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Translating Wordplays
in Rick Riordan's
*Percy Jackson and The
Olympians*

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INTRODUCTION

Upon the discovery of Rick Riordan's work, I fell in rapture with this new, yet familiar world that unravelled before me. The *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (*PJO* for short) series started with the first volume *The Lightning Thief*, published on the first of July 2005, and expands throughout five volumes in total which constitutes the corpus of this work. The world depicted in these books is then further developed through multiple sequel series of books that we decided not to work on for the sake of limiting the corpus to a succinct amount of books.

The story revolves around the teenager Percy Jackson, who finds out that Greek Gods are real, and more than that, that he is himself a demigod, son of Poseidon. We then follow his struggles as he becomes the epicentre of multiple events and quests with the fate of the world at stake, from a conflict between major Gods, to the resurrection of a being older than the Gods, culminating in a war between monsters and demigods in the middle of Manhattan. The setup is thus a world mixing Greek Mythology and our modern world, seen from the point of view of a teenager. As such, this book can be classified as youth literature, a genre which has seen a massive rise in readership thanks to international successes such as the *Harry Potter* series by J.K.Rowling, and many more that followed, and this genre comes with its specific stakes and its specific codes, necessary to successfully appeal to its target audience. One of the key devices used in youth literature is wordplay. It provides rhythm to the text in different ways, either by creating a break in the narrative, or by enhancing it, the effect produced thus catches the attention of the reader in the process. Wordplay can also be an important tool for an author in order to define their style.

In this case, the primary source of wordplay in these books is the author Rick Riordan. He did not start as a youth literature writer. In fact, he was for a long time a teacher, writing adult mystery novels on the side. This career as a teacher taught him a lot on how to interact with kids,

how to catch their attention, which then became a valuable experience when it came to writing stories with kids as the target reader. The idea for *PJO* came from his son's request to hear tales about Greek mythology as a bedtime story, which eventually made Rick recall an exercise he did in some of his classes in which the goal was for the kids to create their own demigod and write about one of their adventures. He used that with his son when he ran out of myths to tell him about, and from there (and the suggestion from his son to make this bedtime story into a book), the *PJO* universe truly came to life. As for Rick's style, it is peculiar in the sense that he decided to write almost in the same general style as he did in his mystery novels. In his own words that we can find on his website rickriordan.com, he tells us: "I didn't simplify anything to write *The Lightning Thief*. I didn't worry about vocabulary or sentence length or book length […] I think it would be a mistake to 'write down' to kids. They hate that. They want to be treated like intelligent and sophisticated readers". He adds that of course the contents are not the same in *PJO* and in his mystery novels, the latter being designed for adults there a more mature themes, more violence. I strongly agree with this point of view, youth literature should not suffer from an oversimplification of language and style just because kids are the target reader. On the contrary, the fact that they can be challenged by a book will push them to learn further, to develop their reading skills early on, which can only be beneficial for the rest of their life. Furthermore, it is precisely the fact that Rick Riordan kept a similar writing style when writing adult mystery books and youth literature that makes the latter enjoyable for any demographic. In my experience, it was the discovery of wordplay in kids novels that inspired me early on to try and find out how it functioned, how to make my own puns in order to trigger laughter or just for the thrill of it. That is why wordplay is the aspect that struck me the most in Rick Riordan's works and why it sparked this study specifically.

However, this is not just a study of wordplay, as my other main interest lies in translation. This is the reason why I labelled Rick Riordan as the primary source of wordplay in these books,

as in my opinion, the translator holds an important place as the secondary source of wordplay due to the need to translate them, process that often involves a great participation from the translator. The translator for the *PJO* series is Mona de Pracontal, a translator who has worked on a variety of genres, from fantasy to crime fiction, and even sociological essays with the example of her translations of Chimamanda Adichie. Her earlier works have been criticised at times for the strong changes made to the universe of the books she was translating, notably changes she made to characters' names and such, but her choices can be explained by the fact that youth literature in France was not seen the same way it is now. Names and vocabulary were often considered too complicated for children to read, and thus the publishers often asked for a simplification of those aspects. Fortunately, this vision is rarer nowadays, and translators are able to keep the names and style as close to the text as necessary. After these works which made her more experienced as a translator, Mona was thus put in charge of translating the *PJO* series, as well as its sequels *Heroes of Olympus* and *The Trials of Apollo*, which implies that she inherited the task to take this world, and make it accessible for a young French readership, which is no small task. In this process, she had to tackle my main subject of study for this paper: wordplay. The translation of wordplay is a challenge to any translator, and while in my analysis I will be commenting on her choices and proposing my own solutions in certain instances, I have the utmost respect for her work and I do so solely for the sake of argumentation and research.

The question that this paper will thus focus on is that of the impact that wordplay has over a fictional world and why its translation matters, and in order to investigate this it is necessary to take a look at the intricacies of wordplay. Then, a study of the process of translation through the prism of youth literature will further expand the scope of the research, followed by an analysis of what makes the roots of a fictional world, to end with concrete examples of the operation of world-building through language and words.

I- THE INTRICACIES OF WORDPLAY

A-General overview

Wordplay as a word can be quite self-explanatory, as can be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it is "the action of playing with words; witty use of words, esp. of verbal ambiguities". This definition is however too general, wordplay is a multifaceted concept and it is necessary to explore it more in depth if we want to study it through the prism of translation. Going back to the origins of wordplay is complex, it is impossible to pinpoint the exact moment people started to twist language to create new meanings, be it for comedy or any other purpose. However, we can note that wordplay has been a fundamental aspect of English literature, the first example coming to mind being Shakespeare's plays, in which words are constantly played with one way or another, for example some of Hamlet's first words are "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (act1, scene 2) to describe his now uncle and stepfather Claudius. English literature is also closely linked to wordplay through the genre of 'nonsense', which intertwines nonsensical and sensible to create a new kind of logic, one of the most notable figures of the 'nonsense' being Lewis Carroll with *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), a work which is so filled to the brim with wordplay that it is still a reference on the subject to this day. On the side of French literature, wordplay can be seen in the works of many great authors. A few examples are cited by Jacqueline Henry in *La Traduction des Jeux de Mots* when she writes : « on en trouve chez Villon, Rabelais, Molière, Balzac, Hugo, Apollinaire, Prévert et bien d'autres encore » (2003: 13).

Wordplay is a vast and widespread subject, found in literature from ancient periods, as we just saw, to this day, but also in a multitude of different fields such as advertising in which it often plays a central role, and just everyday conversation. As a consequence, we can witness that countless studies treat wordplay as their main focus. The book *Cultures and*

Traditions of Wordplay and Wordplay Research published by Esme Winter-Froemel and Verena Thaler is a fine example of this plurality of studies as it brings together contributions from over thirty individuals on the subject of wordplay under a variety of aspects. An example given involves studies of wordplay in relation to a specific author such as Shakespeare, as it can reveal certain specific patterns and thus reveal the author's own perception and use of wordplay, such a study would be Delabastita's *There's a Double Tongue – An investigation into the translation of Shakespeare's wordplay, with special reference to Hamlet*, who focuses on Shakespeare's works to highlight translation issues related to wordplay. In the same vein, we can find studies of wordplay in a literary genre, the example given being 'nonsense' literature, which flourishes with extreme examples of wordplay as established earlier, Elizabeth Sewell's *The Field of Nonsense* aims to define the very nature of nonsense literature and its distinction from gibberish.

It is also possible to study wordplay in conjunction with other disciplines, which opens up a whole new array of possibilities. *Cultures and Traditions of Wordplay and Wordplay Research* mentions studies with at their basis the translation of wordplay, which can be focused once again on a specific author, be it in correlation with their whole bibliography or just a fraction, as I intend to do in this paper, or even types of text such as newspaper articles, and even there the translation of wordplay in everyday conversations. Through the study of linguistics, wordplay has also been examined in specific forms such as puns or other forms of verbal humour. Studies on wordplay are so varied that it is possible to compile next to each other papers that are quite different at first glance from others, but in reality treat a very similar subject. For example, the correlation made in the book between a study on the creation of specific types of internet memes relying on verbal humour, creating new traditions within internet communities, and wordplay in a post-colonial context to express a

new identity born from the melding of two cultures. Wordplay has even been studied in fields such as psychoanalysis by Freud, as mentioned in the book *Du Jeu dans la Langue* :

> […] mais il faut évidemment se rappeler en le lisant que Freud n'était ni linguiste ni home de lettres, et que son propos n'était pas d'analyser les jeux de mots en tant que procédés d'écriture dans des textes mais, […] d'étudier les rapports psychologiques entre les jeux de mots et l 'inconscient, c'est-à-dire les phénomènes qui sous-tendent la production des jeux de mots dans la tête de leurs auteurs. (2019: 17).

However, even though it offers a large choice of study opportunities, there is one field of study that seems to be underrepresented in wordplay studies, which is the classification of wordplay. Jacqueline Henry states in her book *La Traduction des Jeux de Mots* :

> les tentatives de classification systématique des jeux de mots ne sont pas très nombreuses. Certes, les jeux de mots, et surtout les calembours, sont mentionnés dans les ouvrages de rhétorique classique, mais ils n'y figurent que très accessoirement et les auteurs de ces traits les considèrent le plus souvent comme des figures tout à fait méprisables et caractéristiques d'un niveau de langue des plus vulgaires. (2003: 17)

This is why she decides to examine a few of these classifications, and then chooses the one that is more suitable to elaborate on it. Establishing a classification of wordplay is no small task, as one has to take various factors into account, and opinions differ on the definition of wordplay itself. As Meri Giorgadze puts it: "the difficulties created by the complexity of wordplay and its various classifications are caused by the complexity of the phenomenon and its categories and subcategories" (2014), meanwhile certain scholars such as Delabastita and Gothlib offer more simplistic classifications because they consider wordplay and pun as interchangeable words. That is why Meri Giorgadze makes a difference between the discussion of wordplay in "*narrow* and *broad* senses", narrow being the study of wordplay as an equal of pun, and broad being its study as an umbrella term, with multiple categories and subcategories. As such, we will use the broad sense of the term throughout out study the study.

In order to classify wordplays, it is necessary to offer a basic definition of it. The 'play' in wordplay is identified as the key aspect of the word, as explained when she cites Todorov: "le 'jeu' des mots s'oppose à *l'utilisation* des mots, telle qu'elle est pratiquée dans toutes

les circonstances de la vie quotidienne" (Todorov, 1978). It is then necessary to better define the word 'play', which she does by providing the definition found in *Le Nouveau Petit Robert* (1993) : "activité physique ou mentale purement gratuite, qui n'a, dans la conscience de celui qui s'y livre, d'autre but que le plaisir qu'elle procure", 'play' thus being an activity that is used to escape from the mundane. From other definitions, she adds to it both the notion of rules or conventions and the notion of freedom, going beyond a norm[1], which are aspects that can be applied to wordplay as well, as it also follows certain rules while also enabling great freedom in its creation, a playful combination of constraint and freedom that we will encounter again in the practice of wordplay translation[2]. From her analysis, she observes two main groups of wordplay. The first one is play *with* words[3], which represent rhymes, crosswords and charades, and the second one is play *on* words[4], which represent puns, spoonerisms (contrepèteries in French) or paronomasias. Puns and portmanteau words are identified as the type of devices that come first to mind when one thinks about wordplay, so much so that people often equate puns (in a general sense, plays on double-entendre) with wordplay, which is not only inaccurate, but also quite reductive, as shown in later definitions.

From her work on different sources, Jacqueline Henry identifies wo main approaches to a possible classification of wordplay. She calls the first one morphological, that is to say based at the level of the constituent that is transformed (classification by 'length')[5], this classification is based on ancient rhetoric works, and distinguishes between four categories:

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[1] "à la fois la notion de règles, de conventions , et celle de liberté et de dépassement par rapport à une norme" (Henry, 2003: 8)
[2] "une combinaison ludique de contrainte et de liberté que nous retrouverons aussi dans la pratique de la traduction des jeux de mots." (*Ibid*, 2003: 8)
[3] "les jeux *avec* les mots" (*Ibid*, 2003: 18)
[4] "les jeux *sur* les mots" (*Ibid*, 2003: 18)
[5] "morphologique, c'est-à-dire fondée sur le niveau du constituant soumis à transformation (classement par « taille »)" (Henry, 2003: 19)

deux qui portent sur l'expression, les *métaplasmes* (figures intervenant au niveau d'un mot ou d'une unité plus petite) et les *métataxes* (figures intervenant au niveau d'une phrase ou d'une plus grande unité), et deux qui portent sur le contenu, les *métasémèmes* (figure intervenant au niveau d'un mot ou d'une unité plus petite) et les *métalogismes* (figures intervenant au niveau d'une phrase ou d'une plus grande unité) (2003 : 19)

But this approach is considered flawed. The flaw comes from its classification by length, which is bound to provoke repetitions, as certain devices of wordplay can occur at different levels. The example given by Jacqueline Henry is that of the palindrome, as it can be used at the level of the word as in "Laval" (2003: 20), but also at the level of the sentence as in "Elu par cette crapule" (2003: 20), and it can even be used for a whole text, "comme dans le dialogue *Crab Canon* de *Gödel, Escher, Bach,* qui peut se lire de la première à la dernière réplique, mais aussi de la dernière à la première" (2003: 20). This creates a redundancy in the classification.

This is the reason that makes Jacqueline Henry decide to use Guiraud's classification instead which is based on the type of play that is operated. The three types of wordplay that are thus defined are the following:

.Succession[6]:

Wordplay based on succession are defined as working on an "agencement, [une] combinaison de choses formant un tout ou une suite; une liaison; une connexion d'objets qui sont entre eux dans un rapport mutuel" (Guiraud, 1976), it encompasses all plays on repetition, in which the goal is to offer a break in logic and coherence. The devices that can be found in this category are for example false coordinations ("fausses coordinations" [Henry, 2003: 20]), the example given being "Ah, dit-il en riant et en portugais[7]" (2003: 20), but we can also consider in this category plays on sound such as homophonic successions ("enchaînements par homophonie" [2003: 20]) such as "des messages, des mets

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[6] "L'enchaînement" (*Ibid*, 2003: 20)
[7] (Henry, 2003: 20)

sages, des massages" (2003: 20) or successions by echo ("enchaînements par echo" (2003: 20) as in "Tu parles, Charles" (2003: 20). Other devices in this category include successions by automation (enchaînements par automatisme [2003: 21]), such as "trois petits chats, chapeau de paille, paillasson…" (2003: 21) and drawer charades ("charades à tiroirs" [2003: 21]) in which definitions are made thanks to succession, the example given being as follows:

> pour faire trouver la syllabe 'tor' (de Victor), une charade à tiroirs pourrait donner comme définition « mon second est employé des postes: c'est *tor* parce que *torréfacteur* (tor est facteur) » (2003: 21)

.Inclusion[8]:

This category is composed of three subcategories, first of all are the plays in which there is a permutation of letters or phonemes. In this category we can find anagrams, in which the letters of a word or a group of words are scrambled in order to form new words with a different meaning. This process has been widely used for pseudonyms through history, with examples such as "Rose de Pindare/Pierre de Ronsard ou Avida Dollars/Salvador Dali" (2003: 21).

Then there is the palindrome, letters are still rearranged but this time to create the mirror image of the word, so that it can be read from left to right, and from right to left, the result is a symmetric word. As an example, in her article "Varieties of Wordplay"[9], Verena Thaler proposes the following: "Madam, I'm Adam". It is interesting to note that there exists a subcategory of palindromes, named "anacyclique" (2003: 21) which defines words that can be read from left to right and right to left but depending on the reading chosen, the meaning is different, the example used here is "Amor/Roma" (2003: 21).

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[8] "L'inclusion" (*Ibid*, 2003: 21)
[9] Knospe, Sebastian, et al. *Crossing Languages to Play with Words: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. De Gruyter, (2016: 60)

Another type of permutation is spoonerisms. It consists of switching letters or phonemes at the beginning of words in order to assemble other words, giving them new meanings, and creating a new sentence, generally with a new meaning as well, for example: "un sot pale/un pot sale" (2003: 22), a variation on spoonerism is the concept of "German *Schüttelreine*" as explained by Esme Winter-Froemel in her article "Approaching Wordplay"[10], in which the solution is given with the permutation, as shown in her example: "Du bist/ Buddhist". She also adds to the definition of spoonerism

The final play by permutation is backward-slang ("verlan" [Henry, 2003: 22]), which consists of turning a word around, usually per syllable. The example given by Jacqueline Henry is "laisse béton/laisse tomber" (2003: 22).

The second subcategory of wordplay by inclusion consists of plays by incorporation. They consist of arranging words or sentences in an organised manner in order to create certain effects. The first example developed by Jacqueline Henry is the acrostic, a stylistic figure in which the first letters of each verse of a poem form another word or a few words when read vertically, often use to convey hidden messages. Variations can occur, such as the words to read vertically being at the end of the verse, or even in the example given of E.A.Poe's poem *A Valentine*, the acrostic is to be read diagonally.

We can also find in this subcategory another form of acrostic, more present nowadays but that can also be found in ancient texts, the acronym. This time, the first letters of a sequence of words are to be read horizontally and combined to form another word. It is used in everyday life in terms such as NASA/National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and many other corporation names, but even in what we now consider words, "RADAR, par

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[10] *Ibid.* p34

exemple, est l'acronyme de Radio Detection And Ranging" (2003: 23), but just like acrostics, this stylistic figure can be used in order to hide messages.

The last subcategory of wordplay by inclusion is plays by interpolation. The operation is here to include new elements to disturb a word or a sentence. One of the examples presented is "le 'javanais' qui introduit l'élément 'av' au sein des mots (par exemple 'gros' devient 'gravos') " (2003: 23), this is an example used to define a social status, but this stylistic figure is also used in literature in a humorous manner.

This subcategory houses a similar process that consists of placing a word in the middle of another word, that is what is called "mots-sandwichs" (2003: 24), with for example " 'rajolivissant', qui inclut 'joli' dans 'ravissant' ". This device is linked to another that is quite widespread in the field of wordplay, portmanteau words, the process is once again very similar but instead of an insertion in the middle of the word, two words are fused together, as in " 'to galop' and 'to triumph', qui forment le néologisme 'to galumph' dans le célèbre poème *Jabberwocky* d'*Alice*" (2003: 24).

.Substitution[11]:

The third category is also the largest one, as it encompasses the concept of puns, and as we have seen before, puns are generally what people associate wordplay with. There are however multiple categories of puns to dissociate, but in order to do so, Henry deems necessary to first define the terms that will be the core of the different categories.

First are homophones. Homophones are words that differ in their spelling but share the same pronunciation, for example 'flower' and 'flour' (/ˈflaʊə(r)/).

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[11] "La substitution" (Henry, 2003: 24)

Homonyms are words that share both the same spelling and the same pronunciation, for example 'close the door' and 'he came close'. Jacqueline Henry warns however that some words that appear to be homonyms can in reality be two occurrences of the same polysemic term, her example being "*profession* de foi et *profession* médicale" (2003: 24).

When two words share a spelling, but not the same pronunciation, as in 'lead' the verb pronounced /li:d/ and the chemical element pronounced /led/ are called homographs.

Words that share a similar pronunciation but not quite identical, such as 'compliment' and 'complement' are paronyms. One must be warry however, as a paronym in English can also be used to refer to two words that share a similar root, for example 'you' and 'your'.

Lastly, we need to define the term synonym, which is used when two different words share a same meaning, an example of this would be the terms 'doctor' and 'physician'. Synonyms are opposed to antonyms which define terms that have opposite meanings, such as 'dark' and 'light'.

Now that these terms are defined, we can discuss the different categories of puns. Jacqueline Henry offers this global definition as a starting point : "il s'agit d'un énoncé contenant un ou plusieurs éléments dont la plurivocité a été intentionnellement exploitée par son émetteur" (2003: 25).

From this, the first category of puns that is presented is composed of puns that play on semic versatility. Semic puns are thus the ones that play on the multiplicity of meanings in words. Within this category we can find puns with a play on the concepts of concrete and abstract. The example given in Jacqueline Henry's book is as follows : "Louis XIV souhaita un jour mettre à l'épreuve les talents d'un de ses courtisans qui lui avait été décrit comme un homme d'esprit ; à la première occasion, il ordonne au gentilhomme de faire un mot

d'esprit dont lui-même, le Roi, serait le sujet. Le courtisan lui répond alors par ce bon mot fort habile : « le roi n'est pas un sujet » " (2003: 25).

This category includes puns that play on proper sense and figurative sense as well, such as "Colin montait, le nez sur les talons des deux filles. De jolis talons renforcés, en nylon clair." (2003: 25).

Another concept that can be found in this category consists of puns that make use of proper names. A good example that is given is taken from Shakespeare : "Discharge thyself of our company, Pistol" (*Henry IV*, II, 4, v.134), Pistol being a proper name but also a noun, 'discharge' can take either the meaning of emptying a gun or asking someone to take their leave.

Lastly, this category integrates synonymic puns, in which words or parts of a word are replaced with a synonym. For example, calling an exceptionally large catwalk a 'lionwalk', or as suggested: " 'ficelles vocales' d'une personne ayant une voix faible" (2003: 26). Opposed to this are antonymic puns, playing this time on opposite meanings, such as 'this flavoured water is fire!' to express how good this drink is.

The second large category of puns is made up of puns that play on phonic versatility. First off in this category are homonymic puns, that play on words with the same spelling and pronunciation as seen earlier, such as 'He had a photographic memory that was never developed', playing on the two meanings of 'developed', to improve and to process photographs.

Next are homophonic puns, that play with words that share a pronunciation, for example 'You can tune a guitar, but you can't tuna fish'.

Finally, we find in this category patronymic puns, which involve a play on pronunciations almost identical but not quite, such as the old Italian saying 'Traduttore, traditore', or "

'That's the reason they're called lessons,', the Gryphon remarked: 'because they lessen from day to day' " (Caroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865).

This is the first main way to divide puns, those that are based on meaning, and those based on sound, but Jacqueline Henry then develops other ways to divide them. The second divide is between what she calls puns "in absentia" (2003: 26), where a plurivocity is implicit by using a term to signify another, such as the example "Entre deux mots, il faut choisir le moindre" (2003: 26), where it is up to the reader to understand that 'mots' should be read as 'maux', and puns "in praesentia" (2003: 27) where the plurivocity is explicit and the two terms coexist, as in 'Traduttore, traditore'.

The third possible division is between puns with allusion, and those without, allusion implying a reference to a specific phrase, what Gerard Genette calls an 'hypotextual' element. An example given of a pun with allusion is as follows: "Robespierre qui roule n'amasse pas mousse" cited from Margarito's article "Quand les mots ne cachent plus leurs jeux" in the *Bulletin de l'Unité de Recherche Linguistique n°4*, which is a play between the name Robespierre and the phrase 'Pierre qui roule n'amasse pas mousse'. This kind of pun with allusion seem to be more compatible with puns 'in absentia', and Guiraud puts these puns in another category, complex puns.

Complex puns are the last category in this attempt to divide puns into a classification. A pun is considered complex if it involves more than one of the categories mentioned before or a device other than a pun to achieve it, using a portmanteau word in a pun would result in a complex pun.

In the light of all those categories and divides that exist to classify puns, Jacqueline Henry gives an updated version of her previous definition : "il s'agit d'un énoncé contenant un élément à plurivocité sémique ou phonique implicite (calembour 'in absentia') ou

explicite (calembour 'in presentia'), et faisant ou non allusion à un élément hypotextuel. "

(2003: 28). She illustrates this definition with the following graphic :

Type de plurivocité du calembour	Divisions		
homonymie		IN	AVEC
homophonie	sur le son	ABS.	
paronymie			OU
polysémie		OU	SANS
sens propre/figuré ou concret/abstrait	sur le sens	IN	
nom propre/motivation			ALLUSION
synonymie		PRAE.	
antonymie			
calembour complexe			

Tableau des différentes catégories de calembours

Source : Henry, Jacqueline. *La Traduction Des Jeux De Mots*. Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2003.

This work of classification demonstrates how difficult it is to define wordplay clearly. If we analyse in detail certain occurrences, we can find some overlapping in certain categories, and the divide between one and the other can be quite thin.

Other scholars have proposed simpler classifications of wordplay, such as Verena Thaler in *Crossing Languages to Play with Words, Multidisciplinary Perspectives* who makes divisions based on the linguistic techniques used. She divides wordplay into phonetic techniques, lexical techniques, morphological techniques, and orthographic/graphic techniques. This classification is less precise, but still effective. Henry's is however one of the most complete attempts to classify wordplay, and the one we have chosen as a framework for this study.

B-The function of wordplay

We now know what wordplay is and under which forms it can be found, the next step is to understand what the different functions of wordplay are. The first function of wordplay that comes to mind is the most obvious: to create humour. Wordplay as a whole is first and foremost a device used to trigger laughter, especially in the case of the pun, as pointed out by Xiaoli Gan in the article *A Study of the Humor Aspect of English Puns: Views from the Relevance Theory*[12] who defines the pun as follows:

> "a humorous use of a word," "an amusing use of a word or phrase," "a use of words that make people laugh," "the use of a word so as to produce a humorous effect." Punning, therefore, challenges us to make good use of possible pressure syllable of language, and it amazes us by deliberately violating the law of nature which pretends two things that can not convey the same place at the same time. (2015: 1211)

According to Xiaoli, puns use the compression of language into smaller units, and the distortion of meanings to achieve humour. This manipulation of words is thus the essence of wordplay, this is what Henry calls the playful function[13] of wordplay, using language as a mean to deviate from a norm. She uses the example of portmanteau words to convey her point and to illustrate the manipulation of language at play, making evident another function of wordplay brought up in Xiaoli's study, that is to make language briefer. Henry's explanation of this device is :

> Il est évident, lorsqu'on compare les jeux de mots à leurs gloses, qu'ils sont beaucoup plus courts que celles-ci. Il y a donc, dans le mot-valise, une ellipse importante, une « force de compression », comme dit Freud, qui permet d'exprimer deux mots – et deux idées – en un seul terme. Ces exemples montrent qu'une des propriétés du jeu de mots est d'être concis, d'éviter une explication, c'est-à-dire un développement plus long. Il joue donc sur l'*implicite*. (2003: 37)

This is what we can call the informative function of wordplay, language finds itself shortened, but more information is conveyed. Those functions are not mutually exclusive,

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[12] *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, vol. 5, no. 6, June 2015, pp. 1211–1215., doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0506.13.

[13] "La fonction ludique des jeux de mots" (Henry, 2003: 34)

wordplay can be humorous without being a compression of information, and a compression of information can be done without the intent to produce humour, but the two can work together as well, it is in fact the most common occurrence. A good example of this coexistence of functions can be found in Sender Dovchin's contribution to *Crossing Languages to Play with Words: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* in the article "Multilingual Wordplays amongst Facebook Users in Mongolia". In this article, she describes how after the democratic Mongolian revolution, young people have started to use wordplay, mainly through the incorporation of foreign names in their language, to make their language itself more humorous, to lighten it up, thus "producing a hybrid form of expression for use in the local context." One example she gives is "Bayaraa namaig Obamadchihsan bna" which translates as "Bayaraa has "Obamified" me", found in the Facebook photo album of one of her research subjects. The comment pertained to a photo in which one of the people's face is covered by the hand of another. The wordplay at work here is as described:

> "Obamadchihsan is used to refer to the meaning of having one's face blocked or covered by another person's hand on the photograph. It is a combination of the English name Obama and the Mongolian suffix -dchihsan 'getting -ified / -ification', creating the new playful Mongolian word Obamadchihsan 'getting Obamified; Obamification'. (2016: 104)

The origin of this wordplay is a photo in which Obama unintentionally covers the face of the Mongolian president next to him. The compression of language created in this case a new adjective, expressing a whole concept in just a word, and the goal of this adjective is to describe a situation with humour, thus a perfect blending of the informative and humorous functions of wordplay.

However, more than raw information, wordplay and language can also convey more abstract concepts. One of such concepts is the transmission of emotions, a key component of human relations is to be able to make others understand through communication how one feels, and wordplay can be a device to achieve such a mean. Jacqueline Henry expresses this idea with the sentence: "communiquer, c'est donc aussi s'amuser, choquer, accrocher,

séduire l'autre, ou lui donner un ordre, l'interroger, etc." (2003: 32). Using wordplay to convey emotions is then a way of "adding color to language" (Xiaoli, 2015: 1215), which opens up to another function of wordplay, to make a language more appealing. An instance of wordplay can be affected by a lot of factors, be it its historical background, the political context of its utterance, the type of literature or oral situation it is produced in, but the goal is generally to catch the attention, as Xiaoli puts it: "whether puns appear in advertisements, daily conversations, or riddles, they attract and delight their audience" (2015: 1215).

This last quote from Xiaoli introduces another aspect of wordplay that is of importance, its use in our daily lives. Whether we notice it or not, we come face to face with wordplay every day now, and Xiaoli draws the following observation: "puns have penetrated almost every aspect in our lives, and have thus attracted the attention of more and more scholars in various fields" (2015: 1211), confirming the large variety of studies made with wordplay at their centre as we discussed while establishing a classification. The use of wordplay in daily life can be found in multiple examples, but it is important to note that humour is not always the goal of wordplay, as explained by this quote from the preface of *Du Jeu dans la Langue, Traduire le Jeu de Mots*:

> "au-delà d'un phénomène propre à susciter le rire, le jeu de mots implique très souvent une véritable poétique, et ce, quel que soit son contexte d'apparition. Littérature, presse, bande dessinée, tous les supports se prêtent à cette écriture de la fantaisie et de l'imagination." (2019 : 11)

This poetic function is a concept that can be found in other works on wordplay, such as Jakobson's, as mentioned by Jacqueline Henry: "lorsque le message véhiculé par le langage a aussi pour effet d'amuser ou de provoquer, c'est la fonction que Jakobson qualifie de poétique qui prend le pas sur les autres" (2003: 32). However, this poetic function, as shown by the previous quote, is not only used in poetry, hence why Henry cites the "Groupe μ"

(2003: 32) who refers to it as more of a rhetoric function to avoid boxing the concept in one literary genre. Furthermore, she notes that the two goals mentioned ("d'amuser ou de provoquer") are found frequently in titles, advertisements, or headlines, which often use wordplay[14]. From these observations, she distinguishes three categories in which we can find this rhetoric use of wordplay: purely literary texts such as novels and poems; infra-literary texts such as technical texts, advertisement, or headlines; and para-literary texts such as chapter titles[15].

Moreover, wordplay in daily life can serve in a social setting, an aspect that we can associate to Henry's link between wordplay and conveying emotions, an aspect also examined in Esme Winter-Froemel's study "Approaching Wordplay" in the book *Crossing Languages to Play with Words: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*:

> wordplay can be used to fulfil a broad range of other social functions related to the image of his / her self the speaker wishes to convey by using wordplay (e.g. esteem / admiration of the speaker's wit, creativity, and linguistic mastership), or the social relations – between the speaker and hearer as well as between different hearer groups – confirmed, revealed or created by using wordplay (e.g. shared aesthetic pleasure, inclusion / exclusion of certain hearer groups) (2016: 14)

In her study, Esme also mentions a "motivational or didactic function" (2016: 14) that would be apparent when using wordplay as a mnemonic mean to learn a language, which echoes the concept of enhancing the appeal of a language that we discussed previously.

This didactic function also finds an echo in a field mentioned multiple times already, that is the domain of advertisement. The goal of advertisement is to appeal to the masses, to provoke a reaction in people's minds in order to push them to consume a product, use a service or propagate an idea. It is without a doubt a prominent part of our daily lives, as advertisement can be found in nearly all media, be it on billboards, on television, in

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[14] "Ces deux effets (divertir et provoquer) se retrouvent fréquemment dans les titres, publicités ou slogans en tous genres, qui utilisent souvent les jeux de mots" (Henry, 2003: 32)
[15] "les textes purement littéraires, d'une part (romans, poèmes), et les textes infra-littéraires (textes techniques, publicitaires, slogans politiques, etc.) et para-littéraires (titres)" (*Ibid*, 2003: 34)

magazines, in movies, etc. The field of advertisement is thus as Xiaoli Gan puts it, built on "the power and flexibility of language with distinctive skills to catch consumers' attention". Most brands use carefully crafted leitmotivs in order to associate their products with certain words in people's minds, and wordplay is generally the device used in order to achieve this effect. For example, at the beginning of the democratisation of mobile phones, Nokia used the tagline 'Connecting people', playing on the double sense, to connect people to the mobile network, and connect people with each other.

We have seen the fact that wordplay can serve in communication to convey emotion, but it can also be used to convey meaning. This function is explained in Xiaoli's study as such:

> Puns also function as effective devices to express our meaning. While communicating with others, people sometimes may not say something directly when they want to comfort or criticize somebody. Instead they turn to puns for help. Puns, which are applied in a humorous way, interestingly make our utterances more impressive under some circumstances. And sometimes a pun can have both a humorous contextual effect and an ironic effect as well." (2015: 1214)

This analysis once again demonstrates the utility of wordplay in a social setting, and its capability to contain and transfer information.

Throughout this study of the function of wordplay, an aspect can be pointed out, the aspect of communication. However, for communication to happen, at least two persons need to be involved, and these two persons can have different experiences in life. In this case, wordplay, which is dependent on context, culture and many other factors, can be received differently, this is why Xiaoli and others took an interest in studying wordplay in relation to relevance theory, a concept developed by the cognitive science researchers Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in 1986. The main focus of the Relevance Theory is "communication and recognition […], to understand the world according to related information" (Xiaoli, 2015: 1211). For communication to happen, there must be someone to receive and decode the information. Xiaoli then applies the concept of Relevance Theory to puns as follows:

> "According to Relevance Theory, in the process of understanding a pun, audience decodes what the communicator's ostensive utterance is and constructs the first contextual assumption, so audience would get a context effect. If the context contradicts the broad context, audience would rebuild a new assumption with their encyclopedic knowledge, logical information, and lexical information, and deduce the real implication of the utterance. Then audience would get the humor effect of English pun." (2015: 1211)

This shows that for wordplay to exist and fulfil its functions in communication, there needs to be a cognitive work from both ends that ends up in the successful transmission of the intended information. Moreover, certain conditions must be met, that is "a. having enough contextual effect to attract audience; b. enabling the audience to understand the contextual effect with a reasonable amount of effort" (Xiaoli, 2015: 1212). In a case where these conditions are not met, we face the situation described by Esme Winter-Froemel as follows: "wordplay can be successful (if the intended functions are fulfilled) or fail" (2016: 15), a failure of the utterance of wordplay. There are however exceptions, such as the case in which the receptor does not have the context to understand, but researches it in order to arrive to an understanding, "hence to understand an English pun and appreciate its humor, one may need to put in extra effort to understand its context" (Xiaoli, 2015: 1212). This effort of research is very common with wordplay, due to its very nature, being a deformation of language and twisted use of context. For this effort to happen however, the first condition is essential, to attract the audience, to make them realise that an utterance of wordplay is present, this what Esme means by:

> the primary criterion for the success of wordplay is its being understood, i.e. the speaker(s) and hearer(s) must recognise that a specific instance of wordplay is realised, and be able to identify the linguistic items involved and their respective meanings (2016: 15).

The success of wordplay thus becomes the result of implicit teamwork between the person who uses wordplay and the one who receives it, the addressee of wordplay must become an accomplice of the author[16]. Jacqueline Henry gives the following example of this relationship:

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[16] "le destinataire du jeu de mots […] se fasse complice de son auteur" (Henry, 2003: 38)

> Beaucoup de jeux de mots sont justement fondés sur la référence implicite à un figement, un proverbe, une parole célèbre, un événement, etc. Ainsi, derrière le nom « L'enfant d'eau » d'une association d'activités aquatiques pour le premier âge (« bébés nageurs »), tout Français reconnaîtra la comptine « Do, do, l'enfant dormira bientôt » (2003: 38)

This is an example of intertextuality, it is based on shared knowledge between the emitter and the addressee, the wordplay is not just dependent of the manipulation of words, but also on the cognitive background of the reader/listener[17]. Henry uses this relationship to explain the use of wordplay in technical texts. A technical text is supposed to be informative, humour is, at first glance, not necessary, but the use of wordplay creates a break in the technical tension that can accumulate when reading such a text. It creates an interaction, a cooperation between the author and the reader, catching the attention of the latter back and helping them focus back on the text. This relationship is also present in fiction, as presented in *Du Jeu dans la Langue: Traduire les Jeux de Mots*:

> le jeu vit certes de l'interaction dans les échanges entre protagonistes de la fiction, d'autant que nombre de jeux de mots prennent toute leur force à l'oral, mais il est en vérité jeu entre l'auteur originel et le spectateur co-constructeur du sens (2019: 11)

This quote demonstrates that the interactional aspect of wordplay is not restricted to the fiction in itself and helps establish a relationship between the author and the reader.

Furthermore, Esme mentions in her work that in most cases, explicit feedback is needed from the receiver in order to show that the utterance of wordplay is a success, enhancing the importance of this relationship between emitter and receiver. Without this feedback, there could be situations in which the receiver may have misinterpreted the utterance of wordplay, and the emitter would have no way to know that the intended function has not been fulfilled. Such an example of misinterpretation can however be used to create an unintended instance of humour, as shown in Esme's example:

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[17] "les […] jeux de mots […] font appel à un savoir partagé. Ils ne reposent pas seulement sur les mots, mais aussi sur le bagage cognitif du lecteur/auditeur" (*Ibid*, 2003: 39)

(3) − Teacher (handling a technical device): Jetzt fehlt nur noch, daß das Gummi reißt! [All I need now is that the rubber tears.] − Pupils (pubescent): Laughter. [indicating sexual reinterpretation of rubber in the sense of 'condom'] (http://math-www.uni-paderborn.de/~odenbach/kunz.html; 15.12.2012; example cited from Winter-Froemel 2013: 151; Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015a: 318–319) (2016: 16)

In this instance, the teacher did not mean to make a joke, but the class misinterpreted what was said and produced a new, humorous meaning.

We have established the relationship between emitter and addressee, the "interactional dimension of wordplay" (2016: 13). However, there is a nuance to be drawn in this interaction. It is important to take into consideration what Esme Winter-Froemel calls "speaker and hearer groups" (2016: 13). Her study concerns the cases in which wordplay happens in groups, the incidence is that multiple people come with multiple cognitive backgrounds, and as such, an utterance of wordplay will be received differently by each person. The first pattern that she presents is as follows:

> In cases of in-group humour, wordplay involves two hearer groups, the in-group which plays the game and which includes the speaker and part of the hearers, and the out-group of further hearers who are excluded from the game. These cases of wordplay are thus based on strategies of complicity (French *connivence*) (2016: 13)

This shows that in certain cases, wordplay can be used not only to create a complicity with an audience, but also to deny that same complicity to another audience. Her next example is:

> Another basic pattern involving several speakers and / or hearers arises from the multiplication of levels of communication in literary texts. In analysing this kind of wordplay, it is important to clearly separate the different communicative levels in order to determine where wordplay proper takes place (2016: 13)

This example further illustrates the notion seen before of unintentional wordplay that can happen when the cognitive backgrounds of the members of a conversation do not match. In order to complete this distinction of speaker/hearer, she cites Goffman to establish different types of speakers: "the animator, the author, the principal" (2016: 13) and of hearers: "ratified and unratified participants, and bystanders" (2016: 13), these types are dependent on the degree of agency in the conversation.

The next function of wordplay is developed by Jacqueline Henry, who borrows Jakobson's notion of metalanguage, which refers to the study of the signs of language. Henry poses that the metalinguistic function of language is put into work, consciously or not, each time a speaker makes a choice of speech[18]. Wordplay being a play with the rules of language, it is in most cases a deliberate choice, and thus fits this definition. Henry develops this aspect by writing:

> Les jeux de mots relèvent de la fonction métalinguistique du langage parce qu'ils constituent une utilisation surintensive du langage : ils sont faits des mots qui existent dans une langue donnée et s'inscrivent dans celle-ci, mais en même temps, ils se servent de la langue comme d'un objet pour la déformer et briser ses conventions. (2003: 32)

This function of wordplay represents the essence of wordplay itself, the manipulation of language to create a new result.

Esme Winter-Froemel comments on the metalinguistic function of wordplay and, more importantly, what it can reveal about a language. The first observation she makes is that wordplay that operates manipulation on a word while staying very close in form can highlight the fact that the smallest change in form can cause a drastic change in meaning, this can serve as a warning towards how arbitrary language can be. The second observation is about wordplay involving a succession of similar elements, the aim here is to demonstrate how a language can present problems when there is a "limited repertoire of distinguishing units (phonemes)" (2016: 20), as well as demonstrate "the speaker's linguistic mastership" (2016: 20), that is to say to which extent the speaker can bend language, with a tongue twister for example. Her third observation concerns wordplay "based on remotivations or pseudo-motivations" (2016: 21), this time demonstrating the speaker's ability to play with the meaning of words. She notes however that depending on the instance of wordplay, the

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[18] "la fonction métalinguistique du langage, elle est mise en œuvre, consciemment ou non, chaque fois qu'un locuteur fait un choix de parole" (Henry, 2003: 31)

importance of these functions varies, and that they are usually not dependent on the perception of the speaker or the hearer.

Another aspect of the relationship between wordplay and language can once again be found by looking at one of the foundations of wordplay, it is the use by wordplay of the dysfunctions, or accidents of a language, such as polysemy, homonymy, paronymy, etc, and the fact that this use is intentional[19]. These instances of wordplay use the codes of language to transform existing words by using them in an unnatural context. In order to demonstrate this intentional use of the irregularities of language, Henry gives the example of "Mille-pâtes" (2003: 31) for an Italian food shop, that makes use of the homophony between 'pâtes' and "pattes', and the sentence "farce pas très cathodique" (2003: 31), which uses the word 'cathodique' in an abnormal context, as it is usually used to describe a screen. These cases show the paradoxical aspect of wordplay, as described by Henry:

> a) parce qu'il repose à la fois sur du rigide, les règles, et sur de l'élastique, la liberté créative ; et b) parce qu'il emploie le langage, mais pas pour communiquer un message parfaitement clair et univoque. En effet, il recourt largement aux « accidents » de langue que sont les homophones, les paronymes et les termes polysémiques. Il joue non seulement *avec* le langage, mais aussi *du* langage, dont il met en évidence et exploite les particularités et ambiguïtés sémantiques ou phoniques (2003: 41)

Once again wordplay is then used, to a certain extent, to demonstrate the limits of language and how far it can be remodelled and played with.

One of the least meaningful aspects of wordplay is also one that is quite prominent in literature: one-off[20] wordplay. These instances of wordplay exist not to demonstrate any singularity of language, or to express a greater hidden meaning, they just exist to add flavour to the text, to add a touch of humour and offer a break in the tone of a narrative that is not typically associated with wordplay. Jacqueline Henry provides us with another name for this

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[19] " ils exploitent intentionnellement « les dysfonctions » ou « accidents » des langues qui sont la polysémie, l'homonymie, la paronymie, etc." (Henry, 2003: 32)
[20] "ponctuel" (Henry, 2003: 52)

kind of wordplay: "ils correspondent à ce que D.R. Hofstadter, dans ses annotations à l'intention des traducteurs de *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, a signalé comme des « silly puns »" (2003: 52). This name, despite limiting the concept of one-off wordplay to pun, illustrates its triviality.

Higher up in terms of relevance are the instances of wordplay with a real local impact, that are fully integrated into the writing system of an author. They are present in texts where playing with words is an established practice from the author, but where wordplay is not the mainframe of the text. Henry cites *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as an example.

On the far end of the spectrum from one-off wordplay, we can find wordplay as a system of writing. This time, text and wordplay are co-dependent, one cannot exist without the other as the text revolves around a form of wordplay, the wordplay is not part of a system, it is the system[21]. A typical example of this phenomenon would be an acrostic poem, such as Edgar Allan Poe's *An Acrostic*:

> *Elizabeth it is in vain you say*
> *"Love not" – thou sayest it in so sweet a way:*
> *In vain those words from thee or L.E.L.*
> *Zantippe's talents had enforced so well:*
> *Ah! If that language from thy heart arise,*
> *Breath it less gently forth – and veil thine eyes.*
> *Endymion, recollect, when Luna tried*
> *To cure his love – was cured of all beside –*
> *His follie – pride – and passion – for he died.*

We've discussed the fact that one of wordplay's main functions is to provoke laughter, but that it can also be used in a non-humoristic context, but the following question can be

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[21] "il n'y a pas de texte s'il n'y a pas de jeu de mots, car le texte est construit autour d'un jeu de mots ou d'une série de jeux de mots. Le jeu verbal ne fait plus seulement *partie* du principe d'écriture, il *est* ce système." (Henry, 2003: 56)

raised: is wordplay inherently humoristic? When faced with this question, Henry structures her answer around examples such as charades and crosswords, which are manipulations of words simply made to pass time and exhibit one's ability with words. This leads her to develop that wordplay's first aim is not to provoke laughter, but to entertain in the strict sense of the term, to distract, occupy one's mind. Her answer to the question is thus:

> pour conclure cette question du rapport entre les jeux de mots et l'humour, on peut dire qu'ils ne sont pas forcément humoristiques, mais plutôt *spirituels* : ils touchent l'esprit, ce qui va de la pure jouissance intellectuelle à l'émotion qui s'exprime physiquement par le sourire (2003: 36)

The main aspect of her conclusion is the spirituality of wordplay, the goal is to provoke a reaction, laughter being just one point on the spectrum. In her words, humour can use wordplay, but wordplay is not imbued with humour[22].

This notion of wordplay producing more of a smile than laughter is also found in *Du Jeu dans la Langue: Traduire le Jeu de Mots*, in which the relationship between humour and seriousness in wordplay is briefly explored. The idea presented in the book is that there is no need to oppose these two ideas, as they can work together. This point is presented through the example of the concept of "jest with a sad brow" (2019: 26), that is to say the use of humour through a sad context, to show how comedy can work with seriousness, and not cancel it.

There are however cases in which wordplay is done with a completely serious approach. One such occurrence is mentioned by Esme Winter-Froemel in her study "Approaching Wordplay"[23], in which she discusses the fact that such wordplay is so detached from the notion of humour that "the question whether they should be considered to be in the domain of wordplay proper has been controversial" (2019: 14). The birthplace of such wordplay is

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[22] "l'humour peut utiliser les jeux de mots, mais que ceux-ci ne sont pas forcément empreints d'humour" (Henry, 2003: 36)

[23] Cf *Crossing Languages to Play with Words, Multidisciplinary Perspectives*

presented as being texts of either a religious or philosophical nature, and the example given is as follows: "Nous ne naissons pas seuls. Naître, pour tout, c'est connaître. Toute naissance est une connaissance" (Paul Claudel (1904) in Jacques Petit (1967: 149), cited from WinterFroemel 2009: 1431). In this sentence, we witness an occurrence of succession by echo, with 'naître → connaître' and 'naissance → connaissance', but the context of the biblical nature of the document erases all possibility of humour, or entertaining purpose, leaving us with only a pure form of wordplay.

As a complement to this study of the function of wordplay, we will provide in appendix1 a list of functions compiled by Verena Thaler in her article "Varieties of Wordplay" found in the book *Crossing Languages to Play with Words, Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, that encompasses functions of wordplay seen in this paper and briefly presents new possibilities.

C-Wordplay in corpus

Now that wordplay has been defined and classified, and that its different functions have been discussed, we will take a general look at the instances of wordplay found in the corpus of this study. To establish an inventory of wordplay, we used the five *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* books in the following editions:

Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson & the Olympians: Book One*.
Disney/Hyperion, 2006.

Riordan, Rick. *The Sea of Monsters: Percy Jackson & the Olympians: Book Two*.
Disney/Hyperion, 2008.

Riordan, Rick. *The Titan's Curse: Percy Jackson & the Olympians: Book Three*.
Disney/Hyperion, 2008.

Riordan, Rick. *The Battle of the Labyrinth: Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Book 4*.

Disney/Hyperion, 2009.

Riordan, Rick. *The Last Olympian: Percy Jackson & the Olympians: Book 5*.

Disney/Hyperion, 2011.

Then, we gathered every instance of what seemed to be instances of wordplay that we could find throughout the corpus, and after that took a closer look to separate what were real examples of wordplay and what was just humour without any real manipulation of words. Throughout the process, we made sure to note the pages and books in which these utterances appeared, and then classified them into general categories. The categories were the following: wordplay that involves names; wordplay that involves a modified expression; plays on sound, rhymes, misunderstandings and double meanings; and play on words dependent on context.

In the end we have come up with 81 instances of wordplay, composed of 23 plays involving names, 20 plays on modified expressions, 5 plays which get their meaning from context, and 33 plays involving sonority or a double meaning. Some of them are part of a cluster (linked to other instances in other books or part of a dialogue/monologue), and some are isolated occurrences.

A notable fact that we observed through this inventory of wordplay is that the repartition of wordplay from book to book is quite uneven. As a matter of fact, the first two books are the ones in which there is the smallest amount of wordplay, and the number of instances of wordplay doubles from the second to the third book, to then stabilise at around twenty utterances in each book.

II- THE PROCESS OF TRANSLATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO WORDPLAY

A-The dance of translation

We have now established what wordplay is, what purposes it serves, and briefly discussed the occurrences of wordplay in our corpus. The next step is now to discuss the process of translation. Translation is not a repetitive, monotonous act, it is a dance between the author and the translator, in which the author guides the translator through the music of the source text, while the translator uses his own moves to modify the dance and create something new, the target text. This is the vision of translation that we will try to develop in this section.

A translation, if we look at it in the simplest terms, mainly needs three factors in order to exist: a source text, a translator, and a reader. However, there are many other factors that come in play to truly arrive at a translation, as we will discuss.

First and foremost, we need to define the process that will transform it: translation. The first problem that arises when one wants to define translation is its polysemy. As a matter of fact, translation designates the practice of translating, the activity of the translator, and the result of this activity, the target text. The word also sometimes takes the general metaphoric meaning of expression, representation, interpretation[24], as cited by Marc de Launey in *Qu'est-ce que traduire?*. In the book *Du jeu dans la Langue, Traduire le Jeu de Mots*, we find this short definition by Henri Meschonnic: "pour la poétique, la traduction n'est ni une science, ni un art, mais une activité qui met en œuvre une pensée de la littérature,

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[24] « désigne à la fois la pratique traduisante, l'activité du traducteur (sens dynamique) et le résultat de cette activité, le texte-cible lui-même (sens statique). Le mot prend aussi parfois le sens métaphorique excessivement élargi d'expression, représentation, interprétation » Ladmiral Jean-René, *Traduire : théorèmes pour la traduction*, chap. 1

une pensée du langage[25]", which does not take into account the notion of polysemy and focuses on the activity itself as a mental action. As for Jacqueline Henry, she mentions the definition given by the interpretative theory of translation (which we will abbreviate as ITT), developed by D. Séleskovitch and M.Lederer:

> la traduction est vue comme une opération mentale qui s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un acte de communication ayant un émetteur et un destinataire. En outre, l'émetteur a une raison de formuler un message à l'intention de tiers, aussi potentiels soient-ils, comme les lecteurs dans le cas d'un livre (2003: 65)

Here, translation is also considered a mental action, but this definition goes further as it establishes a link, a connection between the author of the text and the translator, the emitter and the addressee. One of the most important points of the ITT lies in the definition of what translation must recreate: the meaning of the source text[26]. As such, Henry adds:

> En résumé, la traduction est une opération mentale dont l'objectif n'est pas de produire des correspondances linguistiques, mais des **équivalences textuelles**. Cela signifie qu'elle se situe non dans le domaine de l'identité, mais de l'analogie fonctionnelle et pragmatique (2003: 67)

The act of translation is thus more complex than one would think. The concept of translation being this complex and important, it is not surprising to see, as mentioned in *La Version Anglaise. Lire, Traduire, Commenter* (which we will abbreviate as *LVA*), a steady increase in studies and reflexions with translation at their core throughout the last decades, broadening the fields of study with new emerging theories, and new methods in student guides[27].

There are important stages that a translator must go through in order to produce the target text, but the most important one that will serve as a foundation of the translation is to

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[25] Meschonnic, Henri. 1999. *Poétique du traduire*. Lagrasse : Verdier : p.18

[26] Un des points essentiels de la théorie de D. Séleskovitch et M.Lederer réside dans la définition de ce que la traduction doit rendre, à savoir le **sens** du texte original (Henry, 2003: 66)

[27] L'importance de la traduction de nos jours est telle que les rélfexions et études dans ce domaine n'ont cessé, au cours décès dernières décennies, de se multiplier, donnant naissance soit à des modélisations théoriques de plus en plus fournies soit à des applications pratique variées à travers des manuels ou des guides pour étudiants. (*La Version Anglaise. Lire, Traduire, Commenter*, 2007: 9)

understand and then interpret the source text. Most studies seem to agree on this base aspect of translation, it is seen in Launey's work:

> On ne peut traduire que ce que l'on comprend de l'original, or ce que l'on comprend de l'original résulte déjà d'une sorte de prétraduction ; déterminer ce qui doit être traduit […] implique nécessairement une pré-compréhension du texte-source, et, plus encore, la reconstitution de sa cohérence. (2006: 10)

This quote resonates with the ITT, as to convey a specific meaning, one needs to understand it first. Launey's concept of 'pretranslation' corresponds to the ITT's concept of "deverbalisation" (Henry, 2003: 66), a personal analysis of the text's meaning units, another mention of this is found in *LVA* on a comment about translation: "elle n'en requiert pas moins une certaine technicité, ou en d'autres termes, une identification préalable des procédés susceptibles d'être mis en œuvre dans l'interprétation d'un segment donné" (2007: 13).

The next step is what the ITT calls "reverbalisation" (Henry, 2003: 66), which consists of transcribing the meaning decoded previously into the target language, taking into account the characteristics of the target language, to adjust if necessary what is implicit or explicit in the source text, in order to produce a text with the same level of legibility as the source text for the target readers[28]. The success of this process rests mostly on the translator's cognitive baggage[29], that is to say their cultural knowledge, their eventual knowledge on the subject of the text, their experience in translating, as well as their general way of thinking. To all of this we can add the contextual clues present in the source text to achieve an optimal level of comprehension. All of those elements constitute what D. Séleskovitch and M.

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[28] "Cette reformulation consécutive à la compréhension déverbalisée doit alors tenir compte des facteurs propres à la langue et à l'environnement cibles, c'est-à-dire respecter les usages et, si nécessaire, moduler ce qui est implicite et explicite dans le texte original afin de produire un texte d'un même niveau d'intelligibilité pour ses lecteurs que le texte de départ." (Henry, 2003: 66)

[29] "bagage cognitif" (*Ibid*, 2003: 67)

Lederer call cognitive complements[30]. In order to produce a successful translation, it is thus necessary to understand what the author says and how he says it, in order to have the keys to reproduce the true meaning of the source text, this aspect is of the utmost importance in the case of translating wordplay.

We now know what a translation is and the preparatory steps to take in order to produce a translation, we must now tackle the question: what makes a translation ? At first glance this question can be easily answered: a translation is done by transposing the source text to the target language by using the long list of translation techniques that we can find in a translation guide. There is however more to the question of translation than just this. As mentioned before, every translator will apprehend a text differently depending on their cognitive background. Depending on the situation, the translator will give for example more importance to the style of the author, or on the contrary, more importance to what is told.

All of these elements make clear that translation is not just a code to reproduce in a new language, translation in that case would always be a failure in the end because it would be transposing a code into another[31]. As Henry puts it:

> La traduction n'est pas l'affaire de langues. Son objet n'est pas de rendre le sémantisme des mots et des phrases, c'est-à-dire d'appliquer un décodage systématique d'un système linguistique dans un autre. Autrement dit, le traducteur ne cherche pas à établir des correspondances linguistiques entre les structures classifiées que sont les mots, les phrases et les agencements syntaxiques ; cette démarche a été celle des premiers systèmes de traduction automatique et leur échec a été flagrant. (2003: 64)

There is no sure method to translate a text into another, a word for word translation is not viable, it would just be a collage and cannot hold any internal cohesion, be it at the emotional or notional level[32], as for a words for word translation of wordplay, it is only possible in a

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[30] "Tous les connaissances préalables et concomitantes à la réception du texte qui entrent en jeu dans la compréhension du sens constituent ce que D. Séleskovitch et M. Lederer ont appelé les **compléments cognitifs**" (Henry, 2003: 67)

[31] "la traduction serait finalement toujours un échec puisqu'elle devrait transposer un code en un autre" (Launey, 2006: 37)

[32] "Un texte ainsi traduit ne peut être qu'un collage et ne peut avoir de cohésion interne, ni au niveau émotionnel ni au niveau notionnel." (Henry, 2003: 64)

handful of instances, and will in most cases completely denature the manipulation of language at play. One must also take into account the evolution of languages, which can result in quite different systems, making impossible such a translation.

The translator's work is thus not limited to a purely linguistic aspect in which it is sometimes boxed in, considering translation as nothing but establishing a sort of word to word correspondence between two linguistic systems[33]. This is why in *LVA*, a distinction is made between language and discourse, the first being the general system and the second being individual occurrences. A few pages later, the authors present us with an illustration of this distinction through translation mechanisms associated to both ideas. Language is thus linked to word for word translation, loan translation, and borrowings, that have been qualified as 'false mechanisms[34]', in that the word or sentence is barely worked on during the process of translation[35]. On the other end of the spectrum and linked to discourse, we find 'true' mechanisms, or 'creators of translation'[36], called this way because they imply an active participation of the translator, a real work on the word or sentence. These mechanisms are as follows: "ils comprennent notamment la transposition ou **recatégorisation**, la **modulation**, l'**équivalence** (dont un cas particulier est l'adaptation) ainsi que l'**étoffement** (et son opposé l'**effacement** ou **réduction**)." (*LVA*, 2007: 15). Ironically, besides 'étoffement' which can be translated as 'expansion', the rest of these terms can be subject to word for word translation. As for the operation behind those terms, recategorization is the

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[33] "le rôle du traducteur n'est en aucun cas limité au domaine purement linguistique dans lequel on a parfois tendu à l'enfermer, considérant que la traduction n'était autre que l'établissement d'une sorte de correspondance terme à terme entre deux systèmes linguistiques donnés" *La Version Anglaise. Lire, Traduire, Commenter* (2007: 10)

[34] "faux procédés" Hardin Gérard and Picot Cynthia, *Translate : initiation à la pratique de la traduction* (1990: 19)

[35] "Trois de ces procédés- la **traduction littérale**, le **calque**, et l'**emprunt**-, parfois qualifiés de « faux procédés » puisque le travail du traducteur sur le segment de discours concerné est en réalité minimal" *La version Anglaise. Lire, Traduire, Commenter* (2007: 14)

[36] "créateurs de traduction" Hardin Gérard and Picot Cynthia, *Translate : initiation à la pratique de la traduction* (1990: 20)

change, for stylistic reasons, of the grammatical category of a word or group of words, modulation is a shift in point of view (active to passive form for example), equivalence is the passage from a fixed phrase to another which holds the same idea in the target language, and expansion consists in adding elements that were not in the source text, be it out of style or necessity.

All these mechanisms are quite important in Séleskovitch and Lederer's ITT, as one of its base ideas is as follows:

> la théorie interprétative précise que l'objet de la théorisation effectuée, dans le domaine de la traductologie, n'est pas le résultat obtenu, ce que l'on appelle couramment le texte en langue cible (ou lange d'arrivée), mais l'opération traduisante, c'est-à-dire le processus par lequel un texte écrit dans une langue donnée est transformé en texte dans une autre langue et un autre environnement. (2003: 63-64)

This separation between the process of translation and the final text is what makes the distinction between professional translation and the translation into a native language, which occurs in the teaching of languages[37]. The 'academic' translation is more focused on the linguistic aspect, to make sure of the student's mastery of the language, the goal is not to produce a text meant for the same type of reader as the source text in order to maintain an effect[38]. This distinction is important to note because the consideration of translation as just the final text leads to problems of supposed untranslatability that we will discuss in a later part.

Our focus here being the process of translation, it becomes essential to discuss the concept of rewriting. As told in *LVA*:

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[37] "c'est précisément ce qui sépare la véritable traduction de l'opération de version, qui se situe, elle, dans le cadre de l'enseignement des langues." (Henry, 2003: 64)

[38] "l'objet de l'exercice scolaire et universitaire qu'est la version est de contrôler que l'apprenant maîtrise les structures et le vocabulaire de la langue étrangère enseignée, et non de produire un texte destiné à être proposé à un lectorat équivalent de celui du texte source afin de produire le même effet sur lui." (*Ibid*, 2003: 54)

> Le cheminement d'un texte source à un texte cible qui est le fruit d'une **re-création esthétique et pragmatique** est souvent marqué par l'incertitude, l'appréhension mêlée d'envie pour une prise de risques qu'il est parfois difficile d'évaluer et la tentation de demeurer, par sécurité, dans le droit chemin déjà tracé par les mots, les constructions et autres spécificités du texte d'origine. (*2007:* 12)

The process of translation implies, in fact, an operation of rewriting from the translator's part, who becomes what can be considered as a co-author, as he becomes a bearer of the meaning of the source text when translating it into the target text. This aspect of bearing the meaning is, as we have seen previously, essential in translation as the goal is to keep the original effect that the source text was designed to transmit to the reader. Translation thus deconstructs the source text to create a new, original text, which one can assume has broken the linguistic system of the first one[39]. Launey offers a precision in his book on the gap between the analysis of a text and its rewriting:

> Entre l'analyse et la récriture, il y a un saut, certes préparé par l'analyse, mais sans que cette dernière puisse jamais préjuger de sa réussite approximative. La part de « chance », la contingence qui commande et la disponibilité de signifiants à peu près équivalents à l'intention et l'intuition chez le traducteur, est indéniable ; elle signifie surtout l'impossibilité d'universaliser la démarche de récriture (2006: 50)

This once again reaffirms the earlier discussion that translation is just not a system of linguistic code for which there exist a sure-fire method to apply and translate any text.

An example given by Jacqueline Henry proves that there is a real need to go beyond language in order to recreate meaning behind implicit concepts of a language:

> la traduction peut expliciter un point, par exemple dire « le ministre britannique des Finances » là où l'original anglais dit, « the Chancellor of the Exchequer ». La formule anglaise ne contient aucun des mots correspondants à « ministre », « britannique » et « finances », mais tout Britannique qui la lit pense immédiatement au membre de son gouvernement qui correspond au plus près à celui qui est désigné par l'appellation française. (2003: 64-65)

By trying to stay too close to the original, a translator would lose too much meaning for it to render the original intention of the author anymore. This is the struggle of the apprentice translator, torn between two side extremes: stay as close as possible to the text, and take the

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[39] "la traduction prend donc toujours pour point de départ un texte qu'elle a *reconstitué* en un original, car ce dernier n'est jamais donné comme tel, et elle a pour résultat un autre texte dont on peut penser qu'il a détruit tout le réseau langagier subtil dudit original." (Launey, 2006: 38)

risk to produce a heavy and clumsy translation, or embellish the source text and take the risk to end up too far from it[40].

The process of adaptation is thus a precious tool for the translator, it consists of finding in the target language a solution to translate a cultural specificity or to overcome a linguistic wall. It seems however that the notion of adaptation suffers from a negative view compared to translation, adaptation is sometimes synonymous with a failure to translate[41]. This notion of adaptation as a failure seems only to hold true for an academic translation, as adaptation is more than often necessary in order to convey meaning from a culture to the next, which is as we have seen, should be one of the main goals of a translation. One such example of the importance of adaptation which directly concerns this paper can be found in *LVA*:

> les jeux sur les mots et les sons, qui ne peuvent exister tels quels que dans une langue donnée, doivent être **adaptés**. Le défi est généralement de taille pour le traducteur qui doit alors mettre les **ressources plastiques** de la langue d'arrivée au service de son imagination et de sa créativité en exploitant à son tour la **fonction poétique du langage** (2007: 16)

As we have discussed previously, wordplay often possesses strong cultural roots, and is often the result of a linguistic specificity. As such, it generally requires an operation of adaptation to be rendered efficiently in the target text. This also holds true for another aspect of wordplay: its brevity. Wordplay is often short and incisive, and it is quite crucial for a translator to transcribe this aspect, as pointed out by Jacqueline Henry:

> Cette brièveté du jeu de mots doit rester bien présente dans l'esprit du traducteur, […] les *effets* produits par un jeu de mots et par les différentes gloses paraphrastiques qui peuvent en être données sont très différents. Il est fréquent, en traduction, de rendre explicite ce qui est implicite dans le texte de départ parce que le lecteur du pays d'origine et celui de pays de la traduction n'ont pas les mêmes connaissances et que ce qui est évident pour le premier ne l'est pas forcément pour le second. Mais traduire un jeu de mots, intentionnellement elliptique, par une paraphrase explicative, ce serait bien souvent faire perdre de sa qualité d'écriture et de son originalité à un texte (2003: 37-38)

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[40] "L'apprenti-traducteur est souvent hésitant, écartelé entre deux pôles : rester le plus près possible du texte, au risque de produire une traduction lourde et maladroite, ou embellir le texte source au risque de s'en éloigner." Chartier, Delphine. *De la grammaire pour traduire*, Presses Universitaires du Mirail (2006: 141)

[41] "Il apparaît cependant que la notion d'adaptation est souvent jugée négative par rapport à celle de traduction (on adapterait lorsqu'on ne parvient pas à traduire)" (Henry, 2003: 15)

This shows the difficulties presented by adaptation, where one must sometimes make a choice between sacrificing form or sacrificing meaning, in order to reproduce an effect. This is even more true when considering the passage from English to French, as English is a language with a wide range of short words that can express complex meanings, while French is often more expansive in its syntax, and it can be easy to break the relationship between author and reader found in the source text. It is then the task of the translator to rebuild the bridges between author and reader[42] by using the resources of the target language.

One must also keep in mind that adaptation is not just limited to linguistic and cultural concepts, as shown is this precision made in *LVA*:

> Il convient en outre de souligner que l'adaptation s'applique également de plein droit aux **signes de ponctuation** -tirets, guillemets, points de suspension- et aux autres **marques typographiques** -italiques ou capitales, par exemple- dont la fréquence et les conditions d'apparition suivent, d'une langue à l'autre, des règles fort différentes. (2007: 16)

Punctuation also possesses strong cultural roots one must take into account, or run the risk of creating a text that does not seem coherent with the usual form of a text in the target language.

The notion of adaptation is often linked to another concept in translation, the concept of fidelity. However, this term of fidelity is quite blurry, as what it refers to seems to pertain to an unconditional cult of a proximity that is not truly defined[43]. On the subject, the following question is asked in *LVA*:

> Cette imprécision fait d'ailleurs écho à la définition du *Petit Robert* selon lequel peut être qualifiée de « fidèle » une traduction « qui suit de près le texte original ». Que suit-on de près au juste, que doit-on révérer dans un texte ou, en d'autres termes, à quoi est-on « fidèle » et sur quoi débouche cette « fidélité » ? (2007: 12)

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[42] "Il incombe alors au traducteur d'un tel écrit de s'efforcer de restituer ces « passerelles » entre l'auteur et le lecteur sous peine de lui faire perdre son caractère coopératif et, certainement, de le dénaturer" (Henry, 2003: 40)

[43] "Le recours à ce terme est susceptible d'engendrer quelque confusion dans la mesure où ce qu'il désigne semple s'apparenter au culte inconditionnel d'une proximité dont on ne connaît pas au juste la nature." *La Version Anglaise. Lire, Traduire, Commenter* (2007: 12)

The notion of fidelity is quite tricky, in that if one takes it to the extreme, the target text becomes but a pale copy of the source text, and most likely loses the intent of the author. Fidelity is then, contrary to what one would expect, not a marker of a successful translation. *LVA* explains this phenomenon as such:

> La raison en est, de toute évidence, le caractère foncièrement **dissymétrique** des systèmes linguistiques, chaque langue faisant état d'une **saisie singulière du réel**, de l'univers extralinguistique, comme la linguistique mais aussi, tout simplement, notre propre expérience quotidienne de locuteur nous le rappellent sans cesse. (2007: 12)

Once again, the differences between two languages are too important to uphold the fantasised idea of fidelity that is sometimes claimed in the field of translation. However, there can be a definition of fidelity compatible with the idea of a successful translation that we have developed. To introduce their definition of what fidelity should be, Norman Thomas di Giovanni in *Borges on Writing* is quoted in *LVA*: "[…] the worst fault in a translation is not getting a word wrong, but getting the author's tone, or voice, wrong (156)" (2007: 13), followed by the definition in question:

> La « fidélité » dont il est question ici s'apparente plutôt à une recherche systématique d'**équivalence stylistique**, appellation qui nous semble apte à rendre compte de la production, dans la langue d'arrivée, d'un **effet global similaire**, d'une construction qui bien qu'édifiée à l'aide de matériaux différents (pour reprendre notre métaphore antérieure), sollicite de manière analogue la curiosité, l'imagination ou les émotions de celui qui y est confronté. (2007: 13)

This definition is thus a lot more in tune with the vision of translation that we are trying to develop in this paper, that is to say, more based on playing around language to recreate an effect than just trying to stay as close as possible to the text in itself.

There is however no definition set in stone of what is a good translation, just different visions of translation, as told by Paul Ricoeur in " 'Un passage' : traduire l'intraduisible":

> Il n'existe pas de critère absolu de ce que serait la bonne traduction. Ce critère absolu serait le même sens, écrit quelque part, au-dessus et entre le texte d'origine et le texte d'arrivée. Ce troisième texte serait porteur d'un sens identique supposé circuler du premier au second. (2004: 60).

This third text is thus an embodiment of what we have developed, a text that stays true to the intentions of the author, and tries as much as necessary to stay close to the source text, but finds solutions that can linguistically deviate from the source text when needed.

Wordplay embodies this difficulty to establish the definition of a good translation, because they are a fine source of study for translation researchers, as they belong to a domain, with culture, where the transition from one language to another, from one world to another, seems to be the most difficult[44].

Wordplay can be so difficult to translate in fact, that Jacqueline Henry mentions: "il n'est pas rare de lire qu'ils se situent à la limite de la traduisibilité et même qu'ils appartiennent au domaine de l'intraduisible" (2003: 13), an untranslatability that stems, it would seem, mainly from ignorance towards the concept of wordplay[45]. While some instances of wordplay do not seem to be considered untranslatable, such as the anagram, which rarely remains untranslatable, even if the combination form/meaning is often sacrificed along the way[46].

This notion of untranslatability is of interest to our study, all the more so that it is closely linked to wordplay. It would seem, from what Jacqueline Henry gathered, that the wordplay is still often considered untranslatable in certain articles on translation or on specific books such as *Alice in Wonderland*, and more than often, this seems to come from a lack of knowledge at an intralinguistic level, that is to say from the evolution of languages and the characteristics of wordplay, or at an interlinguistic level, that is to say the act of translation

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[44] "Les jeux de mots sont in terrain d'investigation privilégié des théoriciens de la traduction parce qu'il s'agit précisément d'un domaine, avec celui de la culture, où le passage d'une langue à l'autre, d'un monde à l'autre, semble être le plus difficile." Delesse Catherine, *Le Coq Gaulois à l'Heure Anglaise* (2009: 135)

[45] "leur méconnaissance peut entraîner un *a priori* d'intraduisibilité des jeux de mots" (Henry, 2003: 31)

[46] "l'anagramme demeure rarement intraduisible, même si la conjugaison forme-sens est souvent sacrifiée dans l'opération" *Du Jeu dans la Langue. Traduire le Jeu de Mots* (2019: 13)

itself[47]. Henry mentions the link that is made by certain researchers between the translation of wordplay and the translation of poetry, where some cases arise in which the form is just as important as the meaning, in those cases, the subject can often be considered untranslatable without breaking this combination form/meaning, this reveals questions as to the importance of keeping the balance in this dichotomy.

Jean-Marc Launey offers another approach towards this untranslatability problem when he writes:

> les traducteurs sont souvent la cible d'une agressivité identitaire latente. C'est en faisant un tel constat qu'on avance l'hypothèse de l'intraduisible. Pour user d'une image qui s'appuie sur l'étymologie du terme de traduction on aurait l'impression que les traducteurs seraient de négligents déménageurs qui abandonneraient au départ un certain nombre d'éléments du mobilier, ou en perdraient au cours du trajet, si bien que la reconstitution de l'intérieur original serait toujours impossible – le client averti ne se reconnaîtrait jamais tout à fait chez lui. […] Quoi qu'on puisse dire sur l'impossibilité de la traduction – elle ne restituera jamais l'original dans toutes les dimensions qu'il a pu avoir pour ses lecteurs initiaux. (2006: 39-40)

He thus establishes as the base of his study that a translation will always be imperfect, that it is impossible to fully transmit the vision of an author, this makes the notion of untranslatability a non-problem as, if a text is going to be imperfect anyway, the translator is free to find a work around an issue, to arrive at a solution that may not be perfect but will still partially convey the intention behind the source text. This is the reason for the mention of his preference to study the dichotomy "fidelity versus treason" more so than "translatable versus untranslatable" which he quotes from "Le Paradigme de la Traduction" *(*1999: 10). He also adds that even if the syntax of two languages are made quite similar thanks to

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[47] "Il apparaît bien au contraire, à la lecture d'articles oud e livres traitant de la traduction ou de certaines œuvres particulières, comme *Alice*, que les jeux de mots passent encore pour un des obstacles majeurs à la traduisibilité totale. Or il ressort de l'étude de ces écrits que, bien souvent, les arguments utilisés par leurs auteurs, aussi éminents soient-ils, résultent d'une méconnaissance de tout ou partie de leur sujet : cette méconnaissance peut se situer à un niveau intralinguistique, c'est-à-dire à celui de l'évolution des langues et des caractéristiques des jeux de mots, ou à un niveau interlinguistique, c'est-à-dire à celui de la traduction." (Henry, 2003: 69)

translation, the combination of associations, synonyms, antonyms, and expectations remains specific to a language[48].

This echoes the commentary by Jacqueline Henry that another source of the concept of untranslatability is found in linguistics themselves, in the evolution of languages as Jacqueline Henry writes:

> Les arguments […] qui touchent à l'évolution des langues, consistent généralement à dire que les jeux de mots (entendus le plus souvent uniquement comme des jeux sur des plurivalences homophoniques ou polysémiques) sont des « accidents de langue », autrement dit que la similitude ou la ressemblance phonique des deux termes est le fait du hasard, lequel ne peut se reproduire pour les termes correspondant dans une autre langue. (2003: 70)

The problem with this argument is that it considers that languages evolve on their own, which is not accurate since first of all, languages constantly influence each other, much more so with globalisation, but we must also take into account that certain languages evolved conjointly at certain points in history. England, even more so, was and still is to a certain extent a melting pot of civilisation, and has taken into its language characteristics from multiple other languages. Furthermore, we must also consider that certain languages evolved from the same roots, such as languages which descend from Latin or Germanic languages, Henry gives the following examples:

> C'est le cas, en Italien et en français, de « muro » et « mur » (le mur) ou, en anglais et en allemand, de « wall » et « Wall » (la muraille, le rempart). Dans tde telles situations, il n'est alors pas exclu que l'« accident » noté dans une langue soit reproductible quasiment à l'identique dans l'autre. (2003: 70)

The most obvious example of an occurrence that can be found in two languages are of course borrowings, which allows, in most cases, to keep the instance of wordplay as it is, or as Henry puts it: "les signifiés et les signifiants sont les mêmes dans plusieurs langues" (2003: 71). The last example of linguistic feature that can be transcribed as it is given by Henry are

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[48] "même si les syntaxes des deux langues mises en rapport par la traduction sont très voisines, la série des associations, des synonymies, des antonymies, des attentes et des anticipations reste propre à telle langue." (Launey, 2006: 52)

proper nouns, as they are often borrowed or slightly adapted to the characteristics of each language[49].

Another point of origin of the notion of untranslatability presented by Jacqueline Henry is, as briefly mentioned before, an ignorance of what a wordplay really is. There seems to be a tendency in studies establishing that wordplay is untranslatable to present a narrow vision of wordplay, only considering puns as such, as well as thinking that most important aspect of wordplay is the signified[50], which is quite reductive, as wordplay is much more rich, as is evident in the work done on the subject earlier. An example of such a case is given by Henry:

> Un bon exemple de ce point de vue est donné par cette définition du philosophe K. Fischer, citée par Freud (Freud, 1930, p.106) : « Le calembour est le mauvais jeu de mots, car il ne joue pas avec le mot en tant que mot, mais en tant que sonorité. » Et il poursuit : le bon jeu de mots, au contraire, « part de la sonorité du mot pour entrer ensuite dans le mot lui-même ». Il est clair que « le mot en tant que mot » est vu comme le signifié, le message, l'idée et que son autre face, le son, est considéré comme un élément qui ne fait pas partie de ce qu'est le « vrai mot ». Ce genre d'arguments rejoint la dichotomie établie par les rhétoriciens entre les « figure de mots » et les « figures de sens », dont les premières ont souvent été jugées basses et vulgaires alors que les secondes seraient nobles et dignes des véritables écrivains. (2003: 72-73)

The pun is thus considered as a bad form of play with words as it is based on sonority, which makes it untranslatable in another language in theory, as sonorities can greatly vary for the same signified depending on the language. The problem with this vision of wordplay is that in the end it fails to take into account the desired effect behind the instance of wordplay[51].

Linguists working on certain translation projects with computer engineers also have a tendency to claim that wordplay is untranslatable, remarks Henry. This is due to the fact that their aim is an automation of language, which is not compatible with any form of ambiguity,

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[49] "il convient justement de signaler les noms propres, qui sont bien souvent empruntés ou simplement adaptés aux caractéristiques de chaque langue." (Henry, 2003: 71)

[50] "on en trouve d'autres qui fondent la même réfutation sur une mauvaise compréhension de ce que sont les jeux de mots. Dans bien des cas, les auteurs concernés ont en fait une vision tout à fait réductrice des jeux de mots, qui se limitent aux jeux sur les plurivalences (calembours) en oubliant les autres catégories, et ils pensent que l'aspect prépondérant du jeu de mots réside dans les signifiants des termes employés." (*Ibid*, 2003: 72)

[51] "Cette focalisation sur l'aspect superficiel du jeu de mots, c'est-à-dire sur leur signifiant, a pour corollaire la négligence totale de la fonction et de l'effet." (Henry, 2003: 73)

one of the main aspects of wordplay. As a result, this automation of translation fails when confronted to something other than an unequivocal situation, that is to say terms with only one meaning, and with clearly identifiable grammatical forms. When a choice is required, it is however unable to produce a translation[52]. This in itself is symbolic of the importance of human translators, as expressed by Henry:

> il n'a pas encore été possible de réaliser des machines à traduire véritablement intelligentes, qui puissent se passer de toute intervention humaine, et certains choix et certaines réflexions demeurent l'apanage des traducteurs humains, notamment lorsqu'il convient de penser non en termes de langue et des nombreuses virtualités de celle-ci, mais en termes de texte et, plus particulièrement, des caractéristiques de ses éléments, comme leur fonction ou leur effet. (2003: 75)

A computer is not able to recreate an intention, an effect, when faced with an utterance of wordplay, all it can do is try to find a similar term in the target language. Henry warns however, that it would not be honest to attribute the untranslatability of wordplay to the failure to find linguistic similarities of automated translation. She mentions that many authors who have studied human translation also concluded that wordplay is untranslatable because they think, so it would seem, that translating is only about finding term to term similarities between two languages[53]. Once again, we face here a wrong comprehension of the definition of wordplay and translation, as what is important is the function that the wordplay aims to fulfil, and it is the translation's goal to rewrite the play to reproduce that effect and fulfil that role in the target text, a translator is then much less likely to run into the issue of untranslatability.

All in all, the issue of untranslatability is a non-issue, as Launey puts it:

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[52] "Tant qu'elle est confrontée à des situations univoques, c'est-à-dire à des termes mono-référentiels et à des formes grammaticales clairement indentifiables, elle peut émettre une hypothèse de traduction, mais dès qu'il faut faire un choix, parce que les solutions potentielles (les différentes significations possibles qui forment, en langue, l'extension d'un terme) sont multiples, elle se heure à un écueil." (*Ibid*, 2003: 75)

[53] "Il serait cependant incomplet et malhonnête de dire que la croyance en l'intraduisibilité des jeux de mots du fait de l'impossibilité de trouver des correspondances traductionnelles se limite au domaine de la traduction automatique. Bien des auteurs qui ne se sont interrogés que sur la traduction humaine ont eux aussi conclu que l'on ne peut pas traduire des jeux de mots parce qu'ils pensent, *a priori*, que traduire est essentiellement un travail de correspondance de termes à termes entre deux langues." (Henry, 2003: 76)

> l'intraduisible, même lorsqu'il est effectif et n'est plus synonyme commode de telle
> incompétence, n'est jamais un problème sur le versant de l'analyse, de l'interprétation ; il
> n'est qu'une impossibilité momentanée de la récriture, ou structurelle de telle langue, mais
> pas de la traduction : il est toujours possible, en effet, de donner une sorte d'équivalent, étayé
> par des explications (2006: 46)

The goal of translation being to convey an intent, an effect, there will always be solutions, as convoluted as they need to be, to achieve that goal. Catherine Delesse, quoting Edmon Cary[54], tends to confirm this non-issue of untranslatability: "Cette notion « ne devient une gêne que dans la mesure où l'on est résolu à réduire la traduction à un exercice mort de stérile linguistique [c'est-à-dire la traduction littérale]. Une traduction vivante ne connaît guère d'intraduisibles »", or Paul Bensimon in "Traduire la figure" (2002: 21) cited in *LVA* (2007: 16): "La compétence traductive va dissoudre l'intraduisibilité linguistique en **traduisibilité poétique** ". The conclusion that may be drawn is that there is no room in translation for such a concept as untranslatability.

Most of the time solutions can be found, especially when dealing with wordplay, in the processes of expansion and reduction which are defined in *LVA*:

> **l'étoffement** et **l'effacement** (ou **la réduction**) consistent à ajouter ou retrancher des
> éléments de l'énoncé de départ en fonction de nécessités pragmatiques ou esthétiques :
> l'ajout d'une précision ou, en d'autres termes, l'explication de ce qui n'était qu'implicite
> dans le texte de départ, se révèle parfois indispensable à l'intelligibilité du message où à la
> teneur stylistique du texte. (2007: 16)

This process is very common in translation itself, mostly the expansion, as cultural aspects often need to be explained from a source to a target language, while reduction is quite used in the translation of wordplay, if no satisfactory answer is found and the situation allows it, the wordplay itself is not translated and can be replaced by an element that is not considered wordplay, or just erased. This case mostly concerns creations *ex nihilo*, as their range of complexity related to translation is quite wide. Such a creation will be more understandable if it is accompanied by an extralinguistic reality, a referent. To guide the reader towards a

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[54] *Comment faut-il traduire ?*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses Universitaires de Lille, (1958) (1985: 54)
Delesse Catherine, *Le Coq Gaulois à l'Heure Anglaise* (2009: 136)

referent, the author can use illustrations, but also contextual and co-textual explanations[55].

When a creation is not understood, and does not offer enough contextual elements to help resolve it, the translator must then ask themselves the question of the overall weight of this creation in the text, its value. If the translator deems that the presence or absence of an instance of wordplay does not change the overall effect of the text, it is then acceptable to not translate it, or not reproduce the play, as it will not impact the intent of the text, the function of the passage will not be altered. However, Jacqueline Henry warns against the abusive use of this process:

> En traduction, l'omission d'un certain nombre de ces jeux ou leur rendu par d'autres figures d'écriture, tendant ainsi à rejeter la minorité maintenue dans la catégorie des astuces ponctuelles, risque fort de dénaturer le texte considéré en brisant sa cohérence et en ne respectant pas son esprit. (2003: 54)

A text containing numerous instances of wordplay, will at least have a certain stylistic quality to it, that it is important to transcribe, and erasing most of that style would be very damaging to the overall feel of the text. The erasure of wordplay or a creation *ex nihilo* is not the only solution however, this other solution is proposed in *Du Jeu dans la Langue. Traduire le Jeu de Mots*:

> En effet, si le traducteur connaît parfois le rare bonheur de rencontrer une symétrie entre les langues, souvent l'un des sèmes originaux doit être abandonné. Fi du calque alors ; l'humour, en effet, se moque bien des conventions et règles (qu'elles soient morales ou grammaticales), et sollicite la créativité du traducteur. (2019: 10-11)

This approach is a lot more optimistic, and the optimal mindset to translate wordplay.

We have discussed the translation of wordplay here and there previously, but there are still aspects of it that need to be touched upon. First of all, as we have seen, the translation of wordplay is an arduous task, with multiple factors to take into account. As such, it is quite

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[55] "Toutes les créations *ex nihilo* ne représentent pas la même difficulté de traduction. Une innovation lexicale ad hoc se comprend très bien si une réalité extralinguistique, un référent, lui correspond. L'auteur.e a plusieurs moyens de guider les lecteur.rice.s vers un référent. Il peut s'appuyer sur l'illustration, mais aussi sur des explications contextuelles ou co-textuelles." Poix Cécile, *Du Jeu dans la Langue. Traduire le Jeu de Mots* (2019: 42)

well defined by Gerard Hardin and Cynthia Picot with the sentence: "une redoutable épreuve devant laquelle on reste parfois perplexe"[56]. This is where the mindset discussed earlier comes into play, as told by Jacqueline Henry:

> Le statut du jeu de mots du point de vue de la dénotation et, surtout, de la connotation, est un problème important dans la perspective de la traduction parce que la définition de ce statut a nécessairement une incidence sur l'attitude du traducteur. En effet, confronté à la difficulté posée par un jeu de mots dans le texte original, le traducteur doit faire un choix, notamment en fonction du type de ce texte, dans l'éventail allant de la glose) une solution rendant également compte de l'émotionnel sous une forme voisine de celle de l'original. (2003: 48)

The difficulty here is to find that mindset, depending on the type of text, to then be able to focus on how to translate the instances of wordplay. Concerning the recreation of wordplay in the target language, in the case of a variant of a basic formulation, one would think it would be possible to produce a first translation of the 'content', and then apply a layer of 'stylistic varnish' to this first translation[57], it would be however a mistake, as the effect of the wordplay could find itself denatured. The importance of effect in wordplay is again emphasised by Henry through its linguistic specificities:

> Le jeu de mots peut ainsi être considéré comme une sorte de mise en évidence de l'individualité d'une langue défiant donc tout naturellement la traduction – mais en même temps appelant le geste. C'est donc dans cette optique fonctionnelle et pragmatique, c'est-à-dire du rôle joué par les jeux de mots dans le texte et de l'effet qu'ils doivent produire sur leurs lecteurs que l'on doit aborder leur traduction. (2003: 51)

This idea of wordplay being akin to a provocation, asking for a translation, is what makes wordplay attractive, it makes wordplay a challenge for any translator to overcome. The paradox between how hard it is to translate wordplay and how attractive of a challenge it presents is reinforced by this quote from *Du Jeu dans la Langue*:

> Face aux contraintes fortes exercées sur eux, les traducteurs se piquent au jeu et offrent des solutions, recours, stratagèmes, faisant de la traduction du jeu de mots un espace de liberté, car il s'en dégage néanmoins une marge de manœuvre. (2019: 10)

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[56] Hardin Gerard and Picot Cynthia, *Translate. Initiation à la pratique de la traduction*, Paris : Dunod (1990: 23)

[57] "si un jeu de mots n'est qu'une variante d'une formulation de base, on pourrait croire possible de procéder à une première traduction du « contenu » puis d'appliquer, dans un deuxième temps, une couche de « vernis stylistique » à cette première traduction." (Henry, 2003: 50)

Wordplay is the embodiment of the concept of translation as we tried to develop in this paper, a blending of constraints that still allows huge freedom. In this regard, Mona de Pracontal's work in the field of translation seems to correspond with the idea of translation developed in this paper, even more so if we take a look at how she is described in an article by the CITL (Collège International des Traducteurs Littéraires): "Elle aime danser de ce pas de deux qui emporte texte et traducteur, où mes mots tantôt se placent d'emblée dans les empreintes de l'auteur, tantôt errent, tâtonnent, buttent et pirouettent, pour enfin marcher de pair avec les siens"[58]. This statement about freedom through constraint is not limited to translation though. The genre of youth literature operates in a similar manner.

B- The stakes of youth literature

PJO belongs to a particular literary genre which entertains a close relationship with wordplay as we will see, it is classified as youth literature, a term that we need to define. We must thus ask ourselves: what does 'youth' represent in youth literature[59] ? An answer can be found in *La Littérature de Jeunesse – Pour une Théorie Littéraire* by Nathalie Prince (2010: 12), quoted by Grace Mitri Younes:

> Il semblerait qu'il est difficile d'émettre une définition de la notion de « jeunesse ». Le grand Robert définit l'enfance comme la première période de la vie humaine de la naissance à l'adolescence. Mais nous possédons dans la terminologie moderne trois termes, voire quatre, pour préciser et décrire cette enfance : le nourrisson- ou bébé-, l'enfant, et l'adolescent. Le vocabulaire moderne de l'enfance reste vague (2014: 13)

Youth literature thus encompasses a large variety of potential readers. In our case, *PJO* is aimed more for a teenage audience, or slightly younger, it is generally found in libraries and book shops either in the 'children's books' or the '12 years and older' sections.

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[58] Quoted from https://www.atlas-citl.org/mona-de-pracontal-laureate-prix-de-traduction-centre-culturel-irlandais-fondation-irlandaise/, November 28, 2019.

[59] "Comment définir « la jeunesse » dans le cadre de la littérature de jeunesse ?" Mitri Younes Grace, *La Traduction de la Littérature Jeunesse* (2014: 13)

As for the main characteristics of this genre, Mitri Younes (2014: 14) quotes Marie-Hélène Porcar in *Un mot pour l'absence : une lecture de la mort dans la littérature jeunesse contemporaine* :

> Ce qui distingue un texte pour la jeunesse, c'est sa valeur éducative : l'enfant n'est qu'un être à instruire et à éduquer, sans véritable statut de lecteur. Et même si l'on a affaire à une édition plus soignée, où la part de l'image a un rôle, facilitant l'accès d'un jeune public ou d'un lectorat peu cultivé, c'est encore le souci éducatif qui prime (2006: 24)

However, this definition underestimates the young readers, as if they are not able to appreciate stylistic elements, which is a generalisation that unjustly undermines that lectorate which is capable of seeing and understanding style. It is even more so important to give care to the style as it is an important part of the literary culture that young readers are developing with this genre.

The true goal of youth literature, which has been the same since its inception, is not only to educate, as proposed before, but also to please the reader, it needs to create the pleasure to read, to further give young readers the need to read more, and thus educate themselves more, developing the beginning of a literary culture on the way.

Since its goal is to educate, to transmit a culture, a need arises to expand this transmission, and to achieve this, translation is a primary candidate. The task is however quite hard for the translator, as they must give a special attention to the conservation of the author's intent, of this culture that is to be transmitted. The reader must also feel, while reading the target text, as if it was written in its in original language, otherwise, there is a risk that they will not be completely immersed in the story, which would be detrimental to the reading experience.

Another specificity of youth literature that a translator must consider is the fact that children do not buy the books themselves. The adult acts as an intermediary, suggesting the book to the child after reading it themselves, implying, to a certain level, the existence of a double

target reader for the genre[60] that the translator must also take into account when producing the translation.

The work of the translator is thus complex and must take into account multiple factors for a successful translation. The translator must in this case, more than it is needed in most genres, become a re-writer, modifying the text to transmit it efficiently into another culture, while keeping the essential cultural aspects transmitted by the source text. As such, Mitri Younes comments:

> L'histoire de la traduction de la littérature de jeunesse montre que, pour des fins éditoriales, idéologiques, sociales ou autres, la plupart des textes traduits ont été soumis à l'adaptation : l'objectif étant de les rendre lisibles pour un public récepteur dans une nouvelle langue/culture. (2014: 16)

This applies mainly to specific references, such as cultural, geographical or historical references that may not be known by the reader. Furthermore, in the case of translating wordplay, the translator often has to produce a work of adaptation in order to make the text and the wordplay understandable to the new audience, be it for cultural references or for the sake of legibility. A simple lexical field must remain simple, the translator must be careful as to not over-translate, context is often enough to understand an uncommon word, even for a young reader. As for cultural references, a balance must be kept between adapting these references to something known in the target language culture, and keeping some of them to still make the reader feel that the action takes place in a foreign country (America in the case of *PJO*).

In the case of youth literature, the translator must also adapt parts of the text to the target readers, this task can prove complex as the translator has to put himself in the mind of an author putting himself in the mind of his target audience.

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[60] "l'adulte joue un rôle médiateur car c'est lui qui propose à l'enfant le livre après l'avoir lu. Ainsi la question des deux destinataires de la littérature d'enfant s'impose-t-elle." Prince (2010: 15-16), quoted from Mitri Younes (2014: 31)

Another staple of youth literature is the presence of humour. As mentioned before, youth literature must appeal to its audience, and as a means to do so, humour is the main device to reach this goal. Authors must thus adapt their writing to create in this genre that Isabelle Nières-Chevrel defines in *Littérature de jeunesse, incertaines frontières* as "un territoire qui se déplace au gré des représentations que les adultes se font, non pas simplement des jeunes lecteurs, mais également des ouvrages qui doivent leur être proposés"[61] (2005: 10). This means that an author must project himself into his audience to decipher what they would like to see.

The subject of wordplay is also linked with youth literature and exhibits a few characteristics worth mentioning in this genre. The first one is its omnipresence. Cécile Poix defines this aspect as such:

> Comme le constatent Esme Winter-Froemel et Angelika Zirker, « les jeux de mots relèvent de notre expérience linguistique quotidienne » (2015 : 2). Dès son plus jeune âge, l'enfant expérimente avec le langage par des jeux de distorsions phonologiques, de répétitions et de rimes. Il est donc naturel que la littérature pour la jeunesse reflète ces jeux de mots. (2019: 35)

We have discussed before the fact that wordplay is present in multiple aspects of our daily lives, and this is particularly true for children. This omnipresence in rhymes and songs helps develop their linguistic capabilities and their cognitive capabilities in general, as they gladly memorise the rhymes, without even understanding them at first, understanding their hidden meaning[62] as they grow up. This can be seen in youth literature through the omnipresence of play on sounds such as alliterations and assonances.

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[61] Quoted from Douglas, Virginie. "Présentation." *Palimpsestes. Revue De Traduction*, Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 4 Feb. 2019

[62] "L'enfance est généralement bercée de comptines, rythmées, rimées et répétées inlassablement. Les enfants les mémorisent et les récitent à cœur joie sans toujours comprendre ce qu'elles signifient. Souvent, les comptines ont des significations cachées" Cécile Poix in *Du Jeu dans la Langue. Traduire le Jeu de Mots* (2019: 47)

The second characteristic of wordplay in youth literature is its singularity. Cécile Poix writes:

> Dans la littérature pour la jeunesse, l'innovation lexicale ludique sert le plus souvent à attirer l'attention. Le jeu de mots se distingue par sa singularité, sa longueur, la difficulté éventuelle à le prononcer. Il ressort comme une formule magique, tel le lexème prononcé par Mary Poppins : *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.* (2019: 35)

This singularity in order to catch the attention of the reader thus develops their imagination, but it holds another secondary benefit: to help them realise the flexibility of language. That is what Cécile Poix demonstrates a few pages further:

> Dans le contexte de la littérature pour la jeunesse, le mot qui dénote, celui sur lequel la lecture s'attarde, permet à l'enfant de réaliser que la langue est un objet malléable. Jouer avec les mots est une activité ludique à dimension pédagogique, puisqu'elle permet d'appréhender les normes de la langue afin de pouvoir les dévier. Les traductions qui n'ont pas reproduit certaines fonctions des jeux de mots, ont toutes su retranscrire l'élément ludique général pour attirer l'attention des lecteur.rice.s sur le signe sans pour autant avoir recours au sens. (2019: 49)

The reader, by being exposed to wordplay, can learn how language works and how it can be modified to create new meanings.

The third characteristic is the interactional aspect of wordplay. As a matter of fact, books that belong to this genre are often read aloud to children, adding to the interaction between the author and the reader the interaction between reader and child, especially if there are some difficult words that the reader has to explain[63]. This resonates with *PJO* as the idea for the books started, as mentioned in our introduction, as a bedtime story Rick Riordan would tell his son. Wordplay can also in some instances start discussions between parent and child in the instance of specific references. We can find an example of such a case in the preface of *Du Jeu dans la Langue*:

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[63] "Les livres pour la jeunesse sont souvent lus à haute voix aux enfants. Outre l'intéraction entre écrivain.e et lecteur.rice, les jeux de mots peuvent ainsi donner lieu à un échange entre lecteur.ice et enfant, notamment si un décryptage est nécessaire." (Cécile Poix in *Du Jeu dans la Langue. Traduire le Jeu de Mots* (2019: 35)

> Passons des planches à l'écran avec l'univers de la série américaine *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Les dialogues y ont valeur sociolectale, et les jeux de mots fonction de code entre communautés d'âge, initiés et non-initiés au monde des vampires, avec parfois une connotation défensive. Ce type de confrontation implique souvent un décalage entre groupes qui donne une portée humoristique à l'incongruité des répliques. (2019: 14)

In *PJO*, certain instances of wordplay allow a discussion to start on certain aspects of Greek Mythology, that can be explained by the parent and prompt an interest in the child's mind to educate themselves more on the subject.

The fourth characteristic of wordplay in youth literature presented by Cécile Poix is its fugacity. The definition given is the following:

> Les jeux de mots ont un caractère éphémère. Dans la littérature pour la jeuneese, les néologismes ludiques n'ont pas vocation à entrer dans la langue, à s'institutionnaliser. Judith Munat l'explique par leur trop grande dépendance du contexte textuel et leur manque d'utilité référentielle dans le monde extralinguistique (2007 : 169). On appelle d'ailleurs ces innovations lexicales des occasionnalismes. (2019: 36)

Wordplay thus becomes a short-lived existence, they happen and are forgotten, even though there are some examples that can leave a mark in a language, for example some creations from *Alice in Wonderland* which are still widely known nowadays.

The fifth characteristic is its benefits regarding the linguistic competences of the reader. Cécile Poix comments:

> La complexité du langage s'acquiert de façon progressive. En fonction de son âge, l'enfant ne pourra pas toujours percevoir et comprendre seul les jeux de mots rencontrés dans un texte. D'ailleurs, selon la complexité du jeu de mots, l'adulte peut pareillement passer à côté d'une occurrence ludique, ou la détecter, mais ne pas la comprendre. (2019: 36)

This implies a need to put special care into the legibility of the text, because a child or a teenager does not have the same linguistic faculties that an adult has, but the text must still be stimulating to read, and that is why the most used device to add humour in youth literature is wordplay as it allows the writer to play wit language, all the while giving flavour to the text.

The last characteristic of wordplay in youth literature is the effort of interpretation that it necessitates. Cécile Poix offers the following explanation:

> En littérature britannique, le *nonsense* st un genre littéraire, promu dans la littérature pour la jeunesse par Edward Leart et les *nursery rhymes* [comptines]. Bercé dès le plus jeune âge part des comptines où, tout naturellement, une vache saute par-dessus la lune, l'enfant laisse libre cours à son imagination sans se surprendre de l'incongruité du texte. Cette entrave à la logique du sens donne aux auteur.e.s de littérature pour la jeunesse une grande liberté créative. (2019: 36)

Confronted with an unfamiliar setting, the reader will try to decode it, this will develop their imagination and creativity, and in turn help them understand and imagine further stories that will also contain strange concepts.

C-Overview of translation in this corpus

The process of translation and the stakes of youth literature having been defined, we can now tackle these concepts in relation to our corpus. The edition chosen for this study can be found in the works cited.

This corpus is interesting in the fact that, as mentioned before, it offers a variety of wordplay, and inside these categories, we can find cases that are handled in a very different manner. As in all translations, there are losses, plays that could not be translated. This concerns 20 occurrences, and is often due to a difficulty to translate, but also sometimes to the fact that there was no need to translate, as they could be brought into French as they were. There are also plays that were heavily modified in appearance while retaining the original effect. It is also interesting to see plays that translated almost naturally from a language to another. Most of the cases that fall under this category are names, as our culture has become more accustomed to English names, but there are also some cases in which the names manage to convey the same idea all the while drawing from slightly different references from both cultures.

III- THE ROOTS OF A FICTIONAL WORLD

A-Creating something new from something old

Creating a new world is no easy task. Furthermore, a new world is never really created from scratch, it is often built upon previous experiences, upon inspirations found in other worlds, and of reality, as expressed by Nelson Goodman in *Manière de faire des mondes*: "Pour construire le monde comme nous savons le faire, on démarre toujours avec des mondes déjà à disposition; faire, c'est refaire." (2015: 22), and he develops a bit further: "Pour faire un monde à partir d'un autre, il faut souvent procéder à des coupes sévères et à des opérations de comblement – à l'extraction véritable de vieux matériaux et à leur remplacement par de nouveaux." (2015: 32). These two quotes are particularly interesting if we consider them in the context of our corpus. As a matter of fact, the world depicted in the *PJO* series are a great example of Goodman's statements, as it takes heavily after Greek mythology, be it for its bestiary composed of chimeras, cyclops, manticores and other delightful creatures, or for its characters with the presence of all the Greek gods and the presence of demigods/heroes. However, Rick Riordan does not use these entities exactly as they were depicted in ancient times. He takes some liberties with them, and the chimera first appears as a chihuahua before transforming into its true form, a cyclop appears in the form of a messy teenager, and a manticore is seen disguised as a teacher. As for the gods, Poseidon appears in casual beach attire, Arès wears a leather jacket and sunglasses, and so on…

Old ideas are recycled to appear credible in our modern setting. One of the most striking example of this is the Half-Blood Camp. Similar to ancient Greek myths, the gods continue to have children with mortals, thus birthing half-bloods, also called demigods, just like Heracles or Perseus (which is the inspiration for the name of the main character), but when one of these children enter their teenage years, they start to get hunted by monsters who are now able to sense them. In order to remedy this problem, a camp has been created to protect

and train demigods, a mix between a summer camp and a military camp in Ancient Greece. This allows the creation of a world that will resonate with the minds of the target audience, as the stories of Greek mythology are quite popular with young children. We may think for example of the movie *Hercules* made by Disney, and references to this mythology in a plethora of fictional works, and the summer camp aspects will also be understood by youth, particularly in an American context. In a French context, this point also holds true, as summer camps exist there as well.

Furthermore, Greek mythology is also quite represented in fiction, we witness its presence in movies through examples such as *Hercules* which we mentioned earlier, but also in other works of youth literature with the bestiary of *Harry Potter* with the presence of centaurs, sphinxes and many more, and its presence is also found in comics, as most of the characters in the world of *Wonder Woman* are pulled from this mythology. This means that a translator will have fewer difficulties as the work of adaptation will then be reduced.

B-The importance of names

The mix of old and new concepts facilitates the process of creating a new world, as the author can use names that have already been established in general culture, as seen before with the likes of Poseidon and Arès for example. These names already exist as cultural references so there is no need to do more than translating them with the established translation (in those cases they even stay the same from one language to another). However, creating new names is also necessary if one wants to create a new world. We thus discover new names that are used for objects or concepts that already possessed one. This illustrates one of Goodman's concepts for the creation of a world:

> des qualifications différentes peuvent renvoyer au même individu : nous pouvons désigner ou indiquer, verbalement ou par d'autres moyens, le même objet par des occurrences différentes. (2015: 24)

One of the new names present in the books is that of the ancient sword wielded by Percy named Anaklusmos. It most often referred to by its English name Riptide, a translation of its Greek name which allows for the renewal of its identity in a modern context. It is not enough to create a new world though, and that is why it is necessary to come up with new names made up from scratch in order to flesh out this universe. Rick Riordan did exactly this in his own playful way, as most of the name given to the demigods and other characters contain a form of wordplay, hinting at their godly parent or at their nature. This is where the translator's work gets harder. As expressed by Catherine Delesse and Bertrand Richet in their book *Le Coq Gaulois à l'Heure Anglaise*:

> La traduction des noms propres pose souvent problème : faut-il ou non les traduire ? En ce qui concerne la bande dessinée, et particulièrement une série comme *Astérix*, où la plupart des noms se fondent sur des jeux de mots, la réponse est claire : il faut traduire ou adapter. (2009: 28)

It is very much the case in *PJO* as well, as mentioned earlier. We will thus see how this problem was tackled by Mona de Pracontal, as well as other issues she is likely to have faced.

IV- WORLD-BUILDING THROUGH LANGUAGE AND WORDS

A-The names in *PJO*

In order to introduce these names which are the subject of a play on words, we will first focus on the sword of one of the main antagonists of the series: Luke Castellan. Like many weapons in this universe, it has a name which is revealed to us at the end of the first volume *The Lightning Thief* : "Backbiter" (2006: 362). It is a portmanteau word, derived from the expression 'Backstabber', and the reveal of the name accompanies a plot twist, Luke committed treason against the gods and Camp Half-Blood. It is also interesting to note that the play also involves an alliteration as the two words that this name is composed of start with 'b'. For a French translation, one would be tempted to try and keep all the aspects of the original, the result could be a name such as 'Percepeau'. It is still a portmanteau word, it is derived from the expression 'donner un coup de poignard dans le dos', and the two words begin with the same consonant. However, this answer is not fully satisfactory, as it is a little too far from the base expression. For the official translation, Mona de Pracontal decided to use the process of elision and named the sword Perfide. It is not a portmanteau word, and the sonority is lost. However, the 'Per' part still reminds one of 'percer', an act that one would do with a dagger in the back as a betrayal, and the meaning of the source name is kept. It is not a perfect answer either, but it still fulfils what can be expected from a translation.

Unfortunately, this choice becomes the source of a problem in volume 4 *The Battle of the Labyrinth*, in which the name of the sword is used in the pun "Now that it is re-forged completely, it shall indeed bite back" (2009: 304), which was translated as "Maintenant qu'elle est complètement reconstituée, elle va donner toute la mesure de sa perfidie" (2010:

347). The effect of the snarky and clever turn on the name loses a lot of impact in the French version, as the source version uses the very name that was introduced to us from the beginning, and modulates it into an action verb using only the words in the name, whereas the translation is forced to expand on the sentence to keep the same meaning while also modifying the grammatical nature of the name like in the original. If we consider the hypothetical translation 'Percepeau' given before, it would produce the following: 'Elle va effectivement percer ta peau', which is more similar to the original sentence. However, we have to bear in mind that this hypothetical translation was made with this wordplay in mind, while Mona de Pracontal did not know that the sword's name would be part of a future wordplay when she was translating it in the first volume, but to keep the world consistent, she had to find solutions and came up with her own answer to this problem. It is a good illustration of the translation issue expressed by Olivier Reboul in *La Rhétorique*:

> "Parlons de la maxime italienne : «Traduttore, tradittore»; elle est proprement intraduisible. Si je dis : traducteur, traître, je perds la répétition de syllabes (paronomase) qui fait sa force. La première caractéristique des figures de mots est qu'elles sont intraduisibles, à moins qu'on ne trouve par hasard leur équivalent dans une autre langue."(1984: 37)[64]

We will now delve more generally into the presence of names carrying meaning, a device often used in youth literature or comic books, as seen in the quote earlier which questioned the need to translate a name or not in the context of *Astérix*. Here the question also applies to a lot of names, but as we will see, Mona de Pracontal chose not to translate every name. For example, one of the first names of such nature appears in the first volume: "Mrs Dodds" (2006: 4), that was not translated in the French version. According to the website Houseofnames.com, a meaning of the name Dodd could be deceiver or rascal, which is fitting considering that Mrs Dodds is revealed to be a fury, a monster of Greek mythology, disguised as a teacher. However, this interpretation of the name seems rather obscure, and it

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[64] Quoted from Delesse, Catherine, and Bertrand Richet. *Le Coq Gaulois à L'heure Anglaise: Analyse De La Traduction Anglaise d'Astérix*. Artois Presses université, 2009.

is unsure if this is even what the author intended when he named this character, so keeping the name in the French version is an understandable choice. Two other names that were not translated are Will Solace and Katie Gardner, two campers from Camp Half-blood. Solace is a name that helps identify the character, who is a son of Apollo, and inherited skills in the field of medicine from his godly father, a reader is then more likely to remember afterwards which god he is associated to. In the French version, his original name is preserved, and while it could have been possible to find a name reminiscent of medicine, it would have been harder to combine the aspect of medicine and the aspect of the sun (Apollo also being the sun god) that we find in 'Sol', so keeping Solace is enough to still identify him with his father in the French translation, as it shares its beginning 'Sol' with the word 'soleil', and the pronunciation of 'Solace' echoes that of 'soleil'.

In the case of Katie Gardner, she is a daughter of Demeter, goddess of agriculture, so her name is just 'Gardener' with the omission of the first 'e', which is quite straightforward. Here again, the translation could have made something new, such as 'Jardun', but keeping 'Gardner' is a valid option as it is still similar to the world 'Jardin', and the American sonority remains, which can be important to keep so as not to adapt too much and risk losing the markers of nationality. However, this problem was far easier to deal with for another camper, a daughter of Aphrodite named Silena Beauregard. Here, the name is already a portmanteau word in French that links her with her mother's attributes, so a non-translation was the obvious choice. Another example that can be found in the name of a character mentioned only once, a science teacher named Mrs Tesla, which is quite a straightforward reference that resonates through most cultures. If we now consider the name of Percy's stepfather, we feel that there was a possibility for translation while Mona de Pracontal chose not to adapt it. His name is Gabe Ugliano, he is a despicable character, which is well reflected by his name, combining 'ugly' and the suffix -ano as a marker of Italian origins. If we follow

that logic, a translation such as 'Vilano' could be a satisfying answer, mixing 'vil' and -ano, while also sharing a similar pronunciation with the word 'vilain', and still reflecting the despicable nature of the character.

Such complete transformations of names can also be found in the books, and are often operated on names that are commented upon by the narrator. A good example can be found in the second volume, when we are introduced to two sons of Hermes, the god of thieves (among many other things), and we learn that their last name is Stoll, which is very close to 'stole'. Percy then makes the commentary "I'd always thought it was funny that the god of thieves would have kids with the last name Stoll" (2008: 57), clearly displaying their name as a mean to create humour. This name displays no evident marker of nationality, because of this factor, Mona de Pracontal possesses more freedom to translate it so that the joke would still function in the same manner, and while she could have come up with a translation such as 'Voll', she went beyond that to make the pun a little more subtle, and chose 'Alatir'. Here we have the same process that consists in taking a real word (in this case multiple words merged into one) to make a homophone, still referring to the act of thieving while being a credible name.

Another name undergoing such a translation appears in the third volume, when Percy comes face to face with a teacher with a peculiar name that he immediately addresses: "Ms Gottschalk [...] A teacher named *Got Chalk ?*" (2008: 5). This name is similar to the French translation 'Alatir' in the sense that it is an idiom compressed into a name, but this one has a specificity which may render a translation problematic: it is also a cultural reference to the milk advertising campaign which uses the slogan "Got Milk?", quite famous across America. However, that cultural reference is obscure for a French teenager, so Mona de Pracontal made the choice of translating the name into "Mme Taddlacray [...] Un prof qui s'appelle 'T'as de la craie' ?" (2008: 14), quite a literal translation, once again melding a sentence into

a name, but the pun is conveyed nevertheless, even though the fact that it is explained directly after diminishes the impact.

The same kind of change is present in the first volume in the form of a chihuahua named "Sonny" (2006: 205) held by an old lady. The play here is that 'Sonny' can pass as a real name, and the chihuahua is revealed later to be none other than a chimera, a monster that was birthed by Echidna, the true form of the old lady holding it. There is no equivalent in French that could act in a similar fashion as a name and the designation of a son, so the translator chose the name "Fiston" (2008: 236), which is not a real name per se, but is acceptable as an affectionate pet nickname, though less probable. In the fifth volume, we find out about a new weapon that is subject to wordplay, but this time the wordplay appears in the sentence following the reveal of the name, and not separated by a few volumes, which made the translator's work easier compared to the 'Backbiter' case. The pun is the following: "She called the spear *Maimer*. Behind her back, everybody else called it *Lamer*" (2011: 52), two words with a very similar sonority that were translated by "Elle surnommait son arme *La Mutileuse* mais dans son dos tout le monde disait *L'Inutileuse*." (2010: 61). Here all the elements of the source text are conveyed, we find the meaning (the derogatory nickname) and the play on sonority, which makes this translation a perfect fit. Another play on sonority appears in the third volume, with the revelation of the new man in the life of Percy's mother, a man named Paul Blofis. Upon first hearing the name, Percy answers "Mr Blowfish ?" (2008: 106), thus using a fish name which sounds similar instead of his real name. A literal translation could be inaccurate in this instance as the French for blowfish is poisson-globe, which is very different from Blofis, but fortunately, there is a fish in French with a name akin to 'Blofis', the 'bouffi', hence the translation "M. Bouffi ?" (2008: 128), which thus functions the same way as in the original text. The adaptation here then plays out perfectly one volume later, when this wordplay comes back in an exchange between Poseidon and

Paul Blofis, which is as follows in both versions:

> "Blowfish, did you say ?"
>
> "Ah, no, Blofis, actually."
>
> "Oh, I see." Poseidon said. "A shame, I quite like blowfish. I am Poseidon." (2009: 355)
>
> -Bouffi, vous dîtes ?
>
> -Non, Blofis, en fait.
> -Ah, je vois. Dommage, j'aime bien le bouffi comme poisson. Moi c'est Poséidon. (2010: 403)

Thanks to the close similarity between the source text and the adaptation, the translator did not find herself confronted to the same problem she faced with "Backbiter", and the wordplay is thus faithful to the original.

However, there are wordplays involving names that are so specific that the translator had to either find a solution in order to adapt them properly, or not translate at all. Such an example occurs at the beginning of the third volume, when Percy finds himself in a cold environment while not equipped to endure it, and thus says "I felt like a Percysicle" (2008: 18), a combination of his name and the word icicle which is meant to express his discomfort against the cold weather. In French, 'Perstalagtite' is a possibility, but unlike what can be found in the original pun, the name 'Percy' is not used in its entirety with another word to create a new one, thus the official translation that was chosen is "J'avais l'impression de me transformer en glaçon ambulant" (2008: 28). The wordplay is lost, but the feeling is still conveyed, while avoiding a play on words that might have felt unnatural. In other cases, we also end up with a translation that does not fit in as smoothly as the original, for example when a nymph named Juniper is asked where she lives, she answers "In the Juniper. Duh." (2009: 56), but she shares her name with a plant for which a translation already exists. It was translated as Genièvre in the French version, but because the naming system is different in French, we end up with "Dans le genévrier, figure toi" (2010: 71), which does not hit the mark quite as much as the original answer.

As a last example of the difficult translation of a name, in the fourth volume, Percy and his

friend and love interest Annabeth find themselves in a magic maze that they have trouble navigating. They get the help of one of Percy's friends, a mortal girl named Rachel who has the power to see through the illusions of the maze and thus acts as their guide. A tension builds up between Annabeth and Rachel as they are both attracted to Percy, and that is when Annabeth throws a sarcastic inquiry at Rachel, asking her to lead the way, and calling her "Sacagawea" (2009: 271) in the process. Sacagawea is an important Native American figure and was a key element in the Lewis and Clark expedition that aimed at discovering more about the West, she acted as a guide thanks to her knowledge of the environment. However, since she is not a well-known figure in France, the translator could not keep the name as it could have been too confusing. Instead, Annabeth calls Rachel "grande prêtresse" (2010: 311) in the translation, which is more evocative of Greek Mythology and coincides with the themes of the book, and is more relatable to a French audience. This goes to show how hard it is to deal with a precise cultural reference in a translation.

B-Wordplay as a reflection of body and mind

After the study of character names and how the author toys with them to flesh out the world he created, we need to study how these characters are filled with life by the author, and wordplay has a part to play in this process. Under the disguise of humour, it is possible to express the state of mind of a character, or even his physical state, as Goodman explains : "dans la mesure où la littérature a une fonction descriptive, narrative, ou d'exposition, les variations de style vont être des variations dans la façon dont cette fonction est accomplie par les textes" (2015: 45). Here, the variation in style that we are interested in is thus wordplay. First, a good example of the use of wordplay to convey inner feelings can be found in the second volume. After being rescued from the song of some sirens that had the effect of showing her through illusions what her life could have been, Annabeth has the following

exchange with Percy:

> "My fatal flaw is hubris."
> I blinked. "That brown stuff they spread on veggie sandwiches ?"
> She rolled her eyes. "No, Seaweed Brain, That's *hummus*. Hubris is worse."
> (2008: 199)

In this dialogue, we can see that Annabeth, who is still under the shock of her vision, is talking about a serious matter, but Percy immediately answers off the mark, be it intentionally or not, Annabeth thus corrects him, acknowledging the play on words which offering a relief from the tension of the previous scene. The translation of this passage is not problematic, as the word 'hubris' is Greek, and 'hummus' has the translation 'hommos' in French, the play on the vaguely similar sonority remains the same. This device of using wordplay to dispel tension can also be found in the third volume. After a series of events, the characters finally arrive at a dam named Hoover. Upon their arrival, a character named Zoe (a girl who became immortal at a young age and who as a result has the appearance of a teenager while being thousands of years old) utters a perfectly innocent sentence that is turned into a joke by the rest of the group, resulting in this dialogue:

> Let us find the dam snack bar" Zoe said.
> [...]"I could use some dam french fries."
> [...]"And I need to use the dam restroom."
> [...]"I want to use the dam water fountain" Grover said.
> "And… [...] I want to buy a dam T-shirt (2008: 208)

Here we have a pun with the word 'dam', which phonetically is identical to 'damn', and that is what the others use to create a comedic moment, bringing down all the tension after their narrow escape. Given the specificity of this pun, it is hard to find a relevant translation for it, as there is no word in French that could express the same meaning as 'damn', while being an homophone to the word 'barrage', it is the perfect illustration of Gérard Hardin and Cynthia Picot's comment about translating wordplay being a formidable trial in front of which we can at times find ourselves puzzled[65]. However, Mona de Pracontal found a brilliant answer to this problem, and instead of trying to use the word 'barrage' which was

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[65] "une redoutable épreuve devant laquelle on reste parfois perplexe" (1990: 23)

a dead end, she played with the name of the dam itself which is Hoover, to come up with this translation:

> -Allons voir si ce snack-bar est ouvert, a dit Zoé.
> [...] -Tu veux voir si le snack-bar est Hoover ?
> [...]- Je me prendrais bien un sandwich Hoover au fromage.
> [...] -Et moi, j'aimerais bien trouver des WC Hoover.
> [...]-Un distributeur d'eau fraîche Hoover, ça me plairait bien aussi.
> [...]- Je voudrais bien m'acheter un tee-shirt, si le magasin de souvenirs est Hoover.
> (2008: 241)

We still have a pun with homophones, but this time between 'Hoover' and 'ouvert', the structure of this passage is then preserved. This is important due to the fact that this passage is pivotal to the story, as it produces a break in the story, represented by the shift in the characters' state of mind. The second volume offers yet another example of such plays with tension when Percy and his cyclop friend (and brother from his father's side) Tyson snuck up on a boat which at first seems empty. But upon waking up, they are greeted by a strange message:

> "and for our special guests, disemboweling practice on the promenade"
> [...] "What did he say ?"
> "bowling practice ?" (2008: 118)

The surprise at the mention of a gruesome act, coupled with the foggy state of mind of waking up causes this incomprehension, and this is once again a play on similar sounds, thus offering a scene that mixes a sense of danger and comic relief. The French translation does not appear to show sign of any difficulty to produce:

> -Et, pour nos invités spéciaux, cours d'étripage sur la promenade!
> -Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit ?
> -Cours de triage ? (2008: 136)

The pun is written with the translation of 'disemboweling' by its French counterpart 'étripage', and since the most important part of the wordplay is the sound of the second word and not the meaning, the use of 'triage' works well, especially in the context of a practice class. The final examples of wordplay for the sake of toying with tension that we will examine occur in the fifth and last volume. At this point in the story, an important prophecy that is supposed to decide on the fate of the world is finally revealed to Percy, who

has a key part to play in it. This is meant to be a major revelation, which has been foreshadowed before. However, the revelation starts like this:

> "A half blood of the eldest dogs..."
> "That's gods, not dogs." (2011: 55)

Thus, the very first line of the prophecy is butchered by Percy because of his dyslexia (a common characteristic to all demigods) and immediately corrected by Annabeth, defusing all the tension at once. The same effect was achieved in French, not by switching the letters of a word in order to make another, but by transforming "dieux aînés" into "nieux aidés" (2010: 64) we thus lose the comedic aspect of the gods becoming dogs, since "nieux" does not mean anything, but the wordplay still fulfills the same role. The prophecy is then revealed to us, its last line being "Olympus to preserve or raze." (2011: 55). In this moment that should be filled with anxiety after hearing about the possible end of the world, the first character to speak up says "Raise is good, isn't it ?" (2011: 55), thus offering once again a play on homophones that drastically changes the atmosphere from anxiety to comedy. Of course, the translator had to use an equivalence in order to convey the wordplay, the last line of the prophecy was changed to "Pour l'Olympe préserver ou céder sans retour" (2010: 65), as a consequence the character's line becomes "S'aider, c'est plutôt bien, non ?" (2010: 65). The result coincides with the original play on homophones and the meaning is once again preserved.

As regards the development of characters, wordplay can be used to emphasize their age, we have to bear in mind the fact that most of the main characters are teenagers, and this aspect has to be reflected in the text. This is one of the purposes of the "dam" wordplay examined earlier, the butt of the joke being the character of Zoe who has lived for thousands of years and does not understand the reason behind her companions' laughter, which is due to a linguistic gap. This is not the only instance where this gap in language has a role to play, as shown in the third volume by the following exchange:

> "The Hunters do not need thy help"
> "*your*" Thalia grumbled. "Nobody has said *thy* in, like, three hundred years, Zöe. Get with the times."
> [...] "*Yerrr*. We do not need *yerrr* help." (2008: 93)

We can see here the clash between the two characters through their language register, laying clear emphasis on their hostile stance towards each other throughout the book, and such a linguistic clash can be seen in a couple of other instances. The difficulty here for Mona de Pracontal was to express this difference of register in French, which she did in the following manner:

> -Les chasseresses n'ont point besoin du vostre secours
> -De votre secours, a grogné Thalia. Plus personne ne parle comme ça depuis des siècles. Essaie de suivre l'époque.
> [...]-Point n'ayons besoin de votre secours, a-t-elle dit. (2008: 114)

Just as Rick Riordan used old English, she opted for the use of old French, but mimicking the humour found in Zoe's unsuccessful attempt to pronounce 'your' appeared difficult to translate, as instead, Thalia's correction is repeated in a sentence that still contains old French. Other examples that play a role in expressing the age of a character can be found in Percy's habit of making snarky answers. When Annabeth asks him in the second volume "What do you get when you skin a ram ?", his answer is "Messy" (2008: 86), as he does not have the real answer and thus makes a joke instead. The translation here does not present any particular issue, except the fact that linguistic amplification is required to make the answer grammatically correct. There is no word in French that can be used alone to translate 'messy' as an answer to 'Tu as quoi?/Tu obtiens quoi?', as a result, the given translation is "-Quand tu dépouilles un bélier tu obtiens quoi ?   -Un tas de saletés ?" (2008: 102). If we look once again into the third book, we can find another one of those replies in the dialogue "'Wow' Thalia muttered. 'Apollo is hot.'   'He's the sun God.' I said." (2008: 46), playing with the multiple meanings of the word 'hot', at first to note that he is attractive, and in the reply to notify the link between the sun god and the temperature of the sun. In French, we have a literal translation "-Waouh! a marmonné Thalia. Il est trop chaud, Apollon ! -C'est le dieu du soleil, lui ai-je fait remarquer." (2008: 60), the expression and double meaning

being the same in French, the translation does not need unnecessary additions, even though the expression 'chaud bouillant' would also add a double entendre, as it is generally used in an erotic context.

Wordplay also helps to enhance a specific physical characteristic. In the second book, Percy overhears a conversation between two beings that he cannot see, but the way they talk alerts him immediately: "Ssssix more joined yesssssterday." [...]"Yessss," a second reptilian voice said. "He drawssss them. Sssson we will be sssstrong." (2008: 119), the insistence on the 's' sound produces an alliteration that alerts us to the fact that the ones talking are snake monsters. The French translation does not require much analysis, as the alliteration is preserved here. The exact same device is then used in the last book when Percy faces the same monsters, which helps creating a coherence within the world. There is another wordplay that acts as a reminder of the appearance of a character. It is introduced in the first volume when Percy is "tackled by Grover's bear hug–or goat hug." (2006: 216). The original expression is thus changed to highlight the fact that Grover, being a satyr, is indeed half goat. However, this expression has no equivalent in French, there is no term to describe a hug that involves an animal. A reformulation is then necessary to produce a result such as "Il se jeta sur moi pour me faire le genre de câlin qu'on fait quand on est copains comme cochons, ou plutôt comme chèvre.", but this makes the sentence too long. The translator decided to abandon the wordplay, instead choosing "Grover m'a serré de toutes ses forces dans ses bras." (2008: 248). Later on, a similar play on words occurs when Annabeth acts a little bit too caring with Grover, who retorts "Jeez Annabeth," he grumbled. "You're like an old mama goat." (2006: 357), the pun involves the expression 'mama bear' which designates an overprotective motherly behaviour, adapted to fit Grover's goat-like nature. However, there is here an equivalent in French that involves an animal, namely 'mère poule', thus the translator was able to keep the original equivalence with "Bon sang,

Annabeth, a grommelé Grover, on dirait une vieille maman chèvre!" (2008: 406). It is only much later in the last book that the play on Grover's appearance resurfaces, when Percy thinks to himself that "His goatee looked fuller, almost manly (or goatly ?)" (2006: 112), creating an adjective from the word 'goat', once again to insist on his nature as a satyr for the sake of comedy. The structure of adjectives makes it easy to create new ones in English thanks to the suffix '-ly'. French does not have that possibility, so the translator opted for "Son menton s'ornait d'un bouc assez fourni qui lui donnait un air presque adulte" (2008: 128), once again getting rid of the original wordplay.

C-Wordplay as a stylistic device

The final aspect of wordplay to be studied is its stylistic use. Sometimes it does not need to represent a complex trait of character or hints as to what they feel or look like. In order to develop further, we will rely on this quote: "La stylistique [...] se limite aux aspects de la façon dont et de ce que l'oeuvre symbolise, et plus précisément encore, à ceux de ces aspects qui sont caractéristiques d'un auteur, d'une période, d'une région, d'une école, etc., données." (Goodman, 2015: 63). What is interesting for us there is thus the development of a style from the part of the author, a style which focuses on wordplay. One of the staples of Rick Riordan's style throughout the *PJO* universe is the use of prophecies. Each book of the first saga contains one, and they all possess the same structure: rhyming verses, with four verses for the first two, and then six verses for the volumes three to five, with the exception of the prophecy revealed at the end of the last book, which serves as an introduction for the next series of books which are a continuation of the story. All of these prophecies are effectively translated as rhyming lines in French, except for the first one:

You shall go West, and face the god who has turned
You shall find what was stolen, and see it safely returned
You shall be betrayed by one who calls you a friend
And you shall fail to save what matters most, in the end. (2011: 141)

Tu iras à l'ouest et tu rencontreras le dieu qui s'est retourné
Tu retrouveras ce qui fut volé et tu le verras restitués sans dommage
Tu seras trahi par quelqu'un qui se dit ton ami
Et à la fin, tu ne parviendras pas à sauver ce qui compte le plus (2010: 165)

In the subsequent prophecies, the translator uses different devices in order to preserve the rhyme. For example, in the second book, the four verses rhyme with the sound /oʊn/, so she decided to put all of the verbs at the end of the verses to end with rhymes in /a/. It is thus unclear why this first prophecy was translated in quite a literal manner, and thus not rhyming. For the sake of the exercise, we decided to try and come up with a translation similar to that of the other prophecies:

Tu iras à l'ouest et tu rencontreras le dieu qui s'est retourné

Tu retrouveras ce qui fut volé, et tu le verras sans dommage restitué

Tu seras trahi par quelqu'un qui se dit ton ami

Et à la fin, tu ne parviendras pas à sauver ce que plus que tout au monde tu chéris.

Another element of the books that is often an occasion for wordplay is the titles of chapters. Most of the time, they consist of a short sentence announcing an event that will happen in the chapter, but in a few instances, the author slipped in a play on words. For example, the title for the ninth chapter in the fourth book, which is "I scoop poop" (2009: 149), playing once again with sonority through the repetition of the sound /u:p/. This title was translated by Mona de Pracontal into "Je mets les mains dans le purin" (2010: 175), which perfectly corresponds to the original title as both the meaning and the repetition of sound are intact. She even expands the descriptive quality of the title, as it refers to a moment of the story in which Percy is forced to clean stables, the word 'purin' is thus even more precise than the word 'poop' originally used. In a different style, the second chapter of the last book reads "I meet some fishy relatives" (2011: 28), which plays on the meaning of 'fishy' as dubious, and the prefix 'fish', as Percy encounters many other sons of Poseidon

in this chapter, but contrary to himself or Tyson, these relatives are akin to fishes or other sea life. The French version of this title is "Je rencontre des cousins à la mode océane" (2010: 34), which does not translate the play on the double meaning of the original, as no equivalent exists in French that could both translate the meaning of 'fishy' and refer to the sea or its wildlife. In the same fashion as the prophecy, we tried to find an alternative title which could convey a play on words while remaining as close as possible to the original, and came up with "Je rencontre mes 20 000 cousins sous les mers", a play on the title *20 000 lieues sous les mers* written by Jules Verne.

In order to put an end to this analysis of comical chapter titles, we decided to choose one which can serve as an example to this statement:

> La traduction du contenu sémantique de ces noms inventés pose en revanche des problèmes spécifiques, soit parce qu'ils désignent une réalité trop franco-française pour être traduite, soit parce que le jeu sonore sur lequel ils se fondent –notamment homophonie et paronymie– ne peut être transposé directement dans la langue d'arrivée (Delesse et Richet, 2009: 22)

The quote refers to names and how they are sometimes used in *Astérix*, but we can easily transpose it to an anglophone work translated into French as well. The title we would like to focus on is "Blackjack gets jacked" (2011: 355), chapter twenty-one of the fifth volume. The play here occurs on the homophony between the name 'Blackjack' (a pegasus), or most precisely the end of his name, and the verb 'jacked' which is usually used to describe a theft. Unfortunately, there is no word in French that describes a robbery and resembles 'jack' at the same time, which makes the wordplay near impossible to translate. Mona de Pracontal reached the translation "Blackjack se fait détourner" (2010: 396), which is a play on the ability to fly possessed by pegasi, allowing the use of 'détourner'. Other solutions would have been 'Arnaque pour Blackjack', thus retaining the play on repetition of sounds, but the meaning of the original title is not quite conserved. This word would otherwise seem strange if associated with a normal horse. This title shows the limits of translation when the translator is faced with a linguistically very precise occurence of wordplay.

CONCLUSION

Wordplay is a multifaceted concept, so much so that it is difficult to give it a clear definition, let alone a thorough classification. Throughout this paper, we tried to define the concept of wordplay as precisely as possible by fitting examples into different categories to show the versatility of wordplay. This analysis pointed out the fact that wordplay can take various forms, from double meaning to homophones and other plays on sound, and so much more, those examples specifically can be considered as a main aspect, a staple of Rick Riordan's style, as they were the main types present throughout the books. However, it is not only a stylistic device used to embellish the text, we have seen through the exploration of the functions of wordplay that it can serve a variety of purposes that, once put together, result in a creation of a new, coherent world, specific to the author. The problem with a world crafted in such a manner is that it hardly becomes faithfully translatable in other languages. This is the reason that pushed us to develop, through the study of many authors that worked on the subject, our definition of translation, and what we consider a good translation. In our corpus, we encountered a large number of instances in which the play on words was too specific, which forced the translator to find ways to sort it out, sometimes losing a part of the original in the process. Mona de Pracontal's text thus created is not a bad translation, according to our vision, it is a good translation, but which contains some weaknesses. The result of this problem is a world that is still coherent and functional on its own, but when compared to its original version, it appears much less fleshed out. This creates an unsatisfactory feeling for a reader interested in wordplay and their translation, while the intended readers, in this case teenagers, will enjoy the book the way it is if they do not try to go beyond the simple read of the French version by taking a look at the source text. This paper allowed us to realise more than ever the difficulty of translating wordplay, even more so in the context of youth literature with all its stakes, and challenged us to find solutions where even the official translator did not translate certain

instances of wordplay. Mona de Pracontal would then go on to face new challenges in the *PJO* sequels, such as multiple point of views, or even the translation of haikus as the titles of chapters, challenges that could be the subject of another paper.

APPENDIX

Appendix1 : List of functions of wordplay by Verena Thaler in *Crossing Languages to Play*

with Words: Multidisciplinary Perspectives(2019: 51-52):

Specific functions :

-To amuse people and achieve humorous effects

-To give aesthetic pleasure

-to show one's creative ability in using language

-to attract and retain the addressee's attention

-to gain approval of others

-as a mnemonic device to foster memorization

-to provoke emotional involvement

-to create or maintain in-group solidarity

-as a politeness strategy/a means of saving the speaker's (writer's) or hearer's (reader's) face

-to contribute to social stability

-to exclude certain hearer groupes

-to ridicule or embarass out-group members

-to tease or provoke the hearer or reader

-as a tool of satirical comedy

-to insinuate things that are too indecent to say outright

-to discuss social taboos

-to condense information

-to support one's argumentation

-to increase the student's motivation and interest in language learning

Most of these are social in nature. Wordplay is always a part of social human behaviour and has to be analyzed within its specific discursive context.

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