggests that the prosaic origins of the alexandrine, visible in its wide syllabic span, enable it to embrace, in a single line very often, a typical subject/verb/object/quality pattern. In this way, it provides the poet with enough space and time to organize his thoughts into a logical framework. Its syntax remains relatively transparent, and, although a stylistic unit, it maintains some of the vigour and movement of prose. In comparison, the octosyllabic line is far more static in quality. (1977: 150)

While Scott argues that the syntactic limitations in Mallarmé's short verse reflect the poet's symbolism and support the density of his imagery, this consideration is also relevant to Bolt's less 'poetic' verse. First and foremost, because it is challenging to provide a meaning-oriented

translation while coping with the constraints imposed by a rigid verse system in the target text, it is difficult to argue whether omissions, additions and deviations result from the inevitable compositional constraints, or stem from the translator's deliberate choices. However this may be, as we shall see in several examples, Bolt uses the formal constraint to create great dramatic effects. Consider this quatrain from *Tartuffe*:

Il l'appelle son frère, et l'aime dans son âme	Daughter and mother, son and wife?
Cent fois plus qu'il ne fait mère, fils, fille, et femme.	Forgotten for his new amour.
C'est de tous ses secrets l'unique confident,	Companion, confidant, mentor,
Et de ses actions le directeur prudent. (I-ii, 185-8)	Tartuffe is all of those in one. (29)

As a result of the shortness of the verse, the style becomes telegraphic. To some extent, while Molière's sentences are long and flowing thanks to the use of conjunctions, the minimalist structures in Bolt's lines produce a panting rhythm that, in fact, highlights the shortness of the lines. By the same token, the two enumerations are stressed by their isolation and their autonomy: they are syntactically separated from the phrases of which they are respectively the subject and the antecedent. The addition of the second enumeration – which, incidentally, makes up a line with only three words as a result of the tight prosodic form –, adds up to the creation of a fast rhythm. The final line, winding up Dorine's point in a pithy way, to some extent, indirectly alludes to the shortness of the octosyllables. The phrase 'all of those in one,' appropriately expresses an idea of hastiness and density. Because the octosyllabic line sometimes cannot deploy the syntactic operators to make it grammatically complete and self-contained, in Scott's words, 'it takes on a mysterious, tantalising quality. [...] it keeps the reader in a state of anticipation as, through a frequent and seemingly unavoidable use of enjambment, it defers the moment of revelation' (1977: 151). Here, the last line comes as the revelation that puts an end to the build-up, adding a rhetorical effect to Dorine's description of Orgon's infatuation for Tartuffe.

Scott provides another insightful remark on Mallarmé's sonnets, but which is also very relevant here: 'Whereas in the dodecasyllabic sonnet, rhyme very often comes as a confirmation of the end of a statement, in the octosyllabic sonnet it has a more important function: it confers autonomy or integrity on propositions syntactically incomplete' (1977: 152). In other words, because the lines are swift and often syntactically incomplete, rhymes seem to be imposing an artificial verticality onto the text. In other words, rhymes seem to have no other function than the one which prosodic convention requires. Although they are deprived of a full rhetorical dimension, they still sound prominent thanks to the shortness of the verse. Because the listener perceives them as being both artificial and prominent, rhymes sound very self-conscious.

When the suppression of syntactic operators is impossible or insufficient, other solutions must be found. Bolt's translation, indeed, reveals many instances in which the playwright seems to have admitted to the impossibility of curtailing twelve syllables into eight. Bolt often resorts to splitting one French line into a full couplet in translation without adding extra sense-units. This restores the rhetorical dimension to rhymes. The first quotation given from the play in this section is one example, and here is another:

De vous dépend ma peine, ou ma béatitude; (III-iii, 958)	My hope, my happiness, my peace Begin with you, without you cease [...]
Heureux, si vous voulez; malheureux, s'il vous plaît. (960)	To be the happiest of men Or wretchedest – pronounce it, then! (66)

One can argue that these 'line-doublings' diminish the lapidary quality of the verse: doubling the octosyllabic lines makes the outcome longer than an alexandrine. By resorting to giving up density in style, line-doublings, to some extent, defeat the point of the octosyllable. Bolt has indeed stated that the swiftness of verse was an important objective to him (2010: 19). On the other hand, line-doublings may have the advantage of bringing out the character's point very clearly. In this case, the repartition of two opposing ideas into two different lines entails a form of connivance between the form and the meaning, which significantly highlights the presence of prosody. But above all, more than bringing out an epigrammatic resonance less present in the source text, these features are in keeping with Bolt's way of enhancing verbal humour, which can come more naturally from two-liners than from one-liners.

Bolt's short lines make stichomythic dialogues even more striking: the cadence of the alternation between the characters is higher than in longer lines. What is more, occasionally, Bolt's tetrameters do not contain enough space to retain the structural deployment of Molière's lines: while in the French, Orgon's evasive answers are placed at the beginning of the line, in Bolt, Orgon's brief replies end Cléante's unfinished lines. Therefore, rhymes are brought out:

CL – Laissons là ce discours. Vous savez que Valère, Pour être votre gendre, a parole de vous.	CL – You’ve given him your word, what’s more.
OR – Oui.	OR – I have.
CL – Vous aviez pris jour pour un lien si doux.	CL – You’ve named a day.
OR – Il est vrai.	OR – Quite so.
CL – Pourquoi donc en différer la fête?	CL – Why put it off?
OR – Je ne sais.	OR – Damned if I know.
CL – Auriez-vous autre pensée en tête?	CL – Well... have you changed your mind?
OR – Peut-être.	OR – Maybe.
CL – Vous voulez manquer à votre foi?	CL – You’re going to break your word?
OR – Je ne dis pas cela.	OR – Who? Me?
CL – Nul obstacle, je croi,	CL – But what on earth’s preventing you?
Ne vous peut empêcher d’accomplir vos promesses.	OR – There are no obstacles.
OR – Selon. (I-v, 410-7)	OR – Says who? (38)

The performance of this episode confirms the strong visual effect of rhyme on the page. While in Molière, Orgon’s utterances are quite locutionary, being somewhat detached from the conversation, Bolt’s Orgon has a greater involvement in the dialogue thanks to the structural position of his answers. This episode is not unique: in II-iv, Marianne and Valère’s tense dialogue resulting in a quiproquo is given a similar prosodic restructuring.

The shortness of the octosyllables can also be very significant in itself: when Elmire is ensnared by the lewd Tartuffe in IV-v, the verse form corroborates the sense of urgency of the situation. Feeling vulnerable, understanding that Orgon will take his time to intervene, the tension is palpable in Elmire’s speech: in Molière, almost each line finishes with an exclamation or a question mark. Although Bolt does not retain Molière’s agitated rhythm by markedly endstopping the lines, the tetrameters lend themselves to an untrammelled delivery of a frantic speed:

Mon Dieu, que votre amour, en vrai tyran agit!	My! When there’s something that you want
Et qu’en un trouble étrange il me jette l’esprit!	You’re so <i>frighteningly</i> adamant!
Que sur les cœurs il prend un furieux empire!	Your love exerts a brutal sway,
Et qu’avec violence il veut ce qu’il désire!	You’re fiercer than a bird of prey
Quoi! de votre poursuite, on ne peut se parer,	In your pursuit: There’s no respite,
Et vous ne donnez pas le temps de respirer?	No breathing space. It can’t be right
Sied-il bien de tenir une rigueur si grande?	To <i>harry</i> helpless creatures thus,
De vouloir sans quartier, les choses qu’on demande?	Abuse the hold you have on us
(1467-76)	In this uncompromising style. (87)

Akin to the many instances of telegraphic lines imposed by the transposition of dodecasyllables into octosyllables, the full question ‘Et vous ne donnez pas le temps de respirer?’ is rendered in a minimalist asyndetic phrase: ‘No breathing space.’ This phrase carries in itself a certain metatextual dimension, seemingly alluding to the way the prosodic form, the style and the emotion are in the same line. Fittingly enough, ‘breathability’ is a concept often employed in the field of Theatre Translation, used to reflect on the relation between the text and the actor’s breathing in performance, mostly through the use of

punctuation and the length of sentences. As Ansgar Haag defines it, ‘the concept of ‘breathability’ means the sentence rhythm and the length of the words should answer the feelings expressed through the actor’s respiration.’¹³⁸ The pithiness of Bolt’s lines, albeit undoubtedly the result of tremendous patience in composition, can, quite paradoxically, sound *breathtakingly* uncontrolled owing to their hastiness, making Elmire gasp for air, not just metaphorically, as in the original, but, here, physically.

As the paring down of two syllables from standard English couplets is aimed at producing a fast-flowing performance in order to enhance the comic tone, these examples seem to be evidence that Bolt attained his objective.¹³⁹ Reviews further confirm this: thanks to their vigorous energy, Bolt’s octosyllables have indeed enjoyed almost unanimous approbation. ‘Bolt’s octosyllabic rhyming couplets initially sound like chugging doggerel, but soon they’re cantering along, spattered with cheeky expletives’ (*Independent on Sunday*, 10/03/2002). John Peter, a theatre critic who has a history of disparaging comments towards translations of French classical theatre, writes: ‘The speaking of this sparkling, athletic text is excellent: fast and vigorous but always clear; eloquent but never mannered; subversive but never snide’ (*Theatre*, 13/03/2002). In *The Sunday Telegraph*, one can read: ‘It has to be said that the pantomime couplets of Ranjit Bolt’s version are a long way from Molière. They bounce along [...] they are strenuously slangy [...] and there is a general crispness and clarity’ (10/03/2002).¹⁴⁰ ‘French subtleties might be lost,’ says *The Mail on Sunday*, ‘but the comic spin Bolt puts on his couplets is worth the price. This kind of writing is a high-wire act, and if there is the occasional silly wobble, it’s more than compensated for by the odd dazzling somersault’ (10/03/2002).

¹³⁸ ‘Übersetzen fürs Theater: Beispiel William Shakespeare,’ *Babel*, vol. 30, n° 4, 218-224, 221, quoted in Bigliuzzi, Kofler, Ambrosi 2013: 7.

¹³⁹ Translator and critic David Johnston produced an unpublished translation of *L’Avaro* (2009), in 8-syllable unrhymed verse, which had the effect of enacting ‘an unfamiliar rhythm of performance, speeding up actors’ delivery in the process’ and was ‘designed as a key element of timing’ (2011: 22-3).

¹⁴⁰ A few negative remarks, however, were made about the second version of *Tartuffe*. Although he states that ‘the translation is the real star of the show,’ Ian Shuttleworth had this to say about Bolt’s play: ‘But the endless 4/4 thump can grow wearing, like the sound of a bass drum drifting up through the floorboards; this verse is more end-stopped than is usual, and some of the actors hit the rhythm even more heavily than it calls for’ (<http://www.cix.co.uk/~shutters/reviews/02089.htm>).

2. Neil Bartlett's Dodecasyllables in *The Misanthrope* and *The School for Wives*

The Misanthrope (1988) and *The School for Wives* (1990) by Bartlett are amongst the very rare translations, with Necula (2009) and Slater (2001), of Molière's comedies that are written in dodecasyllabic couplets throughout. The intrinsic oddness of the form opens up great dramatic potential. Arguably, even more so than in Molière: as the alexandrine is an unquestioned convention in French classical theatre, dramatic effects mostly stem from other stylistic strategies. Chapter I already commented at some length on the uncommonness of this verse form in English and the challenges it poses to actors and audience. Bartlett points to how highly conscious of this he is:

The whole point of translating this play has been to make an elaborate and provocative game out of the collision of the formality of classical French verse and the vivid recognisability of contemporary speech... [*The Misanthrope*] is completely un-English. I wanted the translation to sound foreign, like a foreign work of art, even though the language is comprehensible.¹⁴¹

By choosing a verse form that stands poles apart from the 'quiet visual and verbal languages of English television-derived realism,' Bartlett does not intend to revitalise comedy in the same way as Bolt does. In *The Misanthrope*, rhymes remain now and then witty and sometimes funny, but they appear much more restrained than in other translations.¹⁴² This rhyming triplet, spoken by Philinte in a derisive response to Alceste's claim that being a hypocrite is punishable by death, illustrates how formal the style often is:

I don't think, myself, it's a capital offence,
And I would just like to say, in my own defence,
I beg you, your honour, give a poor man a chance (66)

Peacock, however, notes a comic value in the affected language: 'The metrical formality of the alexandrine gives comic emphasis to the obsessiveness of the power-crazed, fashion followers who inhabit the media world of London's docklands – Célimène's salon *circa* 1980s!' (1996: 46). There are points, indeed, where Bartlett pushes affectation to the verge of the self-conscious. In the following couplet, it becomes striking thanks to the length of the rhyming words, whose meanings, in a way, reflect their form, in an almost metatextual fashion:

Because I cannot bear to confuse seriousness
With socially acceptable pretentiousness. (66)

The comic dimension of the formal prosodic system is reinforced by several techniques. As Jim Carmody remarks, the first line of the play, 'what's up doc?' ['qu'est-ce donc? Qu'avez-

¹⁴¹ 'A Letter to the Company,' *Performing Arts*, vol. 2, n° 9, 1989, (quoted in Carmody 2007: 45).

¹⁴² In *The School for Wives*, one can however notice a greater density of unexpected rhymes, play on sounds and rhythm.

vous?']], is a quotation from the character Bugs Bunny, and is a prelude to other intertextual references. Intertextuality, of which Carmody notes other examples, contributes to the artificiality of the spoken text, making it sound 'as if the entire play were nothing but a tissue of citation' (2007: 45). Carmody also demonstrates that the feeling of estrangement generated by the text was in keeping with director Robert Fall's further adaptation and production of Bartlett's *The Misanthrope* for La Jolla Playhouse, California (1989), which made cross-cultural references obvious and prominent. As pointed out by Bartlett, the oddness of the verse form stems mainly from the arresting conflict between its formality and the occasional colloquialisms, further enlivened by contemporary references. The way Célimène rephrases her antiphrastic address to Alceste in the second couplet is an instance of a sudden intrusion of a vulgarity:

For a lover, you phrase yourself exquisitely.
You present such a flattering image of me.
(Or P-leeze,¹⁴³ for a lover, your compliments are rich.
Do you really think of me as a complete bitch?) (80)

As stated above, the self-conscious – 'provocative,' to use Bartlett's word – tension between a direct language and a distancing form, has a deeper objective than adding extra humour for commercial purposes:

It seems to me that violent or extreme times demand violent pleasures, and the development of a violent (by which I mean vivid, virulent, ambitious) language. Putting it more simply, I would say: let us be grand. The grand sentiments and especially the grandeur of language and structure – the thrilling, un-English, un-real splendours (at the level of form) – of seventeenth-century French theatre appeal to me hugely as an artist, and strike many resonances within my own work to date. (1990: 6)

The seriousness of the rhyming hexameter, supported by a certain 'Wilburian' elegance in the way verse is crafted, can be partly taken as a way of suggesting a degree of gravity in the play and highlighting its potential moral implications. Indeed, the intertwining of high speech and low humour in *The School for Wives*, as Bartlett argues, 'challenges performers and audience to accept how outrageously seriously Molière intends us to take his comic picture of the havoc wreaked by the inability to love' (*ibid.*). Vulgar jokes, peppering the 'serious' speeches every now and then, as funny as they are, do not undermine the intensity of the dramatic action, not as much, at least, as if the text were written in a shorter verse form, in which these jokes could be appreciated as sheer comic relief.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Bartlett, author, actor and director often distorts the spelling of words in his texts to indicate how they should be pronounced or stressed in performance.

¹⁴⁴ The same happens in Bartlett's *Berenice*. It can be contended that, by making a case for reproducing the rhythm and the sonority of Racine's text strictly (Johnston 1996: 6), Bartlett's project goes beyond the desire to be faithful to Racine, but aspires to a kind of aesthetics that Folkart names *l'étrangeté* in *Second Findings* (2007). Throughout her book, Folkart extols translations that depart from mainstream language, in search of aesthetic

The prosodic form, however, is exploited as a comic effect in Oronte's sonnet and Alceste's criticism of it, usually a scene in which translators stress the metatextual effect. Before beginning his recitation, Oronte sets the scene: playfully bonding content and style, he illustrates what he is saying by using one-word sentences. This acts as a hint that more playfulness is to come:

HOPE... I don't consider my work literature.
Each word is a statement; personal. Unforced. Pure. (1988: 73)

Translators of *The Misanthrope* often take great relish in writing an entirely new sonnet for Oronte in an eccentric fashion. Bartlett's Oronte uses the Shakespearian sonnet form, i.e. three quatrains of alternating rhyme and a couplet, all in relatively free iambic pentameters. Using such a traditional form for lines completely devoid of any poetic style is, in itself, an amusing incongruity:

My Love is like a Northern Line station.
I get stuck on it. Patiently I wait.
They send me to the wrong destination;
I have to change platforms twice; I am late. (74)

In the original as well as in most translations, Alceste's sharp criticism is solely directed at Oronte's poor versification, and in some translations, Alceste even ventures to teach Oronte how to craft acceptable verse by stating the stylistic guidelines he wishes to see enforced, not only by Oronte, but by the whole of his social entourage. To give a striking example, as Harrison's introduction to his *Misanthrope* makes a strong case for pursuing fast-flowing verse, the way Harrison's Alceste quotes Oronte is very meaningful (speech quoted above, ch. II, 1.1.a.). In Harrison, Alceste gives concrete examples of what he rejects: he expresses scorn for Oronte's heavy alliterative and assonantal word combinations, which disturb the iambic rhythm and impede the flow of speech delivery: 'makes thirst worse' (42). Although referring to the words 'hot trek' by the derisive '*ek eks*,' the distorted quotation makes Alceste's view of what constitutes an unspeakable language very obvious. Alceste makes another harsh comment to disparage the rhythmic and sonorous inadequacy of Oronte's lines: 'Vacuous verbiage, wind, gas, guff.' In his diatribe, Alceste thus implicitly reflects on three fundamental elements that are pivotal to Harrison's way of achieving flowing speech delivery: the relative regularity of the iambic rhythm, the absence of heavy alliterations and the scarcity of punctuation.¹⁴⁵

effects, which should be, according to her, an utmost priority: '*L'étrangeté*, as I see it – far from being merely ethnic or cultural – *is profoundly esthetic in nature*' (2007: 299). Folkart criticises the fact that Venuti privileges foreignising translations only insofar as 'it enables a disruption of target-language cultural codes' (1995: 42), in other words, the fact that Venuti is driven by ideological motives rather than solely aesthetic aims.

¹⁴⁵ A comparable insight that seems to confirm Harrison's objectives for the speakability of his theatrical language appears in one of Acaste's rejoinders in the *scène des portraits*:

In Bartlett, because of the certain irrelevance of both verse forms – Oronte’s inadequate Shakespearian lines as well as Alceste’s strange dodecasyllabic couplets – it is possible to attribute Alceste’s criticism, ‘Your whole approach to verse is hopelessly dated’ (75), to Alceste’s own dramatic language. In Bartlett’s translation, Alceste’s sharp criticisms might indeed have a resonance that transcends the framework of this sole episode. Being constantly surprised by the intrusion of vulgar language within formal prosody, the audience is tempted to receive the following lines of Alceste with a certain *double-entendre*:

All this affected slang, this attempt to ‘relate’
Do you think that’s how real people communicate?
[...]
But I value this song more than this clapped out, tired,
Pretentiousness which is now so widely admired. (76)

3. David Bryer’s Trilingual Alexandrines in *Women on Top*¹⁴⁶

In an article entitled ‘Translating the Alexandrine’ (1996: 43-58), Bryer, as a translator and a man with experience of the stage,¹⁴⁷ offers a reflection on different verse forms in existing translations of classical French theatre. As mentioned in previous chapters, he warns against English alexandrines, based on his experience of having actors complain that the lines were not easy to speak. However, at the end of the article (53-55), he briefly reviews his adaptation of *Les Femmes savantes*, entitled *Women on Top*, which is written in alexandrines: ‘My last performed translation two years ago would seem to give the lie to much of what I have said’ (53). And far from favouring ease of delivery, Bryer’s text poses an even greater challenge to actors. As the play is set in a modern-day trilingual London household, the cast needs to speak French, English and German. The fact that he ends his article with a discussion of this

After a session with the world’s worst bore,
blabbermouth Damon – on the street, my cab
waiting at the kerbside; blab, blab, blab! (2002: 56)

Acaste emulates the talkative Damon by means of a weighty succession of long vowels and stressed syllables in the first line /w3:ldz ‘w3:st ‘bɔ:/ – echoing Oronte’s clunky line in his sonnet – and which lend themselves easily to comic mimicry. The iambic pattern of the line is interrupted by the striking concluding spondee. The disruption of flowing speech attains its paroxysm in the three last syllables of the extract, which speak for themselves.

¹⁴⁶ I am grateful to David Bryer for sharing the manuscript of his translation with me.

¹⁴⁷ Bryer translated Corneille’s *Le Cid* and Racine’s *Andromaque* for Cheek by Jowl Theatre Company (1983-4), both world premieres, followed by Molière’s *Tartuffe* for Watford Palace Theatre (1990). Other translations from French plays include Jean Giraudoux’s *Electre* and Victor Hugo’s *Ruy Blas*, published in 2005 by Oberon Books. He also translated a number of German plays. A short biography is available here: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/96624>

adaptation might suggest that he thinks verse translation of alexandrine lines is always experimental in nature. In 1991, with the sponsorship of the School of European Studies, Bryer, a current teacher at the University of Sussex, wrote, directed and acted in this adaptation at the Gardner Arts Centre. It has been performed only once by a mixture of students and faculty members, and has never been published; this play, however, certainly deserves critical consideration.

Molière has already been performed in multiple languages on the modern stage. In Quebec, a few comedies by Molière have been adapted into multilingual plays, notably *Le Malade imaginaire* by André Païement (1975), *Scapin!* by David Edney and Ian Nelson (1994) (see Nolette 2015). In these adaptations, individual languages do not separate the characters on stage, as several characters are themselves multilingual. In these plays, other objectives are pursued, notably ‘l’accommodement stratégique aux spectateurs, sur une poétique comique de la répétition et sur un refus de la monotonie’ (Nolette 2015: 97). Similar effects are created in Bryer’s trilingual play: in keeping with the recent critical interest in multilingual theatre, *Women on Top* can be studied from several perspectives. In addition to the way it affects the dramaturgy of the play and brings new comic effects, Bryer’s multilingualism can, according to the author, ‘invite the fuller incorporation of the feminist theme’ (‘Translator’s note’).

Anne Bérélowitch and myself, with the Instant Mix company, recently put on a multilingual production of an extract of Molière’s *Misanthrope* performed at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d’Art Dramatique (November 2017). We used excerpts from the translations of *Le Misanthrope* by Crimp and Bolt (2008) mixed with the source text, as well as a French retranslation of Crimp’s text. In this adaptation, Molière’s text is used like a nightmare haunting the contemporary Alceste; and the English translations signal a return to reality. Languages are thus in opposition. Although interactions are frequent between English and French, the two languages resolutely retain their formal identities: Crimp’s and Bolt’s verse forms are strikingly different to Molière’s. Although, as we shall see, in Bryer’s text, the different languages also represent opposing worlds, prosody has a strange way of tying them together.

Les Femmes savantes has a strong metalinguistic focus: identities are created through different uses of language, and reinforced through the characters’ commentaries on register and style. At one end of the spectrum stands the servant Martine, who misuses syntax and conjugation, a misdeed justifying her dismissal. Then there is Chrysalde’s use of down-to-earth vocabulary. II-vii, in which he devotes several speeches to the superior value of food over learning, vividly displays his pragmatic style:

J'aime bien mieux, pour moi, qu'en épluchant ses herbes,
Elle accommode mal les noms avec les verbes,
Et redise cent fois un bas ou méchant mot,
Que de brûler ma viande, ou saler trop mon pot. (527-30)

This speech is brutally decried by Philaminte: 'Que ce discours grossier terriblement assomme!' (535); 'Quelle bassesse, ô Ciel, et d'âme, et de langage!' (615) the same *savante* will exclaim in reaction to another speech advocating a down-to-earth way of living. These reactions emphasise that both what is said and how it is said are worthy of criticism. At the opposite end of the spectrum, then, stands the language spoken by the learned ladies: fraught with abstractions, their style displays comic pedantry: 'Je m'attache pour l'ordre au péripatétisme/Pour les abstractions j'aime le platonisme' (877-8).

Bryer compellingly reinforces the metalinguistic dimension. Indeed, he pushes the linguistic characterisations further: instead of only setting apart his characters by using different registers and lexises, Bryer uses different languages. The original French is retained in the speeches of the *savantes*, occasionally tried out in a strong English accent by Oscar [Chrysalde], Maureen [Martine] and Henrietta, as an act of submission or derision. French, therefore, embodies cultural pretentiousness and artificial formality, an effect all the stronger as the French parts are supposed to be performed by native English actresses. English is spoken by the other characters as the vernacular of standard communication; English is thus looked down upon by the French speakers. Updating the play in a mixed-marriage household enabled Bryer to incorporate some German, spoken by Oscar [Chrysalde], an ex-pat German-Jewish businessman and his brother Leo [Ariste]. German is even more derided, deemed to be the language of the rogues, standing poles apart from anything distinguished. To make it very clear for the audience, Edith [Bélise], reluctantly having to speak German to join in the conversation at the beginning of Act II, spits in a glass after each sentence to express her disgust. 'Ah! que votre langage à mon oreille est rude!' exclaims Phyllis in reaction to a speech by Oscar in which he mixes up English and German.

Being an experienced translator, and aware that Molière needs some kind of revitalisation to win over audiences across the Channel, Bryer deploys great inventiveness in the English rhymes, in line with other recent rhymed translations of Molière's plays. But Bryer cleverly builds on the mix of languages to increase the comic value of rhymes. Juxtaposing abstract and pretentious French rhymes in the learned ladies' speeches with resourceful rhymes in the English speeches creates a striking effect. This enables Henriette to express disdain towards the ladies who are enthralled by Trissotin's recitation of his poor sonnet:

BÉLISE – Quoi, sans émotion pendant cette lecture? Vous faites là, ma nièce, une étrange figure!	EDITH – Quoi? sans émotion pendant cette lecture? Vous faites-là, ma nièce, une étrange figure!
HENRIETTE – Chacun fait ici-bas la figure qu’il peut, Ma tante; et bel esprit, il ne l’est pas qui veut. (III-ii, 819-22)	HENRIETTA – I’m sorry if I can’t join your group jacuzzi But deeds not words move me. And I’m more [choosy.

Rhymes are not only emphasised by the contrasts stemming from the mix of languages. Rhymes tie this multilingual play into a coherent whole. Although it is unlikely that all members of the audience will understand two foreign languages, the play, thanks to the verse form, does not altogether exclude the non-polyglots. The play, indeed, still enables non-French and non-German speakers to be on the look-out for rhymes. Not understanding the speech but still able to perceive rhymes can generate a certain satisfying feeling in the audience. Bryer adds several complicit asides by Maureen, the servant, which often inform the audience of what is the key information to be retained. Releasing the audience from the pressure to understand every word, the audience is free to sit back and focus on the only formal feature they are able to sense easily.

More than rhymes, the real unitary force binding the different characters together is the prosodic system as a whole, which is twelve-syllable rhyming couplet. It can be argued that in English, dodecasyllables, because of their unusual length, invite the audience to hear *verses* instead of *rhymes*, which creates a stately, or a cumbersome, effect, according to taste. Shorter rhymed forms as heroic couplets or octosyllabic couplets, make rhymes more prominent than metre to the listener’s ear. In Bryer’s play however, because of the use of different languages, the effect is different. The dodecasyllable does not function as an alienating form as in Bartlett’s translations: it is used in English and in German only to ensure the continuity with the French original form. Keeping an identical syllable-count for the three languages regulates speech in such a way that keeps the audience from focusing on verse instead of rhyme. As a consequence, keeping the ‘alexandrine’ throughout might help non-German speakers to locate rhymes more easily.

Retaining the syllable-count to ensure a solid unity also enables caesuras to keep their structural function, even when lines are broken between two speakers, who, themselves, speak in different languages. Here is an example of a line, linguistically divided but strongly unified by prosody, as though, to some extent, prosody outweighed language:

HENRIETTA – (<i>aside</i>) The greasy little pseud –	
PHYLLIS –	Comme vous répondez!

More striking evidence that prosody transcends the difference in languages is that several couplets bear heterolingual rhymes: ‘Ach Gott, um Himmels Willen, red’ einmal auf

Deutsch!/Feed on books, you crackpot? Yes, I'd get fat on Joyce' replies Oscar ironically, maintaining that food is more nourishing than literature. If English rhymes are easily self-conscious on stage because of their wit, they are all the more so in heterolingual couplets: the audience is bound to be struck by the technical complexity of the system. In keeping with Chapter III, 2.2.a., which argued that rhymes often create a wherewithal of self-display for the translator, here, prosody makes the text incontrovertibly flashy: 'With three languages the rhyming becomes a terrific challenge [...] you will justifiably note that, despite all principles, I can be seen to be as dreadful a show-off as regards rhyme as the next man' (1996: 53). The stichomythic exchange between Trissotin and Clinton [Clitandre] in IV-iii provides an example of what can be seen as a crowning achievement of prosodic virtuosity:

- | | |
|--|---|
| TR – Vous en pourriez citer qui ne concluraient guère. | TR – Vous le pourriez citer qui ne conclurait guère. |
| CL – Je n'irais pas bien loin pour trouver mon affaire. | CL – This one would do dandy. And he's not far from here. |
| TR – Pour moi je ne vois pas ces exemples fameux. | TR – Je ne vois pas cet exemple flagrant, moi-même. |
| CL – Moi, je les vois si bien, qu'ils me crèvent les yeux. | CL – You're lucky. There's no greater eyesore I could name. |
| TR – J'ai cru jusques ici que c'était l'ignorance | TR – J'avais cru jusqu'ici que c'était l'ignorance |
| Qui faisait les grands sots, et non pas la science. | Qui faisait les grands sots, et pas l'intelligence. |
| CL – Vous avez cru fort mal, et je vous suis garant, | CL – Well, you were wrong. One dumb egghead's a bigger |
| Qu'un sot savant est sot plus qu'un sot ignorant. | [dope |
| TR – Le sentiment commun est contre vos maximes, | Than all the dumb pinheads that ever-snorted coke. |
| Puisque ignorant et sot sont termes synonymes. | TR – Le sentiment commun est contre vos maximes, |
| CL – Si vous le voulez prendre aux usages du mot, | Puisque 'pinhead' et 'dumb' sont des termes synonymes. |
| L'alliance est plus grande entre pédant et sot. | CL – In fact - if semantic usage is your leaning - |
| TR – La sottise dans l'un se fait voir toute pure. | You'll find 'egghead' and 'dumb' even closer in meaning. |
| CL – Et l'étude dans l'autre ajoute à la nature. | TR – La sottise dans 'dumb' se fait voir toute pure. |
| TR – Le savoir garde en soi son mérite éminent. | CL – While learning makes the dumbness of 'egghead' more |
| CL – Le savoir dans un fat devient impertinent. | [mature. |
| (1289-1304) | TR – Le savoir garde en soi son mérite suprême. |
| | CL – 'Savoir' in a dickhead just makes more of the same. |

Bryer was obliged to distort the original text to comply with the new rhyming scheme. In the last couplet, 'suprême' replaces 'éminent' to create the rhyme with 'same.' It is also interesting to note that often Bryer deliberately modifies the French original for less compelling reasons. The modification in the first two lines is a pure linguistic update: Bryer deleted the 's' in the word 'jusque,' being no longer an acceptable orthographic license, and changed the tense of the verb to respect the syllable count. Similarly, for the sake of clarity, Bryer swaps the term 'science' with 'intelligence,' as in seventeenth-century France, 'science' had a broader meaning than the current one. It is difficult to argue with certainty that it is because Bryer had to remodel the original text in order to create heterolingual rhymes, that he also felt permitted to take dispensable liberties with the original lines. In other words, one may speculate that if he had opted for a multilingual adaptation, but without attempting any heterolingual rhymes, he would have left the original lines untouched. If this is the case, this is the ultimate proof of

the significant influence of prosody. I have argued above that in this adaptation, prosody outweighs language. Here, Bryer gives another strong case for this.

4. Roger McGough's Prosodic Variations in *Tartuffe* and *The Misanthrope*

The Renaissance English tradition of prosodic variation in plays, which persevered throughout the ages, consists in keeping rhymed verse for poetic speeches, or using them as a way of setting some kinds of distance from the action. This was common practice in late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century translations of Molière (Jones 2016: 88, 90-93). As seen in Chapter II, 2.1., a number of modern translators of Molière's and Racine's plays have peppered their blank verse or prose translations with a few rhyming couplets at strategic points. In these blank verse translations, the occasional rhyming couplets are thus given a particular dramatic significance depending on the context.

The prosodic variations found in McGough's translations of Molière's *Tartuffe* and *Misanthrope* depart from the traditional practice. Consequently, these translations are possibly those that have gone the furthest in the dramatic significance of prosodic variations. McGough's prosodic variations actually proceed from three structural reforms. First, McGough reverses the common use of prosodic forms: his plays are in rhyming couplets, and prose is the disruptive element, not the opposite.¹⁴⁸ Second, McGough does not use prosodic variations in order to offer moments of respite for the audience (and the actors) from conspicuous rhymes. Not only is the alternation between verse and prose very noticeable, but it aspires fearlessly to be so. Argent's point about the occasional rhymes found in Solomon's Racine translations – 'I think that such an inconsistent use of rhyme is more likely to call attention to itself than a strict *adherence* to rhyme' (2010: xxix) – is verified in these two plays. And last but not least, far from intervening here and there to create a particular effect, in McGough, instances of prosodic variation are given a definite structural role. In each play, only one character speaks in prose: Tartuffe in *Tartuffe*, Thomas Diafoirus in *The Hypochondriac*, and Alceste in *The Misanthrope*. McGough's prosodic variations firmly ground the action: they

¹⁴⁸ Because rhyming couplets were often firmly criticised as early as the Elizabethan age, Shakespeare tended to elevate rhymes to instances of poetic speech by using them mainly in prologues, choruses, epilogues, sonnets, masks, visions, songs, poems, soliloquies and play-within-plays. In other words, in all those places that introduce a bridge between the realms of illusion and reality. 'One of the characteristics of end-rime is its tendency to distance its listeners by implying a self-sufficiency, a remoteness, in its speakers' (Flint 2000: 79). T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) provides a celebrated example of the continuation of this practice.

help to side-line some characters in relation to the others, characters who lay claim to their marginality – Tartuffe and Alceste –, and those who undergo it – Thomas Diafoirus, the risible physician. Refusal of rhyme is, in both *Tartuffe* and *The Misanthrope*, a comparable way – but carried out with different motives in each case – of making a stand for what the characters wish to present as right (Ploix 2016: 118). Thus, contrary to the Shakespeare-inherited approach to prosodic variations, as carrying various meanings (Flint 2000), McGough’s prosodic variations are given a single one: rhyme is a symbol of the superficiality of society. In brief, prosodic variations have left behind their primarily poetic role; each prosodic form has now claimed a fully-fledged dramaturgical role.

As we shall see, in *Tartuffe* and in *The Misanthrope*, prosodic variations considerably transform the aesthetics of the originals: they reveal McGough’s interpretations of the plays and elicit a particular reception from the audience.

As Tartuffe and Alceste have different motives for speaking in prose, the effects produced are dissimilar. This choice might at first look surprising in *Tartuffe*: although in the original, the eponymous character scorns all forms of affectation, he nevertheless does not skimp on sly rhetorical tricks and honeyed discourse to seduce Elmire and to deceive Orgon (Hawcroft 1999: 82-91). McGough’s rib-tickling use of rhyme reverses the usual association of prose: prose takes on the form of elevated speech, suitable for powerful rhetoric. Thus, Tartuffe is the only character who is not discredited by a distracting humorous language, and who can be taken seriously. His speeches are, indeed, written in a highly-sophisticated language, not devoid of occasional surges of pomposity and archaism, furthering the contrast with the other characters’ colloquial and cheeky language.

Far from underplaying the rhetorical density of his speeches, prose, in this context, instils an aura of gravity around the character and keeps the audience in awe. One can argue that the seriousness of the character’s style intensifies the despicable nature of the character. This is, incidentally, picked up by Tartuffe’s enemies, in metatextual remarks:

DORINE – The man has no refinement, just look at his clothes.

DAMIS – And he speaks not in verse, but in leaden prose. (6)

McGough’s having Alceste speak in prose in *The Misanthrope* is highly justifiable for several reasons. First, prose is the realm of spontaneous and impulsive speech. Although in the original the main character speaks in verse, his impetuous language stands out: swear words and blasphemous language heavily punctuate his speeches; his style is often panting, energetic,

uncontrolled, as the character himself acknowledges: ‘Je n’ai point sur ma langue un assez grand empire’ (1574).

Second, Larry Riggs points to Alceste’s tendency to ‘talk like books’ in Molière’s play, as a consequence of limiting expression to very restricted linguistic structures:

Alceste’s idea of sincerity requires conceiving of speech as analogous to text, since he imagines it as making personal truths visible. He rejects the oral/aural nature of natural speech, presumably because the ear is an organ of involvement, and the hearer is surrounded or enveloped by sound; Alceste can imagine himself enveloping others only if he conceives their speech as a visible display. (2005: 105)

This remark, to some degree valid in relation to the original, applies strikingly well, not to say even more so, to McGough’s play. McGough’s lines are suffused with the aural/oral, thanks to his use of sonorous rhymes, multiple rhythmic microstructures and sonorous tropes. Therefore, the *raison d’être* of McGough’s verse is to be spoken aloud, to sound vigorously in performance, or, if read silently, to be fully appreciated through an engaging internal hearing. Although not entirely devoid of sonorous devices, Alceste’s speeches do not involve musicality to the same extent as those of the other characters in McGough.

Third, Peacock, who commented on Alceste’s language in comparison with the other characters in the play noted that a facet of ‘Alceste’s theory of plain speaking is its exaggerated application. Alceste carries his theory to extremes, to a kind of linguistic absolutism’ (1987: 79). Alceste’s linguistic brutality and his sense of exaggeration will often earn him ironic remarks and laughter, notably from Philinte in the first scene, or when Alceste scathingly criticises Oronte’s lines: ‘je soutiendrai, toujours, morbleu, qu’ils sont mauvais/Et qu’un homme est pendable après les avoir faits’ (771-2). If, in Molière, ‘Alceste carries his theory to the extremes,’ McGough pushes it further. Because of the prosodic contrast, the gap between Alceste’s way of speaking and that of the others widens vertiginously. Alceste’s criticism of Oronte’s verse, and, by extension, his general condemnation of verse, ‘On ne doit de rimer avoir aucune envie,/Qu’on n’y soit condamné sur peine de la vie’ (1153-54), take up a whole other level of meaning in McGough’s play.¹⁴⁹ Peacock has also noted the comic paradox in Alceste’s way of rejecting the hyperbolic style of others while making a liberal use of overstatements and bombastic reactions (1987: 80). In McGough, Alceste’s refusal to speak in rhymes reconciles him with his linguistic ideal of direct communication and, therefore, furthers the coherence between his views and actions.

Furthermore, McGough’s choice with regard to prosody endows the play with a greater sense of unity. *Le Misanthrope* strikes us as an unusual play because of its puzzling structure.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Should he give up rhyming the Muse herself would breathe a sigh of relief’ (2013: 52).

Instead of abiding by the principle of unity, many episodes follow and interrupt one another at a great pace: Alceste's repudiation of society, the sonnet affair, the focus on Alceste's and Célimène's relationship, the *scène des portraits*, the lawsuit, Célimène's tribulations and social disgrace. Not only is this concurrence taking place at the level of the plot, but also, the characterisation of the hero is complex, as the title of the play itself implies: '*Le Misanthrope, ou l'Atrabilaire amoureux*.' Two character traits are embodied in a single persona – the first, in itself, is twofold: the resigned hatred for humankind, and the staunch condemnation of hypocrisy. Moreover, the two main character traits seem to be in opposition: how can a misanthrope possibly be in love, and let alone with a *coquette*? This central paradox is left unsolved partly because Alceste does not fully show his two character traits simultaneously: the first one appears with flamboyance in the first act, the second prevails in the remaining acts, to the extent that a more appropriate title could be, at the risk of sounding provocative, '*Le Misanthrope et l'Atrabilaire amoureux*.'

To some extent, McGough's system with regard to prosodic forms enables these diverging characterisations to be reconciled. Prose, both emphasising the character's marginality, thus, his misanthropic nature, and embodying his rejection of affected speech, is a constant reminder of what he is and what he is fighting for. In McGough, Alceste continually demonstrates that he never departs from his vows and commitments. While in Molière, the sudden revival of the first theme in the first scene of Act V might at first disconcert, in McGough, prosodic forms help to keep the actions in an organic ensemble, however plural and unrelated they may be.

In *The Misanthrope*, not only are the prosodic variations aurally striking, but they also frequently feature at the core of the subject matter of dialogues. Metatextuality adds an extra layer of self-consciousness to what is already a self-conscious prosodic system, thanks to the opposition between prose and verse together with the use of comic rhymes. Metatextuality reinforces the sense of complicitous humour, as the audience gets the sense that the characters on stage are aware of things they should not know as characters. Losing their privileged position, the audience does not laugh at the characters, but *with* the characters.

I have commented elsewhere on the metatextuality in McGough's prosodic variations as a powerful comic strategy (Ploix 2016: 118-22). I shall briefly come back to it and make some new observations on its dramatic significance. In an episode invented by McGough in the middle of the opening scene, Alceste openly reproaches the others for their way of speaking:

Not plainly enough I fear.
From henceforth... No verse!

I will say it as I see it, I will say it like it is,
Plain prose, unadorned.

No frills, no iambs, no alexandrines, no relentless rhythm, no fancy word juggling. No couplets with a rhyme bomb ticking away. (6)

In this speech, Alceste gradually turns from verse to prose: before proceeding with prose (which he does in the fifth line), he first utters a few lines in unrhymed free verse, which allows the actor to declaim the words ‘No verse!’ in a dramatic manner thanks to the ellipsis. In the third line, Alceste also justifies this rejection, strengthening the bonds between form and content.¹⁵⁰ Having the character carry out a change of prosodic system midscene is a way of bringing the other characters’ and the audience’s attentions to language. Indeed, before Alceste’s outspoken rejection of verse, the audience has just had the time to acknowledge the convention of rhymes, and to try to forget them in order to concentrate on what the characters are saying. Now the audience finds themselves having to start the process again.

I have already quoted the dialogue below as a meta-discursive occurrence bringing comic relief in the context of serious and fierce discussions (Ploix 2016: 119). One of the funniest moments in the play, Alceste’s comment on Oronte’s sonnet is worth quoting again:

OR – Voilà qui va fort bien, et je crois vous entendre. Mais puis-je savoir ce que dans mon sonnet...	OR – Mmm... Yet I sense they were cruelly aimed at me. But now, my sonnet. What do you think of <i>my</i> sonnet?
AL – Franchement, il est bon à mettre au cabinet; (I-ii, 374-6)	(Pause.) AL – If it were mine, I would piss upon it. (Another pause.) Sorry! OR – I should think so! AL – Sorry for the rhyme. Not the sentiment. (20) ¹⁵¹

In passing, one can note that for comic effect, McGough chooses not to retain the ambiguity of the French term *cabinet*. A *cabinet* can refer to a piece of furniture where documents are kept, a garde-robe, or ‘le lieu secret où on va aux nécessités de nature’ (Furetière). McGough’s text suggests only the second definition.¹⁵²

But this episode is not simply a pure comic effect devoid of any dramatic significance. Along with the several other instances of slipped rhymes cropping up surreptitiously in Alceste’s speeches, this episode suggests the character’s failed attempt not to abide by the

¹⁵⁰ In the performance at the Liverpool Playhouse on 15 February 2015, the actor Colin Tierney marks a very long pause before uttering ‘No verse!’ and utters these words in a very low voice. The contrast in vocal pitch is supplemented by that of pace as the actor elongates the vowels in these two words in an exaggerated manner which provokes laughter in the audience (the audio recording was sent to me by BBC Radio 3).

¹⁵¹ The actors make powerful vocal contrasts that significantly reinforce the effect of the dialogue. Daniel Goode (playing Oronte) employs a remarkably low voice and slow speech delivery when enquiring about Alceste’s views on his sonnet, which contrasts with his previous lines which are declaimed with a high-pitched voice. Colin Tierney (playing Alceste) marks an artificially long pause before replying with a low and fast voice.

¹⁵² This is probably purely coincidental: McGough based his adaptation on existing translations (Van Laun, Wilbur, Harrison and Lochhead) which do not use this particular definition of the word.

established rules, and to impose his radical views. As *The Guardian* observes: ‘The look of pained self-censure on Colin Tierney’s face whenever an inadvertent rhyme slips out is a wonderful summation of Alceste’s predicament: a man determined to swim against the tide, but no more able to abjure society than a fish can denounce water’ (21/02/2013). The weakness of the character, in the original, appearing through his love for Célimène, here, takes up a more prosaic form.

Metatextuality takes various forms in *The Misanthrope*. For the recitation of Oronte’s sonnet, McGough has imagined an entirely new scene that vividly demonstrates his wit and sense of theatricality. In this episode, Alceste uses rhymes, but this time, deliberately. Without Oronte knowing, Alceste steals the spotlight: he adds a syllable to Oronte’s (almost) every line, which, not only makes them funny in themselves, but makes them rhyme together. Here is a short excerpt of the recitation, which unfolds over more than two pages:

ORONTE – ‘Every night as I walk the street
I think of you, and I get –’
ALCESTE – ... on heat
ORONTE – ‘All kinds of feelings, passionate and raw.
O what I wouldn’t give for a –’
ALCESTE – ... phworr!
ORONTE – ‘– Chance to be near the one I admire from afar –’
ALCESTE – ... t
[...](17)

Alceste, a sworn enemy of rhymes, suddenly becomes a virtuosic rhymester, able to come up with a meaningful and coherent rhyming word or sound on the double. An ironic inversion takes place: Alceste sets out to put into rhyme a piece of poetry that one would have expected to be in rhyming couplet in the first place, especially coming from a pompous character like Oronte. By discrediting the sonnet in such a way that the audience is no longer able to make sense of the poem as a whole, but only concentrates on rhymes, Alceste is actually discrediting the very form he is using. This scene is another arresting example of metatheatre, as it involves Alceste addressing the audience directly and exclusively: ‘*He [Alceste] moves downstage, his back to Oronte, and stage-whispers his asides, which do not alter the flow of delivery*’ (17).

Dubois’s occasional appearances are also metatextual. Dubois continually ends his lines with the same word, sometimes with great effort, demonstrating a blatant inability to speak in rhyming couplets:

Monsieur, un homme est là, qui voudrait vous parler, Pour affaire, dit-il, qu’on ne peut reculer. (II-v, 743-4)	There is a man in the hall downstairs, sir, Come to call about your affairs, sir, Details of which were not forthcoming. Shall I tell him you will be forth... coming? (2013: 37)
--	--

Through Alceste's irritation about Dubois's being a poor rhymester, McGough, with impish detachment, addresses the problematical rapport between formal sophistication and clear-headed communication, and thereby, the legitimacy of rhymes in theatre:

DUBOIS – And . . . er ... is on your desk ready and waiting
 For you to return home and finish ... er ... during.
 ALCESTE – During? What in God's name is 'during'?
 DUBOIS – It rhymes, sir!
 ALCESTE – I know it rhymes, but what does it mean? (27)

Although this gag may seem purely gratuitous, only added for the sake of our enjoyment, it is an extension to the extreme of a trait already present in the original: 'His [Dubois] ludicrous physical disguise – he arrives equipped for a hasty flight with Alceste – is complemented by his failure to dress up linguistically in the presence of a third party' (Peacock 1987: 82). Moreover, it has a dramaturgical function: 'Du Bois's linguistic gaucheness (repetition, exaggeration, confused expression) gives a farcical reminder of the plain speaking of the master' (*ibid.*).

While all these metatextual instances never fail to make the audience laugh – and it was certainly McGough's first objective – they also have a powerful impact on the aesthetics and the stakes of the play.

Le Misanthrope is an enigmatic play: throughout the centuries, critics have often debated which party Molière favoured between Alceste and Philinte (see for example Mallinson 1996: xix). As pointed out, *l'homme aux rubans verts* is given ridiculous attributes thanks to his obdurate temperament, unwavering radicalism and impetuous language. But it is also possible, with Eliante, to be sensitive to his heroic and almost tragic dimension, and to identify with him. The variety of interpretations that the Comédie-Française has proposed, from a hysterical, to a victimised, comic, melancholic or passionate character, testifies to this.

In McGough, thanks to Alceste's use of prose, this ambiguity is somewhat lessened. It is easier to identify with the main character since he speaks as the audience does and shares the audience's unvoiced reactions to the other characters' way of speaking. Alceste's voice, therefore, emerges as the only credible one, standing out from the artificial posture of the other characters. Moreover, akin to some literate characters of Elizabethan plays, who 'mock the labored rime of their underlings, and even of themselves,' and who take up the role of the critic, 'before supercilious members of the audience could raise their eyebrows' (Flint 2000: 19), through metatextual allusions, Alceste pushes for a complicitous relationship with the audience. In instances of metadrama, the audience distances itself from the oblivious state in

which the dramatic illusion plunges them, and becomes conscious of its quality as spectators.¹⁵³ These self-conscious prosodic shifts strongly emphasise double enunciation, a quality ontologically peculiar to dramatic language, which implies that a speech given by a character always has two distinct effects, one on the interlocutor and one on the audience. While dramatic illusion partly occurs when these two effects coincide, Alceste's open rejection of verse and his occasional unwanted rhymes introduce a strong gap between the audience and the stage. The other characters, using rhymes as an unquestioned convention, cannot appreciate Alceste's decision in the same way as the audience, who is the only one not finding rhymes eccentric. Indeed, at various moments, the rejection of the others' choice of prosody goes both ways: Alceste rejects verse, for its being the antithesis of plain-speaking, and the other characters, notably Philinte and Oronte, far from questioning the legitimacy of verse, sneer at Alceste's prose in comic asides. Here are two examples: 'But in company I'm willing to bet/That when the verse is spinning and the rhymes are ringing/It's a decision he'll regret' (6), 'Lawsy! There's some wisdom there, and your words do respect/(*Aside*) Though the rhyming not as sonorous as I was given to expect' (14) (also quoted in Ploix 2016: 120). Although these comic asides do not exist in the original, these additions do not depart so much from the original sense of ridicule attached to Alceste's directness of expression.

Although, as stated above, the fact that Alceste speaks in prose can facilitate the audience's identification with the character, the outspoken comic metatextual nature of prosodic variations in *The Misanthrope* has the effect of limiting this identification, since identification is best achieved through unconscious processes. McGough's dramaturgical adaptation of the play does not, to all intents and purposes, take itself too seriously, thereby avoiding what could have been an out-and-out simplification of this rich play.

¹⁵³ Other moments of metadrama are scattered throughout McGough's *Misanthrope*, mainly for comic effects. Alceste blames Oronte for making a fool of himself in public by reading his sonnet, to which Oronte replies 'We are in private, sir.' Alceste's rejoinder requires a pointing gesture towards the audience: 'Indeed we are' (19).

5. Justin Fleming's Mixed Rhyme Schemes

Fleming is an Australian playwright and theatre translator who recently enjoyed success with four Molière translations. *The Hypocrite* [*Tartuffe*] (2008) was immediately popular and was restaged several times, then followed *The School for Wives* (2012), *The Miser* and *The Literari* [*Les Femmes savantes*] (2016), which toured in thirty Australian cities (*The Australian*, 28/05/2016). This success disproves the frequent comments that Molière does not translate well and hardly travels beyond France or Europe.

However, as an experienced playwright, Fleming was mindful of making Molière accessible to his audience: he translated the texts into a 'clever Aussie vernacular' (*The Australian*, 01/08/2014), and set the plays in contemporary Australia: 'I think Molière would approve of [the relocation and local vernacular] because he did love the plays to get out to the masses, not just the court of the king' (*The Australian*, 28/05/2016).

Fleming also chose to translate all of his selections of Molière's plays into 'thumping English verse' (*ibid.*), *L'Avare* included. The effects and issues stemming from rewriting a prose text into verse will be discussed in the next section, so they will not be addressed here. However, the adaptation of *L'Avare* into verse is far from being the only peculiarity with regard to prosody in Fleming's translations: Fleming has translated Molière into hexameter lines that are often made up of anapestic (unstressed-unstressed-stressed), dactylic (stressed-unstressed-unstressed), and occasionally, amphibrachic (unstressed-unstressed-unstressed) meters. As an example,

Un pédant dont on voit la plume libérale
D'officieux papiers fournir toute la halle. (*Les Femmes savantes*, I-iii, 235-6)

becomes (with the lines scanned):

The man's an idiot, a pedant, whose head's full of total vapour,
- / - / - - / - - - / - - / - / -
Which is why all his books get pulped and end up as toilet paper. (*The Literari*, 2016: 223)
- - / - - / - / - - / - / - / -

The multiplicity of three-syllable meters in Fleming's verse results in very long lines, which occasionally comprise up to 19 syllables, and which retain the caesura most often. Unsurprisingly, this has been picked up by a reviewer: 'Justin Fleming's translation owes a lot to Byron, with its long lines and crazy rhymes' (*The Herald Sun*, Nov. 2008).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Quoted from <https://australianplays.org/script/ASC-1136>

Although ternary meters accelerate speech delivery, one can nonetheless argue that Fleming's long lines delay the occurrence of rhymes without the disadvantages of the formal alexandrine. If iambic hexameters notoriously pose problems to actors with regard to breathability, actors are bound to take their breath in the middle of the lines, at caesuras or punctuation marks. These unusually long lines give actors the possibility of varying the rhythm depending on the situation. Therefore, the rhythm of the hexameter will often be broken, steering clear of any singsong effect. In addition to naturalness in performance, the length of the line also allows more flexibility in the compositional process and a greater potential for creativity. One reviewer pointed to Fleming's 'Australianisation of the verse' in *The School for Wives* (*The Australian*, 01/08/2014), thanks to the added jokes that the length of the lines allowed.

In his three translations, Fleming innovatively mixes rhyme schemes, using the AABB, ABAB, and ABBA forms. One of the reasons lying behind this is to dilute the presence of rhymes: as a number of reviewers pointed out, rhymes are also an uncommon form for the Australian stage.¹⁵⁵ But on the other hand, the variety of rhyme schemes sharpens the audience's concentration on rhymes: it ensures that the audience will not consume the rhymes passively – it has to engage actively with them. With different rhyme schemes, the audience always remains alert.

Rhyme schemes are not used randomly, with a sole aim of shunning monotony. Fleming's translations show that he is aware that rhyme schemes are an important structural element in the architecture of the discourse and that they can significantly control the rhythm of the text. In the introduction to each play, Fleming explains the use of his rhyme scheme in a few lines. Here is what he says in his introduction to *The Literati*:

For variety's sake, and to give characters and themes their breathing space, in scenes on lofty pretentiousness, I used the rhyming couplets (AABB). When the subject is love, the rhymes are on alternate lines (ABAB). And for wisdom and true scholarship, the rhymes fall on the first and fourth lines, and the second and third lines (ABBA). (2016: 216)¹⁵⁶

Although Fleming does not say more than this, it is possible to vindicate these choices. As rhyming couplets present the rhymes instantly to the ears, they are certainly the most catchy of the three rhyme schemes. Therefore, this form is the most appropriate for characters to show off. As in the original, couplets used in highfalutin and would-be poetic speeches create many

¹⁵⁵ 'The fact that, even in English, he manages such deft rhyming couplets, defies the mere mortal' (*Crikey*, 31/10/2012, quoted in <http://www.writers.net/writers/books/42985>), see also Nowra 1984: 15.

¹⁵⁶ These explanations appeared in the programme notes to his plays: see http://www.griffintheatre.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/The-Literati_OnlineProgram.pdf

comic effects. Most importantly, thanks to the feedline-punchline dialectic, rhyming couplets are the rhyme scheme that lends itself the most efficiently to comic effects. In *The School for Wives*, rhyming couplets are used in scenes where ‘Arnolphe is driving his soapbox themes of cheating wives and cuckoldry’ (2016: 2). Keeping a comic form for an inherently ridiculous character participates in discrediting his speech. Fleming thereby draws on the common association of rhyming couplets with a usual form of light verse, and is in line with most modern rhymed translations of Molière’s comedies. Once again, reviewers have been struck by the humour sparked by the extremely prominent rhymes: ‘He has ripped into Molière’s original with gusto, whisking us off on a hysterical journey of rhyming verse’ (*The Guardian*, 31/07/2016).

However, Fleming’s rhyming couplets are not exclusively reserved for funny speeches. In fact, in the four translations, couplets are the form used in most of the text. Rhyming couplets lend themselves to a fast and steady rhythm, as they function in sets of two lines, contrary to alternate rhymes and enclosed rhymes, which function in sets of four lines. Thus, rhyming couplets have greater plasticity: a couplet can be self-contained, whereas two lines cannot stand on their own in the other two rhyme schemes. English couplets are also more flexible than French alexandrines, in which the alternation between feminine and masculine rhymes group the lines into quatrains. Furthermore, the emphasis on structure is smaller in rhyming couplets than in the other rhyme schemes because there are two ways of grouping couplets into quatrains, either AABB/CCDD or BBCC/DDEE, unlike alternate and enclosed rhymes, which only allow one structuration. Therefore, English couplets lend themselves well to dialogic scenes; they can be passed between different characters easily: when a character speaks a line, they only have a single other line to say before another character can take over. And in fact, being not a heavily structured scheme, couplets are often shared between two characters without creating a significant clash with any pre-arranged structure.

Sometimes, however, rhyming couplets are linked to a carefully structured discourse, as pointed out in Chapter II, 2.2. In *The Hypocrite*, rhyming couplets are used ‘in moments about truth versus hypocrisy’ (2016: 67), and they often efficiently support rhetorical discourse. Unlike the blend of rhyming sounds in the other two forms, rhyming couplets keep the sounds separate. And as the phonic echo often creates a semantic bond between rhymes, this form is appropriate to separate ideas, and thus to express dichotomy. Here is Fleming’s translation of the last lines of Cléante’s long speech towards the end of Act I:

Their religion is kind and tolerant; they don’t look for fault.
The beautiful Christian philosophy, by their deeds, they exalt.

But your Tartuffe, to tell the truth, is not this kind of person.
I believe that you are dazzled by a most zealous perversion. (2016: 77)

Rhyming couplets appear to be particularly efficient in sets of four lines, when the second couplet stands in opposition to the first (here, introduced by the conjunction ‘but’). The other two rhyme schemes would presumably fail to achieve this rhetorical effect.

Seemingly, alternate and enclosed rhymes imply a more structured and rigid discourse. In these two forms, each line is given a particular structural function in the quatrain to which they are attached. In a way, these two schemes presuppose that the character already has the entire quatrain in their mind when they speak the first line.

In Fleming’s *Hypocrite* and *The Literari*, alternate rhymes are chosen in scenes of love. In *The School for Wives*, they are used in scenes driven by Agnès’s ‘enlightenment’ (2016: 2). Not only might it suggest that the ABAB form is an ‘enlightened’ form of the AABB form, but also, this choice puts Agnès’s delusional idea of love inculcated by Arnolphe in contrast with an emerging capacity to feel genuine affection. Alternate rhymes are less conspicuous than couplets: since the listener has to process two rhyming sounds at the same time, their sonorous quality is somewhat attenuated. This form allows speeches to avoid unwanted comic effects. Thus, being uncondusive to comic effects and not altogether yielding to the more reasoned dimension of enclosed rhymes, alternate rhymes seem suitable to speeches expressing genuine feelings. Alternate rhymes, for more symbolic reasons, can also be said to fit ‘love speeches,’ since the intermingling rhymes in the ABAB scheme, it might be argued, alludes to a romantic pair.

Interestingly enough, this rhyme scheme works particularly well in I-ii of *The Literari*, when Cléante expresses two different feelings within the same lines, his depleted love for Armande and his new love for Henrietta:

D’un regard pitoyable ils ont séché mes larmes,
Et n’ont pas dédaigné le rebut de vos charmes;
De si rares bontés m’ont si bien su toucher,
Qu’il n’est rien qui me puisse à mes fers arracher (I-ii, 147-50)

My dream of someone more human came true when I saw these eyes,
In them was something precious, which I know I’d value forever;
They had a healing kindness, with no deception or lies,
She welcomed what you rejected, was wise where you were clever. (2016: 220-1)

Rather than bluntly set the two women in opposition, alternate rhymes might allude to a simultaneous process in the expiration of his tenderness for the older sister, and the emergence of his affection for the younger. Being a heightened poetical form in comparison with most of Fleming’s couplets, alternate rhymes makes Cléante’s speech sound sincere.

And as Fleming says, in the *School for Wives*, the ABBA form is used in scenes in which Arnolphe ‘has to deal with his rival, Horace’ (2016: 2), in *The Hypocrite*, in scenes driven by Tartuffe’s ‘own rhetoric’ (2016: 67), and in *The Literari*, in speeches conveying ‘wisdom and true scholarship’ (2016: 216). As the ABBA form is only used when the scene revolves around certain characters, Fleming’s prosodic variations reinforce characterisation. Although, unlike McGough’s *Tartuffe* and *Misanthrope*, characters generally do not have the monopoly of any prosodic form, occasionally, prosodic variations intervene during the dialogue to differentiate the characters. This is notably the case when Tartuffe tries to seduce Elmire, with Orgon under the table (IV-v): Elmire uses the AABB form and Tartuffe the ABBA form. The fact that within the dialogue, two mindsets, together with two rhyme schemes, are in opposition, engenders an effect similar to McGough’s two plays.

As enclosed rhymes work in quatrains, the source text is often adapted the better to convey the force of these fixed units. When in Molière, successive speeches comprise each three to six lines, one can note a tendency in Fleming’s translations to regulate these speeches in sets of four lines. This further accentuates the sense of structuration of this rhyme scheme. Enclosed rhymes are, indeed, a great resource for strong rhetorical discourse; a device that was unavailable to classical French playwrights. Enclosed rhymes can take control of the audience’s expectations and create tension: announced from the start, the long-awaited last line has a certain authoritative resonance. Fleming often uses the emphasis on the last line to stress important ideas. Tartuffe’s last line before he leaves the stage at the end of Act IV, sounds particularly menacing in Fleming’s translation:

Qu’on n’est pas où l’on pense, en me faisant injure;
Que j’ai de quoi confondre, et punir l’imposture,
Venger le Ciel qu’on blesse, et faire repentir
Ceux qui parlent ici de me faire sortir. (IV-vii, 1561-4)

If you try to damage my name or injure my reputation
No one will believe you, all your ranting will ring hollow.
And I will avenge your insult and punishment will swiftly follow.
For it’s my intent to implement your complete annihilation. (2016: 116)

This final speech leaves the other characters in utter disquiet: in that regard, Elmire’s reaction ‘His manner was so imperious!’ is notably more meaningful than Molière’s Elmire, who merely says: ‘Quel est donc ce langage, et qu’est-ce qu’il veut dire?’ (IV-viii, 1565).

6. Timothy Mooney's Versification of Prose Plays

In order to 'breathe playful life into the dialogue,' and aiming for 'a heightened performance style' (2009: 7), Mooney translated several of Molière's prose plays into rhyming couplets: *The Imaginary Invalid* (2005), *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* (2008), *The Miser* (2009), *The Schemings of Scapin* (2009) and *Don Juan* (2010). Mooney invokes other reasons:

With the language fully 'present,' the audience can better appreciate playful twists of characterization, comic movement, and crafty directorial invention. As the audience finds themselves amid the game of a play that is performed in verse, they will listen to hear just how we play by this game's rules, and gain satisfaction in seeking those rules employed. (2009: 7)

Such an undertaking requires a great spirit of creativity. One can argue that, in some respects, translating from prose into verse is even more constraining than translating from verse into verse. First because Molière's alexandrines tend to be more 'dense' than prose, and, on top of that, Mooney has to deal with a shorter verse form than Molière's. Second and most importantly, in order to accommodate the sense-units contained with the prose text into a prescribed prosodic form, Mooney has to impose a regularity on phrases and sentences that are not regulated in the source text. In alexandrines, sense-units are already regulated, and it is only a matter of accommodating them into another prescribed framework. When translating from verse into verse, elements are already condensed, the arguments already appear structured in couplets and quatrains. At many points in the text, Mooney is obliged to translate a short reply, sometimes made of one syllable, like 'oui,' into a full line, having to pad out and paraphrase. This often disturbs the rhythm of the original, as I shall explore in detail with a number of examples.

However, in other respects, translating from prose into verse allows greater liberty in the translation process than from verse into verse. As the thought-process is not pre-organised in couplets, and words have a greater independence, it is possible for the translator to add a single line to a speech. In a verse translation of a verse text, doing so would modify the rhyme disposition in the rest of the play. This can be problematic: in stichomythic dialogues, for example, the character who finishes the couplet seems to have the upper hand in the conflict. Therefore, adding a line at one point calls for adding another one shortly after in order to restore the original rhyme disposition. Translating from a prose text, Mooney does not have this problem; in fact, he uses many single-line additions to create gratuitous comic effects. Toinette's first line is an example:

ARGAN – [...] et une fille de bon naturel doit être ravie d'épouser ce qui est utile à la santé de son père.	AR – [...] To help her father's health should be an honor.
TOINETTE – Ma foi, Monsieur, voulez-vous qu'en amie je vous donne un conseil? (I-v)	TO – I'm sure she'll think of that when he's upon her. Good sir, might I give you some fond advice? (2005: 24)

Chapter II argued that a prose translation of a verse play by Molière could result in a lessening of a number of effects that contribute to the intensity of the comedy, especially given Molière's skilful versification. And indeed, there is no denying that Mooney's verse translations of prose plays add rhetorical and dramatic strength to many speeches. For example, the rewriting of the following dialogue into verse certainly has its advantages. Although in the original, Argan is clearly the ludicrous character, compensating for the lack of arguments with insults, Mooney makes Toinette's stage presence even stronger. First Argan interrupts Toinette, and finishes her line in an attempt to assert his authority, but Toinette reclaims the rhyming position straight away:

TO – Il est de mon devoir de m'opposer aux
choses qui vous peuvent déshonorer.
AR – Viens, viens, que je t'apprenne à parler.
TO – Je m'intéresse, comme je dois, à ne vous
point laisser faire de folie.
AR – Chienne!
TO – Non, je ne consentirai jamais à ce mariage.
AR – Pendarde!
TO – Je ne veux point qu'elle épouse votre
Thomas Diafoirus.
AR – Carogne!
TO – Et elle m'obéira plutôt qu'à vous. (I-v)

TO – I only do my duty to oppose
A choice that may disgrace –
AR – I'll break your nose!
TO – I'm stopping you from things you will repent.
AR – You wench!
TO – No, I'll not give you my consent.
AR – You jade!
TO – I won't allow her wed this Thomas
AR – You harlot!
TO – It would bring a shame upon us.
(29)

On the other hand, one cannot contend that Mooney necessarily makes the originals more efficient in all respects. Molière's prose has certain advantages and the playwright exploits them fully. Obviously, the principal advantage of prose is verisimilitude: prose enables a total rhythmic freedom which can be made to serve dramatic intensity. However, prose in itself does not necessarily imply 'un langage dont on oublie qu'il est langage' (Larthomas 2005: 306); prose can still sound very artificial. And in fact, Molière's dramatic prose, very often, reveals no intention to conceal its artificial nature. However, when pure comic effects are not sought, and when a speech needs to convey information, Molière ensures the efficacy of his prose thanks to a dexterous dialectic between regularity and rhythmic variety, as Conesa demonstrates (1983: 395-409). Regularity is based on the frequent use of speech segments of a certain length, which makes the text highly 'speakable' (or 'breathable'). Conesa analyses Molière's rhythm by counting the number of syllables between each break in the flow of speech. The critic finds much regularity in Molière's prose, with, notably, a high number of

units resembling the octosyllable: ‘L’utilisation du segment octosyllabique est créatrice de rythme dans la mesure où sa répétition accoutume l’oreille à une valeur moyenne’ (*ibid.*: 401). He demonstrates that these units tend to function in triplets, giving actors great flexibility in segmenting the text in performance: either in three groupings or as one larger grouping equating the length of two alexandrines (402). As Conesa puts it: ‘Outre son importance rythmique, le segment octosyllabique présente un grand intérêt, dans la mesure où il favorise la plasticité du texte, en offrant au comédien différentes possibilités de diction’ (402). The fact that respiratory regularity is also observable in Molière’s prose does not make it as different to verse as one might think: ‘Il y a un rythme verbal de la prose, qui est aussi efficace que le rythme imposé du vers. C’est le rythme respiré.’¹⁵⁷

On the other hand, a long speech in prose can sound prolix and diffuse, as no rhymes help to structure discourse and to link ideas together. Molière, demonstrating his experience of the stage, shuns monotony by also often disrupting regularity in his prose (Conesa 1983: 29). The opening monologue of *Le Malade imaginaire* deploys a variety of rhythmical features that compensate for the theatrical immobility. Notably, within the monologue, several voices stand alongside one another to dilute the long speech into a lively virtual conversation: Monsieur Fleurant’s prescriptions, Argan’s direct responses to them, and Argan’s comments to himself. Speech units are also rhythmically varied: enumerations and short sentences are juxtaposed with longer propositions, endowing this first monologue with a highly improvised character:

Ah! Monsieur Fleurant, c’est se moquer, il faut vivre avec les malades. Monsieur Purgon ne vous a pas ordonné de mettre quatre francs. Mettez, mettez trois livres, s’il vous plaît. Vingt et trente sols. ‘Plus dudit jour, une potion anodine, et astringente, pour faire reposer Monsieur, trente sols.’ Bon, dix et quinze sols.

Despite the irregularity of the length of the syntactic propositions, the tempo of the first scene is very slow. This is mainly due to the cyclical structure of the speech on a larger level: Argan keeps reading new prescriptions from his apothecary and counting his money, while no new information relevant to the plot is given. This immobilises time: sentences have no sense of direction.¹⁵⁸ The slow tempo of the opening has a structural importance as it radically contrasts with the following scene, in which the stichomythic exchange between Toinette and Argan is highly cadenced. Tempo picks up at the very end of the monologue with the onomatopoeic repetitions: ‘Drelin, drelin, drelin, point d’affaire. Drelin, drelin, drelin, ils sont

¹⁵⁷ *Revue d’Histoire du Théâtre*, n° 2, 1972, 194, quoted in Conesa 1983: 408.

¹⁵⁸ In what Garapon calls the *ballets verbaux* (1957: 236-41), the structure of the dialogue is also frozen and its informational quality is non-existent. However, the cyclical structure is much shorter and an increasing tension results from the structural blockage, as one of the characters usually yearns to access an information. The tempo is therefore much faster.

sounds. Toinette. Drelin, drelin, drelin.’ Not only is the acceleration created because these words signal a change in focus, but also because they create a perceivable pattern. Listeners are able to structure the flow they perceive, and create expectations.

One can argue that regular verse is conducive to a certain regulation of variations in tempo – *regulation*, but certainly not *eradication* –: no one would deny that the opening of *Tartuffe* is extremely fast-paced and that the first scene between Tartuffe and Elmire (III-iii) is eerily slower, although they are both in verse. Nonetheless, verse, as Harrison argues in the introduction to his *Misanthrope*, puts words in movement: they are integrated in a structural ensemble that is drawn to the end-word: ‘The playing time of a verse version tends to be shorter than an equivalent in prose, and this is a considerable advantage’ (2002: 7). A sense of stylistic immobilism is thus harder to achieve in verse than in prose.

In the following scene from *Le Malade imaginaire*, the dialogue between Argan and Toinette appears very vertical on the page. The verticality is created by the percussive *Ha!*’s, since they keep the dialogue at a standstill. In Mooney’s rewriting, this effect is somewhat diminished as the *Ow!*’s are distributed within the lines according to the verse rule. Instead of marking a strong refusal to engage in the conversation, Toinette’s interventions are more embedded in the dialogue because of the prosody. It can be contended that the structuration of what is supposed to be unstructured lessens the rhythmicity of the exchange and slows down its tempo:¹⁵⁹

ARGAN – Ah! traîtresse...	ARGAN – Ah, renegade!
TOINETTE – Ha!	TOINETTE – Ow!
ARGAN – Il y a...	ARGAN – It has been an hour...
TOINETTE – Ha!	TOINETTE – Ow! Ow!
ARGAN – Il y a une heure...	ARGAN – That I have sat here, drained of power...
TOINETTE – Ha!	TOINETTE – Ow! Ow!
ARGAN – Tu m’as laissé...	ARGAN – You left me...
TOINETTE – Ha!	TOINETTE – Ow!
ARGAN – Tais-toi donc, coquine, que je te querelle. (I-ii)	ARGAN – With all I’ve paid you...
	TOINETTE – Ow!
	ARGAN – Quiet, slut! I’m trying to upbraid you. (2005: 14)

The *Ow!*’s reaches a noticeable state of structuration when, a moment later, Toinette’s interjection rhymes with Argan’s line:

TOINETTE – To each his own; that’s only fair. Ow! Ow!
 ARGAN – All right! All right! We’ll call it even now! (15)

¹⁵⁹ The tempo of a scene should not be understood as the speed of speech delivery. The tempo of a scene needs to be assessed from a dramaturgical, a psychological and stylistic analysis (Conesa 1983: 376). Here, indeed, the contrast between the two opening scenes, the confrontation between the two characters and the verticality of the writing all participate in creating a fast tempo. Although McGough has also translated *Le Malade imaginaire* into rhyming couplets, his verse is very irregular. Therefore, a variety of rhythms was more easily achievable than in Mooney’s regular verse.

Nevertheless, when the alexandrine is broken down even further (that is, when characters share even smaller linguistic units), the effect is different, as in I-ii of *L'École des femmes*, when Alain and Georgette argue behind the door, keeping Arnolphe outside. The rhythm of the dodecasyllable and the rhymes give a pulse that allows a better appreciation of the independent rhythm: the fast alternation, seeming to be freed from the prosodic system, engenders a clash that emphasises rhythmicity.

Similarly, one can argue that the extreme rhythmicity of Harpagon's monologue in *L'Avare* at the end of Act IV does not lend itself to structuration in a tight metrical straightjacket. The untrammelled enumerations, the lack of structural control in the flow of speech together with the interference of a dialogue-within-the-monologue express Harpagon's insanity, which, here, attains its paroxysm. A regular verse system would not convey the similar effect created by the endless series of questions on which Harpagon sets out before being unexpectedly interrupted by an imaginary culprit:¹⁶⁰

Qui peut-ce être? qu'est-il devenu? où est-il? où	Who can it be? Where is my loving stash?
se cache-t-il? que ferai-je pour le trouver? où	Where find the villain? Run or wait to catch him?
courir? où ne pas courir? n'est-il point là? n'est-	Has he made off? I see him. Can I snatch him?
il point ici? qui est-ce? Arrête. [...] (IV-vii)	I've got you wicked one! [...]
	(2009: 90)

As the questions are fitted into lines of prescribed length, the audience expects that the end of the series of questions will coincide with the end of the line. Because rhymes create expectations, the questions sound less like uncontrolled verbiage than in the original. This relates to some of the common reproaches made to verse seen in Chapter I: as being a threat to efficient dramatic language, which should generally sound as if it were never written and thought before being spoken.

In Mooney's *Schemings of Scapin*, the rewriting of the *scène du bâton* into verse creates a similar clash between the structuration of the verse system and the disordered language. As the theatrical efficiency of the scene stems from the anarchical rhythmicity of the text, Mooney's ordering of the flow of speech is hardly justifiable as an attempt to emphasise the rhythmicity of the original, although it does bring extra humour:

'Ah! toi faire le trole.' Ahi, ahi, ahi; ah, Monsieur,	Oh, oh! Oh, oh!, Oh, sir! Oh, gently, oh!
ah, ah, ah, ah. 'Jusqu'au refoir: l'estre là un petit	Oh, please, sir, please! Oh, no! 'Vell, dat may show
leçon pour li apprendre à toi à parler inso-	You vat I haff for your goot chum.
lumentente.' Ah! peste soit du baragouineux. Ah!	Varewell!' Oh, oh! The devil take the scum!
(III-ii)	(2009: 73)

¹⁶⁰ One must not forget, however, that *L'Avare* was supposedly originally meant to be written in verse. Thus one must not argue that the play would be less efficient in verse.

Another advantage of prose over verse is that prose allows elements to be kept in total separation from the rest of the text. At a purely structural level, G ron te’s famous sentence in II-vii, ‘Mais que diable allait-il faire dans cette gal re?’ stands out as an independent element, because it is repeated seven times identically, regardless of the progress of the dialogue. Mooney’s equivalent, one can argue, does not stand out to the same extent since the question is ‘prosodically’ linked to the rest of the text: ‘But why in the world would he go on board?’ is paired with ‘He didn’t know that he was being lured’ (59), ‘His wicked fate would lead and he explored!’ (60) and ‘That’s true, but one can’t know these things, Good Lord!’ (61). G ron te’s exclamation, to some extent, becomes diluted in the whole text: one can argue that the effect would be more striking if the text were a mixture of prose and verse, and this sentence were an instance of prosodic variation. Alternatively, the effect would have approached that of the original if the question did not take up the whole line as in *Tartuffe*, when Orgon mechanically asks ‘Et Tartuffe?’ and exclaims ‘Le pauvre homme!’ after Dorine’s replies in I-iv. Orgon’s repetitions, indeed, are not as problematic as the repeated words are not as firmly inscribed into the prosodic structure, and thereby acquire a greater structural independence and a stronger resonance.

However, even though one can contend that verse diminishes the comic effect of G ron te’s repeated question, one must point out that the last occurrence of that question is particularly felicitous in Mooney’s translation, as it is G ron te who detains the rhyming line. The audience expects the line, and feels satisfied to hear what they have been able to predict. Furthermore, the comic effect is reinforced thanks to the isolation of the word ‘Implored,’ which emphasises the rhyme, and therefore, the pseudo-tragic rhetorical dimension of the question:

SCAPIN – Non, cinq cents �cus.	SCAPIN – Five hundred ecus.
G�RONTE – Cinq cents �cus?	G�RONTE – Asked for five?
SCAPIN – Oui	SCAPIN – Implored.
G�RONTE – Que diable allait-il faire � cette gal�re? (II-vi)	G�RONTE – But why in the world would he go on board? (2009: 62)

Furthermore, consistently varying the rhyming word in the line following the repeated sentence brings attention to Mooney’s inventiveness. In this passage, the comic effect might not be generated solely thanks to the grotesque repetition, but also thanks to Mooney’s changing rhymes.

Although it is possible to express some reservations about the rewriting of these prose plays into verse, Mooney’s justifications of this decision in his introductions are nevertheless entirely valid and legitimate. Furthermore, without adopting the prescriptive views of some

seventeenth-century critics as to the superiority of verse over prose, one must not forget that the versification of these prose plays has certainly contributed to their success with their first audiences:

The Miser was the first prose Molière play which I worked on. Down through the ages, translators have simply replaced Molière's French prose with English prose. And yet what I have noticed is that it is the rhyming verse itself that people recognize as 'Molière.' It gives us something to attend to throughout the action of the play, anticipating what rhyme may be coming up, and hopefully surprising us with a twist of language that we may not have been expecting.¹⁶¹

The adaptation of prose plays into verse can indisputably be considered as a fully-fledged creative rewriting: in a way, it is in line with the spirit of creativity that propelled Molière when he wrote his own plays. When Bolt, in a verse translation, claims that 'the rhymes, are yours, not Molière's or Corneille's or whoso'er it be,' (see ch. III, 2.2.a.), in Mooney's translations, this claim is irrefutable, especially given that Mooney's undertakings are unprecedented.

Boisseau defines the interlinks between prosody, rhythm, syntax and meaning: 'le rythme se réalise dans la langue tout en construisant par la synthèse de la prosodie et de la syntaxe une signification du discours qu'il impulse' (2010: 139). 'Rhythm *must* have meaning' as Ezra Pound puts it, propounding that the form directly shapes the substance. Playwright Howard Barker frequently quotes a sentence that he attributes to Nietzsche: 'If you do not understand rhythm in the sentence, you cannot understand its meaning' (Brown 2011: 172). Meschonnic goes as far as to say that rhythm is not within the realm of the 'formal': 'le rythme n'est pas formaliste, au sens où il n'est pas une forme vide, un ensemble schématique qu'il s'agirait de montrer ou non, selon l'humeur' (Dessons and Meschonnic 1998: 7). Quotations from writers or critics attesting to the consubstantiality between the shape of language and the meaning or aesthetic effects are plentiful.

These six case studies demonstrate the impact of prosodic systems on the aesthetics of the plays. A prosodic system in translation is, in itself, always a meaningful choice that suggests a personal engagement with, and interpretation of, the text. An unusual prosodic system always draws attention to itself: it makes dramatic language striking during performance and it has a

¹⁶¹ <http://moliere-in-english.com/moliere.html>

clear visual impact on the page. Furthermore, it makes the text interesting to study for the translation critic: as there are no such things as absolute prosodic equivalence between different languages, a text never dictates the prosodic system to be adopted by the translator.

This chapter shows the variety of effects that prosody can create: rhymed verse does not limit itself to fostering verbal humour, although it is often its primary function in many translations. Depending on the translator's use of verse, the text can create tension, regulate the tempo of drama, provide guidance for the actor's delivery, which actors may or may not follow. Prosody can control the theatrical illusion: a conspicuous verse system can deliberately alienate the spectators, particularly when comic effects are avoided. Verse can also assist the audience in its understanding of the play, by emphasising characterisation, and by strengthening certain aspects of dramatic situations. Prosody also has an essential role in structuring discourse, in placing emphasis on certain words and ideas. Prosodic variation allows rhetorical strategies to be varied and the role of each prosodic form to be clarified. Indeed, by setting forms in opposition, prosodic variation enables us to further our reflections on their respective effects. More generally, a prosodic system makes up a significant part of the translation's identity. An original prosodic system, makes the translation unique and personal. It differentiates the translation from all others.

Conclusion

When preparing a work on the innovative features employed by modern English poets and playwrights in their translations of Molière's plays, and beginning with the premise that these innovative features are introduced with the purpose of making the plays successful on the English stage, it is quite tempting to adhere – somewhat disingenuously – to the point of view that categorises Molière's comedies as deploying an irrevocably unstageable aesthetic for Anglophone audiences, and equally tempting to maintain that bringing Molière onto the modern stage must involve exceptional forbearance on the part on the audience. Far from attempting to belittle the poetic and rhetorical quality of Molière, this thesis has endeavoured to pinpoint what processes can help us to mobilise their potential resonance for the English theatre public, and the innovative features that characterise the modern translators' texts, but that cannot be found in most of the translations that have now sunk into oblivion. Although Molière's plays may have some timeless qualities, historical and cultural shifts often impeded the stageability of the classics. But this thesis has hoped to demonstrate that this unstageability is far from irrevocable, and that the means to enhance the stageability of Molière can be different to customary domestication strategies. It is an undeniable reality that Molière's fortune remains below its real potential, and this calls for further reflection upon the different solutions to the challenges that conspire to prevent successful translations and productions of classics of the French theatre.

I should insist again that the role that many different agents contribute to the success of the translation is significant. Accounting for the success of the plays analysed would therefore also require a comprehensive analysis of their productions. Although some of the translations strongly engage with the *mise en scène* and the *mise en son*, Theatre Translation does not believe in textual imperialism; as Sirkku Aaltonen puts it: 'Playwrights, translators, stage directors, dress and set designers, sound and light technicians as well as actors all contribute to the creation of theatre texts when they move into them and make them their own' (2000: 32). Since the text is only one of the multiple semiotic systems making up performance, one can argue that stagecraft contributes considerably to the attenuation of the gap between the original play and target culture. In the same vein, one can posit that the reason for the popularity of the plays might also lie in the actors' performance. Jean-Louis Barrault, in *Mise en scène de Phèdre*, writes 'On allait, paraît-il, voir Sarah Bernhardt dans *Phèdre*, non plus pour voir jouer

la pièce, même pas pour voir Sarah Bernhardt jouer le rôle en entier, mais pour lui voir jouer les deux scènes dans lesquelles elle excellait' (1946: 16).

In brief, studying the political, ideological and cultural significance of relocation in time and space, reflecting on the translations as cultural objects, and analysing performance and the relationship between the texts and *mise en scène* in modern translations are two avenues of research that have not been discussed in the thesis but that would contribute to an historical overview of Molière translations.

Many more studies could flow from this thesis. The methodologies and analyses developed in this work can be applied to other corpuses. A catalogue as well as a study of Marivaux or Beaumarchais's plays in translation could be very useful, as their works have not been much performed on the English stage, and the existing translations have not received much critical attention. More importantly, the interest in verse in translation could be especially relevant to Racine's and Corneille's drama. As revealed by the reviews and critics quoted in Chapter I, translating seventeenth-century French tragedies into English is arguably even more complex than translating Molière's comedies, and would repay thorough reflection. Although Racine's tragedies and style are widely revered in the Anglo-Saxon world, they have failed to have the same fortune on the English stage as Molière's comedies. Many attempts have been made to translate Racine's and Corneille's tragedies, but, almost systematically, published translations start with a preface explaining why French classical tragedy is impossible to render successfully on the English stage, and that the beauty of Racine's style is lost in translation. Another potential preconception that deserves to be challenged.

This thesis has not directly engaged with debates on the theory of Theatre Translation, but it is hoped that critics will consider it useful, notably thanks to its contestation of the idea that an efficient theatrical language should be entirely domesticating and naturalistically-driven. Whether it is for their pure resonances in performance, or the effective characterisation they embody, or the flexibility and dynamism they invite in delivery, or, more crucially, for the comic effects they trigger by taking the audience by surprise, the promotion of self-conscious conspicuous prosodic effects proves to be a fundamental strategy for revitalising Molière's plays in general, and rhyming couplets as a dramatic form in particular. It is also hoped that my work on verse translation for the stage and the strong links I posit between verse forms and aesthetics will spark further reflections. Furthermore, the concept of prosodic domestication that derives from my analyses might be worth pursuing further, and potentially might become a new paradigm.

If not to Theatre Translation, this thesis can however definitely claim a significant contribution to the scholarship on translations of Molière, which have remained significantly unexplored. In fact, more has been written on Racine's translations than on Molière's, even despite the fact that translations of Molière by far outnumber translations of Racine. Apart from Malleson's, Wilbur's, Harrison's, Bartlett's, McGough's translations, to which one article or more has been devoted, most of the translations mentioned in the thesis have received very few, if any, critical attention. This may, of course, be because many of the primary sources are very recent – Peacock's scholarship on Molière translation does not go beyond the new millennium. Another significant reason why the translations studied in the thesis have remained under-researched is a tendency in the discipline of Theatre Translation to base articles and contributions to collective books on a single case study. And as Theatre Translation scholars are very often translators or theatre practitioners themselves, their case study is very often their own ongoing or latest work. Consequently, diachronic studies of theatre translations are very rare, which might, incidentally, explain why the discipline struggles to develop a theory for itself. The works of Peacock (1993, 1994, 2006) on Molière translations, Stevenson (2004) on Scottish translations, and Senior (2001) on translations of *Tartuffe*, are consequently very welcome, not only for the study of Molière translations, and but also, potentially, for Theatre Translation, even though these three critics are not Theatre Translation critics as such.

According to translation critic George Steiner, 90% of translations produced are regressive; Steiner deplores a tendency of textual deterioration in translation (Folkart 2007: 350). Translation has for centuries been associated with something tragic; the tragedy of loss, betrayal, and subservience. Although Translation Studies has made every possible effort to depart from this conception and challenge the old Italian adage '*traduttore, traditore*,' ('*traduire, trahir*;' 'translator, traitor'), the 'tragedy' of translation is still an ingrained idea in popular culture. It is also quite spontaneously accepted by the public at large that a free rendering of the original is less appropriate than a faithful translation. Again, many critics have appropriately argued against the notion of faithfulness and the view that creative input is illegitimate. Again, despite the constant efforts made by critics, translators are still regarded as inferior to the original author.

When plays are written in verse, and verse is retained for comic effect, the three preconceptions seem much less valid. In poetry and theatre, creative rewriting is more spontaneously welcome than in translation of prose texts, and as a consequence, the translator

suffers less from low status.¹⁶² Being always concerned with the low status of the translator, it is hoped that the discipline of Theatre Translation, and Translation Studies in general will welcome this work on translations that, thanks to their creative prosodies, give visibility to their creators, even, potentially to elevate them to the status of ‘celebrity translators.’

Along with sacred texts and canonical literature, theatrical texts are generally the most frequently retranslated works (Gürçağlar 233-236; see also Brownlie 2006: 146). Retranslation of theatre works is not driven by the aspiration for accuracy, for correcting or improving the previous translations, as it may be frequently the case in literary translation. First, the ‘history-as-progress model’ of retranslation or the ‘logocentric’ kind of reworking, as advocated by Antoine Berman (1990: 1-5), has been deemed inappropriate, notably by Yves Gambier (1994: 414) and Susam-Sarajeva (2003: 2). More crucially, this view of retranslation is definitely not relevant when reflecting on theatre adaptations. As Patrice Pavis puts it: ‘Translation in general and theatre translation in particular has changed paradigms: it can no longer be assimilated to a mechanism of production of semantic equivalence copied mechanically from the source text’ (1989: 26). Other analytical schemes are required, which Georges Bastin, in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* defines concisely: ‘The study of adaptation encourages the theorist to look beyond purely linguistic issues and helps to shed light on the role of the translator as mediator, as a creative participant in a process of verbal communication. Relevance, rather than accuracy, becomes the key word’ (2009: 6). Second, it is often argued that the lifetime of theatre translations is about twenty years or so, and retranslation is necessary to ensure that language reflects the evolution of the current sociolect, idiom and theatrical norms. Studying the history of all available translations prepared for performance of a particular play could bring some insights into the evolution of language usage and the norms of theatrical efficacy. However, this would apply more for prose translations than for verse ones.

Studying verse translations of Molière’s plays is worth it, not with a view to analysing how translations get ‘better’ in relation to the source text, or how they get ‘better’ or more relevant in relation to the target culture, but first and foremost with a view to appreciating how the voice of the poet-translator-playwright engages resourcefully with the text, how innovative and wide-ranging prosodic styles are deployed in creative interactions with Molière’s verse.

¹⁶² This is of course far from being always the case, especially when the translation is actually an adaptation based on a ‘literal.’ The name of the literal translator is rarely mentioned in the programme notes.

Appendix

A Catalogue of All Published English Translations of Molière's Plays

The catalogue lists English translations of Molière's verse plays first, followed by translations of his prose plays. The plays are ordered from most frequently translated to the least. The catalogue references the name of the translator, the date of first publication, the title of the translation, the volume in which it can be found (where applicable), the place and the publisher of the first edition, and the prosodic system chosen. The figures after the headings indicate the number of translations counted. Although this catalogue aims to be exhaustive, I cannot be absolutely certain that all existing translations are listed. Furthermore, one should keep in mind that there are many translations or adaptations that have been performed but not published, and do not appear in this catalogue.

Verse plays (209)

Tartuffe (48)

Medbourne, Matthew	1671	<i>Tartuffe; or The French Puritan</i>		Printed in London	H. L and R. B for James Magnus	Blank verse
Crowne, John	1689	<i>The English Frier: or, The Town Sparks</i>		Printed in London	For James Knapton	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 4</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Cibber, Colley	1718	<i>The Non-Juror</i>		Printed in London	For J. L.	Prose
Clare, Martin	1732	<i>Tartuffe, ou l'imposteur; Comédie par Monsieur de Molière; Tartuffe; from The French of Molière</i>		London	John Watts	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The impostor</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 5</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Bickerstaff, Isaac	1789	<i>The Hypocrite, A Comedy (adapted from C. Cibber)</i>		Dublin	H. Chamberlaine, W. Colles, G. Burnet, P. Wogan, P. Byrne	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1876	<i>Tartuffe, or The Hypocrite</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 4</i>	Edinburgh	William Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 2</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose

Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>Tartuffe, or The Hypocrite</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 4</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>Tartuffe, or The Hypocrite</i>	<i>Molière, vol. 1</i>	New York and London	G.P. Putnam's Sons	Blank verse
Constable, Thomas	1898	<i>The Tartuffe</i>	<i>The Great French Triumvirat: The Athalie of Racine; The Polyeucte of Corneille; The Misanthrope; The Tartuffe of Molière</i>	London	Downey and Co. Ltd.	Heroic couplets
Anstey, F.	1933	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Three Molière Plays</i>	London	Oxford University Press	Prose
Malleson, Miles	1950	<i>Tartuffe, or The Imposter</i>		London	Samuel French	Free verse with occasional rhyming couplets
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Eight Plays by Molière</i>	New York	The Modern Library	Blank verse
Block, Haskell M.	1958	<i>Tartuffe</i>		Northbrook	AHM Publishing Corporation	Prose
Frame, Donald	1959	<i>Tartuffe, or The Impostor</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	Middlesex	Penguin Books	Heroic couplets
Waldinger, Renée	1959	<i>Tartuffe</i>		Woodbury	Barron's Educational Series	Prose
Wood, John	1959	<i>Tartuffe, or The Imposter</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Stories</i>	Baltimore	Penguin Books	Prose
Rosenberg, James	1962	<i>Tartuffe</i>		San Francisco	Chandler Pub. Co.	Verse
Wilbur, Richard	1963	<i>Tartuffe</i>		New York	Harcourt Brace	Heroic couplets
Scotland, James	1978	<i>The Holy Terror: A Scottish Comedy</i>		Glasgow	Brown and Ferguson	Prose

Hampton, Christopher	1984	<i>Tartuffe, or The Impostor</i>		London	Faber	Blank verse
Lochhead, Liz	1985	<i>Tartuffe</i>		Edinburgh, Polygon and Glasgow	Third Eye Centre	Rhyming couplets
Gray, Simon	1990	<i>The Holy Terror: Tartuffe</i>		London	Faber and Faber	Prose
Hirson, David	1991	<i>La Bête</i>		New York	Dramatist Play Service, Inc.	Rhyming couplets
Bolt, Ranjit	1991	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Tartuffe with The Sisterhood</i>	Bath	Absolute Press	Heroic couplets
Hoeper, Jeffrey	1994	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Drama</i>	New York	Macmillan	Prose
Edney, David	1997	<i>Tartuffe</i>		Saskatoon	University of Saskatchewan	Prose
Thomas, Freyda	1997	<i>Tartuffe: Born Again</i>		London	Samuel French	Heroic couplets
Appelbaum, Stanley	1998	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Tartuffe and The Bourgeois Gentleman</i>	Mineola, New York	Dover Publications, Inc	Free verse
Jeffries, Charles, and Luis Munoz	1999	<i>Tartuffe, or The Imposter</i>		Quincy, Mass.	Baker's Plays	Rhyming couplets
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin	Prose
Hischak, Thomas S.	2001	<i>Molière's Tartuffe; a Comedy in five Scenes</i>		Englewood	Pioneer Drama Service	Free rhymed verse
Slater, Maya	2001	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>The Misanthrope, Tartuffe and Other Plays</i>	Oxford	Oxford University Press	12-syllable rhyming couplets
Bolt, Ranjit	2002	<i>Tartuffe</i>		London	Oberon	8-syllable rhyming couplets
Mooney, Timothy	2005	<i>Tartuffe</i>		New York	Playscripts	Heroic couplets

Mooney, Timothy	2008	<i>Tartuffe</i> (one-act version)		New York	Playscripts Inc.	Heroic couplets
McGough, Roger	2008	<i>Tartuffe</i>		London	Methuen Drama	Irregular rhyming couplets and prose
Steiner, Prudence L.	2008	<i>Tartuffe</i>		Indianapolis	Hackett Pub. Co.	Prose
Murphy, Gerald P.	2009	<i>Tartuffe in Texas</i>			Eldridge Publishing Company	Prose
Campbell, Chris	2013	<i>Tartuffe</i>		London	Oberon Books	Free verse
Jones, Andy	2014	<i>Molière's Tartuffe: A Newfoundland Adaptation</i>		Portugal Cove-St. Phillip's	Boulder Publications	Free rhyming couplets
Gardley, Marcus	2015	<i>A Wolf in Snakeskin Shoes: or, The Gospel of Tartuffe</i>		London	Bloomsbury Methuen Drama	Prose
Sorrell, Martin	2002	<i>Tartuffe</i>		London	Nick Hern Books	Prose
Fleming, Justin	2016	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>A Molière Anthology: New Versions of The School of Wives, Tartuffe, The Miser, The Literati</i>	Putney, NSW	Phoenix Education	Irregular rhymed verse
Congdon, Constance	2016	<i>Tartuffe</i>		New York	Broadway Play Publishing Inc.	Heroic couplets
Hilton, Andrew, Dominic Power	2017	<i>Tartuffe</i>		[unidentified]	Favell & Marsden in association with Shakespeare atThe Tobacco Factory	Heroic couplets
Le Misanthrope (38)						
Wycherley, William	1677	<i>The Plain Dealer</i>		Printed in London	T. N. for James Magnes and Rich Bentley	Prose

Congreve, William	1695	<i>Love for Love</i> (modelled on <i>Don Juan, Le Misanthrope, L'Avare</i>)		Printed in London	For Jacob Tonson	Prose
Hughes, John (allegedly)	1709	<i>The Misanthrope, or Man-Hater</i>	<i>The Monthly Amusement</i>	Printed in London	D. Midwinter and B. Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Man-hater</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English</i> , vol. 6	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 3	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 3	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Wormeley, Katherine Prescott	1894	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i>	New York	The Athenaeum Society	Prose
Constable, Thomas	1898	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Great French Triumvirate: The Athalie of Racine; The Polyeucte of Corneille; The Misanthrope; The Tartuffe of Molière</i>	London	Downey and Co. Ltd.	Heroic couplets
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 5	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Molière</i> , vol. 1	New York and London	G. P. Putnam's Sons	Blank verse
Giese, William F.	1928	<i>Le Misanthrope</i>		Boston	Houghton, Mifflin	Blank verse
Anstey, F.	1931	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Four Molière Comedies: Freely Adapted for The English Stage</i>	London	Hodder and Stoughton	Prose
Malleson, Miles	1957	<i>The Slave of Truth</i>		London	Samuel French	Irregular verse

Wilbur, Richard	1955	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		London and New York	Harcourt Brace	Heroic couplets
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Eight Plays by Molière</i>	New York	The Modern Library	Blank verse
Wood, John	1959	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	Penguin	Harmondsworth	Prose
Grebanier, Bernard, D. N.	1959	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		New York	Barron's Educational Series	Blank verse
Neugroschel, Joachim	1966	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		New York	Amer. R.D.M	Blank verse
Frame, Donald	1968	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	Signet	Heroic couplets
Harrison, Tony	1973	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		London	Rex Collings	Heroic couplets
Bartlett, Neil	1988	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Bérénice; The Misanthrope; The School for Wives</i>	Bath	Absolute Press	12-syllable rhyming couplets
Falls, Robert	1988	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		Chicago	Goodman Playscripts	12-syllable rhyming couplets
Cohen, Robert	1994	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Twelve Plays for The Theatre</i>	Mountain View, Calif.	Mayfield Pub.	Heroic couplets
Crimp, Martin	1996	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		London	Faber and Faber	Irregular rhyming couplets
Bolt, Ranjit	2008	<i>The Grouch</i>		London	Oberon Books	8-syllable rhyming couplets
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin	Prose
Slater, Maya	2001	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>The Misanthrope, Tartuffe and Other Plays</i>	Oxford	Oxford University Press	12-syllable rhyming couplets

Lochhead, Liz	2002	<i>Miseryguts</i>	<i>Miseryguts and Tartuffe: Two Plays by Molière</i>	London	Nick Hern Books	Heroic couplets
Cohen, Robert	1994	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Twelve Plays for The Theatre</i>	Mountain View, Calif.	Mayfield Pub.	Heroic couplets
Congdon, Constance	2003	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		New York	Broadway Play Pub	Heroic couplets
Mooney, Timothy	2008	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		New York	Playscripts	Heroic couplets
Daniels, Daniel H	2010	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Rhyming couplets
Mooney, Timothy	2010	<i>The Misanthrope</i> (short version)	<i>Nine Molière Comedies in Fresh English, vol. 2</i>	New York	Playscripts	Heroic couplets
Ives, David	2013	<i>The School for Lies</i>		New York	Dramatists Play Service	Rhyming couplets
McGough, Roger	2013	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		London	Methuen Drama	Irregular rhyming couplets
Edmunds, John	2013	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		London	Penguin Books Ltd	Blank verse with occasional rhyming couplets
Mulrine, Stephen	2015	<i>The Misanthrope</i>		London	Bloomsbury	Heroic couplets

L'École des femmes (24)

Caryl, John	1671	<i>Sir Salomon, or The Cautious Coxcomb</i>		Printed in London	For H. Herringman	Prose
-------------	------	---	--	-------------------	-------------------	-------

Ravenscroft, Edward	1682	<i>The London Cuckolds</i>		Printed in London	For Jos. Hindmarsh	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>A School for Women</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 2</i>	Printed in London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 4</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 2</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 1</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 3</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Anstey, F.	1933	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>Three Molière Plays</i>	London	Oxford University Press, H. Milford	Prose
Malleson, Miles	1954	<i>The School for Wives</i>		London	Samuel French	Prose with occasional rhyming couplets
Frame, Donald	1967	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>Tartuffe and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	New American Library	Heroic couplets
Wilbur, Richard	1971	<i>The School for Wives</i>		San Diego and New York	Harcourt Brace	Heroic couplets
Kemp, Robert	1947	<i>Let Wives Tak Tent</i>		Edinburgh	St. Giles Press	Prose
Lord Longford,	1948	<i>The School for Wives</i>		Dublin	Hodges, Figgis & Co.	Heroic couplets
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>The School for Wives</i>		New York	The Modern Library	Blank verse

Mahon, Derek	1986	<i>The School for Wives</i>		Dublin	Gallery	Irregular rhyming couplets
Bartlett, Neil	1990	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>The School for Wives; Bérénice; The Misanthrope</i>			Rhyming hexameters
Macdonald, Robert David	1984	<i>The School for Wives</i>		Birmingham	Oberon	Rhyming couplets
Bolt, Ranjit	1997	<i>The School for Wives</i>		London	Oberon Books	Rhyming couplets
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin Books	Prose
Slater, Maya	2001	<i>The School for Wives</i>	<i>The Misanthrope, Tartuffe and Other Plays</i>	Oxford	Oxford University Press	12-syllable rhyming couplets
Lochhead, Liz	2008	<i>Educating Agnes</i>		London	Nick Hern Books	Free rhymed verse
Necula, Maria-Cristina	2009	<i>The School for Wives</i>		[unidentified]	Xlibris Corporation	12-syllable rhyming couplets
Fleming, Justin	2016	<i>The School of Wives</i>	<i>A Molière Anthology: New Versions of The School of Wives, Tartuffe, The Miser, The Literati</i>	Putney, NSW	Phoenix Education	Irregular rhymed verse

Les Femmes savantes (19)

Wright, Thomas	1721	<i>No Fools Like Wits, or The Female Virtuoso</i>		Printed in London	J. Wilde for R. Vincent	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 5</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Cibber, Colley	1721	<i>The Refusal, or The Ladies Philosophy</i>		Printed in London	for B. Lintot and W. Chetwood	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>The Works of Molière, vol. 9</i>	London	J. Watts	Prose

Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Learned Women</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 3	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 6	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>Les Femmes savantes</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 8	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>Molière</i> , vol. 2	New York and London	G.P. Putnam's Sons	Blank verse
Beringer, Vera and Mesley Down	1926	<i>The Blue-stockings: a Comedy in Three Acts</i>		London and New York	Samuel French	Heroic couplets
Anstey, F.	1931	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>Four Molière Comedies; Freely Adapted for The English Stage</i>	London	Hodder and Stoughton	Prose
Frame, Donald	1968	<i>The Learned Women</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	Signet	Heroic couplets
Wilbur, Richard	1977	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>The Learned Ladies and Tartuffe</i>	New York	Dramatists Play Service	Heroic couplets
Bolt, Ranjit	1989	<i>The Sisterhood</i>	<i>The Sisterhood and Tartuffe</i>	London	Samuel French	Heroic couplets
Waller, A. R., Steven Pimlott and Colin Chambers	1996	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>		London	Nick Hern	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>Those Learned Ladies</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin	Prose
Slater, Maya	2001	<i>The Clever Women</i>	<i>Molière: The Misanthrope; Tartuffe and Other Plays</i>	Oxford	Oxford University Press	12-syllable rhyming couplets
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>The Learned Ladies</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies in Fresh English</i> , vol. 3	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Rhyming couplets

Fleming, Justin	2016	<i>The Literari</i>	<i>A Molière Anthology: New Versions of The School of Wives, Tartuffe, The Miser, The Literati</i>	Putney, NSW	Phoenix Education	Irregular rhymed verse
L'École des maris (15)						
Flecknoe, Richard	1667	<i>The Damoiselles à la Mode</i> (Translation and hybridization of <i>Les Précieuses ridicules</i> and <i>L'École des maris</i>)		Printed in London	For the author	Prose
Sedley, Charles	1668	<i>The Mulberry-Garden</i>		Printed in London	For H. Herringman	Mixture of blank verse and Heroic couplets
William, Wycherley	1673	<i>The Gentleman Dancing-Master</i> (borrowings from original play)		Printed in London	For Herringman and Dring	Prose
Otway, Thomas	1681	<i>The Souldier's Fortune</i> (modelled on <i>Sganarelle ou Le Cocu imaginaire</i> and <i>L'École des maris</i>)		Printed in London	For R. Bentley and J. Magnes	Prose
Betterton, Thomas	1706	<i>The Amorous Widow, or Wanton Wife</i>		Printed in London	For W. Turner	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>A School for Husband</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 2	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English</i> , vol. 4	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose

Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 2</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 2</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Mahon, Derek	1985	<i>High Time</i>		Dublin	The Gallery Press	Rhyming couplets
Wilbur, Richard	1994	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>School for Husbands and Sganarelle, or The Imaginary Cuckold</i>	New York	Mariner Books	Heroic couplets
Frame, Donald	1967	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>Tartuffe and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	New American Library	Heroic couplets
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>The School for Husbands</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies Fresh English, vol. 2</i>	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Rhyming couplets
Sganarelle ou le cocu imaginaire (12)						
D'Avenant, William	1673	<i>The Playhouse to be Let</i>	<i>The Works of Sir William D'Avenant</i>	London	T. N. for Henry Herringman	Blank verse (with some irregularities)
Rawlins, Thomas	1677	<i>Tom Essence: or, The Modish Wife</i>		Printed in London	T.M. for W. Cademan	Mixture of prose and blank verse
Otway, Thomas	1681	<i>The Souldier's Fortune</i> (modelled on <i>Sganarelle ou Le Cocu imaginaire</i> and <i>L'École des maris</i>)		Printed in London	For R. Bentley and J. Magnes	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Imaginary Cuckold</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 2</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>Sganarel, or The Cuckold in Conceit</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 1</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose

Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>Sganarelle</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 1	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Sganarelle</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>Sganarelle, or The Husband who Thought Himself Wronged</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 2	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Malleson, Miles	1955	<i>Sganarelle</i>		Pennsylvania State University	French's acting edition	Irregular verse
Bermel, Albert	1975	<i>The Imaginary Cuckold</i>	<i>One-act comedies of Molière</i>	New York	Unger	Prose
Wilbur, Richard	1994	<i>Sganarelle, or The Imaginary Cuckold</i>	<i>School for Husbands and Sganarelle, or The Imaginary Cuckold</i>	New York	Mariner Books	Heroic couplets
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>The Imaginary Cuckold</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies in Fresh English: in Three Volumes</i> , vol. 1	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Rhyming couplets

Le Dépit amoureux (10)

Dryden, John	1671	<i>An Evening's Love, or The Mock Astrologer</i> (mostly an adaptation of Thomas Corneille's <i>Le Feint Astrologue</i> (1648))		Printed in London	T.N for Henry Herringman	Prose
Ravenscroft, Edward	1677	<i>The Wrangling Lovers: or, The Invisible Mistress</i>		Printed in London	For William Crook	Prose
Vanbrugh, Sir John and Thomas Betterton	1706	<i>The Mistake: A Comedy</i>		Printed in London	For Jacob Tonson	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Amorous Quarrel</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 1	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose

Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The Amourous Quarrel</i>	<i>The Works of Molière</i> , vol. 1	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Love-tiff</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 1	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Lover's Quarrels</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>Lovers' Quarrels</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 1	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Spencer, Frederic	1930	<i>The Love-tiff</i>		Oxford	Blackwell	Rhyming couplets
Wilbur, Richard	2009	<i>Lovers' Quarrels</i>		New York	Theatre Communications Group	Rhyming couplets

L'Étourdi, ou les contretemps (8)

Dryden, John	1668	<i>Sir Martin Mar-all, or The Feign'd Innocence</i>		London	For H. Herringman	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Blunderer, or The Counter-plots</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English</i> , vol. 3	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Blunderer</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 1	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1877	<i>The Blunderer</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Blunderer</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Blunderer</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 1	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Wilbur, Richard	2000	<i>The Bungler</i>			Dramatists Play Service Inc.	Heroic couplets

Bolt, Ranjit	2001	<i>The Idiot</i>	<i>Molière: The Miser, The Idiot, new versions by Ranjit Bolt</i>	London	Oberon	8-syllable rhyming couplets
--------------	------	------------------	---	--------	--------	-----------------------------

Amphitryon (7)

Dryden, John	1690	<i>Amphitryon, or The Two Socia's</i>		Printed in London	For J. Tonson	Mixture of prose, blank verse and heroic couplets
Ozell, John	1714	<i>Amphitryon</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 3</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>Amphitryon</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 8</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>Amphitryon</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 4</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Amphitryon</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 2</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mandel, Oscar	1976	<i>Molière's Amphitryon, in a Licentious Translation</i>		Los Angeles	Spectrum Productions	Prose
Wilbur, Richard	1995	<i>Amphitryon</i>		New York	Harcourt Brace & Company	Irregular rhymed verse

Les Fâcheux (6)

Shadwell, Thomas	1668	<i>The Sullen Lovers, or The Impertinents</i>		The Savoy	For Henry Herringman	Blank verse
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Impertinents</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 2</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose

Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Impertinents</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 8</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Bores</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 2</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Bores</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 1</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Bores</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 2</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Psyché (5)						
Shadwell, Thomas	1675	<i>Psyche</i> (Part-translation, part-adaptation of <i>Psyché</i> by Molière, Pierre Corneille and Quinault)		Printed in London	T. N. for Henry Herringman	Heroic couplets (occasionally irregular rhyme scheme)
Ozell, John	1714	<i>Phiche</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 5</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>Psyche</i>	<i>The Works of Molière, vol. 7</i>	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>Psyché</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 5</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Phyche</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 3</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
La Princesse d'Elide (5)						
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Princess of Elis</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 3</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The Princess of Elis</i>	<i>The Works of Molière, vol. 9</i>	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Princess of Elis</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 3</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose

Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Princess of Elis</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 2	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Princess of Elis</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 3	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose

Mélicerte (5)

Ozell, John	1714	<i>Melicerta</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 6	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>Melicerta</i>	<i>The Works of Molière</i> , vol. 9	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>Mélicerte</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 4	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Melicerte</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 2	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>Melicerte</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 5	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose

Dom Garcie de Navarre, ou le Prince jaloux (5)

Ozell, John	1714	<i>Don Garcia of Navarre</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 5	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>Don Garcia of Navarre, or The Jealous Prince</i>	<i>The Works of Molière</i> , vol. 2	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>Don Garcia of Navarre</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 1	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Don Garcia of Navarre</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>Don Garcie de Navarre</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 2	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose

Les Plaisirs de l'île enchantée (1)

Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Pleasures of The Enchanted Island</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière,</i> vol. 2	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
-------------	------	--	--	--------	---------------------	-------

Pastorale comique (1)

Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>A Comic Pastoral</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière,</i> vol. 4	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
-----------------	--------	-------------------------	--	-----------	-------------	-------

Prose plays (241)

Le Malade imaginaire (33)

Unknown	1709	<i>The Hypochondriack</i>	<i>The Monthly Amusement, 4</i>	London		Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Hypochondriack</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 8</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Bickerstaffe, Isaac and Samuel Foote	1769	<i>Doctor Last in his Chariot</i>		London	W. Griffin	Prose
Reade, Charles	1857	<i>The Hypochondriac: Adapted to The English Stage from The 'Malade imaginaire'</i>		London	W. Clowes	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 6</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 3</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mongan, Roscoe	1879	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		London	(unknown)	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 8</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Anstey, F.	1929	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		London	Hodder and Stoughton Limited	Prose
Barrett, H. Clark	1925	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		New York	Samuel French	Prose
Stone, Merritt	1939	<i>The Imaginary Invalid; a Comedy in Three Acts</i>		New York	Samuel French	Prose

Bishop, Morris	1950	<i>The Would-be Invalid</i>		New York	Appleton-Century-Crofts	Prose
Malleson, Miles	1959	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		London	Samuel French	Prose with occasional rhyming couplets
Wood, John	1959	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Stories</i>	Baltimore	Penguin Books	Prose
Briscoe, Bert	1967	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		Birmingham	Combridge	Prose
Kortner, Fritz	1968	<i>The Imaginary Invalid, or The Hypochondriac</i>		Johannesburg	DALRO	Prose
Frame, Donald	1968	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	Signet	Prose
Deed Meyer, and J. I. Rodale	1969	<i>The Malade Who Was Imaginary: An Adaptation of Molière's "Malade imaginaire" in poetry and prose</i>		Allentown, Pa.	J. I. Rodale	Prose and verse
Drury, Alan	1981	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>	<i>Molière: Five Plays</i>	London	Methuen	Prose
MacMillan, Hector	2005	<i>The Hypochondriak</i>	<i>Serving Twa Maisters: Five Classic Plays in Scots Translation</i>	Glasgow	Association for Scottish Literary Studies	Prose
Sorrell, Martin	1994	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>		London	Nick Hern Books	Prose
Murphy, Gerard	1998	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>	<i>Molière: The Hypochondriac, Translated by Gerard Murphy; George Dandin, Scapin, Translated by Ranjit Bolt</i>	London	Oberon Books	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>	<i>The Misanthrope Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin Books	Prose
Mooney, Timothy	2005	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		New York	Playscripts Inc.	Heroic couplets

Mooney, Timothy	2005	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i> (one-act version)		New York	Playscripts Inc.	Heroic couplets
Bean, Richard	2005	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>		London	Oberon	Prose
Magruder, James	2006	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		New York	Dramatists Play Service	Prose
Galloway, Paul	2009	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>		Putney	Phoenix Education	Prose and verse
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies in Fresh English</i> , vol. 3	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Prose
McGough, Roger	2011	<i>The Hypochondriac</i>		London	Methuen Drama	Irregular rhyming couplets and prose
Gross, Oded, Tracy Young	2011	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		Ashland	Oregon Shakespeare Festival	Irregular rhyming couplets and prose
Congdon, Constance	2016	<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>		New York	Broadway Play Publications Inc	Heroic couplets
L'Avare (32)						
Shadwell, Thomas	1672	<i>A Comedy Called The Miser</i>		Printed in London	For Thomas Collins and John Ford	Prose
Congreve, William	1695	<i>Love for Love</i> (modelled on <i>Don Juan</i> , <i>Le Misanthrope</i> , <i>L'Avare</i>)		Printed in London	For Jacob Tonson	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 4	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English</i> , vol. 1	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose

Fielding, Henry	1744	<i>The Miser; A comedy; Taken from Plautus and Molière</i>		London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 5	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 3	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Lyons, Joseph Aloysius	1886	<i>The Miser; a Comedy in Three Acts for Male Characters Only</i>		Notre Dame (Ind.)	[unidentified]	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 6	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Lady Gregory, Augusta	1910	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Kiltartan Molière: The Miser, The Doctor in Spite of Himself, The Rogueries of Scapin</i>	Dublin	Maunsel & Co.	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Molière</i> , vol. 2	New York and London	G.P. Putnam's Sons	Prose
Anstey, F.	1931	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Four Molière Comedies: Freely Adapted for The English Stage</i>	London	Hodder and Stoughton	Prose
Malleson, Miles	1950	<i>The Miser</i>		London	French	Prose with occasional rhyming couplets
Wood, John	1953	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Five Plays</i>	Harmondsworth	Penguin	Prose
Graveley, George E.	1953	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Miser, and Coxcombs in Petticoats: Two Comedies</i>	St. Albans	W. Cartmel	Prose
Fowlie, Wallace	1964	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Great Neck</i>	New York	Barron's Educational Series Inc.	Prose

Frame, Donald	1968	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	Signet	Prose
Reed, Roland L.	1973	<i>The Miser; a Freewheeling Adaptation for Young Audiences</i>		Anchorage (Alaska)	Anchorage Press	Prose
McClellan, Bennett E.	1977	<i>Jean-Baptiste Molière's The Miser</i>		San Diego	Kinderdrama	Prose
Drury, Alan	1982	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Molière: Five Plays</i>	London	Methuen	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1987	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Miser and Georges Dandin</i> , vol. 1	New York	Applause	Prose
Sams, Jeremy	1991	<i>The Miser: a Comedy</i>		London	Methuen Drama	Prose with occasional blank verse
Kemp, Robert	1987	<i>The Laird o'Grippy: An Adaptation into Scots</i>		Glasgow	Brown Son and Ferguson	Prose
Irving, Jules	1995	<i>Molière's The Miser</i>		New York	Caedmon	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>The Misanthrope Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin Books	Prose
Bolt, Ranjit	2001	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Molière: The Miser, The Idiot, new versions by Ranjit Bolt</i>	London	Oberon	Prose
Magruder, James	2004	<i>The Miser</i>		New York	Dramatists Play Service	Prose
Mooney, Timothy	2009	<i>The Miser: A Comedy</i>		New York	Playscripts	Heroic couplets
Sherman, Martin	2013	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>Plays: 2</i>	London	Methuen Drama	Prose
Sorrell, Martin	2015	<i>The Miser</i>		London	Bloomsbury	Prose
Fleming, Justin	2016	<i>The Miser</i>	<i>A Molière Anthology: New Versions of The School of Wives, Tartuffe, The Miser, The Literati,</i>	Putney, NSW	Phoenix Education	Irregular rhymed verse

Dom Juan, ou le Festin de Pierre (25)

Shadwell, Thomas	1676	<i>The Libertine</i>		Printed in London	T. N. for Henry Herringman	Prose (occasional verse)
Congreve, William	1695	<i>Love for Love</i> (modelled on <i>Don Juan, Le Misanthrope, L'Avare</i>)		Printed in London	For Jacob Tonson	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>Don John</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 6</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>Don John, or The Feast of The Statue</i>	<i>The Works of Molière, vol. 4</i>	London	J. Watts	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876	<i>Don Juan</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 2</i>	London	G. Bell and Sons	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>Don Juan, or The Feast with The Statue</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 3</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Don Juan</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 2</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>Don Juan, or The Feast</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 4</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>Don Juan</i>	<i>Molière, vol. 1</i>	New York and London	G.P. Putnam's Sons	Prose
Graveley, George	1954	<i>Don Juan</i>	<i>Don Juan, and Forced to Be a Doctor: Two Comedies.</i>	St. Albans	W. Cartmel	Prose
Frame, Donald	1967	<i>Don Juan, or The Stone Guest</i>	<i>Tartuffe and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	New American Library	Prose
Mandel, Oscar	1971	<i>Don John, or The Libertine</i>	<i>Three Classic Don Juan Plays</i>	Lincoln	University of Nebraska Press	Prose

Porter, Stephen	1973	<i>Don Juan</i>		New York	Dramatists Play Service	Prose
Hampton, Christopher	1974	<i>Don Juan</i>		London	Faber	Prose
Nelson, Richard	1989	<i>Don Juan</i>		New York	Broadway Play Publishing Inc	Prose
Enright, Nick	1984	<i>Don Juan</i>		Sydney	Currency Press	Prose
Hampton, Christopher	1985	<i>Don Juan and The Feast of Stone</i>		[unidentified]	[unidentified]	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1987	<i>Don Juan</i>	<i>Scapin, and Don Juan: New Translations</i>	New York	ApplauseTheatre Book Publishers	Prose
McLeish, Kenneth	1997	<i>Don Juan</i>		London	Nick Hern Books	Prose
Walker, Richard	1998	<i>Don Juan</i>		New York	Dramatists Play Service	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>Don Juan</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin Books	Prose
Wilbur, Richard	2001	<i>Don Juan</i>		San Diego	Harcourt	Prose
Bartlett, Neil	2004	<i>Don Juan</i>		London	Oberon Books	Prose
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>Don Juan</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies in Fresh English, vol. 1</i>	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Prose
Marber, Patrick	2017	<i>Don Juan in Soho</i>		London	Faber and Faber	Prose

Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (21)

Ravenscroft, Edward	1673	<i>Mamamouchi, or The Citizen Turn'd Gentleman</i> (Hybridized translations of <i>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</i>)		Printed in London	William Cademan	Prose
---------------------	------	---	--	-------------------	-----------------	-------

		and <i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i>)				
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Gentleman Cit</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière,</i> vol. 4	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Cit Turn'd Gentleman</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English,</i> vol. 2	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Citizen who Apes The Nobleman</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière,</i> vol. 5	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Shopkeeper Turned Gentleman</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose,</i> vol. 3	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Wormeley, Katherine Prescott	1894	<i>Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i>		The Athenaeum Society	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Citizen Turned Gentleman</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière,</i> vol. 7	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>The Tradesman Turned Gentleman</i>	<i>Molière,</i> vol. 2	New York and London	G.P. Putnam's Sons	Prose
Anstey, F.	1926	<i>The Would-be Gentleman; A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts</i>		London	M. Secker	Prose
Lady Gregory, Augusta	1928	<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i>	<i>Three Last Plays</i>	London and New York	G.P. Putnam	Prose
Graveley, George	1952	<i>The Burgher in Purple</i>	<i>The Burgher in Purple, and ScapinThe Scamp; Two Comedies</i>	St. Albans	W. Cartmel	Prose
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i>	<i>Eight Plays by Molière</i>	New York	The Modern Library	Prose

Malleson, Miles	1958	<i>The Prodigious Snob</i>		London	Samuel French	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1987	<i>The Bourgeois Gentleman</i>	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself and The Bourgeois Gentleman</i> , vol. 2	New York	ApplauseTheatre Book Publishers	Prose
MacMillan, Hector	1989	<i>Le BourgeoisGgentilhomme</i>		Edinburgh	Royal LyceumTheatre	Prose
Dear, Nick	1992	<i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i>		Bath	Absolute Press	Prose
Cohen, Robert	1993	<i>The Bourgeois Gentleman</i>		Orem, Utah	Encore Performance Pub.	Prose
Appelbaum, Stanley	1998	<i>The Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i>	<i>Tartuffe and The Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i>	Mineola, New York	Dover Publications Inc	Prose
Sahlins, Bernard	2000	<i>The Bourgeois Gentleman</i>		Chicago	Ivan R Dee	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin	Prose

Le Médecin malgré lui (20)

John, Lacy	1672	<i>The Dumb Lady: or, The Farriar Made Physician</i> (Hybridized translations of <i>L'Amour médecin</i> and <i>Le Médecin malgré lui</i>)		Printed in London	For Thomas Dring	Prose
Centlivre, Susanna	1703	<i>Love's Contrivance, or Le Médecin malgré lui</i>		1703, Theatre Royal Drury Lane		
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Forced Physician</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 3	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Fielding, Henry	1732	<i>The Mock Doctor: or, The Dumb Lady Cur'd</i>		Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose

Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>A Doctor and no Doctor</i> [<i>The Mock-doctor in The Works of Molière, 1739</i>]	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 2</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Physician in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 3</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 2</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Doctor by Compulsion</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>The Doctor by Compulsion</i>	<i>Molière, vol. 2</i>	New York and London	G.P. Putnam's Sons	Prose
Lady Gregory, Augusta	1910	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>The Kiltartan Molière: The Miser, The Doctor in Spite of Himself, The Roqueries of Scapin</i>	Dublin	Maunsel & Co.	Prose
Barrett, H. Clark	1914	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself: A Farce in Two Acts</i>		New York	Samuel French	Prose
Anstey, F.	1931	<i>A Doctor Perforce</i>	Four Molière Comedies; Freely Adapted for The English Stage	London	Hodder and Stoughton	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Physician in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 5</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Graveley, George	1954	<i>Forced to Be a Doctor</i>	<i>Don Juan, and Forced to Be a Doctor: Two Comedies</i>	St. Albans	W. Cartmel	Prose
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>The Physician in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>Eight Plays by Molière</i>	New York	The Modern Library	Prose
Frame, Donald	1968	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	Signet	Prose

Bermel, Albert	1987	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself; and The Bourgeois Gentleman</i> , vol. 2	New York	Applause	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>The Doctor Despite Himself</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin	Prose
Mooney, Timothy	2008	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>		New York	Playscripts	Rhyming couplets
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>A Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies in Fresh English</i> , vol. 1	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Prose

Les Précieuses ridicules (17)

Flecknoe, Richard	1667	<i>The Damoiselles à la Mode</i> (Translation and hybridization of <i>Les Précieuses ridicules</i> , <i>L'École des maris</i>)		Printed in London	For The author	Prose
Behn, Aphra	1682	<i>The False Count, or A New Way to Play an Old Game</i>		Printed in London	M Flesher for Jacob Tonson	Prose
Crowne, John	1685	<i>Sir Courtly Nice: or, It Cannot Be</i>		Printed in London	H. H. Jun. for R. Bently	Prose
Shadwell, Thomas	1689	<i>Bury-Fair</i>		Printed in London	For James Knapton	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Affected Ladies</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 1	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Conceited Ladies</i> [<i>The Romantick Ladies</i> in <i>The Works of Molière</i> , 1739]	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English</i> , vol. 3	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Pretentious Young Ladies</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 1	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose

Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Affected Ladies</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Affected Young Ladies</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Affected Ladies</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 2	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Page, Curtis Hidden	1908	<i>The Affected Misses</i>	<i>Molière</i> , vol. 1	New York and London	G.P. Putnam's Sons	Prose
Barrett, H. Clark	1915	<i>The Affected Young Ladies</i>		New York	Samuel French	Prose
Graveley, George	1953	<i>Coxcombs in Petticoats</i>	<i>The Miser and Coxcombs in Petticoats: Two Comedies</i>	St. Albans	W. Cartmel	Prose
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>The Precious Damsels</i>	<i>Eight Plays by Molière</i>	New York	The Modern Library	Prose
Frame, Donald	1967	<i>The Ridiculous Précieuses</i>	<i>Tartuffe and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	New American Library	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1975	<i>Two Precious Maidens Ridiculed</i>	<i>One-act Comedies of Molière</i>	New York	Ungar	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>Such Foolish Affected Ladies</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin	Prose

Les Fourberies de Scapin (16)

Otway, Thomas	1677	<i>The Cheats of Scapin</i>		Printed in London	For R. Tonson	Prose
Ravenscroft, Edward	1677	<i>Scaramouch a Philosopher, Harlequin a School-Boy, Merchand and Magician</i> [elements from <i>Le Mariage forcé</i> , <i>Les Fourberies de</i>		Printed in London	For Robert Sollers	Prose

		<i>Scapin and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme]</i>				
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Cheats of Scapin</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 5</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The Cheats of Scapin</i>	<i>The Works of Molière, vol. 9</i>	London	J. Watts	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Impostures of Scapin</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 3</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Rogueries of Scapin</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 6</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>Scapin's Rogueries</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Knavery of Scapin</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 7</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Lady Gregory, Augusta	1910	<i>The Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>	<i>The Kiltartan Molière: The Miser, The Doctor in Spite of Himself, The Roqueries of Scapin</i>	Dublin	Maunsel & Co.	Prose
Anstey, F.	1933	<i>ScapinThe Trickster</i>	<i>Three Molière Plays</i>	London	Oxford University Press, H. Milford	Prose
Graveley, George	1952	<i>ScapinThe Scamp</i>	<i>The Burgher in Purple, and Scapin The Scamp; Two Comedies</i>	St. Albans	W. Cartmel	Prose
Frame, Donald	1968	<i>The Mischievous Machinations of Scapin</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	Signet	Prose
Dunlop, Frank, Jim Dale	1975	<i>Scapino: a Long Way off from Molière</i>		Garden City, N.Y.	Nelson Doubleday	Prose
Bolt, Ranjit	1998	<i>Scapin</i>	<i>Molière: The Hypochondriac, Translated by Gerard Murphy; George Dandin, Scapin, Translated by Ranjit Bolt</i>	London	Oberon Books	Prose

Sams, Jeremy	2005	<i>Scapino, or The Trickster</i>		London	Nick Hern	Prose
Mooney, Timothy	2009	<i>The Schemings of Scapin: a Comedy</i>		New York	Playscripts Inc.	Heroic couplets
L'Amour médecin (10)						
John, Lacy	1672	<i>The Dumb Lady: or, The Farriar Made Physician</i> (Hybridized translations of <i>L'Amour médecin</i> and <i>Le Médecin malgré lui</i>)		Printed in London	For Thomas Dring	Prose
Mac Swinny, Owen	1704-5	<i>The Quacks, or Love's The Physician</i>		Printed in London	For Benjamin Bragg	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>Love is The Best Physician</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 3</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>Love's The Best Doctor</i>	<i>The Works of Molière, vol. 5</i>	London	J. Watts	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Love is The Best Doctor</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 2</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>Love's The Best Doctor</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 4</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Barrett, H. Clark	1915	<i>Doctor Love: A Comedy in Three Acts</i>		New York	Samuel French	Prose
Scotland, James	197(?)	<i>A Surgeon for Lucinda: A Glasgow Fairy Tale</i>		Glasgow	Brown, Son & Ferguson	Prose
Hischak, Thomas S.	1997	<i>The Phony Physician: A Farce</i>		Boston	Baker's Plays	Prose
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>Love is The Best Doctor</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies in Fresh English: In Three Volumes</i>	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Prose

L'Impromptu de Versailles (9)

Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Impromptu of Versailles</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 5	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The Impromptu of Versailles</i>	<i>The Works of Molière</i> , vol. 3	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Impromptu of Versailles</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 2	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Impromptu of Versailles</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Impromptu of Versailles</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 3	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>The Versailles Impromptu</i>	<i>Eight Plays by Molière</i>	New York	The Modern Library	Prose
Frame, Donald	1967	<i>The Versailles Impromptu</i>	<i>Tartuffe and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	New American Library	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1975	<i>The Rehearsal at Versailles</i>	<i>One-act Comedies of Molière</i>	New York	Unger	Prose
Slater, Maya	2001	<i>The Impromptu at Versailles</i>	<i>The Misanthrope, Tartuffe and Other Plays</i>	Oxford	Oxford University Press	Prose

George Dandin, ou le mari confondu (9)

Betterton, Thomas	1706	<i>The Amorous Widow, or Wanton Wife</i>		Printed in London	For W. Turner	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>George Dandin</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 4	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>George Dandin, or The Perplex'd Husband</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English</i> , vol. 5	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose

Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>George Dandin, or The Abashed Husband</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 4	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>George Dandin</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 2	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>George Dandin, or The Outwitted Husband</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 6	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1987	<i>George Dandin</i>	<i>George Dandin, The Miser (The Actor's Molière)</i>	New York	Applause	Prose
Daniels, Daniel H.	2010	<i>George Dandin</i>	<i>Nine Molière Comedies Fresh English</i> , vol. 3	[unidentified]	Xlibris Corp	Prose
Bolt, Ranjit	1998	<i>George Dandin</i>	<i>Molière: The Hypochondriac, translated by Gerard Murphy; George Dandin, Scapin, translated by Ranjit Bolt</i>	London	Oberon Books	Prose with occasional rhyming couplets
La Critique de l'école des femmes (8)						
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The School for Women Criticised</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 2	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The School for Wives Criticis'd</i>	<i>The Works of Molière</i> , vol. 3	London	J. Watts	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The School for Wives Criticised</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Slater, Maya	2001	<i>The School for Wives Criticized</i>	<i>Molière: The Misanthrope, Tartuffe and Other Plays</i>	Oxford	Oxford University Press	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The School for Wives Criticized</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 3	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Bishop, Morris	1957	<i>The Critique of The School for Wives</i>	<i>Eight Plays by Molière</i>	New York	The Modern Library	Prose

Frame, Donald	1967	<i>The Critique of The School for Wives</i>	<i>Tartuffe and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	New American Library	Prose
Wood, John and David Coward	2000	<i>The School for Wives Criticized</i>	<i>The Miser and Other Plays</i>	London	Penguin Books	Prose
Le Mariage forcé (8)						
Penkethman, William	1699	<i>Love Without Interest: or, The Man Too Hard for The Master</i>		Printed in London	For Arthur Bettesworth	Mixture of prose, blank verse and rhyming couplets
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Forced Marriage</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 3</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Forc'd Marriage</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 7</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Forced Marriage</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 2</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Forced Marriage</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 2</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Mathew, Charles	1890	<i>The Forced Marriage</i>	<i>Comedies by Molière</i>	London	Ward, Lock and Co.	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Compulsory Marriage</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 3</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1975	<i>The Forced Marriage</i>	<i>One-act Comedies of Molière</i>	New York	Unger	Prose
Le Sicilien, ou l'amour peintre (8)						
Crowne, John	1675	<i>The Countrey Wit</i>		Printed in London	For J. Draby, A. Bettesworth, and F. Clay	Prose
Steele, Richard	1705	<i>The Tender Husband, or The Accomplish'd Fools</i>		Printed in London	For Jacob Tonson	Prose

Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Sicilian</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 3</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>The Sicilian, or Love Makes a Painter</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 7</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Sicilian, or Love Makes The Painter</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 4</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Sicilian</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose, vol. 2</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Sicilian</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière, vol. 1</i>	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Frame, Donald	1968	<i>The Sicilian, or Love The Painter</i>	<i>The Misanthrope and Other Plays by Molière</i>	New York	Signet	Rhyming couplets
Monsieur de Pourceaugnac (7)						
Ozell (allegedly), John	1704	<i>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, or Squire Trelooby</i>		Printed in London	For William Davis and Bernard Lintott	Prose
Ozell, John	1714	<i>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière, vol. 4</i>	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Vanbrugh, John, Sir	1734	<i>The Cornish Squire: A Comedy</i>		London	John Watts	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller and Martin Clare	1732	<i>Squire Lubberly</i>	<i>Select Comedies of Mr. de Molière, in French and English, vol. 6</i>	Printed in London	For J. Watts	Prose
Parsons, Eliza	1792	The Intrigues of a Morning: In two Acts		London	Printed for William Lane	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière, vol. 5</i>	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose

Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>Mr. De Pourceaugnac</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 3	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Les Amants magnifiques (6)						
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Magnificent Lovers</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 6	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The Magnificent Lovers</i>	<i>The Works of Molière</i> , vol. 7	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Magnificent Lovers</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 5	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Magnificent Lovers</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 3	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Courtly Lovers</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 7	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose
Edney, David	2009	<i>The Lavish Lovers: A Comedy Interspected with Music and Ballet</i>		Toronto	Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies	Prose
La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas (6)						
Ozell, John	1714	<i>The Countess of Escarbagnas</i>	<i>The Works of Monsieur de Molière</i> , vol. 6	London	For Bernard Lintott	Prose
Baker, Henry, James Miller et al.	1739	<i>The Countess of Escarbagnas</i>	<i>The Works of Molière</i> , vol. 10	London	J. Watts	Prose
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Countess of Escarbagnas</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 6	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Countess of Escarbagnas</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 3	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Waller, Alfred Rayney	1907	<i>The Countess of Escarbagnas</i>	<i>The Plays of Molière</i> , vol. 8	Edinburgh	John Grant	Prose

Bermel, Albert	1975	<i>The Seductive Mistress</i>	<i>One-act Comedies of Molière</i>	New York	Unger	Prose
Le Médecin volant (3)						
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Flying Doctor</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 6	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1876-7	<i>The Flying Doctor</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose (1877), vol. 1</i>	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1975	<i>The Flying Doctor</i>	<i>One Act Comedies of Molière</i>	New York	Ungar	Prose
Jalousie du barbouillé (3)						
Van Laun, Henri	1875-6	<i>The Jealousy of The Barbouillé</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière</i> , vol. 6	Edinburgh	W. Paterson	Prose
Wall, Charles Heron	1877	<i>The Jealousy of The Barbouillé</i>	<i>The Dramatic Works of Molière Translated into English Prose</i> , vol. 1	London	George Bell and Sons	Prose
Bermel, Albert	1975	<i>The Jealous Husband</i>	<i>One-act Comedies of Molière</i>	New York	Ungar Pub Co	Prose

Bibliography

Molière Editions

- Mallinson, Jonathan (ed.), *Le Misanthrope*, London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996.
- Forestier, Georges (ed.), *Molière: Œuvres complètes*, 'La Pléiade,' in 2 vols, Paris: Gallimard, 2010.
- Mesnard, Paul and Arthur Desfeuilles (eds), *Œuvres de Molière*, in 5 vols, Paris: Hachette, 1880.

English Translations Quoted in the Thesis

- Anstey, F., *Three Molière Plays: Tartuffe, Scapin the Trickster, The School for Wives*, London: Oxford UP, H. Milford, 1933.
- Argent, Geoffrey Alan, *The Complete Plays of Jean Racine: The Fratricides*, in 5 vols, The Pennsylvania State UP, 2010.
- Bartlett, Neil, *Berenice: Racine, The Misanthrope – The School for Wives: Molière*, Bath: Absolute classics, 1990.
- Bartlett, Neil and Robert Fall, *The Misanthrope, American Theatre*, vol. 7, n° 4-5, July/August 1990.
- Block, Haskell M., *Tartuffe*, Northbrook, Illinois: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1958.
- Bolt, Ranjit and Gerard Murphy, *The Hypochondriac* [Murphy]; *George Dandin* [Bolt]; *Scapin* [Bolt], Absolute Classics, London: Oberon, 1998.
- Bolt, Ranjit, *Lysistrata* [after Aristophanes], London: Oberon, 2005.
- , *George Dandin*, London: Oberon, 1998.
- , *Tartuffe*, Bath: Absolute Press, 1991.
- , *Tartuffe*, London: Oberon, 2002.
- , *The Grouch*, London: Oberon Classics, 2008.
- , *The Misanthrope*, London: Oberon Classics, 1998.
- , *The Sisterhood*, London: Samuel French, 1989.
- Cainrcross, John, *Andromaque and Other Plays*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1967.
- Clark, Noël, *Le Cid; Cinna; Polyuct: Three Plays*, Bath: Absolute, 1993.
- Cohen, Robert, *Twelve Plays for Theatre*, Mountain View: Mayfield Pub., 1994.
- Crimp, Martin, *The Misanthrope*, London: Faber and Faber, 1996.
- Edmunds, John, *Corneille, Molière, Racine: Four French Plays*, London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2013.

- Fleming, Justin, *A Molière Anthology: New Versions of The School for Wives, Tartuffe, The Miser, The Literati*, Putney, NSW: Phoenix Education, 2016.
- Frame, Donald, *Tartuffe and Other Plays by Molière*, New York: New American Library, 1967.
- , *The Misanthrope, and Other Plays*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1959.
- Gray, Simon, *The Holy Terror, Tartuffe*, London: Faber and Faber, 1990.
- Hampton, Christopher, *Tartuffe; or The Impostor*, London: Faber and Faber, 1984.
- Harrison, Tony, *Plays 2: The Misanthrope, Phaedra Britannica, The Prince's Plays*, London: Faber and Faber, 2002.
- Hirson, David, *La Bête* (1989), New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1992.
- Ives, David, *The School for Lies*, New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2013.
- Kenneth Muir, *Racine: Five Plays*, Macgibbon & Kee, 1960.
- Knight, Roy Clement, *Jean Racine: Four Greek Plays*, Cambridge: CUP, 1982.
- Lochhead, Liz, *Educating Agnes*, London: Nick Hern Books, 2008.
- , *Miseryguts & Tartuffe: Two Plays by Molière*, London: Nick Hern Books, 2002.
- , *Tartuffe*, Glasgow: Third Eye Centre; Edinburgh: Polygon, 1986.
- Lockert, Lacy, *Mid-Career Tragedies*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1958.
- , *The Best Plays of Racine*, Princeton UP, 1936.
- Lowell, Robert, *Phaedra*, London: Faber and Faber, 1961b.
- Macdonald, Robert David and Neil Bartlett, *Racine: Three Plays*, London: Oberon, 2007.
- Macdonald, Robert David, *Phedre: English Stage Version*, Oxford: Amber Lane Press Ltd., 1985.
- , *School for Wives*, Birmingham: Oberon, 1987.
- Mahon, Derek, *Paris, High Time*, Dublin: The Gallery Press, 1985.
- Malleson, Miles, *Tartuffe, or The Imposter*, London: French, 1950.
- McGough, Roger, *Tartuffe*, London: Methuen drama, 2008.
- , *The Hypochondriac*, London: Methuen drama, 2011.
- , *The Misanthrope*, London: Methuen drama, 2013.
- Mooney, Timothy, *Tartuffe*, New York: Playscripts, 2005.
- , *The Imaginary Invalid*, New York: Playscripts, 2005.
- , *The Misanthrope*, New York: Playscripts, 2008.
- , *The Miser*, New York: Playscripts, 2009.
- , *The Schemings of Scapin*, New York: Playscript, 2009.
- Muir, Kenneth, *Racine: Five Plays*, London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1960.
- Necula, Maria-Cristina, *The School for Wives*, Breinigsville: Xlibris Corporation, 2009.
- Sams, Jeremy, *The Miser*, London: Methuen drama, 1991.

- Samuel Solomon, *The Complete Plays by Jean Racine*, vol. 2, New York: Random House, 1967.
- Sisson, Charles Hubert, *Britannicus, Phaedra, Athaliah*, New York: OUP, 1987.
- Slater, Maya, *The Misanthrope, Tartuffe, and Other Plays*, 'Oxford World's Classics,' Oxford: OUP, 2001.
- Solomon, Samuel, *The Complete Plays by Jean Racine*, New York: Random House, 1967.
- Steiner, Prudence, *Tartuffe*, Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009.
- Wilbur, Richard, *Andromache*, Calif: Matrix Press, 1982.
- , *The Misanthrope*, London: Faber and Faber, 1958.
- , *Don Juan*, Houghton Mifflin: Harcourt, 2001.
- , *Phaedra*, New York-London: Harcourt Brace Jovakovich Publishers, 1986.
- , *Tartuffe*, London: Faber and Faber, 1964.
- , *The School for Wives*, San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovonovich, 1971.
- , *Amphitryon*, New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1995.
- Wood, John and David Coward, *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*, London: Penguin, 2000.

Secondary Sources

- Aaltonen, Sirkku, (1996), *Acculturation of the Other: Irish Milieux in Finnish Drama Translation*, Joensuu, Finland: Joensuu University Press, 1996.
- , *Time-sharing on Stage: Drama Translation in Theatre and Society*, Clevedon and Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2000.
- Anderman, Gunilla (ed.), *Voices in Translation: Bridging Cultural Divides*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007.
- Andrea Peghinelli, 'Theatre Translation as Collaboration: A Case in Point in British Contemporary Drama,' *Journal for Communication and Culture*, vol. 2, n° 1, 2012, 20-30.
- Angel-Perez, Elisabeth, 'Le Traitement et Atteintes à sa vie de Martin Crimp: Tricotage du texte et auto-engendrement,' in Jean-Marc Lanteri (ed.), *Écritures contemporaines: dramaturgies britanniques (1980-2000)*, Paris: Lettres modernes-Minard, 2002, 99-110.
- Argent, Geoffrey Alan, 'Translator's Introduction: Taking up the Gauntlet,' in Geoffrey Alan Argent, *The Complete Plays of Jean Racine: The Fratricides*, vol. 1, University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2010, xxi-lx.
- Arnold, Matthew, *Essays by Matthew Arnold: Including Essays in Criticism*, Oxford: OUP, 1914.
- Aroui, Jean-Louis, 'Rime et richesse des rimes en versification française classique,' in Michel Murat and Jacqueline Dangel (eds), *Poétique de la rime*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005, 179-209.

- Astley, Neil (ed.), *Tony Harrison*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1991.
- Attridge, Derek, 'Dryden's Dilemma, or, Racine Refashioned: The Problem of English Dramatic Couplet,' *Yearbook of English Studies*, n° 9, 1979, 55-77.
- , *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry*, Oxford: OUP, 2013.
- Aubignac, François-Hédelin, abbé d', *La pratique du théâtre* (1657), Hélène Baby (ed.), Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001.
- Ayres, P. C. R., 'Prose and Verse in French Drama from Larivey to Molière,' M.Litt. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1974.
- Baines, Roger, Cristina Marinetti and Manuela Perteghella (eds), *Staging and Performing Translation: Text and Theatre Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Baker, Mona and Gabriela Saldanha (eds), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (1998), 2nd ed., London and New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Banville, Théodore de, *Petit traité de poésie française*, Paris: A. Le Clère, 1872.
- Barrault, Jean-Louis, *Mise en scène de Phèdre*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1946.
- Barthes, Roland, *Sur Racine*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963.
- Bassnett, Susan, 'Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability,' *TTR*, vol. 4, n° 1, 1991, 99-111.
- Bastin, Georges, 'Adaptation,' in Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (eds), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (1998), 2nd ed., London and New York: Routledge, 2009, 3-6.
- Beaudouin, Valérie, *Mètre et rythmes du vers classique: Corneille et Racine*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002.
- Beaumarchais, Pierre-Augustin Caron de, 'Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux,' in *Œuvres*, Pierre Larthomas (ed.), 'Pléiade,' Paris: Gallimard, 1988, 119-40.
- Becker, William, 'Some French Plays in Translation,' *The Hudson Review*, Summer 1956, 277-288.
- Benjamin, Stephen, 'Tartuffe: A Modern Adaptation,' MA Thesis, The University of Akron, 2013.
https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=akron1373395035&disposition=inline
 (accessed February 2018).
- Berman, Antoine, 'La retraduction comme espace de la traduction,' *Palimpsestes*, n° 4, 1990, 1-8.
- Berman, Antoine, Isabelle Garma-Berman and Valentina Sommella, *L'âge de la traduction: 'la tâche du traducteur' de Walter Benjamin: un commentaire*, Saint-Denis: Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 2008.
- Bernard, Michel, 'Esquisse d'une théorie de la théâtralité d'un texte en vers à partir de l'exemple racinien,' in Jacques Scherer and Jacqueline Jomaron (eds), *Mélanges pour Jacques Scherer: Dramaturgies, Langages Dramatiques*, Paris: Librairie A.-G. Nizet, 1986, 279-288.
- Bernet, Charles, 'Hasards de la rime,' in Gérald Purnelle, Cédric Fairo, Anne Dister, *Le poids des mots*, '7es Journées internationales d'Analyse statistique des Données Textuelles,' 2004, 148-159.

- Bigliazzi, Silvia, Peter Kofler and Paola Ambrosi (eds), *Theatre Translation in Performance*, New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Boileau, Nicolas, 'L'Art poétique' (1674), in *Œuvres*, Georges Mongrédien (ed.), Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961.
- Boisseau, Maryvonne, 'Beckett, Mahon, Carson et Le Bateau ivre: Rythme, prosodie, interprétation,' *Études irlandaises*, vol. 2, n° 35, 2010, 135-148.
- , 'Traduire/travestir: Derek Mahon détourne Molière,' *Études Irlandaises*, vol. 1, n° 30, 2005.
- Bolt, Ranjit, 'Translating Molière,' in Jane Taylor, Edith McMorran, Guy Leclercq (eds), *Translation Here and There Now and Then*, Exeter: Elm Bank Publication, 1996, 89-94.
- , *The Art of Translation*, London: Oberon, 2010.
- Bonnefoy, Yves, 'On the Translation of Form in Poetry,' *World Literature Today*, vol. 52, n° 3, 1979, 374-379.
- Brisset, Annie, *Sociocritique de la traduction: théâtre et alterité au Québec (1968-1988)*, Longueuil, Québec: Le Préambule, 1990.
- Brodie, Geraldine, 'Plays in Translation on the London Stage: Visibility, Celebrity, Agency and Collaboration,' PhD thesis under the supervision of Theo Hermans and Maria Delgado, University College London, 2012.
- Brodsky, Joseph, 'Beyond Consolation,' trans. by Barry Rubin, *New York Review of Books*, 1974, 13-16.
- , *Less Than One: Selected Chapters*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986.
- Brown, Mark, (ed), *Howard Barker Interviews 1980-2010: Conversations in Catastrophe*, Bristol: Intellect, 2011.
- Brownlie, Siobhan, 'Narrative Theory and Retranslation Theory,' *Across Languages and Cultures* vol. 7, n° 2, 145-170.
- Bryer, David, 'Translating the Alexandrine,' in Jane Taylor, Edith McMorran and Guy Leclercq (eds), *Translation Here and There Now and Then*, Exeter: Elm Bank Publication, 1996, 43-58.
- Cahen, Jacques-Gabriel, *Le vocabulaire de Racine*, Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1946.
- Carmody, Jim, 'Alceste in Hollywood: A Semiotic Reading of *The Misanthrope*,' in Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach (eds), *Critical Theory and Performance*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007, 37-48.
- Chapelain, Jean, 'Lettre sur la règle des vingt quatre heures,' in *Opuscles critiques*, Alfred C. Hunter (ed.) (1936), revised by Anne Duprat, Genève: Librairie Droz, 2007, 225-234.
- Chapman, Hugh H., 'Review,' *Comparative Literature*, vol. 9, n° 2, 1957, 176-178.
- Chappuzeau, Samuel, *Le théâtre françois* (1674), Georges Monval (ed.), Paris: J. Bonnassies, 1875.
- Charpentreau, Jacques, *Dictionnaire de la poésie*, Paris: Fayard, 2005.
- Clark, Noël, 'Translating For The Love Of It,' in David Johnston (ed.), *Stages of Translation*, Bath: Absolute Classics, 1996, 23-34.

- Classe, Oliver, *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, in 2 vols, London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000.
- Claudé, Paul, 'Conversation sur Jean Racine' (1921), in Paul Claudé, *Œuvres en prose*, Charles Galpérine and Jacques Petit (eds.), 'Pléiade,' Paris: Gallimard, 1965, 448-467.
- , 'Réflexions et propositions sur le vers français,' in Paul Claudé, *Œuvres en prose*, Charles Galpérine and Jacques Petit (eds.), 'Pléiade,' Paris: Gallimard, 1965, 3-45.
- Collot, Michel, and Dominique Viart, 'Poésie,' in *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/poesie/#i_9073 (accessed February 2018)
- Conesa, Gabriel, *Le dialogue moliéresque: étude stylistique et dramaturgique*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983.
- Corn, Alfred, *The Poem's Heartbeat: A Manual of Prosody*, Brownsville: Story Line Press, 1997.
- Corneille, Pierre, *Œuvres complètes*, Georges Couton (ed.), 'Pléiade,' Paris: Gallimard, vol. 1, 1980; vol. 2, 1984; vol. 3, 1987.
- Corvin, Michel, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du théâtre à travers le monde* (1991), Paris: Bordas, 2008.
- Crunelle-Vanrigh, Any, 'Traduire *Arden of Faversham*, Le spectre du texte,' in Danièle Berton and Jean-Pierre Simard (eds), *Création Théâtrale: Adaptation, schèmes, traduction*, 'Actes de séminaires et colloques,' Université de Saint-Étienne, 2007, 59-70.
- Cuénin-Lieber, Mariette, *Corneille et le monologue: Une interrogation sur le héros*, Tübingen: G. Narr, 2002.
- Dessons, Gérard and Henri Meschonnic, *Traité du rythme, des vers et des proses*, Paris: Dunod, 1998.
- Diderot, Denis, *Discours sur la poésie dramatique* (1758), in Denis Diderot, *Œuvres esthétiques*, Paul Vernière (ed.), Paris: Garnier, 1959.
- Dryden, John, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), Thomas Arnold (ed.), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.
- Du Ryer, Pierre, *Bérénice* (1645), Coralie Fenin (ed.), <http://www.idt.paris-sorbonne.fr/html/Du-Ryer-Berenice-Preface.html> (accessed February 2018)
- Duffell, Martin, *A New History of English Metre*, London: Legenda, 2008.
- Eliot, T. S., 'Reflections on *vers libre*,' *New Statesman*, vol. 142, n° 5153-5154, 138.
- Elliott, Kamilla, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, Cambridge: CUP, 2003.
- Espasa, Eva, 'Performability in Translation: Speakability? Playability? Or just Saleability?' in Terry Hale and Carole-Anne Upton (eds), *The Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation*, Manchester: St Jerome, 2000, 49-62.
- Fayard, Nicole, 'France's "Other" National Playwright? The Performance of Shakespeare in France and the Shakespeare Myth,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, vol. 19, n° 4, 2009, 400-412.
- Fénelon, François, *Œuvres diverses de Fénelon*, Paris: Lefevre, 1844.
- Ferrier, Janet Mackay, *French Prose Writers of the 14th and 15th Centuries*, Oxford: Pergamon, 1966.

- Flesch, William, 'Quoting Poetry,' *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18, n° 1, 1991, 42-63.
- Flint, Lorna, *Shakespeare's Third Keyboard: The Significance of Rime in Shakespeare's Plays*, Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2000.
- Folkart, Barbara, *Second Finding: A Poetics of Translation*, Ottawa: Ottawa UP, 2007.
- Fortassier, Pierre, 'Alexandrin le grand: Alexandrin pas mort,' *Théâtre en Europe*, n° 1, 1984.
- France, Peter (ed.), *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, New York and Oxford: OUP, 2000.
- , 'Andromaque in Britain,' *Comparative Critical Studies*, vol. 2, n° 1, 2004, 3-22.
- Furetière, Antoine, *Essais d'un dictionnaire universel: contenant généralement tous les mots françois tant Vieux... que modernes et les termes de toutes les sciences* (1684), S.l.: Forgotten Books, 2016.
- Gambier, Yves, 'La retraduction, retour et détour,' *Méta*, vol. 39, n° 3, 1994, 413-417.
- Garapon, Robert, 'Le dialogue moliéresque: Contribution à l'étude de la stylistique dramatique de Molière,' *Cahier de l'Association Internationale des Études Françaises*, n° 16, 1964, 203-217.
- , *La fantaisie verbale et le comique dans le théâtre français*, Paris: Collin, 1957.
- Gasparov, Mikhail Leonovich, 'A Probability Model of Verse (English, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese),' *Style*, vol. 21, n° 3, 1987, 322-358.
- Gervais, David, 'Beyond Tragedy: Ted Hughes, Racine and Euripides,' in Roger Rees (ed.), *Ted Hughes and the Classics*, Oxford: OUP, 2009, 300-323.
- Gevrey, Françoise, 'La Bruyère moraliste: Un modèle pour les Goncourt,' *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, n° 15, 2008, 25-40.
- Gibbons, Reginald, 'On Rhyme,' *American Poetry Review*, vol. 35, n° 6, 2006, 63-69.
- Gostand, Reba, 'Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication: Drama as Translation,' in Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (ed.), *The Language of Theatre: Problems in the Translation and Transposition of Drama*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980, 1-19.
- Greene, Nicholas, *Shakespeare, Jonson, Molière: The Comic Contract*, London: Macmillan, 1980.
- Grimarest, Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de, *Vie de Molière* (1705), Georges Mongrédien (ed.), Paris: M. Brient, 1955.
- Gros de Gasquet, Julia, 'Dire Corneille, un art du naturel,' in Myriam Dufour-Maître (ed.), *Pratiques de Corneille*, Publications des universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2012, 123-131.
- Guiraud, Pierre, *Langage et versification d'après l'œuvre de Paul Valéry: Étude sur la forme poétique dans ses rapports avec la langue*, Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1953.
- Gürçağlar, Şehnaz T., 'Retranslation,' in Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (eds), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2nd ed., London and New York: Routledge, 2009, 233-236.
- Hale, Terry and Carole-Anne Upton, 'Introduction,' in Carole-Anne Upton and Terry Hale (eds), *The Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation*, Manchester: St Jerome, 2000, 1-13.

- Hampton, Christopher, 'Interview with Christopher Hampton, Roger Baines and Manuela Perteghella,' in Roger Baines, Cristina Marinetti and Manuela Perteghella (eds), *Staging and Performing Translation: Text and Theatre Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 173-186.
- Harrison, Tony, 'Introduction' [to *Phaedra Britannica*], in Tony Harrison, *Plays 2: The Misanthrope, Phaedra Britannica, The Prince's Play*, London: Faber and Faber, 2002, 113-140.
- , 'Introduction: Jane Eyre's Sister,' in Tony Harrison, *Plays 2: The Misanthrope; Phaedra Britannica; The Prince's Plays*, London: Faber and Faber, 2002, 3-24.
- , 'Molière Nationalized,' *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*, n° 26, 1974, 169-186.
- Haughton, Hugh, "'The Importance of Elsewhere": Mahon and Translation,' in Kennedy-Andrews, Elmer, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 2002, 145-184.
- Hautepierre, Jean, 'Le théâtre en vers contemporain,' *Le Coin de table*, n° 59, 2014, 24-47.
- , 'Quel avenir pour le théâtre en vers,' *Le Coin de table*, n° 21, 2005, 1-5.
- Hawcroft, Michael, *Rhetoric: Readings in French Literature*, Oxford: OUP, 1999.
- Hegel, Friedrich, *Esthétique* (1832), Samuel Jankélévitch (ed.), Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1965.
- Herzel, Roger, 'Introduction,' in Prudence Steiner, *Tartuffe*, Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008, xii-xxvi.
- Hobsbaum, Philip, *Metre, Rhythm, and Verse Form*, 'The New Critical Idiom,' London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Hoenselaars, Ton, *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, London: Arden Shakespeare, 2014.
- Holmes, James, 'Forms of Verse Translation and the Translation of Verse Form,' in James Holmes (ed.), *The Nature of Translation: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970, 91-105.
- , *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*, Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi B.V., 3rd ed. (1988, 1994), 2005.
- Honig, Edwin, 'A Conversation with Richard Wilbur,' *Modern Languages Notes*, vol. 91, n° 5, 1976, 1084-1098.
- Horville, Robert, *Don Juan de Molière: une dramaturgie de rupture*, Paris: Larousse, 1972.
- Hovasse, Jean-Marc, 'Victor Hugo créateur par la rime?' in Michel Murat and Jacqueline Dangel (eds), *Poétique de la rime*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005, 313-332.
- Howarth, William D., 'L'alexandrin classique comme instrument du dialogue théâtral,' in Jacques Scherer and Jacqueline Jomaron (eds), *Mélanges pour Jacques Scherer: Dramaturgies, Langages Dramatiques*, Paris: Librairie A.-G. Nizet, 1986, 341-354.
- Hubert, Marie-Claude, *Les grandes théories du théâtre*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2010.
- Hugo, Victor, *Cromwell* (1827), Annie Ubersfeld (ed.), Paris: Garner-Flammarion, 1968.

- Hunter, Paul, 'Seven Reasons for Rhyme,' in Lorna Clymer (ed), *Ritual, Routine and Regime: Repetition in Early Modern British and European Cultures*, Toronto, Buffalo and London: The Regents of the University of California, 2006, 172- 198.
- Johnston, David and Neil Bartlett, 'Neil Bartlett: A Different Night out in the Theatre, in Conversation with David Johnston,' in David Johnston (ed.), *Stages of Translation*, Bath: Absolute Classics, 1996, 67-74.
- Johnston, David and Ranjit Bolt, 'Ranjit Bolt: Translating Verse Plays, in Conversation with David Johnston' in David Johnston (ed.) *Stages of Translation*, Bath: Absolute Classics, 1996, 249-261.
- Johnston, David, 'Metaphor and Metonymy: the Translator-Practitioner's Visibility,' in Roger Baines, Cristina Marinetti and Manuela Perteghella (eds), *Staging and Performing Translation: Text and Theatre Tractice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 11-30.
- Jones, Suzanne, 'French Imports: English Translations of Molière, 1663-1732,' DPhil thesis under the supervision of Michael Hawcroft and Tiffany Stern, University of Oxford, 2016.
- Kastner, Léon Emile, *A History of French Versification*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.
- Khamphommala, Vanasay, 'Spectres de Shakespeare dans l'œuvre de Howard Barker,' PhD thesis under the supervision of Elizabeth Angel-Perez, University of Paris Sorbonne, 2010.
- Kochol, Viktor, 'The Problem of Verse Rhythm in Translation,' in James Holmes (ed.), *The Nature of Translation: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970, 106-111.
- Krebs, Katja, 'Introduction: Collisions, Diversions and Meeting Points,' in Katja Krebs (ed.), *Translation and Adaptation in Film and Performance*, London and New York, Routledge, 2014, 1-12.
- Kylander, Britt-Marie, *Le vocabulaire de Molière dans les comédies en alexandrins*, Göteborg: University of Göteborg, 1995.
- La Bruyère, Jean de, *Les caractères: ou, Les mœurs de ce siècle, suivis du discours à l'Académie et précédés de la traduction de Théophraste*, (1688), M. Sainte-Beuve (ed.), Paris: Morizot, 1839.
- La Motte, Antoine Houdar de, *Les paradoxes littéraires de La Motte: ou discours écrits par cet académicien sur les principaux genres de poèmes*, Bernard Jullien (ed.), Paris: L. Hachette, 1859.
- Ladouceur, Louise, and Nicole Nolette, 'Cow-boy poétre: A Bilingual Performance for a Unilingual Audience,' in Roger Baines, Cristina Marinetti, and Manuela Perteghella (eds), *Staging and Performing Translation: Text and Theatre Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 155-169.
- Lanteri, Jean-Marc (ed.), *Écritures contemporaines: dramaturgies britanniques (1980-2000)*, Paris: Lettres modernes-Minard, 2002.
- , 'Les écritures théâtrales en Grande Bretagne (1980-2000): L'Âge d'or et la dame de fer,' in Jean-Marc Lanteri (ed.), *Écritures contemporaines: dramaturgies britanniques (1980-2000)*, Paris: Lettres modernes-Minard, 2002, 3-21.
- Larthomas, Pierre, *Le langage dramatique: Sa nature, ses procédés* (1972), 'Quadriges,' Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005.

- Lefevere, André, *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint*, 'Approaches to translation studies,' n° 3, Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975.
- Levi, Peter, *Harrison's Dramatic Verse*, in Neil Astley (ed.), *Tony Harrison*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1991, 158-166.
- Lowell, Robert, *Imitations*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudah, 1961b.
- Lusson, Pierre and Jacques Roubaud, 'Mètre et rythme de l'alexandrin ordinaire,' *Langue française*, n° 23, 1974, 41-53.
- Marinetti, Cristina, 'Transnational, Multilingual, and Post-dramatic Rethinking the Location of Translation in Contemporary Theatre,' in Silvia Bigliuzzi, Peter Kofler and Paola Ambrosi (eds), *Theatre Translation in Performance*, New York: Routledge, 2013, 27-36.
- Maskell, David, 'Racine and Shakespeare: A Common Language,' *Comparative Literature Studies*, 1993, vol. 30, n° 3, 253-268.
- Matthews, Brander, 'Shakespeare and Moliere,' *The North American Review*, vol. 192, n° 658, 1910, 317-325.
- McCracken, Kathleen, 'Homophrosyne: The French Element in the Poetry of Derek Mahon,' in Joseph McMinn, Anne McMaster and Angela Welch (eds), *The Internationalism of Irish Literature and Drama*, *Irish Literature Studies*, n° 41, Savage, Maryland: Barnes and Noble Books, 1992, 181-192.
- Meschonnic, Henri, 'Propositions pour une poétique de la traduction,' *Langages*, n° 28, 1972, 49-54.
- Michaut, Gustave, *Les débuts de Molière à Paris*, Genève: Slatkine, 1968.
- Milton, John, *Paradise Lost* (1667), Philip Pullman (ed.), Oxford and New York: OUP, 2005.
- Minier, Marta, 'Definitions, Dyads, Triads and Other Points of Connection in Translation and Adaptation Discourse,' in Katja Krebs (ed.), *Translation and Adaptation in Theatre and Film*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, 13-35.
- Mongrédien, Georges, *Recueil des textes et des documents du XVII^e siècle relatifs à Molière*, in 2 vols, Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 1965.
- Müller, Charles, *Étude de statistique lexicale: le vocabulaire du théâtre de Pierre Corneille*, Paris: Larousse, 1967.
- Nabokov, Vladimir, 'Problems of Translation: *Onegin* in English,' in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd ed. (2000, 2004), London and New York: Routledge, 2012, 71-83.
- Nattiez, Jean-Jacques, *Fondements d'une sémiologie de la musique*, Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1975.
- Newman, Francis, *Homeric Translation in Theory and Practice*, London: Williams and Norgate, 1861.
- Nicoll, Allardyce, *A History of English Drama, 1600-1900*, vol. 1, Cambridge: CUP, 1959.
- Nida, Eugene, *Toward a Science of Translating*, Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1964.
- Nolette, Nicole, *Jouer la traduction: Théâtre et hétérolinguisme au Canada francophone*, Ottawa: Ottawa UP, 2015.

- Nowra, Louis, 'Translating for the Australian Stage: A Personal Viewpoint,' in Ortrun Zuber-Skerrit (ed.), *Page to Stage: Theatre as Translation*, vol. 48, Rodopi: Amsterdam, 1984, 13-28.
- Oxley, William, 'Interview with Douglas Dunn,' *Acumen*, n° 13, 1991.
- Pavis, Patrice, 'Problems of Translation for the Stage: Intercultural and Post-modern Theatre,' in Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland (eds), *The Play out of Context Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*, Cambridge: CUP, 1989.
- , *Dictionnaire du théâtre*, Dunod: Paris, 1996.
- , *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, translated from French by Loren Kruger, London: Routledge, 1992.
- Peacock, Noël, 'Cent ans de recherches sur Molière: 1890-1990,' in Robert McBride and Noël Peacock (eds), *Le Nouveau Moliériste*, vol. 1, 1994, 45-61.
- , 'Molière Nationalised: *Tartuffe* on the British Stage from the Restoration to the Present Day,' in Bavid Bradby and Andrew Calder (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Molière*, Cambridge and New York: CUP, 2006, 177-188.
- , 'Molière,' in Oliver Classe (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, vol. 2, 2000, 956-961.
- , 'Molière's Handling of Rhyme: The Translator's Perspective,' in Christopher Smith (ed.), *Chapters in Memory of Michael Parkinson and Janine Darkyns*, University of East Anglia: Norwich Papers IV, 1996, 45-50.
- , 'Translating Molière for the English Stage,' *Nottingham French Studies*, vol. 32, 1994, 83-91.
- , 'Verbal Costume in *Le Misanthrope*,' *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, vol. 9, n° 1, 1987, 74-93.
- , *Molière in Scotland: 1945-1990*, Glasgow: University of Glasgow French & German Publications, 1993.
- Phalèse, Hubert de, *Les mots de Molière: Les quatre dernières pièces à travers les nouvelles technologies*, Paris: Nizet, 1992.
- Ploix, Cédric, "'Sorry for the rhyme, not the sentiment.'" Traduire Molière et Racine pour la scène anglaise: le problème de l'alexandrin et l'exemple des trois "McGoughières",' in Isabelle Guénin and Bruno Poncharal (eds), *Les sens en éveil: traduire pour la scène, Palimpsestes*, n° 29, Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2016, 103-125.
- , 'Traduire de la scène, pour la scène et sur la scène, un paradigme de création,' *Cahiers d'ALLhis*, 'Traduction et création,' 2018 (forthcoming).
- Pope, Alexander, *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), Alfred Slater West (ed.) (1886), Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014.
- , *The Iliad, The Odyssey* (1715-1726), in 3 vols, London: A.J. Valpy, 1833.
- , *The Poems of Alexander Pope; Translations of Homer: The Iliad, I-IX*, vol. 7, Mack Maynard (ed.), London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1967.
- Raffel, Burton, *The Art of Translating Poetry*, University Park, London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1988.

- Reuven, Tsur, 'Masculine and Feminine Rhymes: Their Structural Effect,' *Style: A Quarterly Journal of Aesthetics, Poetics, Stylistics, and Literary Criticism*, vol. 47, n° 1, 2013, 1-24.
- Riggs, Larry, *Molière and Modernity*, Charlottesville: Rookwood, 2005.
- Roaten, Darnell, *Structural Forms in the French Theater, 1500-1700*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960.
- Rosa, Guy, 'Hugo et l'alexandrin de théâtre aux années 30: Une question secondaire,' *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, vol. 52, n° 1, 2000, 307-328.
- Rothstein, Eric, *Restoration Tragedy: Form and the Process of Change*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.
- Roubaud, Jacques, *La vieillesse d'Alexandre* (1978), Paris: Ramsay, 1988.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Un théâtre de situations* (1973), Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka (eds), Paris: Gallimard, 2005.
- Scherer, Jacques, *La dramaturgie classique en France*, Nizet: Paris, 1960.
- Scolnicov, Hanna and Peter Holland (eds), *The Play out of Context Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*, Cambridge: CUP, 1989.
- Scott, Clive, 'Translating Rhythm,' *Translation and Literature*, vol. 6, n° 1, 1997, 31-47.
- , *French Verse-art: A Study*, London and New York: Cambridge UP, 1980.
- , *The Riches of Rhyme: Studies in French Verse*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Scott, David, 'Mallarmé and the Octosyllabic Sonnet,' *French Studies*, n° 31, 1977, 149-63.
- Senior, Nancy, 'Translators' Choices in *Tartuffe*,' *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, vol. 14, n° 1, 2001, 39-64.
- Short, J. P., 'Racine,' in Oliver Classe (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, vol. 2, 2000, 1145-1149.
- Sisson, Charles Hubert, 'The Best Words in the Best Order,' in Chris McCully (ed.), *The Poet's Voice and Craft*, Manchester: Carcanet, 1994, 26-38.
- Sorel, Charles, *De la connoissance des bons livres, ou examen de plusieurs auteurs*, Paris: André Parlard, 1671.
- Stendhal, *Racine and Shakespeare* (1823), Bernard Leuilliot (ed.), Paris: Kimé, 1996.
- Stevenson, Randall, 'Triumphant Tartuffication: Liz Lochhead's Translation of Molière's *Tartuffe*,' in Bill Findlay (ed.), *Frae Ither Tongues: Essays on Modern Translations into Scots*, Clevedon et al.: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2004, 106-122.
- Stewart, W. McC., 'Racine's Untranslatability and the Art of the Alexandrine,' in Thomas Edward Lawrenson et al. (eds), *Modern Miscellany Presented to Eugene Vinaver*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1969, 230-242.
- Stock, Robert, 'Molière's *Tartuffe*: A Comparison of Two Translations by Richard Wilbur and Roger McGough,' MA dissertation, University of Bristol: 2012.
- Susam-Sarajeva, Sebnem, 'Multiple-Entry Visa for Travelling Theory: Retranslations of Literary and Cultural Theories,' *Target*, vol. 15, n° 1, 2003, 1-36.
- Swinden, Patrick, 'Translating Racine,' *Comparative Literature*, vol. 49, n° 3, 1997, 209-226.

- Taylor, Jane, Edith McMorran and Guy Leclercq (eds), 'Introduction,' in *Translation Here and There Now and Then*, Exeter: Elm Bank Publication, 1996.
- Trilling, Lionel, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Havard: Havard UP, 1972.
- Turnell, Martin, *Jean Racine: Dramatist*, New York: New Directions, 1972.
- , *The Classical Moment*, London: H. Hamilton, 1964.
- Ubersfeld, Anne, *Lire le théâtre*, Paris: Éditions sociales, 1978.
- Valéry, Paul, 'On Speaking verse' in Paul Valéry, *The Art of Poetry*, trans. by Denise Foliot, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985, 159-166.
- Veinstein, André, *La mise en scène théâtrale et sa condition esthétique* (1955), 3rd ed., Paris: Librairie théâtrale, 1992.
- Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translation Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2007.
- , *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Voltaire, *Vie de Molière*, in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, vol. 9, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999.
- , *Dictionnaire philosophique*, in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, vol. 43, Oxford: Voltaire Fondation, 2013.
- Wheatley, Katherine, 'Introduction,' in Samuel Solomon, *The Complete Plays by Jean Racine*, vol. 2, New York: Random House, 1967, ix-xxxii.
- Wiggins, Kayla McKinney, *Modern Verse Drama in English: An Annotated Bibliography*, 'Bibliographies and Indexes in World Literature,' n° 39, Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1993.
- Wimsatt, William K., 'One Relation of Rhyme to Reason: Alexander Pope,' *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 5, n° 3, 1944, 323-338.
- Wu, Chin-Tao, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s*, New York: Verso, 2003.
- Zuber-Skerrit, Ortrun (ed.), *Page to Stage, Theatre as Translation*, Rodopi: Amsterdam, 1984.
- Zuber, Roger, *Les 'belles infidèles,' ou la formation du goût classique* (1968), Paris: Albin Michel, 1995.

Reviews

The reviews that are mentioned in the thesis but that are not referenced in this section have been either quoted from other sources (references indicated in the text) or from the National Theatre archives, London.

Independent on Sunday, Kate Bassett, 'Tartuffe, National Theatre: Lyttelton, London [...],' 10 March 2002.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/tartuffe-national-theatre-lyttelton-london-hinterland-national-theatre-cottesloe-london-kiss-my-echo-9132584.html>

Le Monde, Fabienne Darge, 'Jean-Michel Déprats ou l'art de traduire Shakespeare en comédien,' 18 December 2008.

http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2008/12/18/jean-michel-deprats-ou-l-art-de-traduire-shakespeare-en-comedien_1132518_3260.html

New York Theatre, John Simon, 'Poetry in Motion,' 28 January 1999.

<http://nymag.com/nymetro/arts/theater/reviews/227/>

The Australian, Alison Croggon, 'Review: The Hypocrite,' 14 November 2015.

<http://theatrenotes.blogspot.co.uk/2008/11/review-hypocrite.html>

The Australian, Jane Albert, 'Playwright Justin Fleming on Helpmann, Moliere and the joy of theatre,' 28 May 2016.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/playwright-justin-fleming-on-helpmann-moliere-and-the-joy-of-theatre/news-story/a9f22b3485a436b8ee6a0f87a3f81f43>

The Australian, John McCalum, 'Justin Fleming translates Moliere's *Tartuffe* into funny, clever Aussie vernacular,' 1 August 2014.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/stage/justin-fleming-translates-molieres-tartuffe-into-funny-clever-aussie-vernacular/news-story/acb179c7d38905cdeae609782b7bab8>

The Guardian, Alfred Hickling, 'The Misanthrope – review,' 21 February 2013.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/feb/21/the-misanthrope-review>

The Guardian, Brian Logan, 'Whose play is it anyway?' 12 March 2012.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2003/mar/12/theatre.artsfeatures>

The Guardian, Jessica Keath, 'Tartufe review: Molière's satire Australianised but not brutalized,' 31 July 2014.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/australia-culture-blog/2014/jul/31/tartuffe-review-moliere-satire-australianised-not-brutalised>

The Guardian, Michael Billington, 'Margaret Thatcher Casts a Long Shadow over Theatre and the Arts,' 8 April 2013.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/apr/08/margaret-thatcher-long-shadow-theatre>

The Guardian, Michael Billington, 'Tartuffe,' 6 March 2002.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2002/mar/06/theatre.artsfeatures1>

The Guardian, Michael Billington, 'The Miser review – Griff Rhys Jones presides over a relentless gag-fest,' 13 March 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/mar/13/the-miser-review-griff-rhys-jones-lee-mack-moliere>

The Guardian, Ranjit Bolt, 'Truth be told,' 9 February 2008.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/feb/09/theatre>

The Guardian, Raymond Blankenhorn, 'Plays in verse were all the rage, but why are they missing from the stage?' 11 November 2011.

<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/nov/11/plays-verse-missing-stage>

The Guardian, Roger McGough, 'Roger McGough: How I brought Molière to the Mersey,' 5 February 2013.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/feb/05/roger-mcgough-moliere-mersey>

The Guardian, Vera Rule, 'The Misanthrope, Tartuffe, and Other Plays,' 21 July 2001.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/jul/21/1>

The Harvard Crimson, Harrison Young, 'Tartuffe,' 4 December 1965.

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1965/12/4/tartuffe-pif-john-lithgow-werent-the/>

The Los Angeles Times, Jan Herman, 'Likable "Misanthrope" Said Another Way,' 31 January 1997.

http://articles.latimes.com/1997-01-31/entertainment/ca-23898_1_misanthropic-alceste

The New York Review of books, Jackson Mathews, 'A New Tartuffe,' 26 September 1963.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1963/09/26/a-new-tartuffe/>

The New York Times, D. J. R. Bruckner, 'Reviews/Theater; Moliere's Fools at a Breathless Pace,' 16 September 1991.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1991/09/16/theater/reviews-theater-moliere-s-fools-at-a-breathless-pace.html>

The New York Times, Vincent Canby, 'THEATER; In "Far East," a WASP Tries to Flee the Nest,' 17 January 1999.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/01/17/theater/theater-in-far-east-a-wasp-tries-to-flee-the-nest.html>

The Spectator, Harry Eyres, 'Uncle Vanya (RSC/Young Mb) The Misanthrope (Piccadilly),' 11 April 1998.

<http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/11th-april-1998/48/theatre>

The Telegraph, Charles Spencer, 'You can enjoy Molière after all,' 30 March 1998.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4713069/You-can-enjoy-Moliere-after-all.html>

Websites (accessed February 2018)

<http://britishtheatreconference.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/British-Theatre-Repertoire-2013.pdf>

<http://gallatin.nyu.edu/utilities/events/2015/02/amphitryon.html>

<http://moliere-in-english.com/moliere.html>

<http://theatrenotes.blogspot.co.uk/2008/11/review-hypocrite.html>

http://www.chaseside.org.uk/theatre_casts/1996789/schoolforwives.html

<http://www.cix.co.uk/~shutters/reviews/02089.htm>

http://www.griffintheatre.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/The-Literati_OnlineProgram.pdf

<http://www.idt.paris-sorbonne.fr/html/Du-Ryer-Berenice-Preface.html>

<http://www.lyric.co.uk/production-archive/entry/lamda-the-school-for-wives/>

<http://www.poetscraft.com/education/handouts/transphedre.pdf>

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/96624>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/poetry/wilbur.htm>

<http://www.themontserratreview.com/americanStage/moliere.html>

<http://www.uktouring.org.uk/rogermcgough/>

<http://www.writers.net/writers/books/42985>

<https://australianplays.org/script/ASC-1136>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DHA7vpHHQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBkgEcLxSFY&list=PLBAF0FBB8A121B846>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBAdLFIDty4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKiDZvs_IPA&index=6&list=PL28C667FFD1B48E9D

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKm7_CFNIn8