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Essay on the Principles of Translations
by
Alexander Fraser Tytler

INTRODUCTION

1. Edinburgh in the Late Eighteenth Century

Edinburgh during the years of George III was a place of dynamic complexity, a city that underwent dramatic changes in both its physical structure and its cultural and intellectual spirit while retaining its traditions and its pride as the capitol of a nation whose contributions to the literary, scientific, and philosophical life of the times were unrivaled by any other country of its size. Although the Act of Union a half-century earlier had imposed some features of English rule, Scotland had maintained its sense of independence; the material connections represented by the railroad lines were not yet made and the journey from London to Edinburgh by the "fast" coach exacted a punishing sixty hours of jouncing. At the beginning of George's reign, Edinburgh was still largely enclosed by the medieval confines of Old Town, with houses of a dozen or more storeys providing a distinctive Celtic mixture of classes in the same building - shopkeepers and tradesmen on the bottom floors, professionals on the next, and the gentry on the top, paying on the social contract for their height and light with tedious climbs up winding, narrow staircases. By the mid-1800s, however, the extension northwards into New Town over the drained Nor'Loch had altered the focus and hence the character of the city. Tortuously narrow passages (one named Horse Wynd because it was the only one safely negotiable by horses) gave way to broad avenues with right-angled corners, sedan chairs to four-wheeled carriages (whose number more than tripled, to 1268, between 1763 and 1783). The center of New Town was the reticulation of streets whose names exemplify the only slightly restrained independence of the Scots, with Charlotte Square balanced by St. Andrews, George Street by Queens and Princes, Rose Street by Thistle.

The intellectual geography of eighteenth-century Edinburgh, which throughout overlapped with that of Glasgow and Aberdeen, was similarly expansive. Directly and indirectly, the University community dominated, with students and professors whose pragmatic achievements matched their scholarly interests. This practical orientation was

9f long standing among Scots, who for centuries had been going to Utrecht and Leiden to study Roman law and Dutch drainage, and it is likely not accidental that the inventive Benjamin Franklin was the only American member of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh and its successor, the Royal Society. Edinburgh men of science and medicine include William Cullen (compiler of the first modern *materia medica*), Alexander Monro (father and son, the latter the discoverer of the foramen of Monro), and Joseph Black (whose chemical research led to the rejection of the philogiston theory and whose experiments with hydrogen-filled balloons in the 1760s inspired the Montgolfier brothers' ascent almost twenty years later). In law, religion, and philosophy, representative figures include Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, David Hume, Henry Home (Lord Kames), and Dugald Stewart – men whose common sense philosophy and innovative logic exemplify the best thought of the period. For letters, a typical list would include Allan Ramsay, William Robertson, James Thompson, Tobias Smollett, Henry Mackenzie, Robert Burns, Francis Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, Walter Scott, and Hugh Blair (who in 1762 was appointed to the Professorship of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres at the University of Edinburgh, the first chair of English literature in the world). The monuments of these scholars are both individual productions, inventions, and discoveries, and collective efforts like the original *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1771), the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* (1787-), *The Mirror* (1779-80), *The Lounger* (1785-86), and the *Edinburgh Review* (1802-1929).

While some notable Scots like James Boswell moved outside the country, many more lived, worked, and died within the spiritual compass of their cities. In Edinburgh, William Creech published their books in medicine, science, philosophy, history, law, and literature, and the Greyfriars Churchyard provided their final accommodations upon death. Although the beliefs of these men, and of the others in this extraordinary society of Georgian Edinburgh, were often incompatible (and it was as well the city of Thomas Bowlder and of Burke and Hare), the free mixing of individuals and lively interchange of ideas contrasted greatly with the more acrimonious and restrictive characters of London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Alexander Fraser Tytler, by both birth and inclination, was an integral member of this society.

2. Bio-bibliography of Alexander Fraser Tytler (1747-1813) and His Family

The first of eight children, Alexander Fraser Tytler was born at 2 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon, the fourth of October, 1747. Three of his siblings died young and only two others lived past middle age. According to the reports of her friends, relatives, and children, his mother, Anne Craig Tytler, was a woman of great charm, wit, and intelligence. Alexander called her "the best of women, the most affectionate of mothers" (quoted from P. Tytler 1845:f.61 a). His father, William Tytler, was born in 1711 and died in 1792, one month before his eighty-first birthday, after a rich life whose fullness he attributed to "short but cheerful meals, music, and a good conscience". William was educated at the High School and University in Edinburgh, studying classical languages and law, and in 1742 became a member of the Society of Writers to His Majesty's Signet, the highest order of advocates. His legal activities were adequate to allow him to maintain the family estate at Woodhouselee, then some six miles from the Old City, but apparently not so strenuous as to occupy all his time. His leisure was spent in a considerable variety of intellectual pursuits - historical, literary, and musical. Along with the larger part of the Edinburgh literary community, he was a frequenter of Allan Ramsay's bookshop (which, in 1725, had become the first circulating library in the British Isles), and an original member of the Select and Philosophical Societies and their successor, the Royal Society. His close friends over the years included John Gay, John Gregory (whose collected works in 1788 were prefaced by a biography written by Alexander Tytler), George Campbell, Thomas Reid, James Beattie, Lord Kames, and Lord Monboddo, an eccentric but able jurist who is unfortunately remembered chiefly as the butt of Dr. Johnson's ridicule.

According to his biographer, William Tytler was a man of decided opinions, which were expressed

> with a warmth equal to that with which he felt them. He took strong common-sense views of objects, not from want of acuteness to perceive less palpable relations, but from that warm and ardent cast of mind to which such views are more congenial than the subtleties of abstract or metaphysical disquisition.
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> Nor was it in opinion or argument only that this warmth and ardour of mind were conspicuous. They prompted him equally in action and conduct. His affection to his family, his attachment to his friends and companions, his compassion for the unfortunate, were alike warm and

> active...He wrote not from vanity…he wrote to open his mind upon paper; to speak to the public those opinions which he had often spoken in private; opinions on the truth of which he had firmly made up his own conviction. (Mackenzie 1796:20-21)

His intellectual interests are represented by three major productions. *An Historical and Critical Enquiry into the Evidence Produced by the Earls of Murray and Morton against Mary, Queen of Scots* appeared in 1760 and enjoyed four editions (the last, considerably enlarged and revised, published in 1790, when he was 79). Although Hume and Robertson disliked it (because Tytler disagreed with their own accounts), the *Enquiry* was widely and generally favorably reviewed by critics like Samuel Johnson, Tobias Smollett, and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. The third edition was translated into French in 1772 and re-edited in 1860 by Prince Lobanov-Rostovsky, who was to be the Russian foreign minister during the Sino-Japanese War. Tytler's literary efforts, too, had a Scottish focus. Besides essays on Allan Ramsay's "Vision" and occasional pieces like number 16 of *The Lounger*, he edited *The Poetical Remains of James the First* (1783) in which he included the "King is Quair" and (erroneously) the comic burlesque "Christ's Kirk on the Green". Appended to the *Remains* was an "Essay on Scottish Music" (first published in Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*, 1779) in which he praises the "new kind of music, plantive and melancholy", introduced, he says, by James to Scotland (Mackenzie 1796).

William Tytler's contributions in literature and history displayed a respectable but modest talent. In music, however, he was both a skilled performer on the harpsichord and the transverse flute, and a musicologist of considerable importance. He was an original member of the Musical Society of Edinburgh and its director during most of the sixty years he belonged. From present perspectives, his chief contribution - interestingly not mentioned by his contemporary biographers - was to encourage Anna Gordon Brown (better known to folklorists as Mrs. Brown of Falkland) to record part of her repertoire of traditional Anglo-Scottish ballads. Her songs, including "Lampkin", "Child Waters", and "Thomas Rhymer", constitute the oldest extant corpus of so-called Border ballads and a uniquely rich example of the traditional mode of composition and transmission. Two manuscripts containing respectively twenty song texts and fifteen songs with musical notation, owe their existence to William Tytler's request, as Mrs. Brown explains in a letter written to Alexander Fraser Tytler:

> This MS. of which Mr. Jamieson is now in possession was originally made out with the intention of being sent to your father but upon his additional request of having the tunes of the Ballads noted down my father ordered Bob Scott, then a very young boy & a mere novice in musick to try to do it & he & I set to work but found the business so crabbed that in order to abridge our labours a little we selected what we thought the best of the Ballads whose tunes being added in the best manner we could were sent to your father - the longer MS. which I thought had been destroyed It seems Bob Scott laid up & has since given to Mr. Jamieson. (Fowler 1968:295 and Buchan 1972:69-70)

The third manuscript, containing nine ballads, was written for Alexander in order that he might lend both it and his father's to Walter Scott for the latter's *Border Minstrelsy*. Alexander knew and admired the old music of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and made a sensitive and favorable judgment upon its structure when discussing stanzaic measure in his commentary on Phineas Fletcher's *Piscatory Eclogues* (1771:138).

The interest of both Tytlers in Mrs. Brown's balladry illustrates a powerful cultural and linguistic dilemma affecting all educated eighteenth-century Scots: the contradictory pulls of the prestigious but distant southern English and of the native Scots, a dialect that had gone its own rich way for centuries. The Earl of Seafield's pensive epitaph to the Act of Union, "Noo there's ane end of ane auld sang", articulated a fear that the Scots people would lose their distinctive sense of linguistic and literary identity. Although the Scots language was standard in conversation, even learned discourse, through the eighteenth century, most literate Scotsmen were uneasy about their ignorance of "proper" English. The jurist Lord Pitfour complained that English lawyers in Lincoln's Inns could not understand a word of a story he told: "I can utter no sound like an Englishman except sneezing"(Young 1965:114). Against this sense of insecurity, national pride rebelled in an attempt to prevent the degeneration of an ancient literary language into a limited vernacular dialect of a language centered on London. The alien presence was pervasive in written language and it somewhat fettered the style of Scottish men of letters, however successfully they might have resisted it in their speech. But, although we see little direct influence of Scots in the language of general, as opposed to national, literature, the spoken Scots dialect was a persistent, powerful, and generally successful psychic ally for people like the Tytlers.

This brief characterization of William Tytler and his society is made, not out of mere antiquarian interest, but because these details illuminate the world Alexander Fraser Tytler lived in and are guides to understanding his literary and critical taste. Alexander both loved and admired his father: "His mind was cultivated by an acquaintance with almost every branch of science, of literature, and of taste. His writings will long bear witness to the acuteness of his talents" (quoted from P. Tytler 1845:f.62a). Their association - familial, professional, and intellectual - was unusually close and long, so much so that the adult Alexander had to be styled "Mr. Fraser- Tytler" to distinguish him from his father.

Alexander first attended the High School at Edinburgh where he was dux of the rector's class. In 1763 he entered the Academy at Kensington, whose headmaster, James Elphinston, was author of several books on English grammar and pronunciation. Returning to Edinburgh in 1765, he entered the University to read law and in 1770 was called to the Scottish bar. He was an active legal scholar, publishing *Considerations on the Game Law* (1772), a supplementary volume to Lord Kames' *Dictionary of Decisions of the Court of Sessions* (1778), a "Life of Lord President [Robert] Dundas [of the Court of Session]" (1798), *Ireland Profiting by Example; or, the Question Considered Whether Scotland has Gained or Lost by the Union* (1799), and an *Essay on the Military Law and the Practice of Courts Martial* (1800). Although he was not a profound lawyer, his legal career was successful: he became Judge-Advocate of Scotland in 1790, a Lord of the Court of Session in 1802 (taking the title Lord Woodhouselee), and a Lord of the Justiciary in 1811. Although he seems to have been an able and respected jurist, much of his intellectual energy was expended elsewhere.

In 1776, he was married to Anne, the eldest daughter of William Fraser of Balnain, Inverness, a union that he had long desired and which only grew richer throughout his life. They had eight children, of whom two died young. James (born 1780) later became Professor of Conveyencing at Edinburgh; Anne (b. 1782) was the author of *Lelia on the Island, Lelia in England*, and *Lelia at Home,* all very popular in Britain and America; Alexander (b. 1787) rose to eminence in India and was well known for his *Considerations of the Present Political State of India* (1815); and Patrick (b. 1791) became the most famous historian of his time (second only to Macauley), author of several books on Scottish history, the discovery and exploration of America, and biographies of the Admirable Crichton, JohnWickliff, Henry the Eighth, Sir Walter Raleigh, and many fellow Scots. By all reports, the Tytler home-life was a very close and enriching one:

> His evenings were always passed in the midst of his family, either in joining them in the little family concerts with which, like his father, he always wished to close the day, or in reading aloud to them some of those works by which he thought their tastes or their minds might be improved. (Alison 1817:548)

In their letters, his children refer to him with an obvious and genuine affection, and in sum his relations with all members of his family seem to have been mutually very satisfying.

Like his father, Fraser-Tytler had a keen interest in history and archeology, which in 1780 brought him a joint appointment with John Pringle to a professorship of Universal History at Edinburgh, and in 1786 to a full professorship of Civil History and of Greek and Roman Antiquities. In 1783 he published his *Plan and Outline of* a *Course of Lectures on Universal History, Ancient and Modern,* which was expanded over the years, finally appearing in1801 as *Elements of General History, Ancient and Modern.* Although not highly original, the *Elements* was extremely successful on both sides of the Atlantic; five editions appeared during his lifetime and the book, with additions covering more current events, was in print for the next three-quarters of a century. The book "has the merit of dealing concisely and on the whole accurately with a vast subject. At any rate, it was highly successful and continued to be reedited by a succession of hands until 1875, an exceptionally long life for a book of this kind" (Besterman 1938:9). His lesser writings in archeology, history, and biography include several unpublished essays and notes (mostly now in the Laing Collection at the University of Edinburgh), "Dissertation on the Character, Manners, and Genius of the Ancient Scandinavian Nations" (1785), a "History of the Royal Society of Edinburgh" (1787), "Life of Dr John Gregory" (1788), "A critical examination of Mr Whitaker's *Course of Hannibal over the Alps"* (1798), "An Account of Some Extraordinary Structures on the Tops of Hills in the Highlands, with Remarks on the Progress of the Arts among the Ancient Inhabitants of Scotland" (1798), "A Dissertation on Final Causes" (1798), "Remarks on a Mixed Species of Evidence in the Matters of History" (1805), and *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home, Lord Kames* (1807).

3. Tytler's Literary Works and Critical Principles

In his literary studies, Tytler was equally prolific. He admittedly had little to offer in the way of original composition - his contributions to *The Mirror* and *The Lounger* are generally period pieces of simplistic and tiresome moralizing, or strained attempts at humor, sadly lacking in real wit. His critical writings, however, are of considerably more interest, both in their own right and in the way they reveal the literary taste and perception that are most fully expounded, although somewhat indirectly, in the *Essay on the Principles of Translation.*

Tytler's critical predilections were directly shaped by his character. Personally, Tytler was uniformly judged, even by critics of his scholarly achievements, to be an amiable, cheerful, and extremely generous man, an affectionate but firm father, a very agreeable host, and a careful scholar. Two-thirds of the way through his life, Tytler wrote on his birthday in 1795:

> I have this day completed my forty-eighth year, and the best 'part of my life is gone. When I look back on what is past, I am humbly grateful for the singular blessings I have enjoyed. All indeed that can render life of value, has been mine. Health, and peace of mind; - easy, and even affluent circumstances; - domestic happiness; - kind and affectionate relations; - sincere and cordial friends; - a good name; - and, I trust in God, a good conscience. What therefore on earth have I more to desire? Nothing; but if He that gave, so please, and if it be not presumption in me to pray, - a continuance of those blessings. (Alison 1817:549)

His biographer, the Reverend Archibald Alison, was predictably praising of this man, whom, along with his parents and his already illustrious children, he had known for many years. Yet, however benignly flattering Alison's description of Tytler's literary achievements, his characterization of Tytler's personality seems to reflect the common view.

> The conversation which he loved, was of that easy and unpremeditated kind in which all could partake, and all enjoy. To metaphysical discussion, or political argument, he had an invincible dislike; but he gladly entered into all subjects of literature or criticism, - into discussions on the line arts, or historical antiquities, or the literary intelligence of the day; and when subjects of wit or humor were introduced, the hearty sincerity of his laugh, the readiness of his anecdote, and the playfullness of his fancy, shewed to what degree he possessed the talents of society…The humour of most men is unhappily mingled with qualities which add little to the amiableness, and still less to the respectability of character. From the gayest conversation of Mr Tytler, on the contrary, it was impossible to rise, without a higher sense of the purity of his taste, and the benevolence of his nature. (1817:547)

The intellectual qualities that Alison singles out for special comment are perhaps predictable given Tytler's genteel turn of mind and gentle affection for friends and family and especially for literature and other humanistic arts. His studies, Alison says, were not in abstract or metaphysical speculations where "the understanding only is exercised, and where the progress of discovery is so little proportioned to the time or labour that is employed"; rather

> they related to the deeds and language of men, where it was not the understanding alone that was employed, but where the imagination and the heart were perpetually exercised; and he could rise from them to the common business or offices of life, with a mind undistracted by doubt, and unfatigued by abstraction. (1817:546)

Even the prickly Lord Cockburn, although he, rightly, commented about Tytler that "there is no kindness in insinuating that he was a man of genius", praised his *General History* as "elegant and judicious" and Tytler himself as "unquestionably a person of correct taste, a cultivated mind and literary habits, and very amiable, which excellently graced, and were graced by, the mountain retreat whose name he transferred to the bench" (1856 [1910]: 265-66). It should not be assumed, however, that Tytler's gentility and kindness of spirit signalled an uncritical mind. He showed from his earliest literary writings a sensitive and discriminating taste, a natural discernment for excellence, and a disposition towards art and literature of enduring qualities. Among his judgments there are few surprises; indeed, the most impressive aspect of his literary criticism is the degree to which we find we must agree with his comments. While some of his values were shaped by an aesthetic not shared by modern readers - his early affection for the pastoral, for example - the majority of his critical commentary will find support among today's critics, just as it did among his own contemporaries. It is in some odd sense unfortunate that Tytler was such a natural critic, for it has resulted in his work being unjustly neglected of late. He was above all a critic of uncommon common sense; not the finest mind of his time, but an exemplary one.

His earliest serious literary effort to see print was his edition of Phineas Fletcher's *Piscatory Eclogues* (1771). The introduction begins with a topic Tytler was to return to in his remarks on Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd* (1800:cxxi ft.), a refutation of Addison's dismissal of all examples of the pastoral genre not compatible with Addison's own unrealistic (in Tytler's view) and sentimentalized persuasion. Addison wished to see reflected in the pastoral literature a state of perfect simplicity, innocence, and ease. Tytler allowed that a life with a "tint of simplicity and easy contentment" *was* pleasing, even laudable, but not "a manner of life, which neither did, nor could possibly exist" (1771:ii). While Virgil's refined eclogues are admirable and believable (since those gentler times were fertile with exalted sentiments), many of Spenser's pastorals present situations which are "so intolerably rude...that they only excite ridicule; some there are extremely beautiful, but they are those only where he has kept nature in view, and forbore an over affectation of simplicity" (1771:ii). Tytler's standards of literary judgment in the *Piscatory Eclogues* are the same he made more explicit later:

> we must always judge according to our own feelings; and instead of sympathising with the unhappy shepherd who laments such piteous calamities [as pricking his foot on a thorn or breaking his crook], we must undoubtedly laugh at him. . . . The complaints of Virgil's Melibaeus will affect every reader, because they are real, and come home to every man's concerns. (1771 :iv)

Here we see Tytler adducing the self-evident principles that governed his taste, the direct appeal to the natural judgments of sensitive and informed readers. In his notes he demonstrates by knowledgeable reference to works in Greek, Latin, Spanish, and Italian, that he has a wide range of reading, which is especially surprising considering his age and his scholarly preoccupations during this stage of his life with the study of law. A partial list of his citations includes Virgil, Theocritus, Ovid, Lucretius, Milton, David Lindsay, Walton, William Thompson, Guarini, Musaeus, Tasso, Gay, Aristo, and John Harrington. Throughout the book, both in his introductory essay and in the notes accompanying the poems, he displays a kind of sensitive and judicious selection that will characterize his literary taste through his life, most importantly in the *Essay on the Principles of Translation.*

For more than a decade after the publication of the comments on the *Eclogues,* Tytler seems to have been little concerned with literary matters. In 1784 he produced his *Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch, to Which are Added Seven of* His *Sonnets Translated from the Italian.* In this modest volume, the influence of his legal and historical work looms large; the essay is to a great extent an historical document dealing with matters like whether Laura was married or not. The character of this essay persists' even through the extensive revision published in 1810 and again, slightly changed, in 1812, which remains far more historical than critical. This should not be surprising, however, for it was during these years that he produced the bulk of his historical writings and his legal career grew into its full, mature form. That he still read literature we understand from his letters and can infer from the large output of literary material beginning in 1791 with the first edition of the *Essay on the Principles of Translation.* Whatever the specific focus of his literary preoccupations, he must have continued to read widely, for his subsequent work shows the results of study in Italian, Spanish, and German, and we may assume that he did not neglect to maintain his skill in French, Latin, and Greek. While he shows relatively little sign of indulging in secondary works of criticism, he must have concentrated a major part of his reading on the classics and the accepted works of the immediate past.

But Tytler's careful catholic taste extended to his contemporaries as well. Of particular importance was his early interest in writers from the Continent, notably Schiller, whose drama, Tytler was quick to see, was in form an exciting and innovative departure from both the classical theatre founded on Aristotelean principles and the extended French examples of the same tradition, and in attitude *a* signally different literature from that generally current in England. His translation *of* Schiller's *Die Rauber* was likely occasioned by Henry Mackenzie's "Account of the German Theatre", delivered to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1788 and published in the *Transactions* two years later. Mackenzie greatly praises *Die Rauber* (although he knew it only through French translations), lavishing a full quarter of his essay on the one play. Tytler's translation, published in 1792, saw four editions over the next ten years as the most successful of four competing English versions (Willoughby 1921 and Stokoe 1926:19-32). It was *one* of the many translations like those of Christiane Naubert's *Herman of Unna* (1794) and Earl Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries* (1796) whose gloomy suspense and misfortune were so crucially influential on the English Gothic romanciers. *The. Robbers* had *a* profound effect on Scott (who was an original member of the German Class founded, at Tytler's urging, to learn the language) and on Coleridge (who, immediately after reading the play, penned the exuberant sonnet "To the Author of the 'Robbers'"). The play is distinguished by what Tytler (1792:ix) labelled a "wildness of fancy" expressed in a language that is "bold and energetic, highly impassioned, and perfectly adapted to the expression of that sublimity of sentiment which it is intended to convey". Although "transgressing against the two chief unities of Time and Place", it is truly "sublime and beautiful", exhibiting "situations the most powerfully interesting that can be figured by the imagination" (1792:vii-viii). In his preface, Tytler deals successfully with the problem of "the principle of Fatalism" which in Greek tragedy is found "almost constantly in direct opposition to justice and morality".

> In the Tragedy of the Robbers, the principle of Fatalism is reconciled to the Justice of the Divinity, and therefore to the moral feelings of man; for the doom of misery is represented as the just consequence of criminality, and the chief punishment of the offender is the intolerable anguish of his own guilty mind. . . . [As a result] this piece, so far from being hostile in its nature to the cause of virtue, is one of the most truly moral compositions that ever flowed from the pen of genius. (1792: xiIi-xv)

In introducing his translation to the English-speaking world, Tytler correctly anticipated the enthusiastic reception with which this sensational but often profound German literature would be greeted in Britain, and it is not insignificant that he reached first for a piece of high literary merit.

With his "Remarks on the Genius and Writings of Allan Ramsay" (1800), Tytler reached back some seventy years into his own Scottish past to the outstanding figure of the vernacular revival before Burns. Ramsay's satyrical touch was light and sure and his poetical drama *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725) "depicts the humours of rustic life without its grossness. . . . Indeed, he did more than any other man to further the intellectual revival of which Edinburgh became the centre" (Sampson 1972:415). In a long and detailed examination of Ramsay's entire corpus, Tytler focuses on the qualities of Ramsay's mind and work that had impressed Tytler in others. The key word is *natural;* it constantly recurs throughout the one hundred pages of his essay, describing both Ramsay's subjects and his fundamental aesthetic principle. A holder of strong nationalistic sentiments, Ramsay promoted the Scottish cause in two ways: he transmitted the older literature in Scots directly by publishing in his *Ever Green* large portions of the famous Bannatyne manuscript (1568) which preserves much of what remains of late medieval Scots literature, and he revitalized and continued the Scots tradition by composing original poetry on ancient models. His characters speak a natural, if somewhat archaic, rural Scots, which Tytler praises for having "a kind of Doric simplicity...extremely suitable to such subjects. . . the language which belonged to them" (1800:Ixv-Ixvi). Similarly Ramsay is praised for his humor, which is founded on a "just picture of nature" (as contrasted with the wit of other writers like Butler, which "gives an apparent but fanciful resemblance to nature but [which] requires, for its very essence, a real contrariety" [1800:Ixxxiv]). Again, as years before in the preface to the *Piscatory Eclogues,* he reproaches Addison for his kind of pastoral which depicts "unnatural and fictitious beings" for which a "dull moralizing chorus is found necessary to explain what the characters themselves must have left untold, or unintelligible" (1800:cxxiv). In what is perhaps his most direct statement on the matter, Tytler addresses the question of literary theory. Because it so well illuminates the principles underlying his *Essay on Translation,* his final comments are worth quoting at length.

> [I]n the preceding observations, the admirers of theoretic and metaphysical criticism will find but little to gratify their prevailing propensity. In judging of the merits of poetry, and of its power to please the imagination, or to touch the passions, I cannot help thinking, that an appeal to the feelings of mankind is a more sure criterion of excellence or defect, than any process of reasoning, depending on an abstruse analysis of the powers of the mind, or a theory of the passions. We may admire the ingenuity displayed in the works of this nature, but we cannot make use of them to regulate our taste.

> In our judgment of poetry, as of all the works of genius, there is a natural and instantaneous feeling of excellence, and a disapprobation of defect or impropriety, which outruns all reasoning; and which directs with much more certainty than any conclusions of the understanding…If I feel no pleasure in the perusal of a poem, I cannot be persuaded, by any subtlety of philosophical argumentation, that I ought to have been pleased: if I do feel pleasure, that argument is unnecessary. In a word, that species of abstract reasoning may amuse, and even improve the understanding; and, as fitted to do so, it is a laudable and manly exercise of our faculties; but it cannot guide the taste. This quality of mind is a gift of nature. It may be cultivated and improved by exercise upon its object, but it cannot be created. We cannot acquire taste, as we do mathematics or logic, by studying it as a science. No process of reasoning can ever teach the nerves to thrill, the eyes to overflow, or the heart to sympathise. This sensibility is inbred in the mind: it is the *divinae particula aurae;* and as all true poetry addresses itself to that faculty of our nature, it must be the only sure criterion to judge of its excellence, or defects. (1800:cIv-cIvii)

4. Philosophical and Pyschological Foundations: Reid, Campbell, and Kames

Despite his stated distrust of "theoretic and metaphysical criticism", Tytler was in fact accurately reflecting the prevailing philosophical temper of his time and country, especially those elements of philosophical enquiry concerned with the mind and its operations, with knowing and understanding, with judgment and aesthetic appreciation. Three figures (among several very important ones) were preeminent in Tytler's intellectual world - Thomas Reid (1710-96), whose commonsense psychology and philosophy dominated the scholarly community of later eighteenth-century Scotland; George Campbell (1719-96), friend of Reid and Tytler, whose very popular *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) did so much to transmit the new philosophy and its attendant new logic to generations of students in Britain and America; and Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), founder of philosophical criticism, Tytler's legal mentor and superior for many years, and the subject of Tytler's extended study *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home, Lord Kames* (1807). While a thorough analysis of the interrelations of these, and other, figures is impossible here, some brief discussion is needed, for, however careful Tytler was to delineate the principles of translation, their essential critical underpinnings were never discussed overtly. If the *Essay on Translation* is to be accorded the serious place it deserves, it must be placed in its larger context whose dimensions subtly but firmly shaped Tytler's perceptions.

Tytler was himself no great philosopher - he would have been the first to disclaim that skill - but he was a sensitive and selective receptor for the aesthetic philosophy and psychology of his time and, through his writings, an effective conduit for their teachings. In fact, his solid good judgment often overcame some of the potential difficulties posed by the philosophers' overconcern with systematic detail. For Tytler, as his comments at the end of the Ramsay essay state clearly, one's immediate (though cultivated) response to literature was the key to its proper understanding. In holding to this most fundamental principle, Tytler was clearly in the mainstream of his intellectual community, and it is just this principle that allowed Tytler to appreciate both the sophisticated if somewhat over-refined and perhaps elitist views of Kames and Campbell, and the rustic but naturally honest views exemplified in the traditional balladry and the writings of Ramsay, Burns, and Scott. Few of his contemporaries were able to reconcile these two types of literature, let alone appreciate at the same time the unusual and rather disturbing innovations of a Schiller. Tytler was very much a linking figure, sensitive to the refinements of Dryden and Pope but also quick to see the values of literature coming out of very different traditions.

Tytler's critical response to literature was grounded in the Scottish philosophy of common sense, in essence founded by Thomas Reid. Reid, Campbell, James Gregory (1753-1821). Alexander Gerard (1728-95), and James Beattie (1735-1803) among others founded the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen in 1758, which became a fertile testing ground for Reid's philosophy and Campbell's rhetoric. In 1764 Reid published his *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Commonsense,* in which he attempted to counter what he saw as the erroneous and self-defeating skepticism of David Hume. Partially as a result of the fine reception accorded the *Inquiry* (even from Hume, who acknowledged the challenge that Reid's ideas posed for his own theories), Reid was appointed professor of moral philosophy, to succeed Adam Smith. In 1780 he resigned from this position to devote himself fulltime to scholarship, producing the *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785) and the *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human*

Mind (1788) (McCosh 1875). The first of these, concerned with problems of knowledge and understanding, is of interest here.

In his *Essay on the Intellectual Powers,* Reid attempted to construct a theory about the mind and its operations that was parallel to the physical scientific theories of Galileo and Newton. Unlike other eighteenth-century theoreticians of the mind, however, Reid avoided using hypotheses directly analoguous to those applicable to the physical world. Instead, he based his analysis on an introspection into the operations of the human mind. It was at this point that Reid most seriously clashed with Hume, for he felt that Hume's skepticism was unfounded, that certain fundamental principles were self-evident, needing examination but no deductive proof of the traditional, Aristotelean kind. Attempts to prove such self-evident first principles using the traditional syllogistic method were simply wrong headed, in Reid's analysis, because they assumed what they set out to prove; in short, they were tautologous. Instead, first principles must be handled in a way peculiar to themselves. "Their evidence is not demonstrative, but intuitive. They require not proof, but to be placed in a proper point of view" (1785:33). In this, Reid was reaffirming a point he had made a decade earlier in his "Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic" (1774) in which he denied that the syllogistic manner of reasoning was proper for such fundamental enquiry, however useful it may have been in ascertaining whether one aspect of reasoning were consistent with another aspect of the same enquiry.

> In reasoning by syllogism, from general principles we descend to a conclusion virtually contained in them. The process of induction is more arduous; being an ascent from particular premises to a general conclusion. The evidence of such general conclusions is not demonstrative, but probable: but when the induction is sufficiently copious and carried on according to the rules of art, it forces conviction no less than demonstration itself does. (1774:236-37: quoted from Howell 1971: 389)

It is in this context that the term *common sense* must be understood: correct judgments are not to be found by polling the population; rather, fundamental truths and judgments about the mind and its operations are apprehensible to direct, intuitive reflection.

Unlike Hume, Reid believed that there must be a basic and real distinction between the mental act of perception and the real world object which triggers it. Thus the objects of perception are actual things, not mere impressions in our mind. In Reid's view, Hume's classification of all such mental objects as *sensations* denies the basic and self-evident difference between these *perceptions* of reality where there is a clear division between the object and its perception, and sensations proper, such as the feeling of pain, where no such distinction can be drawn. Reid's other two kinds of mental artifacts are *memories* and *conceptions.* The first is a recollection of a perception, for which there is the same belief in a distinction between the mental act and its physical object, even though the object may not be present at the moment or indeed may not even exist any longer. A conception, on the other hand, is an acknowledged fiction of the mind - although it may be a possible fiction - for which a belief in the existence of the object is unnecessary. We can, for example, conceive of a centaur, even though we believe that no such object ever has or ever will exist in fact (Reid 1785, Grave 1960, Brody 1969, and Howell 1971). Reid's work profoundly influenced several generations of Scottish scholars, including his contemporaries Campbell, Kames, and Tytler, as well as thinkers of later centuries like C. S. Peirce, G. E. Moore, and J. L. Austin, who never had the advantage of conversing directly with him. For Tytler his importance was two-fold: first, he provided the basic support for his inclination towards common sense principles in philosophy and literary criticism that Tytler exhibited through all his life; second, he provided the foundation for Tytler's belief that there is a world capable of direct comprehension, whose reality can be perceived and whose literary reflections directly reveal, or should reveal, something of that truth.

George Campbell (1719-96), along with Kames, shared Reid's interest in grounding the understanding of literary arts in an understanding of human nature. In his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (published 1776, although large portions of it were completed years earlier), Campbell is very specific about his two most general aims: to delineate a theory of human nature and to explain a philosophical art of rhetoric in terms directly derived from that theory. His book is indeed a philosophy of rhetoric, not a handbook; while he discussed specific principles of rhetorical proof and persuasion, he did not attempt to further the technical repertoire of the rhetorician. Instead, he focused on fundamental matters like the nature of evidence, the difference among the types of induction and deduction, and the rise and distribution of mental artifacts from sensation. In these matters, Campbell is unfortunately a thorough Humean - phenomenalist, empiricist, sceptic. For whatever reason, Reid's persuasive powers were not sufficient to convert Campbell from Hume's belief that all the entities of the mind - sensations, memories, and acts of imagination - all ultimately derive from sensations. Like Hume denying the reality of perceptions, Campbell sees ideas of memory and ideas of imagination as derivative entirely of sensations, and acts of judgment as complex constructs involving both direct sensations and the indirect acts of memory and imagination. For Campbell there are two kinds of evidence, inductive and deductive. The inductive is the more interesting, for it depends on intellection, consciousness, and the common sense capacity to note and discriminate among the information provided by sensations and, secondarily, by the memory. Deductive knowledge, on the other hand, is somewhat more mechanical: scientific evidence, involving measurable qualities like number and extension, are simple mathematical truths, while moral evidence (that is, evidence about which real disagreements may occur) depends on aspects of experience, analogues derived from experience, the testimony of others, and the calculation of the likelihood of chances. In the end, however, all reasoning is strictly associative, based on inferred resemblances, contiguity, and causation, and therefore all reason is essentially mechanical, like other bodily functions like digestion and respiration. To escape the obvious deterministic trap that this mechanistic view implies, Campbell has recourse to the doctrine that feeling, not reason, ultimately governs human action. Feeling is chiefly motivated by judgments of vivacity in ideas, and it is here that rhetoric has its chief use, for rhetoric helps make a less vivacious concept into a more vivacious and hence more believable one (Bitzer 1963 and Howell 1971).

Despite a not inconsiderable amount of confusion in the psychological and philosophical foundation of his rhetoric, Campbell's practical judgments were sound and usually persuasive. In his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* and in his long introductory remarks to his translation of the Gospels (:789), in which he independently reaches many of the same conclusions about the process of translation that Tytler does in his *Essay*, Campbell's good sense usually wins out and his literary judgments will stand scrutiny. Like Hugh Blair (1718-1800), whose *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1785) were Campbell's chief rivals in popularity, Campbell admired and practiced the plain style, a pleasing consistency with his natural and commonsensical approach to the practical matters of literature and rhetoric. He was an old and close friend of William Tytler, a frequent guest at Woodhouselee, and an obviously important influence on Tytler's taste and critical standards.

The third figure whose scholarly works were especially important for the development of Tytler's views was Henry Home (1696-1782), who assumed the name Lord Kames when he became a judge of the Court of Session in 1752. He was a prolific (and rather prolix) writer whose major reputation in the literary sphere was made on his three volume *Elements of Criticism* (1762). On the face of things, Kames would seem to be the kind of "theoretic and metaphysical" critic Tytler spoke so strongly against in his remarks on Ramsay. Indeed, the analytic commentary in the *Elements* is preponderant: there are fifteen chapters on fundamental aspects of criticism plus eight others on somewhat peripheral matters (like figures, the three unities, and gardening and architecture), while only the first two chapters, on the association of the perceptions and on the emotions and passions, are directly concerned with the psychological foundation for that analytic system. Nevertheless, the system of analysis is clearly secondary to Kames' deducation of rational critical principles from the fundamentals of human nature. Because of this grounding of his philosophy in the natural conditions of humankind (a position-he shared with Reid and Campbell), Tytler thought that Kames had superceded all critics before him, even though his sentiments were at times too elitist for Tytler's taste: the *Elements of Criticism* is a work which "displays a great knowledge of human nature, but which misleads sometimes from over-refinement" (1800:Ixxxv).

Kames bases the principles of" his *Elements* on the associational sympathetic principle of Locke and Hume. The elementary entities of mind are sensations, particles of sight. Emotions are aroused by the contemplation of images, not directly, and passions are excited by emotions, which resemble their causes in the way that the soothing, pleasant emotion raised by the sight of a river is also large, forceful, and fluent (1762:1.47). The imagination is able only to separate and recombine the ideas of sight, to "fabricate images of things that have no existence" (1762:3.385). If mental images are structured as in the original experience, then the secondary experience exemplifies the function of memory; if not like the original, it is an example of the pure imagination. The associative process is essentially mechanical, almost Newtonian in its operation (Abrams 1958:159-67). What saves Kames' philosophy from a solopsistic amorality is his conception of truth, which grows out of the tradition of the new (non-Aristotelean) logic of which Reid wrote in the "Brief Account" (1774). Truth is accuracy, not mere internal consistency. "A proposition that says a thing is what it is in reality, is termed a true proposition. A proposition that says a thing is what it is not in reality, is termed an erroneous proposition" (1774:2.102; quoted from Howell 1971:393). This definition is not really at odds with the old logic, but the new logic attempted "to devise a machinery that would make it workable and productive" (Howell 1971:393). Such truth, however, was not always easy to discern; Kames felt, pace Hume, that truth might not immediately appeal even to the most sensitive mind, that a fiction whose imagery is simple, direct, lively, and therefore vivid, could very well be more persuasive than a true history clothed in vague and unmoving generalities. (Campbell would also have agreed with this assessment; one aim of his rhetoric was to make the presentation of truth more vivacious and thus to enhance its chances of being seen and accepted as truth.)

In a number of these features, Kames follows Hume's lead. Like Reid, however, Kames believes in the existence of self-evident propositions and thinks that Aristotle and his followers, the old logicians, make their greatest mistake in trying to prove those things which need no proof and which, in fact, are essentially beyond proof. Among these self-evident propositions are those that define proper taste and therefore literary standards. These standards are commonsensical in that they are in theory apprehensible by all people, provided that such people have the delicacy of mind to perceive the highest values and a sufficiency of experience to be able to make reliable judgments. For Kames, the common standard of taste is "what is the most general and most lasting among polite nations". Excluded from those whose judgments may help form the common standard are "savages" and "those who depend for food on bodily labour", as well as those who "by a corrupted taste are unqualified for voting. The common sense of mankind must then be confined to the few that do not fall under these exceptions" (1762:3.351-74). Kames' critical standards are thus normative and moralistic, founded on a delicate perception of natural truth and goodness potentially common to all men but in reality confined to a few sensitive and gifted intellectual leaders.

As was mentioned earlier, Tytler finds Kames' philosophical criticism, although correct in essence, improper in its reliance on the over-refined sensibilities of a few. He praises Kames for breaking the tradition of his predecessors who had deduced their principles from the authority of earlier practice: Kames took a "step higher in the inquiry, by putting the following question, whether those rules are agreeable to human nature, and have a solid foundation in the moral constitution of man?" (1807:1.274). Aristotle had not "made the smallest attempt to found the rules of that art on any basis other than authority, or dropped the most remote hint of their real foundation, namely, the consonance of those rules to the immutable principles of our nature, or the laws of the human condition" (Tytler 1807:1.275). Moreover, Tytler sees a value in Kames' principles that Kames himself does not emphasize: for those persons without an innate sense of taste or for whom experience has not provided a sufficiently developed discrimination, the principle of philosophic criticism can supply "the defect of natural sensibility". Tytler believe that the proper apprehension of tasteful things was within the grasp of many people however much it might require the honing of discipline.

> [A]lthough the agreeable emotion arising from what is beautiful, or excellent in those productions, may be a gift of nature…it depends on certain principles or laws of the human constitution which are common to the whole species: whence it follows, that as a good taste consists in the consonance of our feelings with those fixed laws, our judgments on all the works of genius are only to be esteemed just and perfect, when they are warranted by the conclusion of a sound understanding, after trying and comparing them by that standard. (1807:1.291)

Literature may arouse emotions in us and excite the passions, but the prop exercise of criticism

> demands a cool and dispassionate frame of mind, and a sobriety of thought remole from all enthusiasm; and where the habit of criticism prevails, the ardour of feelings is proportionally abated and subdued. But, on the other hand, this moderation of our emotions is absolutely essential to the formation of a good taste, which is not a simple and original endowment of the mind, but a compound faculty, the result of natural sensibility, and of judgment exercised in the weighing of means as adapted to their ends, in comparing of objects, and observing their conformity in a regular work, to the laws of order, decorum, and congruity. Without this discipline of mind, there may be much natural acuteness of feeling, and yet not a tincture of good taste. (1807:1.321-22)

Here in his commentary on Kames, as elsewhere, in the *Essay on the Principles of Translation* and other places, we find Tytler retreating from the more extreme positions of those people whose work in general he admired. He criticized Kames for over-refinement and a preoccupation with a kind of literary excellence defined too narrowly.

He also realized that, for all Kames' clarity and precision of analysis and expression, "the general correctness of the author's taste was more the result of study and attention, than of any extraordinary sensibility in the structure of his mind to the emotions excited by the production of the fine arts" (1807; 1.325). In short, Kames was too much the cold, dispassionate critic who failed to love the arts, and especially literature, quite enough. In this he strayed into a path that Adam Smith, Reid, and others of their school explicitly warned against. The scientific and economic success of the mid-eighteenth century grew out of a concentration on specific practical areas of enquiry and endeavor. Doubtless, specialized skills were necessary for success in an increasingly modern world, but, as the demands grew for scientific and technical expertise on the one hand, and economic expertise on the other, the dangers of intellectual overspecialization became greater. Reid and others, calling for a profound intellectual egalitarianism, believed that the population as a whole, not just an educated elite, must be able to understand the working of science and technology, as well as literature, music, and art (Davie 1973). Kames had himself become too much of a specialist; his legalistic concern with the points of his criticism and, most likely, his native character and turn of mind, had let him become too remote from the human effects of the literature he was analyzing. Tytler no doubt felt constrained to temper his criticism of this old friend, mentor, and superior, but the disagreements appear none the less. However much Tytler admired Kames' intellectual prowess, he found him to be lacking in human values, including those which must exist if the analysis of literature is to be other than a mechanical dissection. And he could laud Kames for his philosophical ability and historical importance, while practicing a more egalitarian kind of criticism himself. Whatever Tytler's concern with an orderly, rational process of analysis and explication, he felt a clear dislike of those critics who ignored, whether from a deficiency of sensitivity or a misplaced sense of formal propriety, the fundamental properties of good literature to move, instruct, and please. In the *Essay on the Principles of Translation,* Tytler never lost sight of these essential qualities that make literature enduring, and it is this tempering of his analysis of the science of translation with his deep feeling for the content and context of translation, the literature itself, that makes the *Essay* a document of interest both to linguistic and to literary scholars.

5. The *Essay on the Principles of Translation*

5.1 First Edition, 1791

The *Essay on the Principles of Translation* appeared first in 1791 after a long period in which Tytler published very little of a literary nature. The preface to Fletcher's *Eclogues* was twenty years old and only the small essay on Petrarch (1784) and the brief and decidedly minor pieces in *The Mirror* (1779-80) and *The Lounger* (1785-86) broke the pattern of historical, legal, and unanalytic biographical writings which characterizes his publications during these two decades. That he had been at work on the *Essay* for some time may be surmised from its scope, but we have little idea of what initially prompted him to undertake the study. Translation was, to be sure, a popular topic in the literary journals and newspapers (the *Gentleman's Magazine,* to choose one example, abounds with reviews of translations, readers' comments on those reviews, and even exchanges stretching over many issues, which offer all manner of observations on the process and product of translation). But in total there seems not to have been much more commentary than had been typical throughout the preceding century. The impulse for the *Essay* certainly does not seem to have come from any preoccupation with theoretical statements about the translation process, for Tytler appears to have had a rather spotty and accidental knowledge of that tradition (a matter discussed in more detail in section 6, below). Instead, he seems to have been moved to write on translation by reading, in his voracious but rather unsystematic manner, a wide variety of literature in the original and in translation, and by his own efforts as a translator of Petrarch and Schiller.

In any case, the first version of the *Essay* was presented in lectures to the Royal Society during 1790 (Alison 1817:538) and published, anonymously, the following year. The critical response was excellent. In his "Memoir" Alison remarks on the wide-spread and uniformly approving quality of the reviews:

> I believe that there is no work of literary criticism which this country has produced, that so soon attained celebrity in England, as the Essay on Translation. The different reviewers of the day, contended with each other in the earliness of their notice, and in the liberality of their praise. The most celebrated scholars of England, Dr Markham, Archbishop of York, Dr Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, Dr Percy, Bishop of Dromore, Dr Vincent, of Westminster, and Dr Watson of Winchester Schools, wrote to the author in terms of high approbation. "Were I not afraid," says Mr Murphy, the well-known translator of *Tacitus*, in a letter to the author, *"of being thought* a

> *dealer in compliment, I should say, that I esteem it the best performance I have ever seen on the subject. Ingenious hints, and cursory remarks, are to be found in many authors, ancient and modern; but they remain scattered, and nothing like* a *regular system has been formed until now."* (Alison 1817:541)

A long, detailed, and laudatory unsigned review in the *London Review* (September-October 1793:186-89, 278-82) uses terms like "judiciousness", "delicacy", and "elegance", ending:

> We have been able to relish the work with a higher luxury. Indeed, it has grown upon us so much in credit and in dignity, as we have gone on analysing it, that we are almost inclined to think ourselves too hasty in opposing the licence which it gives a Translator to improve his original. We certainly conclude our review of the work with wonder at the variety of our Author's reading, with praise of the justness of his judgment and the elegance of his taste, and with applause of the modest yet manly, sober yet lively execution of the whole, (1793:281)

The success of the *Essay* was temporarily clouded when George Campbell, whose "Preliminary Dissertations" to his translation of the Gospels (1789) covered much of the same ground and with many of the same results, wrote to the publisher, enquiring the author's name and commenting that, while he admitted "to have been flattered not a little to think, that he had in these points the concurrence in judgment of a writer so ingenious", he wondered if the author might not have borrowed from the "Dissertations" without acknowledgement. When Tytler received the letter, forwarded by Creech, he responded immediately that the coincidence was purely accidental, since he had not seen the *Gospels* translation and its preliminary matter.

> The coincidence of our general principles is indeed a thing flattering to myself; but I cannot consider it as a thing at all extraordinary. There seems to me no wonder, that two persons, moderately conversant in critical occupations...sitting down professedly to investigate the principles of this art, should hit upon the same principles, when in fact there are none other to hit upon, and the truth of these is acknowledged at their first enunciation.. But in truth, the merit of this little essay, (if it has any), does not, in my

> opinion, lie in these particulars. It lies in the establishment of those various subordinate rules and precepts, which apply to the nicer parts and difficulties of the art of translation: in deducing those rules and precepts which carry not their own authority *in gremio*, from the general principles which are of acknowledged truth, and in proving and illustrating them by examples. (Quoted from Alison 1817:539-40)

Campbell's reply, speaking to Tytler as an old and valued friend, concluded:

> I cannot avoid mentioning one circumstance in this incident which to me is always extremely agreeable, the evidence which it gives of a concurrence in sentiment upon critical subjects with persons of distinguished ingenuity and erudition. Such a discovery makes a man more confident in the justness of his own sentiments. I have only to add, that your illustrations of the general doctrines, and your examples from the ancients, please me exceedingly. (Alison 1817:540-41)

In fact the similarity in the judgments on translation of these two men is very close (as discussed in section 6, below), although Tytler's are broader in scope and somewhat more thoroughly organized, partially because Campbell's aim was mainly to delineate the special problems of sacred literature, not literature in general.

The *Essay* was translated into German (although, because the *Essay* was printed anonymously, not credited to Tytler) by Renatus Gotthelf Loebel (1767-99) as the *Grundsatze der Kunst, zu Ubersetzen* (1793); it seems to have had some European popularity in this form. In the five years following the first edition, demand continued for the work and in 1797 Tytler published the second edition in which he corrected a number of small errors, made a few changes in phrasing, and added two chapters, an appendix, and a significant number of new examples throughout the remaining sections. The resulting volume was just over half again bigger than its predecessor, with a full table of contents and, for the first time, an index. Internally, however, the thrust of the second edition was much like the first; few passages were deleted and the additions did little to change either the rules or Tytler's observations on their employment. (See appendix B for a full listing of the changes between the succeeding editions.)

5.2 Third Edition, 1813

The third edition appeared shortly before Tytler's death in 1813. As was the case between the first and second versions, he added considerably to the length of the treatise. While the number of pages in the third edition is only slightly larger than in the second, the length of the lines increased by over ten percent and the number of lines per page increased by thirty percent. As a result, the third edition is some 42% larger than the second edition and almost 21/2 times larger than the first. No major structural changes, like the addition of chapters, were made in this edition but the number of examples throughout was increased and, more importantly, significant alterations were made in the phrasing of the text throughout. Although he claimed to have made a "careful revisal of the *style*" (1813:vii; henceforth reference to the third edition will be by page number alone), few changes seem to have been made for purely stylistic reasons. In general, his judgments were made more critical, often in subtle ways. Campbell's *Four Gospels* was "a most elaborate and learned work" in the second edition, while in the third the phrase had been weakened to "then recently published"; Francklin's "elegant poem" became "a poetical essay"; Le Mierre's translation, which was "not in all respects equal" to Bourne's, became "far inferior"; and d'Alembert's "principles" and "precepts" of translation had been downgraded to "elements" and "remarks". Tytler had, too, become somewhat more overt about his philosophical foundations, claiming for the first time that his principles were "founded in nature and common sense" (4 note), beliefs that had characterized his literary and critical practices from the beginning (as has been demonstrated) but which he had seldom articulated in this direct manner of Reid, Campbell and Kames. With all these additions, however, the basic substance of the theory articulated in the first edition remains essentially unchanged, although it was considerably strengthened by a clarification of the text and augmentation of the examples.

Tytler's reasons for writing the treatise are of two kinds. First, he wishes to demonstrate that

> the Art of Translation is of more dignity and importance than has generally been imagined. It will afford sufficient conviction, that excellence in this art is neither a matter of easy attainment, nor what lies at all within the reach of ordinary abilities; since it not only demands those acquired endowments which are the fruit of much labour and study, but requires a larger portion of native talents and of genuine taste, than are necessary for excelling in

> many departments of original composition. (ix)

Second, he wishes to reduce the principles of translation to rules that will enable translators to improve their product and patrons to be able to evaluate what they read. He notes what he feels to be a lack of decent commentary on the process of translation, even among the ancient authors.

> In the works of Quinctilian, of Cicero, and of the Younger Pliny, we find many passages which prove that these authors had made translation their peculiar study...But it is much to be regretted, that they who were so eminently well qualified to furnish instruction in the art itself, have contributed little more to its advancement than by some general recommendations of its importance. (1-2)

Of works containing statements of importance for translation theory, Tytler remarks on only a few - for example, d'Alembert's comments in the *Mélanges de littérature*, Batteux's in the *Principles de la littérature* (although he does not mention the English translation of the section on translation published in Edinburgh in 1760), Huet's *De Interpretatione* (1683), and, in the second and third editions, Campbell's "Dissertations" from the *Four Gospels* (1789). But of the French theorists like Du Bellay and Dolet, and of English writers like Cowley, Creech, Golding, Humphrey, Mickle, and Vicars, there is little or no mention. (See Amos 1920, Wikelund 1947, Jacobsen 1958, Steiner 1975, and Huntsman 1978.) Tytler's approach is that of the antiquarian, reading whatever comes readily to hand, rather than that of the thorough scholar seeking copiousness. Some figures like Bourne, Sandys, May, and Melmoth are singled out for praise as practitioners, and examples of their good works cited, but scarcely none of these is mentioned as a theoretician. Indeed, Cowper, who uses terms little different in essence from Tytler himself, is said to be "a little deficient in precision of thought" (212 note). In the main, however, his conclusions are, in context, justified. There was before him no treatise that discussed at length the problems of and solutions to the translation dilemma and the more interesting of the explicit statements on the questions were scattered about in the introductions to the various translations. The result, which the *Essay* is meant to remedy, is the lack both of a knowledge of the principles of translation and even of reliable translations themselves.

> While such has been our ignorance of the principles of this art, it is not at all wonderful, that amidst the numberless translations which every day

> appear, both of the works of the ancients and moderns, there should be so few that are possessed of real merit. The utility of translations is universally felt, and therefore there is a continual demand for them. But this very circumstance has thrown the practice of translation into mean and mercenary hands. (7-8)

5.3 General Laws of Translation

After this complaint about the sorry state of both the art and theory of translation, he begins by noting the difficulty of defining a good translation and satisfies himself with a description (13). Even here, however, "there is no subject of criticism on which there has been so much difference of opinion" (13), since "the appeal lies not so much to any settled canons of criticism, as to individual taste" (viii). He lays out the translator's task as falling between two extremes. It may be said that

> it is the duty of a translator to attend only to the sense and spirit of his original, to make himself perfectly master of his author's ideas, and to communicate them in those expressions which he judges to be best suited to convey them. It has, on the other hand, been maintained, that, in order to constitute a perfect translation, it is not only requisite that the ideas and sentiments of the original author should be conveyed, but likewise his style and manner of writing, which, it is supposed, cannot be done without a strict attention to the arrangement of his sentences, and even to their order and construction. According to the former idea of translation, it is allowable to improve and to embellish; according to the latter, it is necessary to preserve even blemishes and defects; and to these must likewise be superadded the harshness that must attend every copy in which the artist scrupulously studies to imitate the minutest lines or traces of his original. (14-15)

Rather than ally himself completely with either camp, Tytler claims to choose a middle position - "it is not improbable that the point of perfection should be found between the two" (15) - although in fact he speaks very favorably of improvement. He then supplies a characterization of what he considers a good translation to be:

> that, in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work. (15-16)

As a partial measure of the attainment of this goal, he offers three desiderata, which he labels "general laws":

> I. That the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.
> II. That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.
> III. That the Translation should have all the ease of the original composition.

The rest of the *Essay* represents an attempt to make these general principles more explicit by detailing the attributes of particular problems of language, of form, and of the licence the translator has to add to, delete from, or otherwise alter his original text. Although he naturally lacks a precise terminology for either the linguistic or the literary aspects of his problem, Tytler attempts a precision by focusing his attention on particular problems in turn and. by discussing, usually at some length, examples of both good and bad practice.

The simplest kinds of problems concern the structure of languages (chiefly regarding idioms) and peculiarities of the lexicon which make simple and precise correspondences difficult to discover. The latter type includes antiquated terms and their opposites, innovating ones; *verba ardentia* (glowing and rapturous phrases) and their opposites, phrases exhibiting a naiveté or great simplicity of thought and expression; deliberately florid or vague styles; and the problems posed by the lack of exact correspondence between series of minute distinctions marked by characteristic terms in one language over another. In these areas, Tytler understandably offers few general rules. Instead, he discusses the difficulties involved in translating Shakespeare, Milton, and La Fontaine, who all have positive virtues difficult to transform into foreign languages, and Pliny, who employs "a studied obscurity and false refinement of expression"(359).

Idioms - "those turns of expression which do not belong to universal grammer, but of which every language has its own" (251) - pose the most vexing linguistic problems for the careful translator. By idioms he does not mean phrases like *un homme bien né* (which means, not "well born", but "of good health") - such if mistranslated simply show a fundamental ignorance of the language - nor does he mean syntactic particularities like the differing placement of adjectives in English and French. Rather, he is concerned with "phrases which are, generally of a familiar nature, and which occur most commonly in conversation, or in that species of writing which approaches to the ease of conversation" (259). In these cases, "the translation is perfect, when the translator finds in his own language an idiomatic phrase corresponding to that of the original" (259). Unfortunately,

> in the use of idiomatic phrases, a translator frequently forgets both the country of his original author, and the age in which he wrote; and while he makes a Greek or Roman speak French or English, he unwittingly puts into his mouth allusions to the manners of modern France or England (263)

as when Echard in translating Terence and Plautus uses phrases like "Lord Chief Justice of Athens", "send him to Bridewell". "grave as an alderman". "Gadzookers", and "G'Bye. Sir Solomon" (for *Salve, Thales!)* (265-66). When idiomatic and language-dependent turns like puns are encountered for which there is no corresponding entity in the translating language, the sense must be expressed "in plain and easy language", for "a literal translation of such phrases cannot be tolerated" (275).

The first requisite of the translator is "that he should have a perfect knowledge of the language of the original, and a competent acquaintance with the subject of which it treats" (17). Such knowledge is not gained easily since "it is but a small part of the genius and powers of a language which is to be learnt from dictionaries and grammars. There are innumerable niceties, not only of construction and of idiom, but even in the signification of words, which are discovered only by much reading, and critical attention" (19). With this knowledge, the translator should be able to correct troubling ambiguities, which Tytler sees as "always a defect in composition...To imitate the obscurity or ambiguity of the original is a fault; and it is still a greater, to give more than one meaning" (28-29).

On questions of form, Tytler restricts himself to the major problem of translating poetry. Missing from his discussion are the long arguments common among his English predecessors about the various values of the Alexandrine line, the rhymed, couplet championed by Pope, and blank verse. He turns instead to another formal problem, stating that poetry simply cannot properly be translated into prose, partially because of the loss of measure - since one language seldom will form itself to the cadences of the original - and partly because of

> the nature of that language in which [its thoughts and sentiments] are clothed. A boldness of figures, a luxuriancy of imagery, a frequent use of metaphors, a quickness of transition, a liberty of digressing; all these are not only *allowable* in poetry, but to many species of it, *essential*. (203)

Such elevated figures must not be replicated in the translation; in prose "these appear preposterous and out of place, because they are never found in an *original prose composition"* (203). Didactic poetry, consisting fundamentally of "rational precepts" will suffer the least in translation, while lyric poetry, with "a greater degree of irregularity of thought, and a more unrestrained exuberance of fancy" is impossible to translate into prose. To attempt it is "the most absurd of undertakings...The excursive range of the sentiments, and the play of fancy, which we admire in the original, degenerate into mere raving and impertinence" (207). The conclusion: prose translation of poetry is doomed to inadequacy; "none but a poet can translate a poet" (208), men like Dryden, Pope, Addison, Tickell, Warton, and Murphy (374).

5.4 The Translator's Privilege to Alter the Original

The issue to which Tytler devotes the majority of his discussion (albeit under a variety of headings) and the one for which many reviewers took him to task is the question of the translator's liberty to add to, delete from, or in other ways alter the character of his original. Suppression is deemed proper when there is a "careless or inaccurate expression of the original, where that inaccuracy seems materially to affect the sense" (54) and when something offends "against the dignity of the narrative" (55). Although *"At, Hercule, Germanicum Druso ortum octo apud Rhenum legionibus imposuit"* [Tacitus An.l.l.c.3] could be rendered "Augustus, Egad, gave Germanicus, the son of Drusus, the command of the eight legions of the Rhone", Tytler suggests that "the simple fact is better announced without such embellishment" (55). Another common occasion where suppression is allowable, even demanded, is where impropriety in the original might offend the translator's audience. Tytler's examples in these cases speak more about his delicate sensibilities and the tenor of the times than about more serious questions of fidelity and grace in translation, however. When Homer provides:

> When I placed you on my knees, I filled you full with meat minced down, and gave you wine, which you often vomited upon my bosom, and stained my clothes, in your troublesome infancy,

Tytler applauds Pope's refinements:

> Thy infant breast a like affection show'd,
> Still in my arms, an ever pleasing load;
> Or at my knee, by Phoenix would'st thou stand,
> No food was grateful but from Phoenix hand:
> I pass my watchings o'er thy helpless years,
> The tender labours, the compliant cares.

"The English reader", Tytler says, "certainly feels an obligation to the translator for sinking altogether this nauseous image, which, instead of heightening the picture, greatly debases it" (90). On the other hand, many, perhaps most, of the translated passages Tytler singles out for adverse commentary are unquestionably faulty. When Dryden renders *"Jam procyon* furit"(Horace) as "The Syrian star / Barks from afar, / And with his sultry breath infects the sky", we must agree with Tytler that "this *barking* of a *star* is a bad specimen of the music of the spheres" (100-01).

On the notion of improving the original, Tytler parts company with the majority of his reviewers, although in this he continues the tradition of the preceding two centuries of English translation theory. Tytler's view is that additions or deletions are always allowable when the change "may appear to give greater force or illustration; or to take from them what may seem to weaken them from redundancy" (35). As a general rule, the translator must always present his author in the best light, even if this involves alteration of the language or style of the original. In the first two editions, he criticizes Roscommon (1685) for advocating that "your author always will the best advise; / Fall when he falls, and when he-rises, rise", adding that,

> Far from adopting the former part of this maxim, I conceive it to be the duty of a poetical translator, never to suffer his original to -fall. He must

> maintain with him a perpetual contest of genius; he must attend him in his highest flights, and soar, if he can, beyond him; and when he perceives any time, a diminution of his powers, when he sees a drooping wing, he must raise him on his own pinions. (78-79)

By the third edition, apparently prompted by a reviewer of the second edition, he sees that his reading of Roscommon was incorrect, that Roscommon meant (in Tytler's words): "Let the elevation of the copy keep pace with that of the original, where the subject requires elevation of expression; let it imitate it likewise in plainness and simplicity, if such be the character which the sentiment requires" (78-79 note). This correction notwithstanding, Tytler's continued recommendation is for improvement through addition, suppression, or alteration whenever the translator - guided, as always, by his sense of taste - feels the original is perfectable: "an ordinary translator sinks under the energy of his original: the man of genius frequently rises above it" (42).

But such changes must be made only "with the greatest caution":

> the superadded idea shall have the most necessary connection with the original thought, and actually increase its force. . . . [W]henever an idea is cut off by the translator, it must be only such as is an accessory, and not a principle in the clause or sentence. It must likewise be confessedly redundant, so that its retrenchment shall not impair or weaken the original thought. Under these limitations, a translator may exercise his judgment, and assume to himself, thus far, the character of an original writer. (36)

He approves, for example, of Pope's addition "move slowly and oft look back" to Homer's ἀέκονσα "unwilling", since "they are implied in the word...for she who goes unwillingly will *move slowly* and *oft look back.* The amplification highly improves the effect of the picture" (39). Similar improvements have been made, he thinks, in Horace, Cicero, and especially Homer who, because of his plainness, "low images and puerile allusions" (79), often suffers in comparison to Pope's translation. On the other hand, Tytler chides Dryden frequently for overreaching this particular boundary. In Lucian's *Timon,* Gnathonides says (after Timon has beaten him):

> You were always fond of a joke - but where is the banquet? for I have

> brought you a new dithirambic song, which I have lately learned.

Dryden's version is considerably amplified:

> Ah! Lord, Sir, I see you keep up your old merry humour still; you love dearly to rally and break a jest. Well but have you got a noble supper for us, and plenty of delicious inspiring claret? Hark ye, Timon, I've got a virgin-song for ye, just new composed, and smells of the gamut: 'Twill make your heart dance within you, old boy. A very pretty she-player, I vow to Gad, that I have an interest in, taught it me this morning.

Tytler remarks that "there is both ease and spirit in this translation; but the licence which the translator has assumed, of superadding to the ideas of the original, is beyond all bounds" (46-47). Dryden and his followers were particularly guilty of the excesses of free translation - "extreme licentiousness", Tytler calls it.

> Fidelity was but a secondary object, and translation for a while was considered as synonymous with paraphrase. A judicious spirit of criticism was now wanting, to prescribe bounds to this increasing licence, and to determine to what precise degree a poetical translator might assume to himself the character of an original writer. (77)

Because of the difficulties inherent in translating poetry with utmost fidelity to form and content, such liberties are more allowable in poetic translation. Tytler favorably quotes Sir John Denham when he says that it is

> a vulgar error in translating poets, to affect being *fidus interpres*. Let that care be with them who deal in matters of fact or matters of faith; but whosoever aims at it in poetry as he attempts at what is not required, so shall he never perform what he attempts; for it is not his business alone to translate language into language, but poesie into poesie; and poesie is of so subtle a spirit, that in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit is not added in the transfusion, there will

> remain nothing but a *caput mortuum. Denham's Preface to the 2d book of Virgil's Aeneid* [1656]. (63-64)

In all portions of the translation, whether concerning the correspondences to the original or the translator's judicious changes, the style of the translation should be of the same character as the original. This second general principle, and the third, that the translation should have the ease of an original work, are somewhat more difficult to follow, for "the qualities requisite for justly discerning and happily imitating the various characters of style and manner are much more rare than the ability of simply understanding an author's sense" (110). Here as elsewhere, the burden of judgment is placed squarely on the arcane and subtle criteria of taste and sensitivity. A good translator, Tytler insists, must discover immediately the "true character of his author's style" (110), ascertaining whether the style exemplifies

> the grave, the elevated, the easy, the lively, the florid and ornamented, or the simple and unaffected; and these characteristic qualities he must have the capacity of rendering equally conspicuous in the translation as in the original. If a translator fail in this discernment, and want this capacity, let him be ever so thoroughly master of the sense of his author, he will present him through a distorting medium, or exhibit him often in a garb that is unsuitable. (110)

Again, perhaps because he was held to be of great stature as a poet and translator, Dryden above all others is singled out for his excesses: Asinius and Messala "feathered their nests well in the civil wars 'twixt Anthony and Augustus", another was "playing the good-fellow", and Agrippina "could not bear that a freed-woman should *nose* her", which, Tytler remarks, is at least better than another translator's *"beard* her" (119-20). Others could be just as bad, however, including Thomas Hobbes of Malmsbury, who achieved no whiff of the sublime with this passage from the *Iliad:*

> This said, with his black brows he to her nodded,
> Wherewith displayed were his locks divine;
> Olympus shook at stirring of his godhead,

And Thetis from it jump'd into the brine. (123)

To avoid these incongruities, while still achieving the sentiments of the original (Tytler's first requisite) and its style and manner (his second), the translator "must adopt the very soul of his author, which must speak through his own organs" (212). This portion of the task is the most difficult to achieve, for too much study can cause the translator to lapse into mere imitation, a lifeless transportation of the form of the original without an animating spirit: like a copist in painting, "the more he studies a scrupulous imitation, the less his copy will reflect the ease and spirit of the original" (212). Since the restrictions of sentiment are the greatest in prose, it is, paradoxically, easier to obtain the requisite ease in translating poetry, especially lyric poetry, than in prose, not because the difficulties are less - they are actually greater, as we have seen - but because

> a superior degree of liberty is allowed to a poetical translator in amplifying, retrenching from, and embellishing his original, than to a prose translator. For without some portion of this liberty, there can be no ease of composition, (230)

Tytler concludes his study with a final comment, which might almost stand as a fourth general principle, that "he only is perfectly accomplished for the duty of a translator who possesses a genius akin to that of the original author" (372).

> He must have a mind capable of discerning the full merits of his original, of attending with an acute perception to the whole of his reasoning, and of entering with the warmth and energy of feeling into all the beauties of his composition. (372)

The standards for assessing success in composition are essentially aesthetic. "The distinction between good and bad writing is often of so very slender a nature, and the shadowing of difference so extremely delicate, that a very nice perception alone can at all times define the limits" (132-33). The central terms in Tytler's aesthetic are *genius, wit,* and, especially, *taste.* They are used almost as if they were technical terms - palpable, real, self-evident, virtually inescapable. In this use Tytler was guided by the writers and critics of his time for whom the terms were part of a generally accepted vocabulary whose forms had been in use for generations, even if the precise meanings of the terms altered subtly from user to user and age to age. He was guided, too, by the philosophical and psychological beliefs of his friends and colleagues who held the tenets of the Scottish school of common sense, tenets that taught that man was essentially rational, moral, decent, and imbued with a natural inclination for chastened simplicity, correctness, and sublimity. Tytler, while lacking much of a sense of wit and whimsey (he disapproves, for example, of Voltaire's characters who "have nothing of nature in their composition, and who neither act nor reason like the ordinary race of men" [384]), was a man whose personal tastes mirrored the qualities he singled out for praise in his remarks on Ramsay, his introduction to *The Robbers,* and throughout the *Essay on the Principles of Translation.*

6. Evaluation and Conclusion

Tytler's general laws of translation are not surprising; in an historical perspective they are indeed self-evident. His greatest contribution was not, as he himself said in the letter to George Campbell quoted above, that he first thought of these criteria for excellence in translation, but rather that he studied those obvious principles carefully, worked through their ramifications, and supplied an abundance of examples, good and bad, which illustrated their use. He did not claim to have made new discoveries, for he looked

> upon nothing to be entitled to the name of Discovery in science unless a new property of Matter be brought to Light, or a new Law of Nature, established by such proofs as amount to absolute demonstration of its certainty. You cannot make discoveries in the science of Mind, where the only test of truth is an appeal to individual consciousness, than which standard nothing can be more certain. (Letter to Macrey Napier, 1809; BL Addit. MS 34611, f.9a-9b)

Tytler's principles were not new, in this strict sense. In fact, they much resembled George Campbell's. Campbell felt that the translator must

> give a just representation of the sense of the original...convey into his version, as much as possible, in a consistency with the genius of the language which he works, the author's spirit and manner, and…the very

> character of his style...[and] take care that the version have, at least, so far the quality of an original performance, as to appear natural and easy. (.1798:340)

Indeed, even Richard Flecknoe (d.1678?), a mediocre writer and translator (although not so contemptible as Dryden made him out to be), promoted essentially the same criteria in his rather overblown essay, "On Translating Authors". A translator must have

> a firm language and no ways *wavering stile,* lest the language he lends the hand to in Translation, pluck him from his own, and make him Translate after it, and not after the phrase of his own language...a perfect knowledge of the Language but much more of the matter he translates...[and an ability to] *indue and put on the person of the* Author, as to imagine himself him, and that he rather writes the Book then [*sic*] translates: so he is not to think, nor reflect on the Language he translates out of, but how the Author would best express himself in that he translates into. (1653:113-14)

Examples could be multiplied, but the full history of translation theory in England is too complex to detail here (see, for example, Amos 1920, Wikelund 1947, Jacobsen 1958, Steiner 1975, and Huntsman 1978.) In essence, Tytler stands in the history of translation much as Samuel Johnson does in lexicography (cf. Sledd 1955 and Hayashi 1978): he summarized and in some sense epitomized the practice of translation for the preceding generations and endured as a model of that kind of translation for generations to follow.

Tytler's general laws about translation were derived chiefly from his observation of the *practice* of translation. Like the philosophy which so much shaped his, way of thinking, his theory of translation assumed certain. self-evident truths, grounded in the very being of mankind. With these self-evident principles as guides, Tytler observed translation practice and from these observations induced the general laws pertaining to his particular field of enquiry. His reading of earlier treatises on the theory of translation was spotty, likely somewhat haphazard; his reading of the primary literature of the investigation - translations themselves - was similarly happenstancive, though more copious, and his reasons for choosing particular examples for the *Essay* are not always evident (for example, although he had himself published translations of Italian and German authors, there is no mention of either of these literatures in the *Essay).* In both areas, we do not see the concern exhibited by others - Samuel Johnson is again an obvious example - for full coverage of a field and for the acquisition and use of reliable editions of texts. As a result, we cannot expect to find his principles set into a fully articulated general framework, whether rhetorical or linguistic. Although the principles themselves are explicitly stated, the criteria for verification - for knowing a good translation when it appears - are not. Tytler was a man of his time and society, an amateur in the oldest, but best, sense of the word: he was a lover of good literature and its promoter.

In another way, however, the *Essay* is a modern book, for we find in it no slavish adherence to a classical theory or ancient authority, nor is there a mere categorization on the model of the encyclopedia. Tytler seems to have felt no need to discover a tradition, a usable past which must be assumed as the foundation for a workable present. He could afford to acknowledge gradation in knowledge, an intellectual luxury even his older contemporary, Lord Kames, could not. Roscommon a century before had reproduced Horace's *"Si paulum summo decessit, vergit ad imum" (De Arte Poetica* 1.378) as a description of poetry which "Admits of no degrees, but must be still / Sublimely good, or despicably ill" (1684:26). But taste and the judgment of quality do admit of degrees; some poems - and some translations - are indeed better than others.

The *Essay* is a scientific literary work in the eighteenth-century sense. There is assumed to be a body of knowledge apprehensible to systematic investigation, with implicit values adduced by explicit criteria. It is not a history and there is no attempt at an historical thoroughness. As a result, the *Essay* lacks the pretention of a work which attempts to investigate the whole of an intellectual endeavor, its history and its practice alike. By focusing on the aims of translation as a process, by inducing his principles from the observation of previous translations, Tytler could avoid the difficulties of having to justify the literary work whose outward shape the process transforms. He leaves aside an evaluation of the text and investigates instead the version. He was no theoretical aesthetician - a notoriously impossible area to be precise about, in any case - and as a result he could be unselfconsciously aesthetic in his judgments. This comment is not, of course, meant to disparage scientific inquisition or the attempt to formulate rigorously the canons of description and explanation. It does recognize, however, that eighteenth-century theories of aesthetics, like the humanistic theories they replaced, were very much preliminary philosophies given necessarily to what we today must call (however arrogantly) simplification and generalization. While Samuel Johnson was trying to fix the entire canon of literary taste in his *Lives of the Poets* (although in his deliberately inexplicit and pointedly unscientific way), Tytler assumed the more modest goal of calling readers' attention to the particulars of good and lesser translations; his criticism, while informed by his general laws of translation, was sufficiently flexible to avoid both the strictures of dogmatism provided by attempts to apply ambitious but imperfect schemata to all literary art, and the unfortunate products of such pretention, particular cases where acknowledged masterpieces are excluded simply because they cannot be made to fit the theory's template and hackworks included just because they do. Johnson's *Lives* succeeds, in spite of his philosophical intention, because Johnson's creative and critical genius is ultimately paramount, while Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (1756-82) does not, dissipating much of its good on proving that Pope's works do not exemplify "the most *poetic* species of *poetry"* (Lipking 1970: 103, 362ff.). Tytler's intention, in contrast, was to help his readers form individual judgments by providing a set of criteria derived from previous, good translations, not to make an ultimate statement about immutable truth.

If we count the birth of "modern" linguistics from Sir William Jones' "Third Anniversary Discourse" in 1786, we can hardly expect Tytler to have written an exemplary treatise of the linguistic science. Yet, despite the progress of linguistics since that infancy, we are hardly closer than we were in 1791 to a thoroughly defensible theory of translation, because we are still far from a thoroughly defensible theory of language of which translation must be a proper part. Translation was then, is now, and is likely to be for the immediate future, an intensely personal process. Like original literary production, the work is creative, elusive, perhaps numinous. Our sense of translation truth does depend on what Tytler called taste and what we might more easily call judgment. Because of this, Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation* is as important a document now as it was when it was written. For, however dated some of his particular sensibilities might be, the intellectual processes we see behind the *Essay* and the qualities of mind and personality that emerge from the book remain interesting, valuable, and ultimately persuasive.

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1800. "Remarks on the Genius and Writings of Allan Ramsay". *The Poems of Allan Ramsay,* lvii-clvii. London: Cadell & Davies.
1807. *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home, Lord Kames.* Two vols. Edinburgh: Creech; London: Cadell & Davies.
1810. *An Historical and Critical Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch, with* a *Translation of a Few of His Sonnets.* Edinburgh: Ballantyne.
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B. Historical and Biographical Works
1782. *Plan and Outline of* a *Course of Lectures on Universal History, Ancient and Modern, Delivered at the University of Edinburgh.* Edinburgh: Creech.
1785. "Dissertation on the Character, Manners, and Genius of the Ancient Scandinavian Nations". Read to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 17 January 1785; unpublished.
1787. "History of the Royal Society of Edinburgh". *Trans. Royal Soc. of Edinburgh* 1:1.3-45.

1788. "Life of Dr John Gregory". *Works* by J. Gregory. Edinburgh: Creech.

1798. "A Critical Examination of Mr Whitaker's *Course of Hannibal over the Alps Ascertained"*. London. [Not seen.]

1798. "An Account of Some Extraordinary Structures on the Tops of Hills in the Highlands, with Remarks on the Progress of the Arts among the Ancient Inhabitants of Scotland". *Trans. Royal* Soc. *of Edinburgh* 2:2.3-32.

1801. *Elements of General History, Ancient and Modern.* Two vols. Edinburgh: Creech; London: Cadell & Davies. (Other editions 1803, 1805, 1809, and 1812.)

1805. "Remarks on a Mixed Species of Evidence in Matters of History: With an Examination of a New Historical Hypothesis, in the *Mémoires pour la vie de Pétrarque,* by the Abbé de Sade". *Trans. Royal Soc. of Edinburgh* 5.119-88.

C. *Legal and Political Works*

1772. *Considerations on the Game Law.* Edinburgh. [Not seen.]

1778. *Decisions of the Court of Sessions,* vols. 3-4 (supplement to Lord Kames' *Dictionary of Decisions).* (Second edition with a *Supplement to* 1796, 1797.) Edinburgh: Bell.

1799. *Ireland Profiting by Example; or, the Question Considered Whether Scotland has Gained or Lost by the Union.* Edinburgh: Creech.

1800. *Essay on the Military Law and the Practice of Courts Martial.* Edinburgh: Creech.

D. Erroneous Attributions

1771. "Remarks on the Genius and Writings of Allan Ramsay" attributed to William Tytler, father of Lord Woodhouselee, by British Library *General Catalogue* (1964) through a confusion of the 1771 edition of *The Poems of Allan Ramsay* with the edition of 1866-68, which contains a new essay bearing the same title by William Tytler, grandson of A. F. Tytler, also Lord Woodhouselee. The 1866-68 edition also appears in the entry for A. F. Tytler, although the full entry (under Ramsay) correctly ascribes it to W. F. Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee.

1815. *Considerations on the Present Political State of India.* Two vols. London: Black, Parbury, & Allen. Attributed to A.F. Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, by British

Library *General Catalogue* (1964) and the *Catalogue of the Printed Books in the Edinburgh University Library* (1923). Actually written by the son of Lord Woodhouselee. also named Alexander Fraser Tytler.

1815. Volume 2 of *Travels in France, during the Years* 1814-15 (Edinburgh: Macredie, Skelly & Muckersy) attributed to A.F. Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, by British Library *General Catalogue* (1964). Actually written by Patrick Fraser Tytler, son of Lord Woodhouselee.

Source: *Essay on the Principles of Translations*, 1978, p. IX-LI