How Paratexts Influence the Reader's Experience of English Translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*

Anne Neveu

Kent State University, USA

ABSTRACT

La Fontaine's *Fables* were published in three volumes, in 1668, 1678–79 and 1694. They belong to the genre of the moral fable and use animals as allegories to deliver a moral of didactic and philosophical value. In a corpus of 25 translations of La Fontaine's *Fables* into English, published in Great Britain and the United States, between 1754 and 2014, I examined the micro- and macro-functions of paratextual elements. I focus here on four translations from this corpus. According to Genette (1997), paratexts are elements that frame the content and facilitate the reader's access to it (e.g.: book covers, prefaces). This definition is adapted to the case of translation to better understand how paratexts influence the reader's experience of these translations. By analyzing the paratexts from the perspective of translator's visibility, this paper shows how translator visibility influenced artistic aspects or the informative/academic value of the work, thus influencing the experience of reading the *Fables* in English.

KEYWORDS**:** La Fontaine's *Fables,* paratextual micro- and macro-functions, translator status, reader experience, translation history

Introduction

The *Fables*[1] of Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695) were inspired largely by Aesop's fables, which were versified by Phaedrus in the first century C. E., and by the Indian *Pañcatantra*, a narrative in Sanskrit that is attributed to Bidpai or Pilpay. La Fontaine's *Fables*, which were published in three separate volumes, in 1668, 1678-79 and 1694, constitute a poetic work based on traditional folktales, in which La Fontaine subtly criticizes human nature and contemporary society in

[1] Throughout this paper, "*Fables*" refer to La Fontaine's work as a whole, whereas "fables" is used to discuss parts of the work.

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French aristocratic circles. He uses animals, to which he gives a voice, to deliver a moral. Through this personification, the *Fables* gain a didactic value, leading to their incorporation into the French primary and secondary educational system as early as the 18th century, and up to the present (Shapiro 2000:xiii; Albanese 2003:1). Indeed, La Fontaine dedicated the first collection of his work to the six-year-old dauphin (Crown Prince of France) in the hope that it would provide him with the wisdom he would need in his future as a ruler (Hill 2008:xxiv). However, the *Fables* also convey philosophical and satirical values, reaching a readership beyond that of children.

There were thus numerous French versions in which additional or "paratextual" information published alongside the text of *Fables* in the form of prefaces, afterwords, and blurb designs reflects different political, artistic and academic discourses surrounding the *Fables* at different political and social junctures in France over time. For example, in an 1820 French edition of the *Fables*, the paratextual information comprises in this order: 1) an account of the life of La Fontaine (this introduction is not signed) mainly based on information provided by La Fontaine's grandson, 2) a first dedication to the dauphin, 3) La Fontaine's preface, 4) the life of Aesop and 5) another dedication to the dauphin. All of these additional paratexts served to present the author (1), to address the future king (2 and 5), to "get the book read" and read "properly" according to Genette (1997:197) (3) and to show his sources of inspiration (4). These paratexts provide information about how the *Fables* were crafted in seventeenth century France during the rise of moralist and libertine writing (Méchoulan 2017:229)[2]. In addition, La Fontaine's *Fables* discuss fundamental questions posed in the seventeenth century, which help us to understand the wider relevance of the text and how it might have been interpreted by contemporary readers, such as, "the relativity of customs and beliefs, the relationship between political power and art, the modes of constituting a literary history, the particularity of the human soul, and the place of humans in creation" (Sribnai 2017:265-6).

[2] The 17th century in France saw the rise of a moral philosophy, exploring the value of humanity, and the emergence of 'libertinage', or 'freethinking' which aims to question and possibly undermine the basis of moral and religious beliefs (Méchoulan 2017:229).

With regard to the demand for translations of verse fables from French into English, it seems likely that the translations filled a gap in the English-language market. As Armstrong explains, "if translated texts provide evidence of an unmet need in the receiving culture, and are produced to fill a perceived gap in the reading life of the nation, they can be understood generally to represent a prestige import into English" (2013:11). Indeed, during the 1660-1750 period in England, "translations from the French appear considerably more frequently than from the classics" (Gillespie 2005:135). This is explained by the presence of a Francophile court which influenced the cultural agenda for over two decades after 1660, and by a rising demand from a quickly growing reading audience for modern works that solely English-language writing could not supply (ibid.). This shows "the impact of social and economic contexts on the acts of reading and interpreting" (Belle & Hosington 2017:4), and thus also on translating. French poetry was, however, little translated (or *englished*, as per the term used at that time) compared to fictional prose, writings for children, 'fact-based' material, geographical and travel works, and literary scholarship and criticism (Gillespie 2005). This can be explained by the difficulty of translating verse from French into English[3], which presented numerous translational dilemmas, as discussed by Gillespie (2005:139). Three authors, whose works were translated into English, represent an exception: Nicolas Boileau, translated in a complete edition (1711-13); La Fontaine, whose fables and *contes* were, however, not fully translated by the second half of the eighteenth century; and Vincent Voiture. In this context, La Fontaine opened the way for verse fable in the Augustan literary culture. However, the translation of fables was not prominent in that period. Stylistic imitation was a considerably more common practice (France 2005:310-1). La Fontaine's *Fables* were originally translated under the broader umbrella of translations of Aesopic works; a larger body of verse translations then appeared in the nineteenth century (France 2005:311).

The present article focuses on the English-language versions of the *Fables* to analyse how the visibility of literary translators of this classical text has been mediated from the eighteenth century up to the present day. The analysis is based on two straightforward theoretical insights, firstly, as Coldiron (2015:16) notes, translators "explain themselves in very illuminating ways in paratext", in other words, the paratexts constitute a valuable source of contextual information

[3] Verse was also the medium for classical French drama, which led to adaptations rather than more literal renderings of the original works.

about the translation and the translator/s. Secondly, regarding the large variety of translations and retranslations of this text, Venuti argues that a canonical text tends to be retranslated because "diverse domestic readerships will seek to interpret it according to their own values and hence develop different retranslation strategies that inscribe competing interpretations" (2004:25-6).This suggests that retranslation is a way to make one's interpretation(s) of a text visible through its publication. Not only can a textual interpretation become visible through the publication process, but the process of making the text visible can also be specifically highlighted by the translator, thus enhancing his or her own visibility through the paratexts.

Both scholars therefore situate paratexts as site of analysis. Coldiron explains that signs of "foreign" presence are found not only in translations but also in paratexts. In contrast with Venuti's concept of invisibility (2008), Coldiron also discusses visibility as a way of historicizing "foreign" presence in translation, in this sense, visibility allows readers to "trace broader cultural-aesthetic agendas related to translation as they change over time" (2012:189). This nuanced concept of translator visibility mediated through the paratexts can thus serve a methodological purpose for the study of translation history. Moreover, Venuti argues that retranslations "create" value by providing a competing interpretation of a text that has already been translated and whose translation is still accessible. Not only can retranslations "reflect changes in the values and institutions of the translating culture, but they can also produce such changes by inspiring new ways of reading and appreciating foreign texts" (Venuti 2004:36). Venuti claims that, as a form of intertextuality in a retranslation, paratexts "signal its status as a retranslation and make explicit the competing interpretation that the retranslator has tried to inscribe in the foreign text" (Venuti 2004:33). Against this theoretical background, it is argued that the different translators' discourses on La Fontaine's source text and their commentary on their own translations were deployed deliberately to enhance and amplify readers' experience of the English version of La Fontaine's *Fables* as a consciously mediated, and therefore not "invisible" (Venuti 2008), French-English translation.

This paper analyses four English versions of La Fontaine's *Fables*, from a corpus of 25 French-English translations published in Great Britain and the United States, the earliest version being published in 1754 and the most recent one in 2014 (see Appendix A for a list of these

translations). Appendix B provides a rigorous, detailed and comprehensive translation history based on a classification of key elements in the peritexts of 25 versions, about which, to my knowledge, no research has been carried out on so far within translation studies. The sheer volume of this corpus indicates *Fables* has been an iconic work for English-language readers since its first publication in 1754 and as such provides a sound basis for a case study in translation studies. While my paper touches on the far wider fields of book-history and French Studies, the research presented here is not intended to be comprehensive but rather a preliminary sampling of a substantial body of knowledge. Indeed, the present article is an initial analysis of a subset (4 texts) of the data presented in the Appendix, which has been designed to answer the following research questions: How have paratextual mediations of translator visibility changed over time in translations of *Fables*? What impact have these mediations had on the reader's experience of this work? The analysis focuses on Elizur Wright's translation (1882) and Norman Shapiro's three volumes of translations (1997, 2000, 2007). The early version was selected because it demonstrates high paratextual visibility, suggesting a particular 'status' accorded to translators at that time and place; the other versions show a new perspective on the visibility of "paratranslators" in the 21st century and justify the continued study of "paratexts", "peritexts" and the role (or influence) of "paratranslation". These terms are associated with Genette (1997). They have been discussed widely in recent translation-studies research (Garrido 2005, Frías 2012) and are introduced more fully in the next subsection.

The analysis begins with an overview of paratexts in the context of translation and retranslation. The focus of the analysis is on how changing visibilities of the translator are mediated in *Fables* in English translation at different junctures in time. Indeed, contrary to contemporary expectations about the translator's invisibility (Venuti 2008), the mid-nineteenth century translator was highly visible in "peritexts". According to Lefevere's concept of translation as rewriting (1992), all rewriting reveals an ideology and a poetics, which manipulates literature, so that it can function in a given society. This sense of "rewriting" is apparent in Wright's translation, which is analyzed below and could be seen as a form of paratranslation of original peritexts (Garrido 2003). Wright's visibility and voice in his preface demonstrates that the importance of translators in making foreign literary works available for the public in the nineteenth century was widely accepted and acknowledged at this time. By contrast, Shapiro's

contemporary versions show a new perspective on the visibility of para/translators in the twenty-first century. In this context, the paratexts reach out towards specific readerships, in the present case, readers who are receptive to both artistic (e.g. via illustrations) and informational dimensions of the fables (e.g. via a glossary on classical references in the text). Each of the four peritexts sought to frame different reading experiences and interpretations of the work as a French-English translation. The varying paratextual mediations of translator visibility are examined in different editions in English to better understand their influence on the reader's experience of reading the *Fables* and how these mediations may have influenced subsequent English translations. *Influence* here is understood in Armstrong's sense of *reception* when she explains, "the very act of translation is in itself a powerful indicator of reception" (2013:9). In this sense, the large number of retranslations of *Fables* in English also demonstrates the reception of this particular work of La Fontaine (Armstrong 2013:10). Analysis of the four versions highlights the importance of paratextual mediations as a means of increasing and directing readers' understanding of the *Fables.* This demonstrates the crucial role of "paratexts" as principal, not peripheral sites of mediation of translations and translators, editors, publishers and other actors involved in the production of books for changing readerships.

Paratexts: Peritexts and Epitexts

In his seminal work on paratexts, *Seuils* (1987), translated into English in 1997 as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Genette defines a paratext as the "verbal or other productions – such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations" that adorn, reinforce and accompany the text (1997:1). He distinguishes between peritexts and epitexts of a book. "Peritexts" are supplemental material physically surrounding the book (1997, xviii). They can be divided into the publisher's peritext – front and back covers, spines, inside flaps, list of other works by the author or the translator, the title page, blurbs - and prefaces and introductions, which can be written by the author, or the translator in the case of a translation, or by someone appropriate to present the text. "Epitexts" are texts written about the book but external to it (e.g.: interviews, book reviews) (1997, xviii). To Genette, the importance of peritexts and epitexts is their function: as "thresholds" through which readers access the contents of a book. Genette proposes a book's paratexts (peritexts and epitexts) as a mode of presentation for the reader to make an informed decision to read the core text of a book or not. For the publishers, a book's paratexts work "to

ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption in the form of a book" (1997:1). This is important to maximize commercial impact and/or academic prestige of the book.

To summarise recent discussion of paratexts and translation, Kovala (1996) argued that translations are "texts that are filtered through many selection and modification processes before reaching the reader" (1996:119), with the translator being only one of the mediators involved in the creation of the translated text. Thus, according to Kovala (1996), any meta-comment by the publisher, the editor, the translator, the illustrator, or a scholar is legitimate paratext. Smith & Wilson (2011:2) have criticized Genette's original taxonomy of paratexts, arguing that it lacks a historical perspective, (ibid.). However, Genette does acknowledge that different paratexts came with each format across different time periods, and that "in principle, every context serves as paratext" (1997:8). From the different, but closely related perspective of book history, Smith & Wilson (2011:5) show that paratexts provide a tool for studying the "book as object, rather than the book as text", with a focus on the material make-up of the text. This materiality is important with regard to retranslations, such as those under investigation here, because the book as object is the "material carrier" (Littau 2016:83) to present the creative works of humans and distribute them. Indeed, Armstrong (2013:5) has suggested that each book in itself is a "snapshot of the historic context in which it was produced". This matters for the translations of the *Fables*: the analysis of four texts below will reveal clues about the role which the translator and other book mediators have played from the Augustan period until now. In each case therefore, paratexts are recognized as carriers or repositories of information about the distribution and reception of texts throughout their historical trajectory.

Smith and Wilson also explain that the study of paratexts "allows us to grasp the extent to which paratextual materials work both outwards, altering the contexts and possibilities of the book's reception, and inwards, transforming not only the appearance but the priorities and tone of the text." They add that "paratextual elements are in operation all the way through the reader's experience of the text, not merely at the start, and they continuously inform the process of reading, offering multiple points of entry, interpretation and contestation" (2011:6). This broader understanding of the role of paratexts complements Genette's main focus on prefatorial peritexts,

acting as "thresholds" or as a "vestibule", leaving the option to look further into the book or leave it behind. While Genette argues that "the meaning and function of paratext are determined by 'the author and his allies' (2) and that paratexts operate as a way of establishing and securing authorial intention" (cited in Smith & Wilson 2011:7-8) Smith & Wilson themselves do not assume that the publisher is necessarily the author's ally (2011:8).

In this way, Smith and Wilson situate paratexts as zones where multiple, and sometimes competing, authorities and sources are the norms, describing each piece of prefatory matter as a "site of contestation and negotiation among authors, publishers/printers and readership(s)" (Marotti 1995:222, cf. Smith & Wilson 2011:8). This is relevant in the corpus under study where negotiation of space is apparent through the order in which forewords or introductions appear: publisher first, translator second (Wright 1882) or translator first and illustrator second (Shapiro 2000). This already shows a ranking of 'status', which can be, or may seem, conflictual to readers: the publisher has more authority than the translator, who has more authority than the illustrator. The translator tries to negotiate more authority by directly discussing choices of titles and addressing the reader to create complicity (Shapiro 2000:xiii), or by using more physical space in the book (Wright 1882).

Rhodes argues that translations should be considered as "metatexts in the sense that they represent something of a second-order kind", as texts about a previous text (2011:109), and paratext in translation ("paratexts of metatexts" [Rhodes 2011:110]) as a "paratext of transmission rather than mediation" (Smith & Wilson 2011:12) because of the "indeterminate textual status of translation" and the "uncertain social and cultural status of the translator" compared to the author of the work translated (Rhodes 2011:120). In sum, the materiality of texts and paratexts as manuscripts show that translators, editors and publishers among other actors involved in the production of books are making their role visible.

Indeed, the study of paratexts (peritexts and epitexts) in translation can also provide clues to political and ideological agendas surrounding a work when published in translation, and the role of the translator, or other mediators (editors, publishers) in communicating these agendas. Garrido (2005) and Frías (2012) use the term "paratranslation" to refer to the agendas of a work

"translated" via its paratexts by intermediaries or "paratranslators", which can include reviewers, editors or publishers, as well as the writer and translator themselves. Paratranslation is a form of translation through paratexts, which in most cases is target-oriented and as such reflects particular "target-oriented" ideologies (Garrido 2005:31) and in some cases, discourses of cultural appropriation (ibid). Using the term "paratranslation" also strengthens the focus on (para)texts in re-translations of a book by combining the multiple agents involved in the process under a single term.

The different paratextual mediations of translator (in)visibility and the extent of changing paratexts between translations reflect the fluctuating status of literary para/translators and classical texts in translation. In the case of this paper, this refers specifically to the context of re-translation. In turn, in the present study, this changing translator visibility and hence, variable para/translator status, modifies the reader's experience of the English translations of La Fontaine's *Fables* with regard to whether this work is approached more from an academic, and/or informational and/or artistic point of view. Without a detailed paratextual analysis taking into account variations in the visibility of translators, editors, publishers and other actors involved in the production of books, the different interpretations of the *Fables*, might go unnoticed by readers.

Peritexts and the Translator's Visibility

With regard to the research questions on which the paper is based (How have paratextual mediations of translator visibility changed over time in translations of *Fables*? and What impact have these mediations had on the reader's experience of this work?), this subsection considers briefly the theoretical relationship between paratexts and translator visibility, narrowing the focus down to a consideration of peritexts.

The issue of the visibility, or invisibility of the translator, is an ongoing debate in translation studies. In his seminal work, *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995/2008), Lawrence Venuti presented a history of English-language translation from the seventeenth century to the present, approached from the angle of the translator's invisibility. Venuti (2008:1) argues that the term "invisibility" describes the status of the translator in two ways: firstly, in how the translator

manipulates the text so that it does not read like a translation. By leaving no traces of the original language's structure and culture in the translated text, the translator removes all signs of foreignness in order to achieve fluency (ibid.). According to Venuti (1995:4), a fluent translation uses "current", "widely used" and "standard" language throughout the text. Secondly, through paratexts (including peritexts and epitexts), translators, publishers and reviewers can promote the concept of translator "invisibility" by presenting a lack of fluency in translations as a fatal flaw (ibid.) and the self-effacing translator as a status to be emulated (Coldiron 2012:196). Thus, translator visibility is paradoxical: translators can express themselves overtly or invisibly, but either choice of discourse could undermine their own status.

How is translator visibility articulated specifically through the peritexts? Peritexts can show the name of the translator on the cover, or may contain a preface written by or about the translator and/or an introduction in which the translator presents the text that s/he translated, typically providing some background as to the context in which the original was published, why it is being translated and providing details of the translation process. The translator, in agreement with the publisher, can also add glossaries, footnotes or endnotes within the text, to clarify for target readers' source language references or to comment on particular translation choices. Such peritextual additions can be used to increase or decrease the visibility and/or the status of the translator and have an impact on how the text is presented and supplemented. They are often used to enhance the edition by highlighting the celebrity status of the translator, thereby benefitting the publisher, but sometimes the reverse situation applies, and the translator is virtually eliminated from view.

Within the corpus of translations of the *Fables* under study in this paper, I looked at the presence or absence of the translator in the peritexts, reading the content of the peritexts as mediated by the publisher, another agent (e.g.: scholar, illustrator, editor) or by the translator him/herself. I consider the publisher's peritext as the "wrapping" of the book for its distribution, which also serves as a window onto the content (e.g.: front and back cover blurbs, inside flaps). Translators, editors and other parties (such as academic reviewers) supplement the written content to the translated work (e.g.: prefaces, introductions) to provide additional support to the reader's experience.

Peritexts in the English Translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*

Most of the translations in the corpus under investigation were published throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I focus on four editions in this paper: one by Wright (1882); and three by Shapiro (1997, 2000, 2007), which present the translations of the *Fables* in three volumes. These editions are representative of how paratexts can influence the reader's experience of English translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*. I focus on the peritexts (Genette 1997: xviii) in this study because I will analyse the presentation of the translations themselves, not the external discourses surrounding them, which would require an investigation of the epitexts.

In the four editions chosen for detailed discussion, the prefaces and introductions framing the translated *Fables* and written by editors or scholars are examined. In particular, the micro-functions of the following elements are analyzed with reference to Kovala (1996:134): (1) *identification and placing*— through the book bindings (front and back cover, spine) and title page—(2) *giving background and meta-textual information for the reader* (authorial or allographic - written by someone else than the author-, introductions and prefaces, dedications, translator's notes, appendices, further reading/bibliographies) and (3) *enhancing the work with illustrations* by suggesting that interpretations of a work can be made through them (1996:141).

The table in Appendix B sums up the presence or absence of these elements in all the twenty-five translations. A detailed analysis of peritexts is presented next, including the publisher's peritext, prefaces, and other peritexts written by the translator in the four selected translations and a discussion of their functions.

Analysis of Representative Peritexts

The peritexts of four translations from the corpus previously presented are analyzed in detail in this section. These translations were chosen on the grounds that they are representative of the different reader experiences the peritexts create: academic, informational or artistic. The translations will serve as a framework to delineate the functions of the corpus of translations of the *Fables* based on their peritextual elements. An additional table in Appendix B summarizes the macro-function(s) of the peritexts for each translation in the corpus.

While La Fontaine's original preface discusses his motivations for re-creating Aesop's fables, the prefaces in the translations of the *Fables* are used by translators to discuss their own motivation for taking up the translation and how they proceeded with the task. These prefaces, once read, will modify the reader's knowledge of the original work and the translation (contextual/cultural, semantic and stylistic): the subsequent reading experience of the *Fables* will be influenced by this "preparatory" reading, emphasizing either the artistic aspect of the work or its academic value, which might or might not be in line with the reader's original reading purpose (in the latter case, the preparatory reading might also have refocused the reader's intentions). By the same token, after reading the prefaces, the reader has been made aware of the fact that the work s/he will read has been made accessible by a translator. The reader is therefore better able to assess the effort applied in translating the *Fables,* and more generally, the nature of the translator's work.

Translator or allographic introductions in the translations discuss La Fontaine's life and work and his classical references in the *Fables* (Thomson 1884, Michie 1979, Wood 1995, Shapiro 2000, Craig 2008, Pirie 2008). Wright (1884) is an exception: in his introduction, the publisher focuses on how Wright took up the translation. The only other allographic introductions that discuss the translator are one written by a poet, editor and anthologist of poetry, Hollander, in Shapiro (2000), and another translator, Chandler, in Pirie (2008), and both are much shorter than the one in Wright (1884). This gives a clue to the evolution of the status of translators across time: they were recognized as major figures in providing foreign books when Wright published his translation, but lost their central place from the nineteenth century onwards. The focus is subsequently on the original author (Tabakowska 2009:509; Katan 2011:146-147), as we will see in the following analysis of representative paratexts.

The Fables of La Fontaine; Translator - Wright, 1841, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs (1882)

The first translation I discuss is "*The Fables of La Fontaine* A New Edition, With Notes By J. W. M. Gibbs and by Elizur Wright Jr. (1882), a re-edition from the original version published in 1841. This edition is exceptional in that the translator is doubly visible: both through the publisher's preface and through the translator's own advertisement and preface of 21 pages. Prefaces, as defined by Genette (1997:161), comprise any type of introductory text, authorial or allographic, placed before or after the text (called a postface or afterword in the latter case).

The publisher's preface is titled "To The Present Edition, With Some Account Of The Translator", and opens with: "The translator has remarked, in the "Advertisement" to his original edition (which follows these pages), on the singular neglect of La Fontaine by English translators up to the time of his own work", despite the existence of three earlier translations by Mandeville, Denis and Thornbury. Thornbury's translation is acknowledged by the publisher as another "complete translation" identified only as accompanying Gustave Doré's illustrations of this edition, in a large quarto format, which "cannot make any claim to be a handy-volume edition" (Gibbs 1882).

The publisher proceeds to give a biographical account of the translator, from his birth as the son of the mathematician Elizur Wright to his work on La Fontaine's *Fables*. The publisher explains that: "The sixth edition, published in 1843, was a slightly expurgated one, designed for schools". Wright omitted five fables and replaced them with six of his own. The publisher states the intention to include Wright's six original fables in this 1882 edition, in order to expose "Wright's powers at once as an original poet and an original fabulist". Here, the question as to whether Wright was involved in the decision to add his fables and remove some of the original author's is relevant to the discussion of translator subservience to the author, which provides information as to the status of translators. For example, in his advertisement to the translation, Wright explains how he came to translate the *Fables*:

> I dropped into Charles de Behr's repository of foreign books, in Broadway, New York, and there, for the first time, saw La Fontaine's Fables. […] I became a

> purchaser, and gave the book to my little boy, then just beginning to feel the intellectual magnetism of pictures. In the course of the next year, he frequently tasked my imperfect knowledge of French for the story […]. This led me to inquire whether any English version existed […]".

He found none, however, and thus decided to undertake the translation himself. He then gives an *excusatio*, a literary tradition of translator's modesty and deference to the original and thanks those who helped him in his task (Coldiron 2012:196). The *excusatio* is formulated by translators in introductions, prefaces or notes preceding their translations and expressing their humility in how their translation cannot equal the original, although they strived to render the qualities of the original work. Here is an example from the present translation under investigation:

> --as it is, not as it ought to be--I commit to your kindness. I do not claim to have succeeded in translating "the inimitable La Fontaine,"--perhaps I have not even a right to say in his own language--"J'ai du moins ouvert le chemin."[4] However this may be, I am, gratefully, Your obedient servant, Elizur Wright, Jr." [1841] (1882).[5]

Wright "commits", "does not claim to have succeeded", "has not even a right to say" but is "grateful" and signs "Your obedient servant". These few lines show Wright's subservience as a translator to La Fontaine, the original author. However, this position seems at odds with the publisher's note that five original *Fables* were removed and replaced by six of Wright's. Did Wright have a say in this decision? The publisher declares that: "As a specimen of Mr. Wright's powers at once as an original poet and an original fabulist, we here print (for the first time in England, we believe) the substituted fables of his sixth edition". If only the publisher made this decision, this would support the idea that translators enjoyed a higher status at this time (Tabakowska 2009:509; Katan 2011:146-147). Indeed, by inserting six Fables within the large collection of La Fontaine's in translation, it could be argued that the publisher wanted to show that Wright was as good as La Fontaine, thus likely considering him as an author as well as a translator. However, if both Wright and the publisher took part in the decision to replace five original fables with six of his own, then we might argue that Wright wanted to show his talent possibly to prove that he was as talented as La Fontaine. However, this warrants further research.

[4] "I have, however, opened the way" (my translation).
[5] The online platform from which the translation is available, Project Gutenberg, does not provide page numbers; therefore, the reference for this quotation is limited to the year of publication.

This could be seen as a strategy to attempt an escape from the translator's subservience to the author. However, this last hypothesis is less likely since the procedure is overtly announced in the publisher's preface. This question of equating the talent of the translator with that of the author has an impact not only on the perceived status of translators compared to authors, but also on the value of the work being translated: the very act of inserting some of the translator's fables into the original work in translation to show their qualities can lead the reader to perceive the academic value of the *Fables*.

Wright's preface follows: "A PREFACE, on Fable, The Fabulists, And La Fontaine. By The Translator". He discusses in a poetic tone the origin of the apologue, which was "invented to give power and wings to moral lessons", and he provides examples of how, in Antiquity, orators used apologues to give advice to kings. Wright then provides an in-depth account of the life of Aesop and the history of the *Fables* through Greek and Roman times. He explains that while La Fontaine's first volume of the *Fables* (1668) drew more from Aesop and Phaedrus, the second volume was inspired by the Indian fabulist Pilpay and by two volumes of fables, the *Pantcha Tantra*[6] and *Hitopadesa*, from Hindu culture. Indeed, Wright notes that La Fontaine took interest in reading ancient literature, but "only through translation". Wright continues his preface by presenting the life and work of La Fontaine, quoting La Bruyère[7] to describe his talent: "He instructs while he sports, persuades men to virtue by means of beasts, and exalts trifling subjects to the sublime". Wright shares his experience reading the work of La Fontaine by saying that "To those who read it in the original, it is one of the few which never cloy the appetite". With this phrase, however, Wright seems to argue that the *Fables* can be truly enjoyed only in the original French, and thus discrediting his own translation and the status of translations in its wake. With this wealth of detailed information on La Fontaine and his sources of inspiration, the academic value of the *Fables* (and of this translation) is further demonstrated to the reader.

Wright shows with his preface that translators were key players in making foreign literary works available both physically (available in their native language) and intellectually (understanding the

[6] Also spelled *Pañcatantra* (Betts 2014:xix).
[7] Jean de La Bruyère (1645-1696) was a French philosopher and moralist. The quote is an excerpt from his speech when admitted at the *Académie Française* in 1693, in which he praised La Fontaine (Wright 1882).

sources and purposes of the original work) for the public in the nineteenth century. In the present study, he did this by emphasizing the informative value of the original work, explaining the context in which it was written and its literary references. This was achieved not through the erasure of the original author and culture, but by *discussing* the life and work of La Fontaine, his knowledge and admiration for Aesop's fables, as well as the literary and socio-political context of the time. In other words, although it is a peritext about La Fontaine, this passage is, in many ways, about the translator and the sense of his own status and voice in the work. By highlighting his depth of knowledge and appreciation of La Fontaine and Aesop, Wright suggests that the quality of the translation itself is thus enhanced.

Moreover, Wright's voice in these peritexts allows him to convey to the reader his passion for the French and ancient source cultures as well as and the work emerging from it (Bassnett and Bush 2006:3; McRae 2012:72). This edition is important because it not only provides a wealth of information on Wright's view of La Fontaine's sources of inspiration, but also on the translator's task for this specific work. As a result, the peritexts in this edition emphasize the informative and academic value of the original text, which might have influenced the reception of subsequent translations. Moreover, the publisher praises the work of the translator, and supports his talent for translation by emphasizing that he is already an original poet and fabulist. Wright is thus highly visible as a translator and enjoys a status similar to that of the author. In the corpus of 25 *Fables* translations under investigation, the translations which emerged in the following century show little to no presence of a translator. However, the next translations to be analyzed, published over 150 years later, show how the translator and in the present case, the illustrator can become visible once again.

Fifty Fables of La Fontaine, Translator – Shapiro, 1997: University of Illinois Press
Once again, la Fontaine: Sixty More Fables, Translator – Shapiro, 2000: Wesleyan University Press.
The Complete Fables of Jean de La Fontaine, Translator – Shapiro, 2007: University of Illinois Press.

Norman Shapiro originally published his translation of fifty of the fables in 1985, an additional fifty in 1995 and a volume comprising sixty more fables – the last ones to be translated - in 2000. The editions I used are a re-edition of the first volume (1997), and of the third volume (2000). Shapiro's preface and introduction in the 1997 edition is under focus here, as well as the 2000 print edition peritexts and the 2007 translator's preface. Prefaces and introductions differ in that the preface is updated from edition to edition and focuses mainly on the experience derived from producing the book, whereas the introduction is unique and centered on fundamental topics or issues related to the book (Genette 1997:161).

In the 1997 preface, Shapiro explains his original intention to translate a dozen fables, as well as his choice of title for the volume. He also acknowledges the help that was provided to him, notably that of Seamus Heaney, for his "appreciative reading". In the introduction that follows (1997), Shapiro discusses his reason for translating. He argues that translation "is a form of recreation", but also of "re-creation" (1997: xiii). This leads to the more difficult question of "how". Shapiro quotes Heaney, who distinguishes the "tone" from the "tune" in translation as metaphors for respectively translating the "manner of speech" and the "meaning". Shapiro argues that the *tone* (manner) is more challenging to render in the translation of poetry, which he terms "artistic translation", as was the case when translating the *Fables*. Shapiro then discusses the style of La Fontaine, "unshackled from a rigid regularity" (1997: xiv) but resulting in a tension between freedom and constraint.

Although he is discussing La Fontaine's style, Shapiro foregrounds his own style by calling himself a "re-creator" rather than a "creator" - the author in this case. By using the same meaningful term, "creator" and adding "re"- in front, Shapiro seems to try to bring translator and author closer together in status. The concept of *re-creation* is reminiscent of Derrida's deconstruction (Godard 1989, Venuti 2000:218): by re-creating, the translator can showcase his/her work and skills to render the original. However, the very fact that the translator discusses his work of re-creation makes that work visible – otherwise, the creativity put into the translation would remain invisible. Shapiro then decides to bring himself to the more respected status of author by introducing himself, in both a preface and an introduction.

With regard to the publisher's peritext, the 2000 edition, illustrated by David Schorr, shows Shapiro's name on the spine, as well as Shapiro's and Schorr's names on the title page. Both also have dedications. This edition also contains two forewords, by the translator and by the illustrator. Shapiro first discusses his choice of title for this second volume of translations. Although Shapiro initially explained that he did not translate all the *Fables* in one volume to "take his pleasure in measured doses, and to leave some joy to the future" (1997:xvi), one cannot help but wonder whether publishing the translations in three volumes was a deliberate act, to imitate La Fontaine's publication of the *Fables*, also in three separate volumes, and to be as "faithful" as possible to his work, even in the process of producing them. Via this imitation, Shapiro shows that the translator can also be creative, as he argued in the 1997 introduction. In the second paragraph of the foreword, Shapiro introduces the fables translated, which are: "his longer, more philosophical texts, less well-known to the general readership than the usual fare memorized by French school children for generations and frequently anthologized" (2000:xiii). He takes the opportunity to praise La Fontaine's work by arguing that "No one with only a child's limited life experience can fully appreciate their moral messages, any more than a child, with limited literary exposure, can revel in the aesthetic of his individual, engaging poetic style" (ibid.). Shapiro goes on to discuss his task as a translator, saying he attempts to be faithful to both "messages and style" (ibid.). He reiterates the joy of translating La Fontaine, while praising him again: "To read La Fontaine in the original is a joy; to translate him is no less so" (ibid.). Shapiro provides the main reference he used to write his notes, gives the reference of the French source text he chose and explains that he chose it because it "purports to be a faithful representation of the last edition corrected by La Fontaine himself" (2000:xiv). Before proceeding to the acknowledgements, he also lets the reader know that he kept the original seventeenth century French (the volume is an en-face version), with a few alterations he argues were probable misprints: "Readers familiar with more modern French will notice that I have again reproduced it with all its often disturbing vagaries and inconsistencies of seventeenth-century orthography and punctuation, taking the liberty of altering only a few probable misprints" (Shapiro 2000:xiv).

In sum, in this foreword Shapiro again shows his subservience to the author by praising him, but also brings himself forward by discussing his work and his textual choices. It is interesting to note that he considers the French edition "faithful" to the last edition corrected by La Fontaine.

"Faithfulness" is a concept in Translation Studies that notably draws from St Jerome and Yan Fu (Munday 2008) and that stipulates that a translation must resemble the content of the original as much as possible, in order not to "betray" the original work. It seems Shapiro considers that subsequent original editions of a source text are similar to translations in that they must be as close as possible to the original author's idea of his text in the present case. As a result, much like considering his work as a re-creation, viewing the product of his work simply as another edition (whether in French or English) of the sole original work La Fontaine crafted yet again brings his task closer to that of the author. This edition also provides information on the cultural references in the original text through endnotes and a bibliography, thus further emphasizing the informational value of the original work.

In the 2000 edition, the illustrator, David Schorr, also provides useful insights into the original work and the translation: he explains that in his illustrations, there were fewer humans than animals and that the humans "seemed to learn their expression and movements from the animals, rather than the other way around" (2000:xv). There, the illustrator attempted to convey, or *translate*, some of the meaning from the original through his illustrations. Schorr also had to think of creative ways to illustrate the double page: "I had also noticed a certain formal difficulty in designing a book with facing page translations of poetry where the original on the left page always faced the translation on the right" (2000:xv). He argues that he broke the monotony of the symmetrical location of the illustrations by showing the "asymmetry" of the opposite characters often presented in the fables. Schorr also explains: "The fables in this collection are often more complex, and I wanted to reflect that complexity in the illustrations" (2000:xvi). He concludes that "because fable writers traditionally "reinvent" each other's material – La Fontaine borrowed from Æsop […] while later writers borrowed from La Fontaine – I myself have adapted many images from the history of art and of illustration" (2000:xvi). This last quote can become particularly relevant in the domain of translation if one sees it in the sense of: "writers always have external sources of inspiration", and are thus also "re-creators", which, as discussed above, is how Shapiro describes himself as a translator. By way of this analogy and his creativity to accommodate his work to the format of the volume, the illustrator also brings himself closer to the author/creator, who also shaped his work based on previous sources of inspiration. As a result, two of the main mediators involved in the presentation of this volume, the translator and

the illustrator, are highly visible in this edition, thus elevating their status within their profession. This supports the inclusion of illustrations and translations as paratexts discussed by Stallybrass in his afterword to Smith & Wilson (2011), and in response to Genette's exclusion of these elements in his classification in *Seuils* (1987).

An introduction by John Hollander, poet, editor and anthologist of contemporary poetry, follows the two forewords. He presents the original work by discussing Æsopian fables and other sources of inspiration, as well as the literary qualities of the text. Hollander finishes by discussing Shapiro's work, calling him "Professor Norman Shapiro" which points to his status beyond that of "translator". Indeed, with reference to Bourdieu (1984:128), higher-education teachers enjoy a higher socio-economic status than "cultural intermediaries", in which I place translators; both enjoy a larger cultural capital than economic capital. He praises his style as a translator and seems to forestall reader's potential remarks on deviations from the original: "In Shapiro's versions, there is always an assurance of metrical control, and a sharp aptness to his decisions about diction, so that when, for example, he makes an egregious emendation or substitution, it often rings true" (2000:xxvii). He also quotes one of Shapiro's translations and analyzes the effect achieved on the reader through the verses in English. By introducing Shapiro's work, Hollander adds to Shapiro's visibility as a translator and contributes to granting him a higher status than if Shapiro had remained invisible in the edition of his own translation.

The 2007 edition is also introduced by John Hollander and illustrated by David Schorr. In the translator's preface, Shapiro refers back to Heaney's "tone" and "tune" and uses the metaphor of "music" and "self-standing work" to refer to form and content (2007:xix). These respectively refer to the notion of translator as composer, as well as that of the translator as writer, whose work does not appear to rely on any other source (although as we have just seen, authors draw from other sources of inspiration). He also discusses the twelve-syllabic line versus English iambic pentameter: "In English poetry, as Pope tells us, the twelve-syllable line is overlong and heavy […] it makes more aesthetic sense to use its canonical English equivalent, the iambic pentameter, and to mold it into a convincing whole […]" (ibid.). He adds: "the reader who troubles to compare my individual lines with La Fontaine's will *not* usually find a one-for-one correspondence" explaining that he did not translate literally, again to forestall potential reader

criticisms about the differences between original and translation. He advocates letting the reader decide (2007: xx). Finally, Shapiro reiterates the joy of reading La Fontaine in the original and the joy of translating it. This is significant beyond the translator's motivation: it shows how La Fontaine's work is timeless, and how he achieves an "afterlife" through it (Benjamin 1968).

As a result, primarily through the translator's visibility, and that of the illustrator, Shapiro's editions show the reader the artistic value of La Fontaine's work, but also the informational or academic value of the work. These are different translations with a different intention from that of Wright. They aim at providing the reader with a fully artistic experience, combining the reading of poetry and the enjoyment of illustrations which support the meaning conveyed in the fables, while also providing information to enhance the meaning of the text. Wright's translation emerges at a time of "renewed and vigorous interest in ancient Greece" (Vance & Wallace 2015:3), but also in a century of revolution and reform in which the "classical past was reimagined and enlisted in political and cultural battles to inspire revolution or press for reform, or to establish political and social loyalties and commitments that were based on contemporary issues of class, ideology, gender, or sexual orientation" (Vance & Wallace 2015:8). In addition, readership in England largely increased during this period but verse composition and Classical learning still predominated in universities, which were still accessible only by an elite[8]. As a result, Wright's audience would have been élite, well-read readers. At the turn of the twenty-first century, however, when literary classics are made accessible to the public at large via public and state schooling, Shapiro's translations reflect another, but nonetheless specific readership: readers receptive to both an artistic experience of the fables as well as an informational one.

Shapiro's editions go back to the model set by Wright in that not only the translator but also the illustrator discusses the original work and their task of rendering it in another language or via (non-discursive?) artwork. However, the language is less academic and the lengths of the forewords are not prescriptive to the reader. Yet again, Shapiro's translations are targeted to a

[8] "At the beginning of our period [1790-1880] substantial classical knowledge was an overwhelmingly masculine affair, largely confined to schoolmasters and the clergy, the expensively educated, and the leisure class". (Vance & Wallace 2015:14).

niche audience: an audience that wishes to experience the fables not only through poetry, but also through artwork and para/textual explanations.

This peritextual analysis shows that the status and the presentation of La Fontaine's *Fables* in English translations have varied over the centuries, as evidenced through the peritexts. In Wright's translation, published roughly 150 years after La Fontaine's original publication of his *Fables*, the emphasis is put on the intellectual value of the work to cater for readers of the élite. Shapiro and his illustrator present the *Fables* in English translation as a work of both informational and artistic value. With reference to Braudel's distinction between the long, middle and short term emerging from the *Annales* school of history and described by D'Hulst (1995:24), the long-term perception of translators in society varies depending on middle term situations of reception of translation in the English-speaking world in the mid-nineteenth century and at the turn of the twenty-first century. It also varies with regard to the short-term acts of translators, publishers, editors and other actors involved in the production of books in these time periods.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have analyzed how the peritexts of these four translations present translators, editors, publishers and other actors involved in the production of books as playing a key role in mediating the works of La Fontaine. The early version show high peritextual visibility suggesting a particular 'status' accorded to translators in the mid-nineteenth century. Shapiro's contemporary versions show a new perspective on the visibility of para/translators in the twenty-first century and warrant further study of peritexts and the role of "paratranslation". Each of the four peritexts sought to frame different reading experiences and interpretations of the work as a French-English translation. One common theme is that the artistic and/or the academic value of the original work is emphasized in all four different versions, albeit in different ways.

According to Shapiro (1997:xv), the use of La Fontaine's work as "pre-text" by other authors, who created stories stemming from the Fables, is what makes the fabulist still present today. However, as the corpus under investigation shows, the translators' work has also kept La Fontaine's work alive and allowed it to flourish until the present: in Benjamin's terms (1968), this corresponds to La Fontaine's afterlife. The sharing of translators' experience of translating

the *Fables* takes place in peritexts, which create a new visibility for them. Not only does this enhance the status of their translation by explaining the rationale behind it, but it "translates" the labor that went into composing it as a translation, enhancing the status of translators themselves.

The paper shows that peritexts of the English versions of La Fontaine's *Fables* emphasized three readings of the original work: academic and/or informational, and/or artistic. These peritexts give a different status to La Fontaine's work depending on the audience targeted by the edition. Moreover, peritexts in the translations provide a site for the translator to be more visible to the readers. What I could not discuss are the reader responses to the various translations of the *Fables* or the readers' purposes for choosing a specific translation, contrasted with the intended effect of the translations communicated via their peritexts. This could be conducted by studying epitexts of past and present translations, such as public responses (Genette 1997:354) or mediations between readers and translators via a journalist, such as interviews, conversations, colloquia and discussions – current or archived (Genette 1997:357). Further research is needed into the socio-cultural backgrounds of the time and place of publication to examine how the perception of the work and the author were shaped through the text for particular audiences. Finally, translations into English of other fables could be studied to gain further insight into the interaction between this double reading of visibility and status of translators and translations. The present study showed that peritexts can influence the reader's experience of a work in translation, opening the way for further paratextual research on translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*.

Anne Neveu
Department of Modern and Classical Language Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, Kent State University, Kent, 44242 Ohio, USA
aneveu@kent.edu

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Appendix A

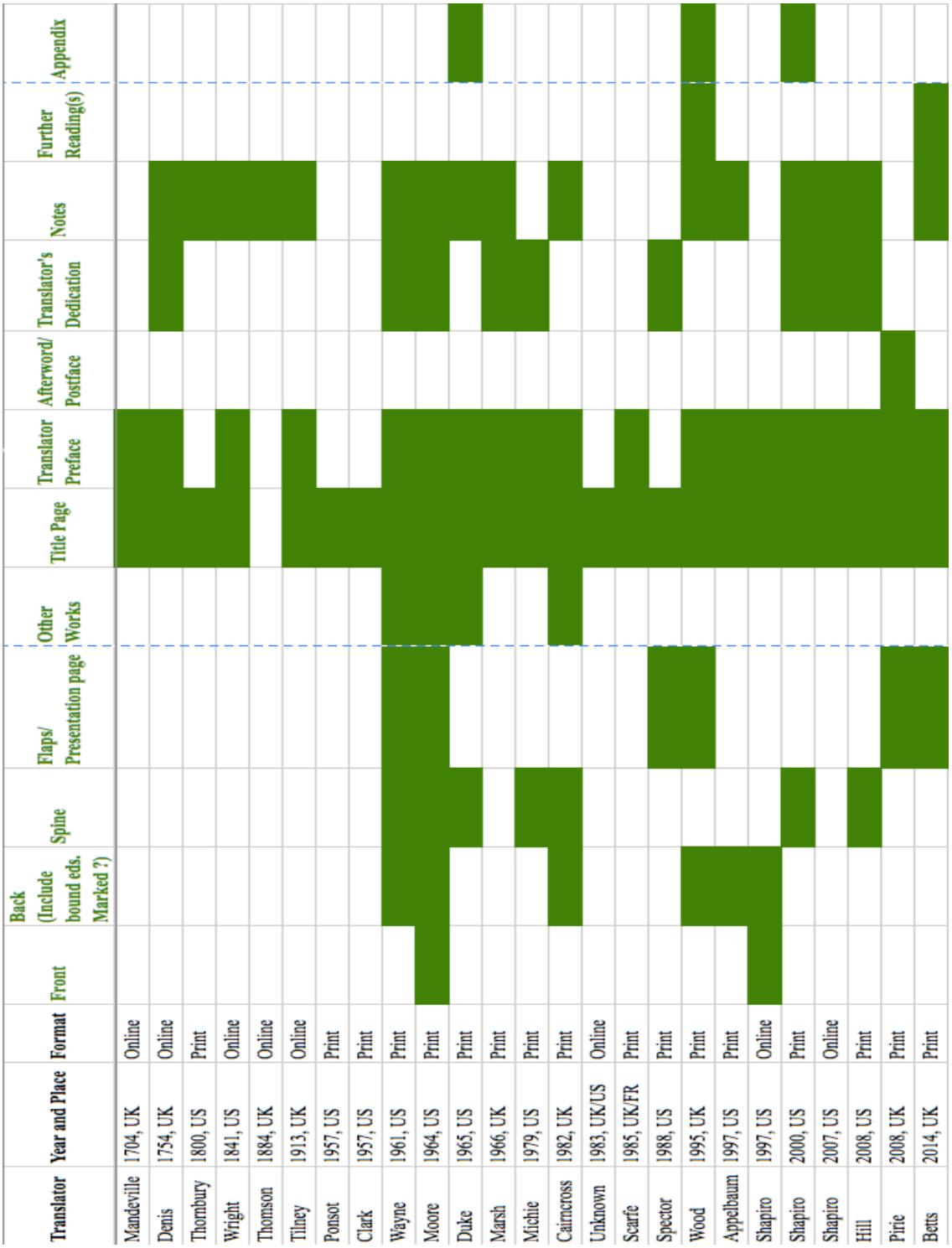
Table 1 provides the name of the translator, publisher, year and place of publication of the translation, and the format under which the translation was available for this study.

Table 1. Diachronic corpus of English translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*

	Translator	Publisher	Year and Place	Format
1	Bernard Mandeville	The Augustan Reprint Society	1704, London. Re-edited 1966, Los Angeles.	Online: The Project Gutenberg
2	Charles Denis	Tonson & Draper	1754, London	Online: Google Books
3	Walter Thornbury	Cassell Publishing Company	1800, New York	Print
4	Elizur Wright	J.W.M. Gibbs	1841, Boston. Re-edited 1882, London	Online: The Project Gutenberg eBook
5	Robert Thomson	J.C. Nimmo and Bain	1884, London/Edinburgh	Online: Google Books
6	F.C. Tilney	J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.	1913, London	Online: The Project Gutenberg eBook
7	Marie Ponsot	Grosset & Dunlap	1957, New York	Print
8	Eunice Clark	George Braziller, Inc.	1957, New York	Print
9	Philip Wayne	Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc.	1961, New York	Print
10	Marianne Moore	The Viking Press	1964, New York	Print
11	Francis Duke	The University Press of Virginia	1965, Charlottesville	Print
12	Edward Marsh	Dent, Everyman's Library	1966, London	Print
13	James Michie	The Viking Press	1979, New York	Print
14	John Cairncross	Colin Smythe	1982, Gerrards Cross (GB)	Print
15	Unknown	John Lane/The Bodley Head	1983, London/New York	Online: The Project Gutenberg eBook
16	Francis Scarfe	Publications of the British Institute in Paris	1985, Paris	Print
17	Norman Spector	Northwestern University Press	1988, Evanstown IL	Print
18	Christopher Wood	Oxford University Press	1995, London	Print
19	Stanley Appelbaum	Dover Publications, Inc.	1997, New York	Print
20	Norman Shapiro	University of Illinois Press	1997, Urbana IL	Online: Google Books
21	Norman Shapiro	Wesleyan University Press	2000, Middleton, Conn	Print
22	Norman Shapiro	University of Illinois Press	2007, Middleton, Conn	Online: Google Books
23	Craig Hill	Arcade Publishing	2008, New York	Print
24	Gordon Pirie	Hesperus Poetry	2008, London	Print
25	Christopher Betts	Oxford University Press	2014, London	Print

Appendix B

Table summing up the presence or absence of peritexts to English translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*.



Appendix C

Table summarizing the macro-function(s) of the peritexts of each translation in the corpus and the main discussion in the prefatorial situation of communication.

Translator	Year and Place	Peritextual Macro-Function	Mainly Discusses
Mandeville	*1704, UK*	*Info/Acad*	*Criticizes translation style*
Denis	*1754, UK*	*Info/Acad*	*Sources*
Thornbury	*1800, US*	*Info/Acad*	*LF's work and time*
Wright	*1841, US*	*Info/Acad*	*Sources*
Thomson	*1884, UK*	*Info/Acad*	*LF's work and time*
Tilney	1913, UK	Artistic/Info	Purpose as translator
Ponsot	**1957, US**	**Artistic**	**N/A**
Clark	**1957, US**	**Artistic**	**N/A**
Wayne	*1961, US*	*Info/Acad*	*LF's work and time*
Moore	1964, US	Artistic/Info	Purpose as translator
Duke	1965, US	Artistic/Info	Purpose as translator
Marsh	1966, UK	Artistic/Info	Purpose as translator
Michie	*1979, US*	*Info/Acad*	*LF's work and time*
Cairncross	1982, UK	Artistic/Info	Purpose as translator
Unknown	**1983, UK/US**	**Artistic**	**N/A**
Scarfe	1985, UK/FR	Artistic/Info	Purpose as translator
Spector	1988, US	Artistic/Info	Purpose of translator
Wood	*1995, UK*	*Info/Acad*	*LF's work and time*
Appelbaum	*1997, US*	*Info/Acad*	*LF's work and time*
Shapiro	**1997, US**	**Artistic**	**Purpose as translator**
Shapiro	2000, US	Artistic + Info/Acad	Purpose as translator + Classical References
Shapiro	**2007, US**	**Artistic**	**Purpose as translator**
Hill	2008, US	Artistic + Info/Acad	Purpose as translator + Classical References
Pirie	2008, UK	Artistic/Info	Purpose of translator
Betts	*2014, UK*	*Info/Acad*	*LF's work and time*