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Line Cottegnies

▶ **To cite this version:**

Line Cottegnies. "That Famous Wit and Cavaleer of France": The English Translation of Cyrano de Bergerac in the 1650s. Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/ Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée, 2019, Early Modern 'Transformissions', 46 (2), pp.1-18. halshs-02266548

HAL Id: halshs-02266548
https://shs.hal.science/halshs-02266548

Submitted on 14 Aug 2019

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"That Famous Wit and Cavaleer of *France*":

The English Translation of Cyrano de Bergerac in the 1650s

Line Cottegnies

Sorbonne Université - VALE

Abstract: This paper studies the English translations of two works by Cyrano de Bergerac that were published in quick succession in London during the Interregnum. While they manifest a keen interest in two French contemporary best-sellers and therefore the increasing commodification of literature, I will focus on the adaptation and naturalization of Cyrano's works in the polarized context of the late 1650s for a royalist readership. In 1656, Henry Herringman published *Satyrical Characters and Handsome Description in Letters, Written to severall persons of Quality*, an adaptation (by "a Person of Honour") of Cyrano's *Oeuvres diverses de Mr de Cyrano Bergerac* (Paris: Charles de Sercy, 1654). In 1659, Humphrey Robinson published *<Selenarchia>, Or the Government of the World in the Moon: A Comical History* (London: Ptd by J. Cottrell, and to be sold by Humphrey Robinson), which is the first English translation, by Thomas Sydserf, of Cyrano's *Histoire comique par Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac, Contenant les Estats & Empires de la Lune* (Paris: Charles de Sercy, 1657). This essay looks at the significance of the translation in the career of the two booksellers concerned, then studies the cavalier "packaging" (Baker, 152) of the two works, in particular through the selection and tailoring of information on the title-page, and the use of paratext. It argues that the heterodox dimension of Cyrano's oeuvre is downplayed as he is read as "a Cavaleer of France."

In her study of the bookseller Humphrey Moseley and a group of translators active in the 1650s and 1660s, Alice Eardley has reminded us that, in the wider context of an increasing demand for translations from the French, by the mid-seventeenth century romance had become a worthwhile commodity for English booksellers (130-42). This essay focuses on the English translations of two works by Cyrano de Bergerac that were published in quick succession in London during the Interregnum in the context of this new interest in French literature. In 1658, Henry Herringman published *Satyrical Characters and Handsome Description in Letters*, a translation, by "a Person of Honour," of Cyrano's *Oeuvres diverses,* originally published in 1654. In 1659, Humphrey Robinson published *<Selenarchia>, Or the Government of the World in the Moon: A Comical History*, which is the first English translation by Thomas Sydserf (or St-Serf) of Cyrano's *Histoire comique par Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac, Contenant les Estats & Empires de la Lune,* first published in 1657.

These two translations, appearing within two years of the publication of the French originals, illustrate the new currency acquired by French literature in the period and its increasing profitability in the context of the Interregnum, when a generation of royalist exiles who had spent time on the Continent came back to England. They also reflect the rise of a middle-class, commercial translator in the context of a socially-mixed readership. The texts belong to very different genres: the first one is a collection of familiar letters, some of them burlesque, and the second a serioludic narrative of a voyage to the moon in the Lucianic vein. Cyrano's *Histoire comique* was in fact inspired by Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*, initially published in 1638 and translated into French in 1648. Godwin's and Cyrano's romances offer an interesting instance of a back-and-forth circulation of texts between France and England through the medium of translation. Cyrano's debt to Godwin is explicit: Domingo Gonsales, Godwin's hero, is featured in Cyrano's *Histoire comique*, and even meets the narrator on the moon: their jailers, identifying them as members of the same species, keep them in the same cage in the hope that they will breed (Cyrano, *Histoire* 75) — a joke that those who were privy to Cyrano's sexual preferences would have enjoyed. A second English edition of *The Man in the Moone* appeared in London in 1657, only two years before the translation of Cyrano's moon voyage, and it seems clear that the publication of Cyrano's text was marketed as a follow-up to this second edition of Godwin's text.

This article proposes a study of the marketing strategies that booksellers, translators, and potential editors used to present the two works in translation. In both instances, the translators' own voices can be heard: the translation of Cyrano's letters, although published anonymously, includes a preface by the translator to the reader, and the translation of *Histoire comique* has a dedicatory epistle to two Scottish officers by the translator Thomas Sydserf. The two texts evince elaborate strategies of adaptation and mediation for the English book market of the 1650s, and a subtle refashioning of Cyrano as a “Famous Wit and Cavaleer of

France" (<*Selenarchia*> title page) — a form of "cavalier packaging" (Barker 152) — through the selection and tailoring of information in the paratext, and in particular the title page. This paratextual apparatus reveals certain generic manipulations intended to enable an English reader to assimilate translated works immediately. Yet Cyrano's identity as a "Libertin érudit" with a scandalous reputation in France, whose works were submitted to censorship, seems not to have registered in the English context.[1] The translatorial and editorial strategies tend to disregard the question of heterodoxy: as he crossed the Channel, Cyrano lost his aura of scandal to become the archetypal figure of the French "Wit" — a marketing strategy capitalizing on national stereotypes, but also catering to the demand for French literature in English translation.

The 1650s saw an intensification of the translation effort from French into English, with an increasing number of French works marketed to what Alice Eardley calls "aspirational readers" (130). Far from being reserved to an elite niche market, then, even the French romances translated in the 1650s were popular among a much wider reading public than once believed: their packaging as genteel and "high-market" is part of a marketing strategy to attract more mixed readers. "English publishers", Eardley argues, "had identified a viable middle-class market for these works, which they actively sought to cultivate and expand" (Eardley 131; see Kewes 6). As Warren Boutcher has demonstrated, the bookseller Humphrey Moseley thus published several volumes of French romances in translation between 1652 and 1661 (the year of his death), at a pace that gathered momentum as the readers' demand for new material increased. The multiple volumes of Scudéry's *Clélie*, for instance, appeared in quick succession almost as soon as they were published in France, an indication that they were in high demand. Eardley identifies a group of commercial translators working for Moseley in London, some distinguished, but most of them lower middle-class, who were paid by the task and do not represent a homogeneous milieu — impecunious

students, schoolmasters, and disenfranchised intellectuals, some of whom, such as Thomas Sydserf, the translator of Cyrano's *Histoire comique,* had spent time in France in exile during the Interregnum. Parts of La Calprenède's *Cassandre* were thus translated by George Digby, the son of an earl, and Charles Cotterell, a high-ranking courtier, but other romances of the period were Englished by translators for whom translation was an occasional, mercenary activity that tended to become a regular source of income in the face of the current demand for French texts. For the earlier part of the seventeenth century, Brenda Hosington has shown that translators did not usually make a living out of translating (54), and this still holds true for some in the 1650s,[2] but a few, such as John Davies of Kidwelly (Hook; Tucker), were now finding it a lucrative enough activity to embrace it as a career.

Yet paradoxically, the title pages of the translations of romances continued to emphasize the high status of the translator, who is routinely presented as a gentleman (or "a person of quality") for whom translation is an occasional, leisurely pursuit (Eardley 135-36) — a posture that could be called, I suggest, a *sprezzatura* topos. The paratexts also repeatedly emphasized the gentility and elegance of the French authors themselves and their original readers in France. As Steven Mentz argues about earlier fiction (7-32), these claims should not be taken at face value: they are part of an indirect strategy of teasing, aimed at a middle-class market, with a view to creating desire for a literature presented as elitist. They were meant to impress readers with the belief that by buying those books, they would share a literature that was written for and read by the genteel, and would in turn give them a highly desirable varnish of gentility. This supposed an elaborate marketing strategy aimed at the new affluent, more socially diverse middle-class reader, who was the key to the thriving book market of the period.[3] To remember this, Eardley argues, is vital to avoid common misconceptions about the rise of the novel as a new publication model aimed at the middle class, when it was merely a continuation of previous trends, only involving the diversification

of translatorial and marketing strategies to attract more socially diverse groups of readers (141). These paratexts should not be read at face value, therefore, but as selling dreams to the upwardly mobile reader with genteel aspirations.

Keeping this caveat in mind, it is possible to detect such marketing strategies at work in the two translations of Cyrano's works, although they belong to very different genres. In mid-century Paris, Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655) was an object of scandal. His eventful life, acerbic wit, quarrelsome personality, and resounding impiety had made him quite infamous. His tragedy *Agrippine* caused an uproar in 1653 for some atheistic lines that shocked the city. It would have been difficult for the English exiles passing through Paris in those years not to have heard about him: Cyrano was a celebrity. In 1654, the highly successful bookseller Charles de Sercy published his *Oeuvres diverses* in two quarto volumes — Cyrano's first published works. The first volume, which appeared early in the spring of 1654, contained his tragedy *Agrippine,* a *succès de scandale*, and the second, a few weeks later, included his letters, together with his only comedy, loosely inspired by Giordano Bruno's 1582 comedy *Il Candelaio*, *Le Pédant joué* ("The Duped Pedant"). The work was censored: as shown by Madeleine Alcover, two extant copies of the volume of letters (out of ten) are heavily censored and reveal a number of cancels: whole pages were substituted as passages, sometimes substantive, were rewritten and recomposed to satisfy the censor, and some names of individuals satirized in the volume were cancelled (*Cyrano relu* 3-27). *Etats et Empires de la lune* was published after Cyrano's death in 1655 by his friend Henri Le Bret in a heavily censored version with one-fifth of the text missing. As argued in Le Bret's preface, the text was apparently first edited, and censored, by Cyrano's friends in the hope of forestalling censorship, but in spite of this effort, it nevertheless incurred the censor's intervention, as can be inferred from the cancels in most extant copies (Chartier 214-15;

Alcover, “Le *Cyrano de Bergerac* de Jacques Prévot”). As a result, the text is garbled in parts, with the paradoxical result that the published work tantalizingly left the cuts apparent by inserting blanks, dots, or dashes; many incomplete sentences visually account for the extensive changes. The result is quite spectacularly defiant, although it meant that Cyrano's text ended up durably mutilated. The original text, with variants, was only restored in the twentieth century from three manuscripts, held in Paris, Munich, and Sydney (Alcover, “Le *Cyrano de Bergerac* de Jacques Prévot”).

Both English translations seem oblivious to this complex textual history, yet both are surprisingly accurate.[4] Using an uncensored edition, the anonymous translator of the Letters does not shy away from the impieties that pepper the text and were targeted in the censored copies; nor does he attenuate the sometimes crude, physical, and often frankly sexual, humour of his author. Only in a very few, rare instances does he tamper down the most extreme profanities or blasphemies that Cyrano loved to introduce in his text, often surreptitiously. Thus when Cyrano rails against physicians, ironically writing that “they die as well as God to save mankind” (*Oeuvres diverses* 205; my translation), the translator omits the reference to Christ, but not to the generic Messiahs that precede it: “as if they were other Messia's [sic], they die for the good of mankind” (*Satyrical Characters* 120). This is actually an unusual example of active censorship on the part of the translator of the letters, in a translation that is otherwise fairly literal: in that same letter, Cyrano includes other impious references to religion which the English translator does not leave out. The translator of Cyrano's moon voyage, Thomas Sydserf, uses Le Bret's censored edition but does not acknowledge the irregularities caused by the cuts, erasures, and omissions. He simply transcribes the dots and dashes, translating the syntactic fragments of the dislocated remaining sentences without trying to compensate or smooth out the disjointed syntax.[5] But he omits Le Bret's explanatory preface and his dedicatory epistle to Cyrano's protector Tanneguy Regnault des Boisclairs

(perhaps because he was unknown in England), which contained a brief account of how and why the text had been tampered with. Sydserf's translation seems therefore unconcerned with this aspect of the text and its impious implications, offering a fairly literal translation of the text as it stands.

In the cases of *Satyrical Characters* and <*Selenarchia*>, Cyrano's heterodoxy is not treated as an issue, and no cautionary discourse is introduced to mitigate the reception of a text that is thus offered without a prophylactic filter. While this could appear as a bold assertion of Cyrano's heterodoxy, it seems to have the opposite effect of making it go unnoticed, as the translators and booksellers seem keener to assert Cyrano's identity as a French wit and to present his works as comprehensible to the English reader of the 1650s. This will be seen in the following discussion of the paratext.

By the mid-1650s, Henry Herringman, who published *Satyrical Characters,* was not yet the important literary publisher he was to become after the Restoration. He collaborated on a number of occasions with Humphrey Moseley,[6] and is identified as a publisher of Royalist authors and of contemporary fashionable French literature. Before and after the Restoration, he thus published many highly successful authors, such as Henry King, William Davenant, Abraham Cowley, John Dryden, Robert Boyle, Roger Boyle, Edmund Waller, Thomas Killigrew, George Etherege, and Katherine Philips. He is also the publisher of all of Walter Charleton's works, which have a French connection, since many are adaptations of Gassendi's Latin works on Epicureanism. The French works he brought forth include a new edition of Cureau de La Chambre's *A discourse upon the passions* (1661); a translation of Corneille's tragedy, *Pompey the Great· A tragedy* (1664), by Edmund Waller et al.; and emblematic French romances or parts thereof, such as Honoré d'Urfé's *Astrea* (volumes 1 and 2, published in 1657, and volume 3 in 1658, a joint venture with Moseley), Scudéry's fifth part of *Clélie* (1661) and a reissue of a former work, *Severall witty discourses* (1661),

Vaumorière's *The Grand Scipio* (1660, again with Moseley), and Madame de Villedieu's *The Husband forced to be jealous* (1668).

Herringman's publication of *Satyrical Characters* as an octavo where the original had been an elegant and sober-looking quarto bears the hallmarks of the other translations from the French he published: he sought to make exclusive works charged with symbolic status available and affordable to the English reader with genteel aspirations. The rather busy title page advertises the gentility of all the protagonists involved: the addressees ("Satyrical Characters, and handsome Descriptions in Letters, Written to several *Persons of Quality*"), the dedicatee of the volume ("the *Duke of Arpaion*"), the aristocratic status of the author highlighted by the promotion of the "particle" in its right place ("Monsieur *De* Cyrano Bergerac"), and finally the translator himself, "*A Person of Honour.*" The English bookseller does not, however, reproduce the engraved blason of the dedicatee which opens the dedicatory epistle in the French text, perhaps because that would have made the book more expensive and been of limited interest for the English reader.

Yet this genteel packaging is also partly deceitful, as can be deduced from the generic tweaking on the title page, with the odd periphrasis used to describe what is simply "Lettres" in the French edition (subsumed under "œuvres diverses" or "miscellanies"): "Satyrical Characters, and handsome Descriptions in Letters." The genre of the printed "letters" was then the height of fashion in France, where it had gained currency under the pen of such authors as Guez de Balzac, who was translated into English as early as 1634, or Voiture, whose letters were translated by John Davies in 1657. The genre of Cyrano's letters posed a problem, however, because he treated them like free essays, witty and burlesque but occasionally philosophical or poetic, closer to rhetorical exercises of amplification than conventional epistles. These essays thus offer descriptions of things, people, or situations, but they are all based on baroque metaphorical developments that ingenuously bring together

heterogeneous ideas and conceits. For instance, in his account of the newly-built Arcueil aqueduct, Cyrano describes in great detail the paradox of having to walk under water, using the various tropes of the world-upside-down. In another letter ostensibly vituperating sorcerers, he uses paradox to launch into a fantastic, hallucinated vision of a black sabbath, a feat of language, until it becomes so extravagant that he can only conclude on the absurd superstitions of the pious who believe such things possible (*Oeuvres diverses* 32-40; 70-96). His contemporary Charles Sorel comments on the specificity of Cyrano's treatment of the genre of letters in *La Bibliothèque Françoise* as early as 1664:

> Pour les Lettres […] on les peut considérer comme etant d'un style particulier dont elles sont l'exemple, qui est d'avoir la plupart de leurs pointes sur les mots par équivoque, et sous une double signification; ce qui n'est fait que pour une matière de raillerie, la plupart de l'ouvrage etant d'un style comique ou burlesque, à quoy cet Autheur se plaisait principalement. (qtd. in Cyrano, *Oeuvres Libertines* c)[7]

Sorel rightly points out the importance of wordplay in Cyrano's witty exercises: it is polysemy that fuels his metaphorical amplifications. Finding no direct English equivalent to this form, the English bookseller, perhaps in agreement with the translator, chose to advertise the book as "Satyrical Characters, and Handsome Descriptions in Letters," to suggest that Cyrano's prose essays had more affinities with the more middle-brow, domestic-grown genre of the characters, which were themselves very fluid. The latter genre had grown increasingly popular since Joseph Hall's and Sir Thomas Overbury's early collections; they became identified as a quintessentially English form, often used to refer to English city life.[8] Together with "descriptions in letters", the syntagm "satyrical characters" was perhaps thought more accurate to describe the contents of Cyrano's letters — short, digressive, and witty essays by way of epistles — even though it is partly misleading. But contrary to any title by such

household names such as Scudéry or Cureau de la Chambre, Cyrano's first book in English garb perhaps needed this form of mediation for an English reader unfamiliar yet with his name. The term “satyrical,” which technically only applies to some of the letters, tries to render in one catchy word the essence of Cyrano's vigorous and acerbic wit, but it imposes a twist on the text. The original table of contents had mentioned four categories of letters: first, generic “Letters,” which could qualify as the more descriptive essays (e.g. “On Shadows”), but also included a few satirical pieces such as “Against a Detractor”; second, “Satirical Letters”; third, “Other letters”; and finally, “Love Letters”. The English table of contents tidies up these loose categories, retaining only two, “Letters” (i.e. the “satyrical letters” of the title page) and “Amorous Letters.” There is no allusion to the latter on the title page, perhaps to avoid any misunderstanding: this Cyrano piece was by no means a work treating of gallantry, contrary to the French romances so popular in the period. It is pitched as belonging to another niche, that of the middle-brow vein of the witty, satirical character. Here the bookseller or the translator is acting as editor and critic, tidying up the French text, also making it more palatable to, and assimilable by, English readers by presenting it as *equivalent* to a popular genre that would have been more familiar to them. The English edition omits the second part of the French volume, Cyrano's comedy, perhaps because it would have required a different advertising strategy.

The dedicatory epistle, whose dedicatee is only named on the title page, is now placed between a preface from the translator “to the reader” and a new glossary. Cyrano's sonnet to Arpajon's daughter is omitted, either because the translator thought the book and its coarse, sexual humour unsuitable for a female readership, or because the dedication had no topicality in England. The addition of a preface and glossary foregrounds the presence of the translator as a creative agent, a phenomenon that can be interpreted as emblematic of the emergence of the new translator.

In the preface, Cyrano's translator, who remains unnamed, highlights his status as mediator, and, claiming to be writing in the name of translators in general, defends their role as go-betweens, and the status of translation, in an increasingly assertive manner. He starts by comparing the genre of the preface to theatre bills (a disclaimer, but perhaps also an ironic allusion to the busy title page of the volume): these bills, he argues, tend to hype the show they advertise in a fraudulent way — perhaps a self-reflexive comment (*Satyrical Characters* [A1r]). The letters are then presented as the "recreations of his youth," as they were for Cyrano himself, an echo of the *sprezzatura* topos, which aims at presenting the work not as the product of a mercenary activity, but a genteel pursuit.[9] This is a commonplace, as seen above, and the preface is perhaps more interesting for how the translator projects an image of his imagined reader. Comparing prefaces to theatre bills, the author describes how credulous readers or spectators, believing the promises of advertising, hope to improve with the help of books, in the hope that they will "*gaine wit by parting with their Coyne*", like those who "*go to the Theater with hopes to become great Politicians by seeing the Countermine of a Periwigd plot, or expect to learne Comportment from a Comœdians Demarche*" (sig. [A1r]). This seems to draw the portrait not of a confident, upper-class reader, but of a middle-brow, upwardly-mobile reader, eager to imitate models he reads about or sees on the stage. The rest of the preface consists of a defence of translation based on a general satire of modern authors, "those that spend their time in brewing of Books" (sig. [A2v]) — all seen as imitators and pilferers of past authors, all "translators" of others' riches: "*What are for the most part the Productions now adayes, but Translations, and the riches of our Ancestors? We speak through their mouths, and scarce have wee a good thought which we are not their debtors for: Everyone Pilfers* [...], *and there's nothing new*" (sigs [A1v]-[A2r]). The word "translation" takes up an extensive meaning here; it refers both to actual translation and to imitation and adaptation in general. This allows for a paradoxical rehabilitation of the often underrated

activity of the translator who, contrary to imitators and plagiarists, does not claim to be what he is not; and the translator fulfills a worthwhile (and difficult) function because he makes knowledge (and wit in the present case) "communicable" in another language.[10]

The author of the preface sees his task as a very serious one and emphasizes the difficulty of translating this particular book, "*almost as hard a Book, to translate well, as any in prose that is extant in that Language*" (sig. [A2v]) — which makes the present book seem like a rare achievement. He also reflects on the quest for equivalence that is necessary for Cyrano to be assimilated by an English reader. The niche chosen for the text, which was obvious in the generic reorientation operated by the title page and table of contents described above, is confirmed here; it is that of the satirist and even more specifically, that of "a French Cleveland": "*you'l confesse he may with some allowance passe for a French* Clevelaud [sic], *and indeed if our Author were not ignorant of this tongue I should think he endeavourd to imitate that great satyrist, for like* Pliny's *fish he carries teeth in his tongue*" (sig. [A2v]). The royalist poet Cleveland had gained fame during the Interregnum as an anti-parliamentary satirist, and he is the author of the often-reprinted *Character of a London-diurnall* (1647), among other broadsides published anonymously but attributed to him. This alignment of Cyrano, "Cavaleer of France," with an English Royalist satirist is a clear attempt at giving a political twist to a text that was intrinsically devoid of such resonance: Cyrano's essays consist of familiar, burlesque, or philosophical essays, with no direct topical orientation directly applicable to the divided 1650s English context.

The preface then ends on the translator's tongue-in-cheek claim that he has not understood everything: "*there are some Conceptions which I understand not*" (sig. [A2v]). Although he blames the obscurity of Cyrano's wit, this sounds very much like a disclaimer for the most heterodox aspects of Cyrano's essays in case they should cause trouble, which might also explain the translator's mask of anonymity. Then comes a French-English glossary,

which provides the glosses on Cyrano's puns and conceits. Highlighting once more the translator's mediation, the glossary could reflect a pedagogical concern, but it is also a gesture of humility, as the translator seems to allow readers to enter his workshop. It makes visible the translator's work as craft: given that this is not a parallel-text edition, the glossary was not strictly speaking necessary for the English reader to enjoy the essays; but inserted at the beginning of the work rather than as an appendix, it allows the reader to catch a glimpse of the complex work involved in translating as a form of mediation. By the same token, the translator tells us something of the peculiarity of Cyrano's witty conceits, on which Sorel also comments in 1664. In spite of his mask of anonymity, this translator is, therefore, not content with remaining a transparent, self-effacing mediator: on the contrary, he presents himself both as a critic and a craftsman carefully weighing his verbal material.

* * *

The publisher of Cyrano's *<Selenarchia>, or The Governement of the World in the Moon: A Comical History,* Humphrey Robinson, is perhaps a less prominent literary bookseller than Herringman. However, he is known for publishing Milton's "Comus" in 1637, and, later, in collaboration with Moseley, the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio (1647) and most of Shirley's plays (Plomer 155-56). He published few French texts: some tracts by du Moulin, such as *The Anatomy of the Masse* (1641), a new edition of Cotgrave's *Dictionary* (1650), and more to the point perhaps, another translation by Thomas Sydserf, that of the *Entretiens du Cours ou Conversations académiques* by Melchior Marmet, seigneur de Valcroissant, under the title *Entertainments of the Cours* (1658). The original French edition was published in 1652 by the bookseller who also published Cyrano, Charles de Sercy. *Entertainments of the Cours* consists of a series of witty conversations set among courtiers, and is illustrated with a

frontispiece emphasizing an elite form of sociability, the fashionable ride in the park. This book, which was published only one year before the English version of Cyrano's moon voyage, shows that the association between the translator and the bookseller was successful enough for a new French contemporary bestseller to appear in English: Marmet's text must have sold well, or Robinson would not have followed suit.

Sydserf (or St Serf) was the son of Thomas Sydserf, a Scottish minister who was Bishop of Galloway before the Civil War, and lost his office because of royalist sympathies. Sydserf the elder went into exile on the continent, where his son, the translator, spent his youth (Cottegnies, "Appendix" 214-15). Thomas Sydserf, the younger, seems then to have become involved in spying activities for the Royalists during the Interregnum. He fought in Europe in the 1640s and 1650s as a soldier in the Scottish regiments, notably fighting under the Marquess of Montrose, before going back to England where he translated these two French works and one from the Italian (Brusoni). He is mostly known as the editor of *Mercurius Caledonius* (1660), and as an actor and owner of a private theatre in Edinburgh. He is also the author of *Tarugo's wiles: or, The coffee-house* (published by none other than Herringman in 1668), a comedy adapted from the Spanish of Moreto, which was performed in London in 1667 to great acclaim, according to Pepys (463). He can be described, therefore, as a versatile entrepreneur. Both his translations from the French emphasize Scottish military connections, and are presented in the preliminary material as an homage to the Scots and to the Franco-Scottish alliance; and both constitute patronage bids for Sydserf. His Marmet translation is dedicated to the famous Scottish royalist leader, the Marquess of Montrose — an ambitious dedicatee, perhaps justified by the courtly dimension of the work. Cyrano's moon voyage was dedicated to George, Lord Douglas, first Earl of Dumbarton, and Lieutenant General Andrew Rutherford, first Earl of Teviot, two high-ranking Scottish officers "in those two Renowned Regiments of Scots, in the service of the most Christian

King of France" who fought in France and in the Low Countries (<*Selenarchia*> A4). It can be derived from the epistle that the dedicatees were not known to Sydserf, who justifies his patronage bid by Cyrano's close ties with the military, "who was not only of your profession, but also of your Army" (sigs A7-A7v), reminding us that Scottish regiments fought with France in the 1640s and 1650s in the Thirty Years' War, but also that Cyrano had been a Cadet in the *Regiment des Gardes françaises*.[11]

The dedicatory epistle gives Cyrano's moon voyage a prestigious Scottish patronage, and associates his work with a royalist, military background. The title page had already advertised the identity of Cyrano as a wit and as a royalist soldier, "by that Famous wit and Cavaleer of France." A *cavalier* in French is a horseman, a higher-ranked soldier than a footman, but in the politicized context of the 1650s the semantic equivocation caused by the English connotations of the word enrolls Cyrano, a former French Cadet, as a loyal supporter of the English royalist cause, like the Scottish officers for whose patronage Sydserf was bidding with this epistle. Incidentally, Cyrano was present at the Siege of Arras in 1640, when the Regiment of Scots was assisting Prince Rupert against the Spaniards, but he probably never met the dedicatees, and probably never concerned himself with the political situation in the British Isles. The romance is advertised as being by "that *Famous* Wit," a ploy to coax the reader into buying a must-read.

It is not the name of the author that strikes the reader first, however: while the French title *Histoire comique par Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac, Contenant les Estats & Empires de la Lune* emphasizes primarily the genre of "Histoire Comique," the English title page introduces an inflection by highlighting the genre of the moon voyage, only secondarily described as "a comical history" a fictional subgenre that had gained currency in England with Francis Godwin's popular *The Man in the Moone.* Clearly, Cyrano's book is advertised here as following suit, perhaps even as a sequel; and it appeared in the same year as another

translation from the French on a similar topic, Peter Borel's *A new treatise, proving a multiplicity of worlds* (originally 1648).[12] The added Greek title <*Selenarchia*>, literally "moon commonwealth," is a free translation of the French "Estats et Empire de la lune." It is printed in Greek and followed by its transliteration in English: "or, the Government of the World in the Moon." As most readers would not have been able to read the Greek, the title offers itself as an immediate riddle, which, once cracked, immediately suggests a generic kinship with Thomas More's *Utopia*. It also gives the romance a burlesque, mock-serious touch, emphasizing the connection of the text with the serioludic, Lucianic tradition. The name of the translator appears in large type (larger than for the author's name), with an emphasis on his quality, again signalling the packaging of French literature as genteel.

However, it is the addition of an engraved frontispiece facing the title page in the English edition that points most obviously to a connection with Godwin's *Man in the Moone* — the French edition was not illustrated: for the print is clearly a visual counterpart for the illustration that was used as the frontispiece of the 1657 reprint of Godwin's text. Both illustrations focus on the means of transportation used by the protagonists to ascend to the moon: Gonsales, Godwin's protagonist, is lifted up by a flock of geese, while Cyrano uses vials full of dew which, as the dew evaporates with the heat of the sun, is supposed to create an ascending movement. But the illustration is clearly satirical, perhaps to illustrate the burlesque nature of the voyage: the hero's body language is awkward and fails to translate the aerial nature of the ascending movement. Moreover, the contrast between the extravagant clothes of the hero, dressed as a courtly fop, with bouffant trousers and large ribbons on his shoes, and his helmet decorated with ornamental feathers, are more reminiscent of ballet costumes than actual clothes worn by the French aristocracy — except perhaps for the eccentric brother to King Louis XIV*, Monsieur*, and his clique, known for their extravagant fashion. In fact, the costume of Cyrano's protagonist is reminiscent of the extravagant theme-

related costumes worn, for instance, by the French dancer Beauchamp for court ballets, for which we have sketches.[13] The representation of Cyrano with his vials seems some of these illustrations and suggests the satirical representation of an extravagant French courtier, dressed for show, and heavily rising from the ground, as a witty visual interpretation of the burlesque dimension of the "comic history."

* * *

Like the French romances Eardley studied, Cyrano's works in translation, a volume of letters and a comic romance, masquerade as elite literature, although it seems clear that the targeted reading public was more mixed. The bookseller and translator were confronted with a twofold problem: they had to deal with two genres that did not easily translate into English, and they had to address a mixed readership. As seen above, their strategy was to sell Cyrano de Bergerac as "that famous French Wit and Cavaleer of *France.*" In both cases Cyrano's works were carefully packaged, advertised, and adapted for the English reader, thanks to paratexts that constitute careful and elaborate operations of mediation, although this adaptation left the content of the texts largely untouched: the mixed letters were translated as "Satyrical Characters, and Handsome Descriptions in Letters," with the paratext targeting the middle-brow readers of the contemporary character books and prose satire. <*Selenarchia*> was presented as a sequel to Godwin's *Man in the Moone,* which had just been reprinted in 1657, with an added emphasis on the "comic" dimension of the text reflected in the addition of a printed illustration. The addition of the pseudo-serious Greek title points to a distant derivation from More's *Utopia*. These two domestic references made the text directly assimilable in English. The remainder of this "transformission" is Cyrano's heterodoxy, which is downplayed, as the reader's attention is diverted by the emphasis on the comic and satirical dimensions of the text. It is difficult to assess whether these two translations were "successful"

— *Satyrical Characters* was not reprinted until 1674 and <*Selenarchia*> never was. Sydserf's translation was superseded by another translation, Archibald Lovell's, published thirty years later, in 1687, with Cyrano's sun voyage, which had originally been published in French in 1662; we can infer from the gap that Cyrano was not a high demand in England by then. We can be sure, however, that the 1659 <*Selenarchia*> did not go unnoticed by at least two astute readers. Margaret Cavendish mentions "the French man's *World in the Moon*" in her preface to *A Discovery of a New World, called the Blazing World* (sig. [b*2r]), published in 1666, although to deny Cyrano's influence on her own voyage. In spite of this curious denial, she obviously knew enough of the text to include specific references to his moon voyage in her narrative.[14] Finally, in *Iter Lunare* (1703), David Russen of Hythe mentions "that little Tractate, entituled *Selenarchia*, or, the *Governement of the World the Moon*, written originally in *French*, by that famous Wit Monsieur *Cyrano Bergerac*" (1), which he did read in "Thomas St. Sere's translation" [sic] (2). Russen starts his own narrative with a rehabilitation of Cyrano's philosophical fable, which he thinks was underrated and even undermined in the fraudulent description offered in the paratext of the 1659 edition. Cyrano's book, he argues, deserves to be called "the *most Rational History of the Government of the Moon*" (4) rather than a "*Comical History.*" Although, according to Russen, it may be, to a certain extent, "ranked with Sir *Thomas Moor's Utopia,* Don *Quixot's Romantick Whymseys,* or *Poor Robin's Description of Lubbardland*," yet "it is throughout carried on with that strength of Argument, force of Reason, and solidity of Judgment in the Demonstration of things probable, that it may not be unbecoming the Gravity of *Cato*, the Seriousness of *Seneca*, or the Strictness of the most rigid Peripatetick or Cartesian" (3-4).[15] It is clear, therefore, that some readers did not take the advertisement of the 1659 edition at face value, and saw beyond the topical fashioning of Cyrano as "that famous Wit and Cavaleer of *France.*"

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[1] For Cyrano de Bergerac's reputation and a recent reappraisal of the complex issue of censorhip, see Alcover, "Le *Cyrano de Bergerac* de Jacques Prévot" and "Sur les *Lettres diverses*."

[2] *Cleopatra*, for instance, was translated by a team of translators from various walks of life, including John Coles, an impecunious school-master; and John Davies, the son of a Welsh yeoman. Scudéry's *Ibrahim* was translated by Henry Cogan, a commercial translator; and *Artamène* by Francis Gifford, a Cambridge student at the time; while *Clelia* was translated by John Davies, George Havers, and others (Eardley 134-35; Braden et al. 343).

[3] For Moseley's aggressive marketing strategies to create a loyal reader, see Eardley 139-42.

[4] A close comparative study of the texts and their translations themselves is beyond the scope of this essay; however, a cursory comparison reveals a sense of the competence of the two translators and a fairly close translation.

[5] An example is found in *Satyrical Characters* [sig. M8v].

[6] He published d'Urfé's *Astrea* (1657, 1658) and Vaumorière's *The Grand Scipio* (1660) in collaboration with Moseley.

[7] As for the *Letters* [...], they can be considered as being of a particular style of which they are the unique example, in that most of their conceits are based on single words treated equivocally, and according to a twofold meaning; which is done only for wit's sake, most of the book being in a comic or burlesque style, in which this author mostly liked to write. (My translation.)

[8] As, for instance, found in John Earle and Donald Lupton. On the development of the genre, see Murphy and Smeed.

[9] *Satyrical Characters* [A2v]. The translator describes himself as young, a trait he shares with Francis Gifford, who translated French romances for Moseley. In the early 1650s Gifford was still a student at Cambridge and later became Chaplain to Rochester's wife. He translated, among others, Scudéry's *Artamenes* (1653). In that volume, however, the dedication and epistle to the reader are signed by Moseley, not the translator. See Eardley 135.

[10] i.e. intelligible (OED: "That may be conveyed; of which an account or a description can be given").

[11] On the *Regiment de Douglas*, see Glozier 123.

[12] Borel's text was itself meant as an answer to Wilkins's *A Discovery of the world in the moon* (1638), a popularization of Copernican astrology (Cressy).

[13] For Beauchamp as "La Chirurgie" from the final entry of *Le Nozze di Peleo et di Theti* (1654), see the original sketch at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, MS 1005, Plate 60 (Powell 170). For more on ballet costumes, see Maillard.

[14] For connections between Cavendish and Cyrano, see Cottegnies, "Brilliant Heterodoxy." Cyrano is mentioned in a number of works after 1687, but it is not possible to know which translation was used. See, for instance, Gildon 202 and Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*.

[15] More's *Utopia* is curiously singled out here for its imaginative part rather than the philosophical dimension of the text.