

Golden Age Spain Wearing English Clothes:
James Mabbe, Renaissance Translator of Spanish Prose Literature

Martine Gagnon

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By: Martine Gagnon

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Translator of Spanish Prose Literature

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respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

Chantal Gagnon
Bradley J. Nelson
Danièle Marcoux
Debbie Folaron
Hugh Hazelton

Chair
Examiner
Examiner
Supervisor
Supervisor

Approved by

Philippe Caignon
Graduate Program Director

9th of December 2010

Brian Lewis
Dean of Faculty

Abstract

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Martine Gagnon

James Mabbe (1572-1642?) was an English translator of works by Mateo Alemán, Fernando de Rojas, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Fray Cristóbal de Fonseca and Fray Juan de Santa María. He worked during a time of religious, economic, and political rivalries between Spain and England, and produced a body of work that is significant in the field of Translation Studies because his technique and methods lie somewhere between “foreignizing” and “domestication”. Mabbe’s dual quality allows contemporary academia to understand the elements of Spanish prose and culture that were of interest to a seventeenth-century English readership and also to introduce another artist of literary merit from the same period as Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and other great Jacobean dramatists. By examining the context of English literacy and translation during the period 1500 to 1640, Mabbe emerges as one of the first serious critics and translators of Spanish prose work in the English-speaking world.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: James Mabbe, Renaissance Translator	6
Chapter 2: Spanish Works Translated in England between 1500 and 1640	23
Chapter 3: Translation Criticism about Mabbe	44
Chapter 4: Analysis of Mabbe's <i>The Force of Blood</i>	59
Conclusions	90
Endnotes	94
Bibliography	97

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Cultural exchanges between England and Spain have always existed but have often been misleading and difficult to identify. The Spanish *pícaro* gave rise to the famous anti-hero in the British picaresque novels of the eighteenth century, but it took over a hundred years for the English to appreciate the complexity and intrigue of this character, whereas translations of the *pícaro*'s exploits were rampant in Italy and France. In politics, enmity and friendship intertwined as the two nations' monarchs both courted and married, plotted and warred. A study of the literatures of these countries reveals affinities and similar preoccupations, but fundamentally, they remained at odds. The ever-growing divide between Spanish Catholicism and English Protestantism during the Renaissance ensured that diplomacy would always disguise conspiracy and deception. The intermittent conflicts that took place during the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) are strong examples of this veiled power struggle since neither nation ever officially declared war. They agreed to disagree and fought incessantly both in Europe and in the American colonies. In 1588 the Spanish launched the full force of their Armada against England and lost. In the following years, Elizabeth I continued to resist Spanish and Catholic threats. Tensions would build until the Treaty of London, signed by her heir James I of England in 1604. Translations from Spanish into English during the seventeenth century sought to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps and introduce the English speaking public to

works from a culture that both attracted and repelled them. Most of these translations consisted of navigational treatises, which served to bring the more advanced aspects of Spanish nautical knowledge to the English. Literary translations from Spanish to English were rare during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though some of the canonical authors and works arrived on English shores, either through direct translation or through an intermediary language such as French or Italian.

One of the translators who took a particular interest in Spain was James Mabbe, who set himself apart from his peers and yielded translations of three of Spain's most famous works: *Guzmán de Alfarache*, *La Celestina* and six stories from *Las novelas ejemplares*. Contemporary critics have often disregarded Mabbe's work as lacking in understanding of the Spanish language and being composed in antiquated, fruity Jacobean prose, and thus of little interest to contemporary readers. Mabbe is not often credited as an avid Stuart Hispanist who gave Reformation England a glance into the labyrinthine world that existed in Baroque Spanish literature through his translations; his work is often misconstrued as being nothing more than a heap of domesticating translations that wash out the appeal or strength of the original work. However, as we will see, Mabbe produced more than a respectable body of work. During a time when England and Spain were slowly descending from the apex of their tenuous relationships, he contributed a perspective on Baroque Spain as seen through English eyes. This point of view is now invaluable to contemporary academia, since it offers an unmitigated observation of one Englishman's experiences and opinions of seventeenth-century Spain. It is fundamental to study this tangible example, which gives scholarship another opening into an often-suspected literary exchange between both countries that has frequently

remained buried beneath the grounds of circumstantial evidence. Mabbe's work allows us to comprehend a little bit more about how Protestant England saw and understood Catholic Spain.

While one side of the translation spectrum focuses on Mabbe's domestication as being a disadvantage, the other side praises his work for its early English spirit, but there may not be such a cut-and-dried answer. He is not fully a domesticating translator, nor is he exactly introducing the full foreignness of Spanish literature and style to the English readership. His skill lies somewhere between the two camps and can be revealed once an understanding of the historical, political and economic contexts in which he thrived are explained. He was not the only translator of Spanish works during the early modern period in England, but he was certainly the most prolific in terms of prose translation. Among his contemporaries were Leonard Digges, translator of Gonzalo de Céspedes y Meneses and Thomas Shelton, translator of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and they both obtained a particular amount of praise for their work. Mabbe, however produced a greater volume of Spanish prose works into English, and therefore seems to have dedicated a greater part of his life to translation. Unlike his translating contemporaries, he produced five works of literature in translation and due to the importance of the works he chose to translate, which are still considered to be some of the best from the canon of Golden Age Spain, Mabbe should continue to be regarded for this very reason as the first serious critic of Spanish literature in early modern England.

Mabbe worked during the period preceding the outbreak of the Civil War in England in 1642, a time of strife, political and religious confusion, and violent upheavals. Most translations from continental sources of this time focused on news, religious, and

political material. Throughout this tension, Mabbe continued to translate Spanish prose literature and gained enough fame to be invited to compose dedicatory verses for the *First Folio Shakespeare*.

In the following chapters, I hope to contrast a host of opinions of translation studies theorists in order to determine exactly what legacy Mabbe has left behind and attempt to discover why his translations still elicit such strong responses from readers today. As previously stated, Mabbe does not adhere to one particular translation philosophy and has so far dodged most intents to safely locate him somewhere along the asymptotic line. Taking advantage of elements from both sides, his technique borrows aspects of both domestication and foreignization. Using theory stemming from the determinations of descriptivist norms by Massimiliano Morini (*Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice*), through to the writings of foreignizing champion Antoine Berman (*Trials of the Foreign*), and defining a series of questions about the historical context Mabbe worked in by adopting ideas from Anthony Pym (*Method in Translation History*), I would like to attempt to define what Mabbe does well on both sides of the spectrum.

To do so, I will also give details and some analysis of the existing translation criticism that is already present about Mabbe from such academics as P.E. Russell, Guadalupe Martínez Lacalle, J.A.G. Ardila, and James Fitzmaurice Kelly. Details and dates of publication for all translations found within this thesis can be found in the *Early Modern Spanish-English Translations Database 1500-1640*, compiled by Alexander Samson¹. Moreover, all details and citations from Mabbe's translations have been taken from the digitized manuscripts made available by *Early English Books Online*².

In the last section, I propose an analysis of one of Mabbe's translations of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*, "La fuerza de la sangre." It is a work that has rarely been studied by contemporary scholarship and it merits a close reading and examination in order to place it within the corpus of Mabbe's work. Since most of the research that has already been published about Mabbe focuses on his inimitable translation of *La Celestina*, I hope in this way to delve deeper into his work. He published "The Force of Blood," his last translation, in 1640 and it has so far been largely ignored by contemporary translation and literary scholars, except for a few brief mentions of its existence.

“In the diffusion of its lesson of loyalty to truth, to life
and to distinction of form, no man, in the measure given
to a translator, has played a braver part than its
admiring lover, Don Diego Puede-Ser”

Fitzmaurice Kelly, *Tudor Translations*, xviii

Chapter One: James Mabbe, Renaissance Translator

James Mabbe (1572-1642?) was a prolific translator and Spanish literary scholar in seventeenth-century England. Though little is known of his personal life outside the body of work he left behind him, several academics have come close to drawing a considerably vivid portrait of this elusive man. Of special note are James Fitzmaurice Kelly, in the introduction to his *Tudor Translations* series, Guadalupe Martínez Lacalle in the introduction to *Celestine or the Tragick-Comedie of Calisto and Melibea*, and P.E. Russell in his article “A Stuart Hispanist: James Mabbe.” Using these texts as a foundation, along with other scholarly research articles and findings, I will attempt to further detail his life and work.

In 1572, Mabbe was born to “genteel parents in the county of Surrey and diocese of Winchester” (Fitzmaurice Kelly xxix). His father, of the same name, was the son of John Mabbe, a jeweller “who carried on business in Goldsmith’s Row until the eve of his appointment as Chamberlain of London in 1577” (xxix). Before dedicating himself to translation, Mabbe matriculated to Oxford University’s Magdalen College in 1586-7³. He

became well-known on campus and kept close ties with the university, at which he held various prestigious offices throughout his academic career. He was Bursar over six times and received a perpetual fellowship in 1595 (Lacalle 7). “In 1605, he is found speaking ‘an eloquent oration’ before Henry, Prince of Wales, on the occasion of the Prince’s matriculation at Magdalen” (Fitzmaurice Kelly xxix). The reception Mabbe offered the Prince is briefly described in the College Register:

[The Prince] came to the College about five o’clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, Aug. 28, and went to the chapel, where James Mabbe received him, in the name of the President, with a speech in which he congratulated the College on the reception on such a guest, and kissed the Prince’s hand.
(Macray 57)

Mabbe received his Bachelor’s degree in 1593-4 and then in 1598 completed his Master’s (Martínez Lacalle 7). In April 1602, at the age of thirty, Mabbe requested his first leave of absence from Oxford to travel to France. This would be the first of many trips abroad that Mabbe would undertake over the following years. Between 1610 and 1633, the year when he would leave Oxford for good, he would travel abroad several times, both to Spain and France. Aside from Spanish, he also spoke and read French and Italian.

James Mabbe has been attributed the generous titles of “Stuart Hispanist” by P.E. Russell and of “English Hispanist” by G.M. Lacalle. The former claims that Mabbe was the first true “serious critic of Spanish literature in England” (76). Although little is known of his private life, “his official activities are recorded in the Register of Magdalen

College in Oxford” (Lacalle 7), and it is occasionally possible to decipher some of his personality through his translation, writing, and marginal notes.

What little is known of the man himself is that he had

a superficial taste for conceits and recondite allusions which help to explain why his friends at Oxford thought of him as a ‘facetious, conceited wit’—a description intended to be complimentary and which, as in the case of his contemporary, John Donne, did not prevent his also enjoying the reputation of a learned man and a good orator. (Russell 76)

Though most of his personal life remains visible only through small scatterings of evidence either in his translations or the Register for Magdalen College at Oxford, some of these instances give us limited insight into his character. The first of these illustrations, and perhaps the most telling, is his inclination to sign most of his translations with the Spanish pseudonym and play on words “Don Diego Puede-Ser”: the “Don” meaning “Esquire”, “Diego” being the Spanish version of the English “James” and “Puede-Ser” being a phonetic pun on “Mabbe”, which could have been pronounced “may-be”—though we know that Mabbe probably pronounced his surname as a monosyllable, since he often signed it “Mab” or “Mabb.” The second occurrence takes place while he was a young student at Oxford: “He was twice censured in 1595 for neglect of study, and ordered to spend one hour a day for two weeks in the Library” (Macray 122). At the time he would have been 23 years old and already have been studying at Oxford for almost nine years. Since he wasn’t to travel abroad until 1602, perhaps he was feeling restless and wished to participate in life outside the confines of academia. However, prior to his first trip to France in 1602, in spite of his earlier “censure,” he held many prestigious

offices. He was also a scholar of the Goldsmiths Company of London, assumedly through family connections, to which “in 1598 he dedicated an original composition, a treatise, presumably pious in character, entitled *The Dyet of Healthe*” (Lacalle 8). His true fame, however, came from his first translation, an English rendering of *Guzmán de Alfarache*, which was subsequently republished in various editions.

According to P.E. Russell, Mabbe also maintained ties beyond the academic world in Oxford. Within his group of colleagues, there were several other scholars interested in Spanish literature, such as Leonard Digges, Vincent Goddard, Robert Ashley, and Accepted Frewen (Russell 76). In addition to his friendship with the Strangeways family, from whom he received patronage for the majority of his translations, his family was well known in the City of London and he counted among “his intimates such prominent literary figures as Ben Jonson, William Browne and Edward Blount, the most cultivated London Publisher of the day. There is some reason for believing that he may have known Shakespeare” (76). This assumption comes from the fact that

Thanks to the fame which the first edition [of *Guzmán*] had brought [Mabbe,] he seems to have been invited to contribute the commemorative verses ‘To the Memorie of M.W. Shakespeare’ which appear over the initials ‘I.M.’ in the First Folio Shakespeare published by Blount in 1623. It has, indeed, been suggested that a metaphor of Alemán’s provided the writer of these verses with the notion of likening Shakespeare’s death to a sudden removal from the stage of the world to the ‘grave’s tiring-room.’ The verses can be interpreted as the work of one who had known

Shakespeare personally, but this is no more than a possibility; Blount may simply have wished to use Mabbe's fame as the translator of *Guzmán* to advertise his new publication. (Russell 80)

There is strong evidence to suggest that Mabbe might well have been the I.M. who contributed a dedication to the *First Folio Shakespeare*. Two well-known writers of the day, Ben Jonson and Leonard Digges, wrote commendatory verses to the Folio, and they were both part of an elite literary circle to which Mabbe would have belonged. Ben Jonson wrote a commendatory verse for Mabbe's translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache*, and as we have seen, Digges and Mabbe were together at both Oxford and in Madrid. Here is the full verse composed by I.M. which appears in the *First Folio Shakespeare* just below the dedicatory note composed by Leonard Digges:

Wee wondred (Shake-speare) that thou went'st so soone
 From the Worlds-Stage, to the Graves-Tyring-roome.
 Wee thought thee dead, but this thy printed worth,
 Tels thy Spectators, that thou went'st but forth
 To enter with applause. An Actors Art,
 Can dye, and live, to acte a second part.
 That's but an Exit of Mortalitie;
 This, a Re-entrance to a Plaudite.
 I.M. (Epistle Dedicatory)

With reference to his commendatory verse, the article "I.M. of the First Folio Shakespeare and Other Mabbe Problems," by Arthur W. Secord posits that Mabbe is in fact the author of the dedication. As previously noted by Russell, the strongest evidence

lies in a common metaphor between Alemán and Mabbe that the latter uses in the verse. Secord hypothesizes that “Mabbe, paraphrasing Alemán’s *Guzmán*, was chiding a haughty cavalier for not considering that he is only a man, ‘a representant, a poore kinde of Comedian, that acts his part vpon *the Stage of this World*, and comes forth with this or that Office... and that when the play is done, (which can not be long) he must presently enter into the *Tyring-house of the grave...*” (Secord 376). He claims that had Mabbe not enjoyed the phrase, he would not have used it in the commendatory verse, since it had “no counterpart in Alemán; and ‘the Tyring-house of the graue’ is not a literal translation of ‘el vestuario del sepulcro’” (377) which appears in the original Spanish. Another argument against Mabbe’s authorship of the verse comes from the prejudice of many who claim that

in so great a work as F1 we should look behind the initials I.M. for a great poet. But we are not likely to find one. No comparable folio of the period, says Lee, was done in so slipshod a fashion or provided with so little commendatory verse. [...] Publishers were only human, [...] they grew weary in well-doing, and [...] they had no inkling that they were dealing with the greatest of all English books.” (377)

Secord also adds that aside from Ben Jonson, Mabbe would have been, with a successful Spanish translation in his arsenal, the contributor with the strongest reputation. (377)

However, before reaching this level of fame, in 1610 Mabbe requested another leave of absence from Oxford University to travel abroad. This time he accepted the invitation of Sir John Digby, newly appointed as ambassador to Madrid, to go to Spain to negotiate Prince Henry’s betrothal to the Infanta María of Spain. He seems to have spent

some five years in Spain (it is unsure exactly how long), but in 1617 he was back in Oxford to be named Bursar of Magdalen College (Russell 79). Mabbe's years in Spain are obscure, but according to Lacalle, there are two references that locate him in Madrid:

first, his own letter from the capital, dated 1612, in which he makes various remarks on novelties which have attracted his attention, and secondly, a reference to him made by another hispanist of the time, Leonard Digges, from Madrid. Mabbe sent a copy of the third edition of Lope de Vega's *Rimas* (1613) to Will Baker, of University College, Oxford. On the flyleaf, Digges writes that he is taking advantage of Mr Mabbe's sending him this book, to praise the famous Spanish poet Lope de Vega whose reputation in Spain is comparable with that of Will Shakespeare in England. (Lacalle 9)

Russell claims that Mabbe "is singularly reticent about his personal experiences of Spain but his reactions to journeys there are reflected in his complaints about Spanish inns, the absence of proper fodder for the animals, and other such matters" (78). And though Russell claims that the Englishmen were offered pleasant quarters in Madrid once they arrived, not much else is elucidated about Mabbe's stay in Madrid. Comments made by him show that he would have been familiar with certain aspects of domestic, religious and cultural life, but "the most significant evidence about his leisure hours in Madrid is, however, to be deduced from the knowledge of the most popular prose works of this period which he afterwards displayed" (78). Once Mabbe's stay in Madrid was over, he returned to England and it is assumed that he worked on his translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache*, an endeavour that would consume him until his next journeys to Spain.

In 1622, Digby returned to Spain to continue royal negotiations for the marriage match of Charles, Prince of Wales, and the Infanta María of Spain. According to Russell, it is not known whether Mabbe was part of the group

on that memorable evening in March 1623 when Buckingham and the Prince himself presented themselves, unheralded and in disguise, at the English ambassador's door. One cannot but regret the need for caution, for his presence there would, if confirmed, add to Mabbe's biography the touch of drama which it lacks. (80)

However, Mabbe leaves behind him a broad literary and translational legacy. By means of the publication dates of his work and various mentions in the Magdalen College Register, we know that "In 1613, being already in orders, he was appointed a lay Prebend of Wells Cathedral in Wanstrow, near Frome. When he withdrew from Oxford in 1633, he seems to have gone to his canon house in Wells, where he remained until 1638. After resigning from his last post, he left for Abbotsbury, the mansion of his patron and friend Sir John Strangeways, where he died about 1642" (8). The exact date of Mabbe's death is unknown, as registers for those years have been destroyed.

“The ideal translator of a masterpiece must be
of the same mould and of well-nigh the
same metal as his original.”

Fitzmaurice Kelly, *Tudor Translations*, xix

In spite of being unable to draw a truly energetic and detailed portrait of James Mabbe’s life, we luckily know much more about the translations he left behind. In total, he translated five works from Spanish into English between the years 1622 and 1640. In this section, a chronological list and short description of each translation will be given, along with a mention of each one’s reception in England at the time. In Chapter 3, full detailed descriptions of translational and literary criticism will be given for each of Mabbe’s works.

In 1622, Mabbe translated one of the most famous and warmly received translations of his times. He named it *The Rogue: Or the Life of Guzmán de Alfarache*. The work, as he termed it, “was put into English clothes.” The translation merited three additional editions, in 1623, 1630 and 1634. Three further editions appeared in 1623, 1630 and 1633, and included a translation of the second part of the novel, which was absent from the other publications. This first translation was no doubt Mabbe’s most acclaimed, as it sold the most copies, earned the most editions, and, as previously noted, most probably entitled Mabbe to compose a commendatory verse for the *First Folio*

Shakespeare. His translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache* remains important today since it remains the only English translation available of that Spanish picaresque novel.

Many modern scholars continue to applaud Mabbe's translation for his deep understanding of the novel and for the separate commentary he added to the work in the form of margin notes.

Mabbe's extensive critical comments on the purpose of Mateo Aleman's novel show an understanding of this book which has only recently been recovered by more modern critics. The discursive *pícaro* is, he explains, fundamentally an 'hombre de bien' whose chief fault was weakness of will and an inability to govern his passions, as well as an undesirable hankering after 'novedades.' Both the translator and the distinguished literary figures among his friends who contributed laudatory verses to both parts stressed the role of *Guzmán* as an allegory of man in general. Their opinion of the high worth of the book was confirmed by the English reading public, which gave it a very favourable reception. (Russell 79)

It is interesting to point out that "weakness of will and an inability to govern passions, as well as an undesirable hankering after *novedades*" are themes that appear in most of the work of James Mabbe, as we can see them quite clearly in *La Celestina* and Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*.

Mabbe's success with *The Rogue* is not surprising when we consider that by 1623, at least three editions of *Lazarillo de Tormes* had been circulating in England, as well as a translation of the first part of *Don Quixote* in 1612 and the second part in 1620. The English readership would already be familiar with the picaresque genre, and the

romances of chivalry that had been popular in English up to this time were already beginning to lose momentum. The greater interest in Spanish characters of the picaresque genre can also be seen to heavily influence work on the English stage and in print by Thomas Middleton (*The Spanish Gypsy*), Thomas Kyd (*The Spanish Tragedy*), and Thomas Nashe (*The Unfortunate Traveller*). The themes present in the picaresque and the sub-world in which its inhabitants live and act were reflected in both Peninsular Spanish society as well as in England. Martínez Lacalle also ascribes the success of this first translation by Mabbe to

the good relations which existed at the time between these two countries [Spain and England] [which were] favourable to literary influences: people were interested in Spain and Spanish things since the proposed marriage between Prince Charles and the Infanta María seemed likely to come about. (17)

In terms of how Mabbe went about translating the Spanish book, Martínez Lacalle points out that his translation owes much to the Italian version by Barezzo Barezzi.

Mabbe seems to have followed Barezzi in adding a list of contents at the beginning of his translation as well as in the arrangement of the books and chapters; the chapters in Part I faithfully reproduce those of the Italian version; those in Part II are taken partly from Barezzi's translation and partly from the original. (14)

Using an existing translation and the original to translate was not unusual at the time, nor would it be the last time that Mabbe employed an intermediary language to complete a translation from the Spanish, as we shall see further on.

Mabbe's second translation to appear was *Devout contemplations expressed in forty two sermons* in 1629. The original Spanish, *Discursos para todos los Evangelios de Cuaresma*, was written by Fray Cristóbal de Fonseca in 1614. With only one edition of his translation, this was certainly not Mabbe's most widely known work. In the epistle dedicatory to the work, in which he addresses "To the Reader," he states that "If the sent of these shall please thee, the translator will hereafter furnish thee with the labors of the same author upon all the parables" (Epistle Dedicatory). Sadly, the English readership paid scant attention to Mabbe's foray into non-secular Spanish literature in translation and he therefore never completed a promised second translation by the same author. Russell maintains that "the Augustinian friar's sermons, which have nothing to do with mysticism, are still quite good reading and the translation ranks high among the works of Mabbe, whose version has charm and is not overweighted by conceits or elaborate metaphor" (81). This last affirmation can clearly be seen throughout the translation and especially in the dedication. His prefaces are usually colourful and energetic, full of tropes and vivid similes. His dedication in *The Spanish Rogue* displays a vigorous use of Spanish and spans four pages. However, perhaps due to the devotional nature of Fray Cristóbal's text, Mabbe's epistle dedicatory is much shorter, at two pages, and the tone is sombre. Both translations were addressed to the same friend and patron, Sir John Strangeways.

Mabbe's third translation, unquestionably the most famous and frequently studied in modern scholarship, was his English translation of *La Celestina*, in 1631. *The Spanish Bawd, Represented in Celestina or the Tragicke-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea*, however, was not to enjoy much praise during its time and received but one edition: "as a

matter of fact, it never reached a second edition: the unsold copies of the first edition were bound together with a new edition of *The Rogue* in 1634” (Lacalle 25). However, the English readership of the time would have already been familiar with the character of *Celestina*, as the Spanish original’s arrival in England would have coincided with Catherine of Aragon’s coming to marry the Prince of Wales in the early 1500s. “It seems the Spanish courtiers who accompanied her brought copies of the already famous book, and thus *La Celestina* was known in England some time before Juan Luis Vives’ treatise *De institutione foeminae christianae* was published at Bruges in 1523” (Lacalle 2). *The Spanish Bawd*, like *The Rogue*, was, up to the mid-twentieth century, the only available English translation of the Spanish original. As of May 2010, five further English translations have appeared, namely by Lesley Byrd Simpson (1955), Mack Hendricks Singleton (1958), Phyllis Hartnoll (1959), J.M. Cohen (1964), and Peter Bush (2009). The interest in *La Celestina* seems to come in waves, with a flurry of activity during the years 1955 to 1959, and a new interest now with the publication of Bush’s excellent modern translation. New advances have been made by the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association), which is bringing out a volume comparing *The Spanish Bawd* and *The Alnwick Manuscript*⁴ edited by José María Pérez Fernández and set for publication in the spring of 2013.

The lack of appreciation of *La Celestina* during Mabbe’s time may possibly be attributed to Puritanical tastes, which were growing in strength in the build-up to the English Civil War, or perhaps it took longer for an English readership to recognize the inherent complexity present in this twenty-one-act novel in dialogue. As recently as 1964, Martin Hume in his tome *Spanish Influence on English Literature* disparaged the novel

and claimed that it “may appear crude and childish to us [modern readers]” (125). In addition, in the preface to his translation, Lesley Byrd Simpson claims that

The neglect of *The Celestina* by the English reading public is, I think, not hard to account for. Mabbe’s translation is, to be sure, written in inimitable Jacobean English, but his command of Spanish was far from perfect and his rendition suffers from many strange interpretations as a consequence. Moreover, he based his work upon the text of later ‘corrected’ editions [...]. Mabbe’s pages, besides, are burdened naturally enough with obsolete words, obscure subtleties, and outmoded syntax, which give his book a certain quaintness and antiquarian flavor, but which make it fatiguing for the reader of today. (vi)

Moreover, Keith Whinnom, a modern critic reviewing Martínez Lacalle’s *Celestine or the Tragick-Comedie of Calisto and Melibea*, mocks the importance of Mabbe’s work by stating that “few Hispanists need take a professional interest in this sample of *fruity Jacobean prose* (italics mine), which did nothing to enhance the popularity of *Celestina* in England” (203). It should be mentioned that modern Spanish readers of *La Celestina* do not seem to share the reviewer’s opinion and do not find the Baroque Spanish writing to be cloying, nor for that matter, do modern English readers think the same about Shakespeare.

Mabbe’s work took another interesting turn with his fourth translation in 1632, which was of Fray Juan de Santa María’s *República y Policia Christiana* (Madrid, 1615). The English title appeared in two forms; first came *Christian Policy Or the Christian Commonwealth*, which went through two editions during the same year; and secondly,

perhaps to diminish the possibly controversial title, appeared again in three separate editions (in 1632, 1634, and 1637) under the title *Policy Unveiled, Or Maxims and Reasons of State*. It was printed for the eminent Edward Blount, and contains no dedication from Mabbe. Actually, Mabbe only became associated with the work as translator in the 1637 edition, when “I.M. of Magdalen College in Oxford” was first named (Russell 82). It was previously assumed that Blount, who had penned a short introductory note, was the translator. Russell also claims that “Santa María’s political treatise, described by Gracián as ‘mui perfeta y labrada conforme a las verdaderas reglas de policía christiana’, evidently enjoyed some popularity in England in the years immediately preceding the Civil War and went into a fifth edition under the Commonwealth—an occurrence which would have surprised Mabbe, who much disliked the Puritans” (82-83). He goes on to say that the work is of particular interest in the political context of England, so close to the outbreak of war, since it “played some part in English political thinking in the years of strife and should eventually have commended itself to those who had executed Charles I” (83).

By 1633, Mabbe was suffering from gout and at this point in time, he took his final leave from Oxford. He might have retired to “his canon’s house at Wells which had been his since his appointment to a prebend there in 1613” (83). The last years of Mabbe’s life are cloaked in obscurity; between the publication of his fourth translation in 1632 and his last translation in 1640, not much is known of his activities. He seems to have abandoned his canon’s house in 1638 to go live with his good friend and patron John Strangeways in Dorset. However, it is not known when or where he died. The year is usually claimed to be 1642, and he would have been buried in the church at

Abbotsbury, but this is uncertain. In fact, the last certainty of Mabbe's life was his fifth and final translation, in 1640, of six of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*, which he entitled *Exemplarie Novells* and dedicated to Susanna Strangewayes, the wife of Giles Strangewayes, his patron's son and heir. Unfortunately for Mabbe, the civil conflict that was stirring in England gave people little leisure time for literature, even less so for that of a Spanish nature. His last translation would see only one edition during his lifetime. And unfortunately, when his translation of Cervantes did resurface, it would first be published anonymously (1654) under the title *Delight in Severall Shapes, Drawne to the Life in Six Pleasant Histories*, and afterwards under the name of another translator. Indeed, G.M. Lacalle claims that the "book was not forgotten in spite of being published at a time of political crisis in England" (22). The second version, published under another translator's name, appeared in 1687 under the title *The Spanish Decameron* and includes ten short stories. In the article "A Forgotten Translation of Cervantes," H. Thomas claims that the first five of these stories were directly copied from Mabbe's earlier translation of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*. The preface to the book declares that the stories are "Spanish Relations, Written by a Famous Author of that Kingdom" (Thomas 1). The translator's name was R.L., Roger Lestrage, the translator of Quevedo's *Visions* and Marianna d'Alcoforado's *Letters* (2). However, his first five stories were not exactly translated. Although he changes the names of the characters, the stories seem to paraphrase Mabbe, and not only do Lestrage's five first novels appear in Mabbe's earlier translation, but they appear in the same exact order.

And so Mabbe leaves behind him more uncertainties and mysteries about his life than one would prefer, but the richness of his life's work more than compensates for our

scant knowledge of its details. His translations are still occasionally read and studied today, and the quality of his efforts confer enough fame upon him for his work to be plagiarized and insulted by modern “rival” translators. His bequest is strong, yet we must now move ahead and examine what Mabbe’s contemporaries were translating and writing, in order to compare and draw more refined conclusions about his body of work.

Chapter Two: Spanish Works Translated in England between 1500 and 1640

According to data in the *Early Modern Spanish-English Translations Database 1500 – 1640 (EMSETD)*, direct translations between Spain and England—those that do not pass through an intermediary language such as French or Italian—are few and far between in the period from 1500 to 1550, and those of a literary nature are in even shorter supply. The printing press was still in its beginnings, and the English Renaissance was only just taking shape. In general, the history of translation in England during the Renaissance and Reformation periods is encompassed within two major spheres: first, the furious activity during the sixteenth century, which produced a propensity for new vernacular translations of the Bible; and, secondly, the emergence of eminent scholars and authors during the second half of the seventeenth century, such as Dryden, Pope, and many others who wrote about the translation process. Latin dominated the field during this period due to its widespread use, giving “translated texts into Latin a potential readership all over Europe” (Weissbort 56). However, translation from other European languages was present in England and began flourishing as early as the 1500s with more translation activity taking place “during the first ten years of Elizabeth I’s reign (1558-1568), when four times as many translations were produced as in the fifty previous years” (Baker 348). Some of the more fashionable literary interests from Spain came first in the form of translations of the Spanish romances of chivalry. Widely popular and circulated in Spain during this period, but coming to an end near the time when Cervantes published his famous *Don Quijote*, these romances began to emerge at the end of the sixteenth

century in England. Another prevalent genre to surface was devotional literature and navigation and conquest narratives by the many sea-faring Spanish conquistadors and explorers. Tomes of Spanish grammar were also present, as well as epistles on ruling and governance. Literary translation appeared sporadically during the sixteenth century, but became firmly rooted by 1600. James Mabbe's secular literary prose translations were rare occurrences, but some of his contemporary colleagues also worked with foreign literatures and many other varieties of Spanish works in translation. In the following chapter, the most popular genres of Spanish works being translated into English during the period will be discussed in order to portray the different kinds of literary contributions that England was importing from Spain through translation and to demonstrate that there was a growing interest in them.

Spanish Romances of Chivalry

The earliest direct Spanish translation from this period was a chivalric romance called *Oliver of Castille and the Fair Helen*, published in 1518 and translated by H. Watson from the Spanish romance of chivalry, *Oliveros de Castilla* (Burgos, 1499). It is interesting to note that this novel was essentially a Spanish translation from the French of *L'ystoire d'Olivier de Castille et d'Artus d'Algarbe*, the first known edition of which was printed in Geneva in 1482 (Fronton 69).

It is important to mention that French and Spanish translations at the time were also incredibly prolific, with many of the romances of chivalry moving back and forth between the two countries. It was therefore natural for several Spanish works to travel through France, with French as an intermediary language, before making their way into

England, either in translation or in their original French, which was a more readily accessible language to the English elite.

However, it might be reasonable to assume that although the popularity of the Spanish romance of chivalry was sweeping through parts of Europe, it did not sway the English readership, in translation at least, until later in the sixteenth century. After the first appearance in 1518 of *Oliver of Castille and the Fair Helen*, another translation of this genre would not be seen until 1578, sixty years later, when *Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* was published (*EMSETD*). The following sixty years, up to 1640, were host to a relatively small number of subsequent Spanish titles: *Palmerín d'Oliva* in 1588 (with further editions in 1597, 1615, 1616 and 1637), the first book of *Amadis of Gaule* in 1590, the second book in 1595, and the third and fourth books, both in 1618 (*EMSETD*). This is not to say that news from Spain was so incredibly sparse during this time. Spanish material would also have been available through French translations circulating in France and travelling to England, or through other continental languages translated into English.

A popular playwright, author and translator during this period, who was also the translator of two of the previously mentioned works, was Anthony Munday (?1560-1633). His earliest published translations, which both came out in 1588, were *Palmerín d'Oliva* and *The famous, pleasant and variable history of Palladine of England*. In the years following, he published no less than a dozen more editions of these translations, notably additional publications of *Palmerín d'Oliva* and *Amadis of Gaule*. He was also a translator of French, with a publication of Etienne de Maisonneuf's *Gerileon of England* in 1592 (*EMSETD*).

Devotional Texts and Treatises of Navigation

With regard to the translation of Spanish devotional literature, a few titles garnered sufficient popularity to merit reprints during the second half of the sixteenth century. First published in Paris in 1582, Luis de Granada's *Of Prayer and Meditation*, translated by Richard Hopkins, saw great success with the English readership, with re- editions in 1582, 1584, 1596, 1599, 1611, and two in 1612 (*EMSETD*). Despite the fact that it was translated into English, every one of the reprints, except for the 1596 edition, was printed in France, though this would be expected, as newly Protestant England might not have been terribly sympathetic to Spanish Catholic writings. The 1596 edition appeared in London.

Hopkins also translated two more works of devotional literature during the same period, one of which was published entirely in France and the other in London. The first, printed in 1586 (with reprints in 1599 and 1612), was *A Memorial of a Christian Life*, and the second was *Granada's Meditations (An Excellent Treatise of Consideration and Prayer)*, both works originally by Luis de Granada (*EMSETD*).

The second half of the fifteenth century also introduced to the English translation world treatises about Spanish grammar, navigation and letters from the conquistadors in America, Asia and India.

Between 1561 and 1615, *The Art of Navigation* was printed no less than nine times, in 1561, 1572, 1579, 1581, 1584, 1589, 1595, 1596, and 1615 (*EMSETD*). The translator was Richard Eden, except for the 1595 version, which was completed by another translator, John Frampton, an English merchant who travelled to Spain and had the misfortune of being captured, imprisoned, and tortured by the Inquisition before

escaping back to England. He translated several other Spanish texts, such as a Spanish edition of Marco Polo's *Travels*, a book about geography, and treaties about the New World⁵.

Another one of the major players in this field at the time was Richard Hakluyt (1553-1616), an English geographer. From his own pen came *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America* (1582) and *The Principal Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1598–1600). But he was also well-known for a series of translations about French, Portuguese, and Spanish navigation and discoveries in the New World. His legacy recognizes him as a firm promoter and supporter of expanding England's influence and power to the new colonies in the Americas, as the neighbouring Continental countries were doing at the time. According to E.G.R. Taylor in his article "Richard Hakluyt," Hakluyt was single-handedly responsible for swaying British opinion leading to colonization, which had begun slowly under the reign of Henry VIII and continued during Elizabeth I's time, with further explorers setting out to sea.

But more than anyone it was Hakluyt who, by his vast assembly of 'The Principal Navigations Voyages and Discoveries,' succeeded in establishing that climate of opinion which fostered the third phase, the successful colonization of the seventeenth century, which he just lived to see. (Taylor 165)

This legacy is further justified by Donald Beecher in the article "The Legacy of John Frampton: Elizabethan Trader and Translator," in which he claims that, indeed,

apart from the translations of Richard Eden in the 1550s and the reports of Frobisher's voyages, a fifty-year period would follow during which the

English would produce few accounts of their overseas voyages, and little published information about trade and commerce, foreign nations and international geography, or the techniques of navigation and cartography [...] Justifiably, the credit goes to the younger Richard Hakluyt for the founding of English navigational travel writing. (Beecher 320)

Clearly, there was a growing interest in the British Isles for information and tales about the voyages and explorations of foreign territories and land, and during this time, due to a lack of English source material, the reading public resorted to translations.

Texts for the Good of Rulers and Courtiers

Though Spanish literature in translation was scant, the literary world in the English court during these years became familiar with and increasingly attracted by the translation of works destined for rulers and courtiers, as well as by devotional and ecclesiastical texts. One of the most renowned Spanish authors in translation in England was Fray Antonio de Guevara (1480?-1545), the court historiographer of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. His two most famous works during the Renaissance period were the *Libro Aúreo de Marco Aurelio* and the *Reloj de Príncipes*. The former, “a more or less imaginary biography based largely on Julius Capitolinus’s *Historia Augusta*” (Mezzatesta 624), consisted of “forty-eight chapters, beginning with a consideration of the Emperor’s lineage and early education. Marcus Aurelius’ entire life is reviewed, with special attention to his outstanding virtues and to personal problems [...] Guevara stressed the Emperor’s sense of justice and clemency; and his love of learning” (624).

The second book, *The Diall of Princes*, as it was known in its English translation,

is three times as long as the *Libro Áureo* but actually incorporates almost all the chapters of the *Libro Áureo* into a considerable body of new material. The book is divided into three sections: the first demonstrates the necessity for a prince to be a good Christian; the second discusses the manner in which the prince should deal with his wife and children and gives advice for the husband and especially the wife on proper behaviour; the third concerns the way the state should be governed, with special emphasis placed on justice and the maintenance of peace. (Mezzatesta 625)

It is frequently conceded that Fray Antonio de Guevara's books were second only in popularity to the Bible during the Renaissance in Europe.

Approaching Literary Translation

During the late sixteenth century, one of the most prolific translators was John Bourchier, also known as Lord Berners. In 1535 he was the translator of Fray Antonio de Guevara's *Libro Áureo de Marco Aurelio*, first published in Spain in 1528. This translation saw tremendous success, as previously discussed, and new editions of the *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius* appeared in 1537, 1539, 1542 and 1546, (*EMSETD*), though by far the most famous English translation of this work came from the French and was done by Sir Thomas North, translator of Plutarch. Bourchier used the French translation circulating at the time of his posting as Lieutenant of Calais, while North consulted the Spanish publication, and his version contains a closer approximation of the original. Bourchier also worked as Chancellor of the Exchequer at the court of Henry

VIII, who personally requested a translation of the *Chronicles of Froissart*, a French chivalric novel set in the years preceding the Hundred Years' War between England and France. In 1548, continuing with his linguistic endeavours, Bouchier translated and published the first English edition of *Cárcel de amor* by Diego de San Pedro, which he named *Castell of Love*. This work saw two further publications in 1552 and 1565 (*EMSETD*). Emphasis must be given to this translation because not only did it herald the first works of Spanish literature to be translated and published in Tudor England, but the translator himself, in his prologues, left various clues as to how he proceeded during his translation, which helps us understand many of the underlying translation paradigms extant during the period.

According to the article “‘This Rude Laboure’: Lord Berners’ Translation Methods and Prose Style in *Castell of Love*,” by Joyce Boro,

Though Berners maintains that he translated Diego de San Pedro’s *Cárcel de amor* directly from the Spanish, his assertion is not completely accurate, as his translation is marked by close verbal parallels to the French translation of San Pedro’s text. Moreover, the French prologue differs completely from the Spanish, and Berners’ prologue matches the French word for word, sharing no variant readings with the Spanish prologue. (Boro 1)

As a consequence of the heavy influence and presence of the French language in England, many of the early translations from the multitude of European languages passed through France before making their way to the British Isles. Since many of the English literary circles were fluent in French, several translations of classical texts from Greek

and Latin originated in France and therefore became more readily available in a vernacular European language before being translated into English. “Translators often translated by way of an intermediate version in another language, or used the intermediate version as a crib, especially when material was available only recently and/or in unfamiliar languages” (Baker and Saldanha 345).

In this manner,

it appears that in composing the romance Berners had the Spanish and French versions of *Castell* open in front of him and looked from one to the other, comparing and contrasting the two, in order to select which variant readings to include or omit, and to devise ways of combining his two sources to create an entirely new English text. (Boro 2)

His previous work, the *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*, enjoyed a longer fame in the second half of the century, with reprints in 1531, 1557, 1559, 1566, 1573 and 1586.

The Advent of Spanish Literature in English Translation: The *Pícaro*

In 1586, a most significant title emerged onto the English literary scene. It was a translation of *Lazarillo de Tormes* that became *The Pleasant Historie of Lazarillo de Tormes, a Spaniard* by the Welshman David Rowland of Anglesey. A second edition, *The pleasant history of Lazarillo de Tormes a Spaniard wherein is contained his marvellous deeds and life. With the strange adventures happened to him, in the service of sundry masters*, then appeared in 1596 (*EMSETD*). “The earliest known edition of David Rowland's version of *Lazarillo de Tormes* is dated 1586, but as a licence to print a

translation of this tale was granted on the 22nd of July 1568/1569, it is probable that a 1576 edition, which appears in the Harleian Catalogue, really existed” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*). At this time, the British readership would at last be introduced to one of the most famous characters in Baroque Spanish literature: the *pícaro*. Earning two further editions printed in 1624 and 1638, the story of Lazarillo introduced an interesting new character and was a far cry from the early chivalric romances the English readership would have been accustomed to. It might also have helped pave the way for Mabbe’s translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache*. In fact, the Spanish picaresque in translation did more than simply introduce a new genre into England.

Most attempts to discuss the picaresque as a genre of European fiction have failed to consider the actual historical process by which translations were gradually assimilated into alien contexts and associated with indigenous works which themselves contributed to the evolution of the novel much as the Spanish originals had done. In France, England, and Germany these works helped break down the traditional separation of styles and establish the legitimacy of considering vulgar characters as appropriate subjects for morally serious literature. In a very real sense they participated in shaping the socio-literary contexts from which *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, *Moll Flanders*, *Gil Blas*, and *Roderick Random* later emerged. (Bjornson 125)

At the time, the picaresque genre began to spread onto the English stage, as previously noted, with authors such as Thomas Middleton, Thomas Kyd, and Thomas Nashe introducing picaresque style characters into their plays (having read the French

translations of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*), and they were not the only playwrights to do so. There existed "a coherent grouping of playwrights who seem to have had a genuine interest in Spanish material: Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, Thomas Middleton, William Rowley and Philip Massinger" (Darby par. 59). Furthermore, Ardila claims that

el influjo del Guzmán en las letras inglesas del seiscientos no planta dudas. Para Gustav Ungerer (1999) el gusto por la picaresca española se debe a las razones políticas de los *royalists* (o monárquicos) que se oponían a la república puritana de Cromwell. En el Guzmán hallaron los partidarios de la monarquía la antítesis del estricto sentir puritano. El pícaro Guzmán es, sugiere Ungerer, la fuente de cuantos *highwaymen* (o salteadores de caminos) y *panderers* (o medianeros) que proliferaron en la prosa inglesa del XVII. (Ardila 25)

Though both *Lazarillo* and *Guzmán de Alfarache* became popular in England, bringing a measure of influence to the Jacobean stage and its literature, the picaresque genre would really take off a century later in English literature during the eighteenth century with the works of such authors as Tobias Smollett and Daniel Defoe. Of greater importance still is the fact that although not all Spanish literature fared well in terms of sales or re-editions in England at the time, the translators were choosing works that had been extremely popular in Spain: translations of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *La Celestina*, and the works of Cervantes are telling indeed.

Cervantes through English Translation

The great Spanish author Cervantes would first infiltrate England in 1612, with Thomas Shelton's translation of the first part of *Don Quijote*, the first translation to appear in any European language. A re-edition of Shelton's first translation would appear in 1620, containing the translator's amendments, along with his translation of the second part (*EMSETD*). The other Cervantine novels making an appearance in England during the same period were *The Travels of Persiles and Sigismunda* in 1619, by an unnamed translator, and then six stories taken from the *Novelas ejemplares*, translated by James Mabbe and printed in 1640. All these translations were published in London, but by various printers (*EMSETD*). In the case of Shelton's work, it was the prominent printer Edward Blount, a man responsible for the printing of no less than seventeen Spanish titles in London, famously including Mabbe's translation of *La Celestina*. Secondly came *Persiles and Sigismunda*:

in 1618 it was translated into French by François de Rosset and later in the same year, Matthew Lownes went to the Stationers' Hall in London and paid to have his interests registered in an English translation. That translation appeared under the title, 'The Travels of Persiles and Sigismunda. A Northern History.' From the title-page, we can see that the book was printed for Matthew Lownes by his brother, Humphrey, and was sold at their shop in St Paul's Churchyard in London." (Darby par. 1)

Mabbe's *Exemplary Novels* were printed by John Dawson, and Mabbe's brother, Ralph Mabbe, also participated in the publication. As a member of the Stationer's Company, Ralph Mabbe's presence in the London literary scene is important since he had probably

helped James Mabbe obtain the necessary licenses to print his translations, as Ralph's name appears in the colophon on several of Mabbe's translations.

Thomas Shelton, First Translator of *Don Quixote*, and Cervantes' Reception

According to Fitzmaurice Kelly,

England was the first foreign country to mention Don Quixote, the first to translate the book, the first country in Europe to present it decently garbed in its native tongue, the first to indicate the birthplace of the author, the first to provide a biography of him, the first to publish a commentary on Don Quixote, and the first to issue a critical edition of the text [...]. During three centuries English literature teems with significant allusions to the creations of Cervantes' genius, that the greatest English novelists are among his disciples, and that English poets, dramatists, scholars, critics, agreed upon nothing else, are unanimous and fervent in their admiration of him." (29)

As passionately extolled by Fitzmaurice Kelly, Thomas Shelton produced the first translation of Don Quixote in any European language in 1612, and then translated the second part of the book in 1620, both times for the prominent printer Edward Blount. Shelton used a Spanish version that had been printed in Brussels in 1607, and in his prologue he states that he completed the work in forty days for a friend who wanted to read about the famous Quixote and understand the subject of the book. What is interesting about the length of time Shelton required to complete his full translation is that it parallels an anecdote found in the book itself:

Recuérdese que en el *Quijote* se indica que el moro toledano que tradujo el manuscrito de Cide Hamete precisó de mes y medio para completar la empresa, plazo que quizá Cervantes estimase apropiado para producir una traducción digna. (Ardila 34)

Shelton's translation is often lauded as being one of the best, because it managed to grasp the spirit of the original, though Shelton himself was aware of his occasional shortcomings in terms of his language. In his dedicatory note, he admonishes that

Since when, at the intreatie of others my friends, I was content to let it come to light, conditionally, that some one or other, would peruse and amend the errours escaped; my many affaires hindering mee from vndergoing that labour. Now I vnderstand by the Printer, that the Copie was presented to your Honour: which did at the first somewhat disgust mee, because as it must passe, I feare much, it will proue farre vnworthy, either of your Noble view or protection. (qtd. in Knowles, 161)

In spite of his apparent mistranslations or “errors,” Shelton is still remembered today as the man who brought Don Quixote out of Spain and into England. His translation no doubt made Cervantes readily available to an English audience interested in Spanish literature, especially by such a complex and brilliant author.

However, in his article “Don Quixote through English Eyes,” Edwin B. Knowles refutes the idea that early modern England readers were as enthusiastic as contemporary readers of the novel. He asserts

I am firmly convinced that *Don Quixote* was no Jacobean *Gone with the Wind*. For its slow growth in popularity there are several reasons. English-

Spanish literary relations were tenuous, and Cervantes apparently was little known to the sons of John Bull. This was to be expected in the light of his relative unimportance in Spain at this date. And as far as his name goes, it did not appear on the title-page of Shelton's English version of Part I. (106-107)

It must be admitted that he is right in saying that Shelton's translation commanded only one edition, but there is ample proof to challenge his assertion that English and Spanish relations were tenuous. As previously noted, the English readership was developing a greater taste for Spanish fare, especially since the royalty were planning for a match between the Prince of Wales and the Infanta María⁷. Undeterred, Knowles continues on to emphasize the blasé attitude the English readership were beginning to develop towards the romances of chivalry that kept being churned out in translation from Spanish.

The important literary folk of the day condemned the romances of chivalry as 'trash' [...] for chambermaids and other intellectual dim-wits—who, as might be expected, read them avidly. How natural, it would seem to us today, for serious-minded critics and writers to have welcomed *Don Quixote* and applauded its satirical intent. But apparently they did not. They did not because, except for a few people like Robert Burton and William Vaughn, they seem to have taken for granted that the Spanish work was just another yarn like *Bevis of Hampton* or *Palmerin of England*; that is, another silly romance. (107)

It would seem that Cervantes' introduction to England remains a contentious issue among scholars⁸.

The First Appearances of Fernando de Rojas' *La Celestina*

It was in 1525 that a most famous work from Spain made its way onto the English literary scene in the guise of a translation, though in fact it was a disguised adaptation of *La Celestina*, by Fernando de Rojas. For many years, it was believed that the author of this adaptation, known as a *New Comedy in English in Manner of an Interlude* (or, the *Interlude of Calisto and Melebea*), was John Rastell, whose name figures on the colophon as the printer (*Amen Johês rastell me imprimi fecit*), but there are many doubts surrounding his supposed authorship, and it is now generally accepted that he was the printer and not the translator⁹. The adaptation itself represents a quasi-faithful fragment of only the first four acts with the quick addition of a *deus ex machina* ending, formulated in order to sidestep the immorality introduced in the remaining seventeen acts of the original. There is a belief that, in spite of this truncated version of the Spanish original, the English public continued to show an interest in Rojas' novel in dialogue. A second apparent translation of *La Celestina* would appear in England several decades later, in 1596, but with the disturbing title *The Delightful History of Celestina the Faire, Daughter of the King of Thessalie*, with William Barley's name as translator. However, in his article "English Translation of the *Celestina* in the Sixteenth Century," Gerard J. Brault demystifies the origin of this formula: "Barley's *Celestina* is not a translation of the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, as it has heretofore been assumed, but an unauthorized English version of *Primaleon*, i.e. Book II of *Palmerín de Oliva*" (306). He explains that changing or altering the title or the names of the characters of a work was a common practice for translators at the time and especially in Barley's case, "who was known to have been fined both before and after 1596 for publishing without a licence

[and was thus] attempting to disguise his translation so that it would not come to the attention of the ever-watchful Stationers' Company" (305).

Mabbe introduced the first full translation of *La Celestina* into the English language. Though it was not an immediate success in England the way it had been in Spain, and to a certain extent through translation in France, Mabbe's translation has its own vitality and continues to be studied and appreciated. However, perhaps echoing the *Interlude's* sensibilities, Mabbe systematically replaced all Catholic religious references in his translation *The Spanish Bawd* with equivalents from classical mythology. Hypotheses as to why he might have done this will be discussed later.

One of the most pressing questions in regard to the introduction of *La Celestina* is whether or not the Jacobean theatre adapted the novel in dialogue to the stage. Though no remaining evidence of a script can bear witness to a possible representation, one particularly revealing journal entry may shed some light on the subject. In the article "References to the Drama in the Mildmay Diary," Philip L. Ralph details the many diary entries produced by Sir Humphrey Mildmay between 1633-1652. He describes Mildmay as a "country gentleman whose principal estate was at Danbury in Essex, [who] spent much of his time in London and was a frequent playgoer in the years before the Civil Wars" (589). He notes that the diary entries are short and do not contain much in terms of criticism, but he does make a fairly complete list of the plays he has attended. The entry of interest to the present study reads as follows: "Ralph Mabbe's *The Spanish Bawd*, May 18, 1632" (590). Unfortunately, Mildmay gives no more information about his experience: no place name, no director, no actors' names. It may be safe to assume that

La Celestina did in fact reach the English stage, even though only the smallest reference to Ralph Mabbe, James Mabbe's brother, exists.

The Stationers' Company

In the city of London at the time, in order to set up shop, take an apprentice, hold civic office, or vote, Londoners had to belong to a guild or livery company. These associations enjoyed immense power and prestige, as they were the most important social institutions in the city, collecting taxes, organizing pageants, maintaining law and order, and providing welfare support for citizens. The Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers was one of the many livery companies in existence at the time, and regulated the publishing industry¹⁰.

The Company's duties were not only limited to regulating printing, copyright, binding, illustration, and selling books, however. They also imposed fines for illegal printing, illegal sales of books, and, under the reign of Mary I, in the mid-sixteenth century, they attempted one of the first cases of censure (Patterson 29). From this point onwards, the monarchy's desire to control the press became obvious, and the Stationer's Company began to play a large role and garner considerable power, since printing and selling books were no longer to be practiced by a freelance individual. Anyone interested in the art of printing must first become apprenticed to an established printer who was a member of the City's guild or had been granted a license to print. The Company essentially gained the right to control who was printing, what was being printed, and how it was being printed. They also granted licenses to print specific works by specific printers, therefore granting patents, which restricted the work and sole right to print it to

one printer only (Patterson 40). Any activity outside their guidelines, such as pirate copies, non-members using the press, or illegal diffusion of information, was punished by fines and shutting down the establishment.

Literacy in Tudor and Stuart England

According to David Cressy, literacy in Tudor and Stuart England had a variety of uses, but was not a prerequisite or necessary to achieve happiness or success. Reading and writing was occasionally promoted for religious and educational purposes, but on the whole, England remained only a partially literate society. “Many people lived on the margins of literacy and were either not convinced of its value or had little opportunity to test it” (17). Chances to learn to read and write were limited to the higher social, economic and domestic classes, and “facilities for the dissemination of basic literacy were underdeveloped” (17).

According to a table of estimates in Cressy’s *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England*, between 1550 and 1650, the percentage of illiteracy for men and women in England was particularly high. In 1550, close to 95% of women were illiterate, while this number dips to approximately 83% for men (177). However, by 1650, these numbers fall to approximately 88% and 68%, respectively. Illiteracy would have been higher in rural areas and lower in urban centres like London, but in general, reading was mostly stratified and restricted to a small clerical and specialized elite minority (Cressy 175).

However, the printing industry was still growing, for educational facilities were on the rise, and there was indeed a market for books. According to *English books &*

readers 1603-1640; being a study in the history of the book trade in the reigns of James I and Charles I, by H. S. Bennett, “whereas for the year 1500 the *Short-title Catalogue* records the publication of only 46 volumes, this number had risen to 259 in 1600 and to 577 in 1640” (1). He also claims that a wide array of subjects and contents were made available to audiences. Booksellers’ stalls would often hold “folios containing anything up to one thousand pages or more, often in double columns, as well as flimsy pamphlets of some twelve or sixteen pages of much smaller format” (2). Subjects included volumes about legal publications, “news-pamphlets, books of travel, ballads, romances, poetry, etc” (2). Translations would also have been readily available at these same shops, alongside works written in the vernacular. Bennett claims that:

much of religion, of information, and of literary merit was to be found in translation. Not only the Bible itself, but a host of foreign commentators on religious matters, both old and new, together with rival bands of eager controversialists kept the printers busy.

(67)

With source material coming from everywhere on the continent, the English readership had access to a wealth of information about foreign travel, court gossip, war stories and accounts, tomes of good health, herbs and gardening, surgery, and many other subjects. Literature was also prevalent, but most prose, poetry and drama came from the Latin, Italian, and especially the French.

With a growing audience taking interest in the printed word, many took pen to paper and began emerging as writers, but Bennett affirms that “few were bold enough to venture on the writing of books as a means of making a living, and those few that did

generally lived to regret it” (2). He recalls the example of Milton receiving only ten pounds for *Paradise Lost*. In the case of most translations, the epistle dedicatories, usually addressed to a wealthy patron, give the best indications of why a translator endeavoured to render a particular work. In part, this explains the propensity of authors and translators for courting wealthy patrons and dedicating their works to these men and their families.

Mabbe certainly maintained these associations carefully throughout his life. Not only did he dedicate most of his translations to the Strangeways family, but also, at the end of his life, he abandoned Oxford and his own canon’s house to go live with them at Abbotsbury in Dorset.

Chapter Three: Translation Criticism about Mabbe

Mabbe's work deserves a complete and chronological analysis. Scattered studies exist, but there are still no more than a handful of references to Rojas's and Guzmán's translator in modern scholarship, despite Mabbe being one of the most prolific and important translators of Spanish works into English during the early modern period. As hinted by P.E. Russell, his work lives on to recommend him as the first serious Spanish literary critic of his time. His work has suffered in the past from plagiarism by others, failure to attribute translations to him, and criticism of his choice of works, but with a full compendium and recognition of his work now in contemporary academia, it is at last possible to give Mabbe some of the credit that he is due and to point out some of his shortcomings. In this section, I hope to introduce some of the existing scholarship and criticism about Mabbe in order to construct a foundation upon which his work can be understood and analyzed.

In Massimiliano Morini's book *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice*, the author dedicates analyzes of the work completed by James Mabbe, staunchly placing him within his historical and cultural context. He uses Mabbe's translation of *La Celestina* to extract methods and patterns in order to illustrate a model for early seventeenth-century translation. His analysis is problematic because instead of comparing Mabbe's translation to another by a translator of the same time period, he uses the truncated *Interlude of Calisto and Melibea* (1525) as a point of comparison. As we have already seen, this

version of *La Celestina* is a short adaptation of the first four acts of the original, accompanied with a moralizing finale. Mabbe's translation, although contentious due to his methodical exclusion of most religious references, still cannot be convincingly weighed against an anonymous adaptation (attributed to John Rastell) published more than a century before.

Of the *Interlude*, Morini writes that "To him [Rastell], *Celestina* is a sort of storehouse containing the materials he needs to raise his own building, a mosaic the tesserae of which can be shuffled and re-arranged at will" (69). Therefore, the *Celestina* itself was the source of inspiration to write a new drama, which might then be presented on the English stage. It is much shorter than the original, and by adding a moralistic ending it was deemed appropriate for English audiences. Morini claims that this version

from a micro-linguistic point of view, stays very close to those parts of the Spanish *Celestina* it is translated from; while Mabbe's later version, though unabridged and unchanged as far as the *fibula* is concerned, shows the mark of seventeenth-century mores, prejudice, and taste in a less obtrusive, but perhaps even more pervasive manner. (71)

In other words, Morini seems to claim that a shortened adaptation, containing none of the principles and dichotomous philosophy of the original, is preferable to Mabbe's version, the shortcomings of which we will now examine.

Morini states that Mabbe's primary concern with *La Celestina* was the same as that of the "translator" of the *Interlude*: "the dubious morality of the original" (72). He argues that Mabbe would have faced "people of puritanical inclinations who would find fault with a Spanish play whose characters spoke openly about sex and religion" (72). In

this case, Mabbe defended himself exactly against this change by maintaining that he was but a “poor parrot” for the author’s words, and that it was the reader’s responsibility to interpret the morality within the story (72). Morini criticizes Mabbe for a statement that should be admired. The ambiguous nature and morals of *La Celestina* are precisely why the novel in dialogue continues to interest critics and readers to this day. At a time in England when religious fervour, puritanical values and superstition still led the country’s powerful elite to conduct witch trials and to torture and burn heretics, it may be said that Mabbe showed considerable bravery in translating and introducing such a work into such a climate, despite the modification of Christian religious references in favour of mythological gods from Antiquity. The sex, mischief, obscenities, lying and stealing, and brutal deaths in the work remain relatively intact within his translation. It might also be appropriate to mention that Mabbe’s translated title for *La Celestina* was *The Spanish Bawd*. It was an immediate warning to readers that the story therein would contain indelicate matters, language and events. With reference to the suppression of most religious words, Morini also notes that

on 27 May 1606, the English Parliament had approved *An Acte to restraine Abuses of Players* condemning the abuse of the name of God and of the Holy Trinity in theatrical performances. If Mabbe’s first version [the Alnwick Manuscript, which does not conceal the Christian references] had been published and staged, the translator or the acting company would have run the risk of being fined ten pounds for each time God’s name was uttered ‘jestingly or profanely.’ (75)

With regard to Mabbe's style of translation, Morini states that "Mabbe identifies elegance with abundance (*copia*), and therefore loses no occasion to amplify the original" (76). Examples of his amplification in his translation of the *Novelas ejemplares* will be seen later. It cannot be disputed that Mabbe was a man of many words. In his epistle dedicatory to *La Celestina*, he writes of the author's style:

Our author is but short, yet pithy: not so full of words as sense; each other line, being a Sentence; vnlike to many of your other Writers, who either with the luxury of their phrases, or superfluity of figures, or superabundancie of ornaments, or other affected guildings of *Rhetoric*, like vndiscreet Cookes, make their meats either too sweet, or too tarte, too salt, or too full of pepper; whence it hapneth, that like greedy Husbandmen, by inlarging their hand in sowing, they make the haruest thin and barren. It is not as many of your Pamphlets be, like a tree without sap; a bough without fruit; a nut without a kernell; flesh without bones; bones without marrow; prickles without a Rose; waxe without honey; straw without wheate; sulfure without Gold; or shels without pearle. (qtd. in Morini 76)

I must agree with Morini when he humorously notes that "If we add that this is just the first half he dedicates to Rojas' concise style, it will be no surprise to learn that stylistic amplification is the fixed star of Mabbe's translation" (77).

An interesting aspect of Tudor translation, which would filter through to translation in the seventeenth century and that we note in Mabbe, is the comparison of

translation discourse with “figures related to the semantic field of clothing” (Morini 36).

Of this phenomenon, he states

in their most typical formulations, they reflect a view of linguistic acts as a conjunction of sense (or, sentence) and sound, meaning and words, or—metaphorically—soul and body, body and clothes; a series of pairs the first element of which is considered as essential, the second as superfluous. The implication, of course, is that meaning and words can be separated in the original text as well as in the translation: words being but the vestment of thought, they are seen as the least essential part of writing, the one that can be disregarded without great loss in the activity of translation. (36)

This idea is familiar, as we see in the opening to Mabbe’s dedicatory note to *La Celestina* that he immediately introduces the character Celestina as “put into English clothes” (Epistle Dedicatory). Can we infer that the translator was claiming that, although his English language was different from the Spanish, the sense, the meaning, and perhaps even the soul of Celestina were similar?

To delve into further opinions by Mabbe critics, in order to draw a clearer portrait of the elusive translator and his style, it is important to consider the article “What Makes Mabbe So Good?” by Nicholas G. Round, which attempts to incorporate the field of Translation Studies into the study of Mabbe in order to decipher the “certain vagueness” as to what makes Mabbe stand out (145). Round explains that most of the existing criticism about Mabbe has focused on his elaborate style of writing and translating, as well as on what he has edited from the originals: what was cut, added, or amplified.

Round concludes that, so far, it has been difficult to pinpoint what exactly it is that Mabbe has done well and why it is that he remains an interesting historical figure and translator to study. With regard to the differences between Mabbe's language and that of Rojas, he states that "Mabbe's linguistic range is structurally akin to Rojas, but it is built out of elements—rhetorical and popular—which differ in themselves from those deployed in similar contrastive structures by the Spaniard. Such a model, integrating elements of invariance with elements of authentic difference, looks very much like what we might expect in the effective rendering of any text into a second language" (148). Two ideas put forth about Mabbe's model in translation come from P.E. Russell, with regard to Mabbe's intelligence as a critical reader of Spanish literature, and Dorothy Severin, who used Mabbe's translation in her bilingual edition of *La Celestina* because it was the "most interesting" (Severin xv). Round agrees that "both point to things which we would expect a good translation to do. We expect it to bring across knowledges inherent in its source text, at more levels than that of its primary meanings. We also expect it to interest us" (Round 148). From this hypothesis, Round introduces the field of Translation Studies to help guide Mabbe's work in translation through the inevitable questions that will arise in the camps of descriptive and prescriptive translations.

First of all, Round emphasizes the importance of norms within descriptive Translation Studies, such as in translation and culture polysystems¹¹. He posits that Mabbe's translations today are often disregarded because, in our receptor community, we no longer function with the same set of norms that operated during his time. He claims that in light of this, we should "try to identify norms, the principles governing their operation, and their function within the overarching sociocultural polysystem" (149). For

example, he refers to the success of the King James Bible, which would be considered a “terrible translation nowadays,” since it is no longer the current way of translating (149). Since Mabbe’s norms are not our norms, it is important to remember that “readers can operate with different norms for different purposes” (150). Mabbe’s translation corresponds to a predetermined set of norms and our views are established in a current set, yet when we read Mabbe, the two sets of norms meet and interact, without one annulling the other. Round also reminds us that “translations can enrich the experience of literary texts, even for readers who know the originals” (151). This statement can be attested to through reference to a contemporary translation of *La Celestina* by Peter Bush that did not seek to reproduce an invented sixteenth-century vocabulary to suit modern readers. In Bush’s translation, the use of a more contemporary jargon updates and gives the Spanish classic new life. Examples of this style of language are as follows:

“Sempronio, Sempronio, where the hell are you, Sempronio?” (Bush 1)

“Sempronio, Sempronio, Sempronio: ¿Dónde está este maldito?” (Rojas 3)

“Don’t believe such cheap gossip” (Bush 24)

“No lo creo, hablillas son.” (Rojas 12)

“The first, Sempronio? You’ve seen few virgins who’ve put their wares on sale here who didn’t get their first or second flowering through me. When a baby-girl’s born, I write her name in my register and then I know how many escape my net. Cunny is money, my lad.” (Bush 53)

“¿El primero, hijo? Pocas vírgenes, á Dios gracias, has tú visto en este ciudad, que hayan abierto tienda á vender, de quien yo no haya sido corredora de su primer hilado. En nasciendo la muchacha, la hago escribir en mi registro: y esto para que yo sepa cuantas se me salen de la red.”
(Rojas 73)

“Sosia, pick up those brains from off the cobbles. Put them back in our luckless master’s head.” (Bush 189)

“Coge, Sosia, esos sesos de esos cantos, juntalos con la cabeza del desdichado de nuestro amo.” (Rojas 361)

In the previous examples, it is possible to see that the modern translation respects the content and the form of the original, while incorporating an update in the expressions, which will be understandable to the reader. But not only does it maintain the content and form, it introduces an element of dark humour, which is plentiful in the original. For example, through the addition of Celestina’s comment, “cunny is money,” the translator solidifies her sleazy dimension in English. At a conference held at the Instituto Cervantes in London on November 12, 2009, at which Bush presented and discussed his work, he comically stated that although Celestina did not actually utter those words in the original, she probably would have liked to. Such a modern translation certainly imbues new life and enriches the experience of a reader who knows both the original and the translation. Every new translation is a new reading and brings new interpretations and new views about the original text.

Returning to Round's article about Mabbe, he addresses probably the most problematical aspect of Mabbe's accomplishment when facing such Translation Studies theorists as Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti, who are systematically opposed to "ethnocentric translation," also known as domestication. He claims that this is disconcerting when analyzing Mabbe, since it

condemns what many have singled out as the heart of Mabbe's achievement. Yet his modern reputation may actually owe something to his offering a rather fortuitous way round that dilemma. His seventeenth-century prose (still more, its rhetorical exuberance) imposes a historical distance, which can stand proxy for the double strangeness of Rojas' text—separate from us linguistically as well as remote in time. (Round 152)

This stance is interesting, because it introduces the idea that Mabbe's translation might also lend itself to a possible description of "foreignizing" translation through its own linguistic, stylistic, and historical capabilities, which are firmly rooted in early seventeenth-century traditions. We must also remember that Mabbe was translating Rojas a full century after *La Celestina*'s publication in Spain. Therefore, it is possible to infer that there is a set of norms that undergoes a major overhaul as fifteenth-century Spain is passed on to Stuart England and then onwards to contemporary readers. Round's article suggests that what truly makes Mabbe good, is the fact that his translation is situated midway between both theories: he is as "challengingly other and as satisfyingly our own, as gifted in reading Rojas and as productive in being read" (153).

Another important fact to mention about Mabbe is that he not only worked directly from Spanish originals, but also from existing French (Jacques de Lavardin, 1578) and Italian translations, the first two countries in which Rojas' work was translated.¹² The French influence is often felt in English translations at that time, especially from earlier on during the early modern period, since it frequently served as an intermediary language between English and other continental European languages. This comes as no surprise since a large portion of the English elite knew French and also, geographically, France's close border made it convenient for exchange. As a result, a reading of Mabbe's translation introduces norms and mores from more than one cultural polity.

We have seen how Mabbe was faced with several cultural limitations with regard to his translation of *La Celestina* and this at a time when he had already published a highly successful Spanish translation before, *Guzmán de Alfarache*. As previously stated, Mabbe has been accused of "paganizing" *La Celestina* by cutting out references to religion and God, and he has been further blamed for producing a "politically correct" version of this work, which would be appealing to the English readership at the time. However, though modern criticism converges around his translation of Rojas, it was not his most successful translation at the time, regardless of whether or not he managed to catch the readership's attention and whether they would have deemed his translation worthy. Although we appreciate his efforts now, his translation of *La Celestina* stagnated at one edition. For this reason, I believe that we should also examine how and what he did with his first and most popular work, *The Rogue*, his English translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache*.

With seven different editions appearing between its first publication in 1622 and its last version, containing both the first and second parts of the novel in 1634, *The Rogue* was a resounding success (*EMSETD*). Mabbe secured commendatory verses in the preface to his translation from both Leonard Digges and Ben Jonson, as well as a note from the printer, Edward Blount. His epistle dedicatory itself is written in Spanish (which might suggest that his patron and a part of his readership would have understood Spanish, but preferred to read literature in English), and the translation contains the full chapters for all three books contained in the first part of the original.

One of the most informative aspects of this translation is that the translator accompanies his work with the addition of several comments and notes in the margin. These notes range from giving personal views, explanations about the action or story, or even to providing further information about a particular Spanish custom being described. For example, in the first chapter, we find the passage:

Thy reason is good, and I allow of it, but I would haue thee withall to consider, That albeit thou wilt count mee but a lewd Companion^a, yet I would not willingly seem so to be, though it bee farre worse to be so, and to make boast of wickednesse. (2)

The reference to “a” in the margin reads: “It is worse to be bad, then to be thought so.” (2).

Another example shows that Mabbe was also adding explanations to some of the passages that may have proved obscure or difficult to understand for some of his readers:

“Making, like another *Count* Palatine*, a Folle, a Wise man[.]” (4)

In the margin, he explains the reference and gives his source for the information: “*The Count Palatines, anciently in Rome, had power and priviledge to legitimate Bastards, to give degrees, and Titles of honour in learning, or otherwise. Vide Couarrubias in Vocabulo Palatino*” (4). The Covarrubias mentioned in the margin is none other than Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco (1539-1613), a lexicographer from Salamanca who published the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* in 1611, a dictionary of the Spanish language, still in use today to help understand some of the complexities and obscurities of Golden Age Spanish literature. It was also the first vernacular dictionary available in Europe. That Mabbe was familiar with the work of Covarrubias and that he cites it in his first translation suggests that he came across it when travelling in Spain. Since it has been noted that he was also familiar with the great literary names in Spain during his stay in Madrid, it is not surprising then that he would have referred to the dictionary at times of doubt.

A second aid to Mabbe’s translation of Mateo Alemán’s *Guzmán de Alfarache* is noted by John R. Yamamoto-Wilson in his article “James Mabbe’s Achievement in his Translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache*.” Yamamoto-Wilson illustrates the closeness between this translation and Mabbe’s work on Cristóbal de Fonseca’s *Discursos para Todos los Evangelios de la Quaresma*, a translation that Mabbe would publish in 1629. He notes that there exist “uncanny resemblances between the two texts” (138). He gives as examples passages in Mabbe’s translation of *Guzmán* in which some of the doctrine from Fonseca begins to appear, whereas it normally would not, since there is no equivalent for it in Elizabethan and Jacobean preaching. He also affirms that Fonseca and

Mabbe share a common attitude with regard to the “reprimand to the rich.” For example, he cites the following example, the first extract taken from Mabbe’s translation *The Rogue*, and the second taken from his translation of Fonseca:

Canst thou thinke it an Honour unto thee, that the Hospitall should bee maintained with “the droppings of thy Tap, and the Scraps of thy Kitchen, (when there is not a Dogge, that waites at thy Trencher, but fares better?) Canst though thinke it an honour unto thee, that thy Mules should have their Linnen and their Woollen, whilest Christ (in his members) dyes out of very cold, not having wherewith to cover his nakedness?” (139)

“those Ladies whose Coaches may rather be said to be of gold, than gilded; whose necks are laden with chains of Pearle, & their fingers with Diamonds and that they should live thus in their Jollitie & plentie and Christ die at their doores for hunger, it is such a charge that when it comes to be laid home unto them, it will admit no excuse.” (139)

Yamamoto-Wilson admits that it is the devotional elements of *The Rogue* that are “the only real point of comparison with Fonseca’s text, and, while the two are completely different in almost every other respect, no other English translation of a Spanish devotional text approaches *The Rogue* as closely as does *Contemplations*” (140). In fact, it makes sense that the translator would have become influenced by other Spanish material he had read, especially when it would have rung so true and close to his own sensibilities, and also due to the fact that Fonseca would be the second author Mabbe would decide to translate. The article also concludes that due to the many similarities in

cultural and religious awareness between the two texts, Mabbe would not have been suppressing or adding information, either as a way to censure as a moralist, or to portray himself as a translator simply interested in linguistic or literary concerns. He could see the abstract similarities between secular and religious texts and was able to draw from these his own interests as a Hispanist in England. “Mabbe’s extensive critical comments on the purpose of Mateo Alemán’s novel show an understanding of this book which has only recently been recovered by more modern critics” (Russell 79). Mabbe’s central work features the preoccupations of a

“discursive *pícaro* [who] is, he explains, fundamentally an ‘hombre de bien’ whose chief fault was weakness of will and an inability to govern his passions, as well as an undesirable hankering after ‘novedades.’ Both the translator and the distinguished literary figures among his friends who contributed laudatory verses to both parts stressed the role of *Guzmán* as an allegory of man in general. Their opinion of the high worth of the book was confirmed by the English reading public, which gave it a very favourable reception” (79).

It is also worth noting that “weakness of will and an inability to govern passions” as well as an “undesirable hankering after *novedades*” are recurring themes in the works that Mabbe chose to translate. They are present throughout both *La Celestina* and the *Novelas ejemplares*.

Indeed, Mabbe was not the only one to become fascinated by the character of *Guzmán*. In dedicatory verses to Mabbe’s translation, the English author Ben Jonson writes that he was enthused and convinced of the book’s merit in the English language.

He said that although Guzmán was created in one language, he can be universally understood and sympathetic: “though writ, But in one tongue, was form’d with the worlds wit” (Preface). Jonson also repeats the trope of using clothing to describe translation, in which a translator may simply change a character’s outside appearance to be introduced into a target audience: “For though Spaine gaue him his first ayre and Vogue, He would be call’d, henceforth, the *English-Rogue*, But that hee’s too well suted, in a cloth, Finer than was his Spanish, if my Oath” (Preface). We are presented here with Jonson’s belief that Mabbe not only achieved an unparalleled translation of the Spanish novel, but that the character and story of Guzmán is much better suited once he has been introduced into England. Mabbe echoes this sentiment about his *pícaro* in his Spanish epistle dedicatory. He claims that “El Pícaro de Alemán ha mudado su vestido; su traje no es al modo de España, sino de Inglaterra” (Epistle Dedicatory). He was therefore well aware that his introduction of the picaresque character into England was following English trends of both style and method—a treatment similar to that with which he introduced *Celestina*.

Although no in-depth academic research exists about the *Novelas ejemplares* that Mabbe translated, many comparisons can be made with regard to Mabbe’s handling of his last translation. In the following chapter, these similarities will be discussed, along with a full analysis of one of the short stories translated by Mabbe.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Mabbe's "The Force of Blood"

Within the tradition of analysing Mabbe's translation work, several scholarly articles and books have focused primarily on his achievements with regard to *La Celestina* and *Guzmán de Alfarache*. These are no doubt the two most famous and most studied of his translations in terms of available published scholarship. This comes as no surprise due to the fact that the first title is widely regarded as a Spanish literary triumph, and the second is often credited, along with *Lazarillo de Tormes*, as heralding the introduction of the picaresque genre into Britain. In fact, little critical work can be found on the devotional material he translated, nor the work that would most probably absorb him during the last years of his life. Published in 1640, two years before his supposed death in 1642, his rendering of six of the twelve *Novelas ejemplares* by Cervantes should have generated more interest in the academic world by now. A minor scattering of references to his endeavour can be unearthed, but they are often underdeveloped ideas, with scant effort to produce a body or a corpus of work that is useful for translation studies.

In the following chapter, I hope to put forward a small offering to the sphere of translation studies by plucking one of these little-known English translations of Cervantes' novellas from obscurity and submitting it to a close reading and analysis by comparing both the original and the translation. I intend to use a combination of Renaissance writings about translation as well as contemporary translation studies to shine some light on Mabbe's apparent technique when translating and as further proof

that some elements of the Spanish Baroque did indeed manage to penetrate the Puritanical atmosphere arising in Reformation England in the early to mid-seventeenth century, during a time of strife and the build-up to the English Civil War in 1642.

As previously seen, modern critics have often discarded Mabbe's efforts with regard to the *Novelas ejemplares*. He is especially criticized for choosing to translate the six least "interesting" novels, the ones of an Italianate nature or source. Although it is now widely recognized that Cervantes' genius is seen at its best in *El coloquio de los perros* or *El licenciado Vidriera*, in view of the audience's tastes at the time, it might have made more sense for Mabbe to concentrate his labours on the tamer novellas. According to Thomas R. Hart in *Cervantes' Exemplary Fictions: A Study of the Novelas ejemplares*,

The translations and adaptations of the *Novelas ejemplares* offered to seventeenth-century French and English readers suggest that they preferred the more aristocratic novellas, like *La española inglesa* and *El amante liberal*, whose protagonists are noblemen and their ladies, to those whose protagonists are juvenile delinquents (*Rinconete y Cortadillo*) or dogs (*El coloquio de los perros*). Cervantes' Spanish contemporaries probably felt the same way. (41)

However, Mabbe had indeed worked with two infamous and supposedly unsavoury protagonists before, *Celestina* and *Guzmán*. As P.E. Russell comments, Mabbe approached his work with an "acute sense of language and [an] intellectual modesty" (83); moreover, "his obvious rejection of those *Novelas ejemplares* of Cervantes which depended for complete understanding on knowledge of and interest in the Spanish

background is revealing” (84). In the epistle dedicatory for the *Exemplary Novels* in 1640, Mabbe dedicates his endeavour to “Mrs Susanna Strangeways, Wife of Gyles Strangeways Esquire, Sonne and Heire to Sir John Strangeways Knight” (Epistle Dedicatory). Of note here is that Sir John Strangeways was a lifelong friend and patron of Mabbe and the man to whom Mabbe dedicated his first translation in 1623, *Guzmán de Alfarache*. Mabbe would also choose to retire to Strangeways’ country house in Dorset at the end of his life. Perhaps as Mabbe approached his twilight years, he felt less inclined to stir the sensibilities of his patron’s young daughter-in-law, but he still felt a strong attraction to the Spanish literature that had come to define his life’s work, which can perhaps lead us to conclude that he was not so much censuring Cervantes’ riskier stories as he was offering “a work worth translating [...] which could be completely anglicized and still retain its meaning” (84). Another critic of Mabbe’s choice of stories was Fitzmaurice Kelly, who concludes that “no translation of the *Novelas ejemplares* can be satisfactory which omits such masterpieces in their kind as *Rinconete y Cortadillo*, *El Licenciado Vidriera*, *El casamiento engañoso*, and *El coloquio de los perros*” (xxxii). However, coming to Mabbe’s defence in this case is G.M. Lacalle, who quotes Randall as justly saying: “My own belief is that among Mabbe’s six *novelas*, “The Force of Blood” and “The Jealous Husband” come nearest to conveying Cervantes’ greatest skills: the successful interweaving of life and romance, and the suggestion of general truths” (qtd. in Lacalle 22).

Let us first examine the translation’s cover page. (The digitized copy is available through Early English Books Online, but without the permission to reproduce it here, I will give a written description of its content.) The title “Exemplarie Novells in sixe

books” appears in large capitalized bold letters. The translated English titles are: “The two Damosels,” “The Ladie Cornelia,” “The liberall Lover,” “The force of bloud,” “The Spanish Ladie,” and finally, “The jealous Husband.” Afterwards, there follows a short promise about the content of these stories that claims that they are “Full of various accidents both delightfull and profitable,” and then the Spanish author is named: “By Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra; One of the prime Wits of Spaine, for his rare Fancies, and wittie Inventions.” And lastly, before the colophon, the translation is also described as “Turned into English by Don Diego Puede-Ser.” The colophon reads: “London, Printed by John Dawson, for R.M. and are to be sold by Laurence Blaicklocke: at his Shop at the Sugar-loafe next Temple Barre in Fleetstreet. 1640.”

This title page reveals several aspects that interest us. Most certainly, the cover is meant to attract the attention of an English audience by, first of all, adding the mention that it is a book which is “Full of various accidents both delightfull and profitable” and, second of all, by introducing Cervantes as “One of the prime Wits of Spaine, for his rare Fancies, and wittie Inventions.” The English readership would have been familiar with Cervantes, since as previously noted, Thomas Shelton had published his translation of *Don Quixote* almost thirty years earlier, and it is most probable that several editions of Cervantes’ works, in both French translation and original Spanish, had circulated throughout England by this point in time.

In his epistle dedicatory to the *Exemplary Novels*, Mabbe reveals more than a handful of hints that help to determine his reasons and motivations for completing his last translation, but his dedication for this, his final work, is sadly void of many of his past verbose expansions on the task of the translator. It is, however, important to consider

what was written in his dedicatory note because it helps to establish patterns in his own writing with his own hand. First of all, as with the style of all epistle dedicatories, there is a humble appeal for his dedicatee's approval through various courteous entreaties and gushing language: "To the Worthie (and worthily of all who know you to be much honoured) Mrs Susanna Strangeways" (Epistle Dedicatory). He also courts her interest by promising that this work is different from those she is accustomed to and will help to divert her from the usual literary offer: "Young Ladies and Gentlewomen that are studious of reading good Bookes, (such as your selfe oft converse withall) when they finde their eyes waxe dull and weary, put their booke from them; and for their better refreshing and diversion, change the Sceane" (Epistle Dedicatory). He asserts that "so naturall is it to all sorts of persons whatsoever to take delight in Variety" (Epistle Dedicatory). To further justify this desire for new material, he pleasantly reminds his reader that "Your wisest and learnedst Men both in Church and Common-weale, will sometimes leave off their more serious Discourses, and entertaine themselves with matters of harmlesse Merriment, and Disports" (Epistle Dedicatory). He further elaborates by comparing variety in literature to a variety of dishes and points out that changing one's reading material is akin to whetting one's appetite. The dedicatory overflows with Mabbe's overwrought hand and his gusto for a clever metaphor. We also see that Mabbe did not abandon his enjoyment of a good pun, as his last translation still bears the name of Don Diego Puede-Ser. And though this might be the shortest of his dedicatories, he has indeed managed to incorporate his own particular style of wit into his writing. When warning against a lack of diversity in one's readings, he says: "To harpe alwayes on one string, is harsh to the Eare. To feed still upon one Dish, doth but glut the

Stomacke. [...] Take (as you like) here and there a little of each sort: which will but whet your Stomacke, and set an edge on your Appetite, against you come to feed your Understanding with meats more nourishable and substantiall” (Epistle Dedicatory).

However, aside from the usual humble tropes appealing to the translator’s reader, Mabbe in this case does not add any mention of his role as translator, such as he included in his epistle dedicatory for *La Celestina* and *Guzmán de Alfarache*. Absent are any allusions, as in his dedicatory to *La Celestina*, to the “poor parrot” that is simply repeating an author’s words, therefore “If any phrase savor of immodesty, blame not me, but *Celestina*. If any Sentence deserve commendation, praise not the Translator, but the Author; for I am no more to be reprehended, or commended, then the poore Parret, who accents but other folkes words, and not his owne” (*The Spanish Bawd*, Epistle Dedicatory). And gone are his conscientious references to his role in introducing a picaresque character to England: “El Pícaro está trasladado. Plega a Dios, que di mi mano no sea mal tratado. Traducido, sí; Si traslucido, bien está” (*Guzmán de Alfarache*, Epistle Dedicatory).

A second, more worrying aspect of the dedicatory note to his translation is his claim that “I will not promise any great profit you shall reape by reading them: but I promise they will be pleasing and delightfull; the Sceane is so often varied, the Passages so pretty, the Accidents so strange; and in the end brought to so happy a Conclusion. Here, though one bit (as we say) will draw downe another, you shall not cloy yourself” (*Exemplary Novels*, Epistle Dedicatory). This statement is especially problematic when contrasted with the complex and labyrinthine readings of Cervantes’ original stories. It is difficult to imagine that there is only one possible reading or understanding of the

Novelas ejemplares. Although the structure itself is modelled on Italianate stories of noble love, romance, vengeance and bravery, Cervantes's *novelas* do not adhere to a typical happy ending.

In the case of the present *novela*, "La fuerza de la sangre," which becomes "The force of blood" in translation, the story unfolds in a disturbing series of events. A strikingly beautiful young girl, Leocadia, is kidnapped and raped by Rodolfo, a young nobleman. Along with a group of his friends, he gallops down on his horse and snatches her from her family as they return from a walk along the river. He returns home with the young lady and engages in forced sexual relations with her. When she awakens, she asks him to kill her for destroying her honour. He is confused and leaves the room to consult with his friends. Left alone, Leocadia examines the room and takes a small silver crucifix as evidence. Rodolfo returns and then unceremoniously abandons her in the town centre, to find her way home alone, robbed of her virginity. At the behest of her family, she remains quiet about the event, in order to preserve her and her family's reputation, but once it is discovered that she is pregnant, she is sent off to a small village for the remainder of her pregnancy, to hide her condition from public scrutiny. Upon her return, her son remains away for four years. After sufficient time is passed, the child returns to Toledo and is introduced as the nephew of Leocadia's father, and the family attempts to raise the child in the most genteel fashion. When the young boy is seven, he attends a horse race and is struck down by a careening horse. As he lies in the track, blood pouring from his head, Rodolfo's father sees him and, struck with compassion by his resemblance to his own son, takes him home in order to nurse him back to health. The boy, Luis, is cared for in the same bed in which he was brutally conceived. Upon hearing of the young

boy's plight, Leocadia's family rush to his bedside. To her surprise, Leocadia finds herself once again in the ominous room where seven years earlier her innocence and freedom was stolen from her. During a conversation with Rodolfo's mother, Leocadia feels the need to confess her son's deeds and admits that the child in convalescence is in fact her grandson. To prove her claim she produces the silver crucifix that she had taken on the night of her rape. Recognizing the family heirloom, Rodolfo's mother plots her son's return from Italy by tantalizing him with promises of marriage to a very suitable lady. Rodolfo returns hastily. His mother hides Leocadia away and before a large dinner, calls her son aside to show him a portrait of an ugly woman who is to be his future spouse. Rodolfo pleads with his mother to reconsider, for he explains that all that matters to him is to have a beautiful wife. They enter the dining room first, and, shortly after, Leocadia enters the room covered in jewels and clad in a rich gown. Rodolfo does not recognize her, but immediately falls in love. Leocadia, suddenly overwhelmed by the moment, faints, and Rodolfo does as well. The guests worry that they have both passed away. Rodolfo awakens first, and his mother reveals that Leocadia is the true woman he is to marry. Rodolfo kisses her, and Leocadia regains consciousness, they fall in love, and are announced to wed. Leocadia declares that though he first robbed her of her honour, he is now restoring it. They live happily ever after.

Unsurprisingly, Mabbe's claim that the stories arrive at a happy ending is problematical in this case. Although it may seem that Leocadia's predicament has been rectified through a supposed happy finale, Mabbe seems to gloss over the fact that, ultimately, the poor young woman lost any chance of honour and a virtuous life, and then ends up having to marry the thug who violated her. Cervantes was probably more than

aware of this fact, and the story contains many references to the absurdity of Baroque Spain's obsession with appearances and adherence to the status quo in spite of morality. Cervantes' genius is often found in his ability to control the reader's point of view¹³. In the following section, a close textual analysis of the translation and the original will try to bring to light both this and other dichotomies existing within and between the two texts.

To facilitate the process I will use some basic criteria from Antoine Berman's discussion of "Deformative Tendencies" in his book *Trials of the Foreign*; I will also incorporate a certain amount of theory from Anthony Pym's *Method in Translation History*; and finally, I will examine and study the most common translation techniques used by Mabbe in his work. Since past scholars of Mabbe have attempted to categorize and criticize him as either a "foreignizing" or "domesticating" translator, I hope to identify and then classify the techniques he employed in order to demonstrate that his enduring talent was his ability to borrow from each camp. Therefore, Mabbe was able to produce a faithful translation of the original, which was of interest to his readers at the time, as well as to contemporary readers. His translations persist as an interesting view of a Renaissance Englishman's perspective on Baroque Spain.

In accordance with Pym's suggestions, I have attempted to identify some of the most frequent variants and their manifestations that appear in the translation. Pym claims that "we have to try to establish how transformations were produced, and within what limits" (Pym 106). It is important to avoid falling into a common trap of over-analysis that can emerge when producing a close reading of a translation focusing only on what is different: that is, why the translation is "bad." Instead, I wish to approach the close reading as a search for what is consistent in Mabbe's translation of "La fuerza de la

sangre.” Pym suggests that “the classical mistake, of course, is to read and compare miles of texts, writing a mess of notes on apparently significant differences, and never finding a way to say something coherent about the result. This trap can be overcome by analyzing translations with respect to just one or two well defined levels or aspects, always in order to test clearly formulated hypotheses” (106). For that reason, I believe that it is relevant to focus on Mabbe’s faithfulness in reproducing Cervantes’ original plot, and his flair in adding elements of English prose, which would have made the story more appealing to his English readership.

Given that Renaissance England was beginning to open its doors to foreign ideas, in this particular case, I believe that Mabbe’s translation follows many of the precepts found in Massimiliano Morini’s *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice*. The author claims that in view of translations being considered rewritings, and in some cases, “a manipulation of the original” (ix), they “are not superfluous by-products of literature, but play a vital role in the cultural life of a nation and of an age” (ix). As previously noted, translations in England’s early modern period often found themselves side-by-side with original English writings in bookshops, and the readership had a taste for foreign works of all sorts, including news, literature, philosophy, and religious works. Indeed, in the essay “Translation and Migration,” Michael Cronin states that “what unites early Republican Rome, early Tang China, Elizabethan England and Meiji Japan is a tendency to borrow heavily from other cultures which, rather than diminishing, heightened the linguistic and cultural self-awareness of these very different polities” (55). Although the greatest part of Mabbe’s work occurred in the early seventeenth century, I believe that at the time, he would have been subject to a cultural context and philosophy very similar to

that of Elizabeth I. England had begun its cultural expansion and in those bustling times, when English literature, poetry, and especially drama were to experience their most fruitful years. The quantity of foreign-inspired plays would have been hard to ignore, and translation's role in introducing these inspirations cannot be denied. This philosophy of appropriation is widely found in translation during Mabbe's time. Juan Miguel Zarandona affirms that "domestication dominated the theory and practice of English-language translation in every genre, prose as well as poetry" (313). This claim is also clearly enunciated in *The Translator's Invisibility* by Venuti: "Fluency emerges in English-language translation during the early modern period, a feature of aristocratic literary culture in seventeenth-century England" (43). Therefore, in this case, I wish to first examine what varies in the translation in terms of Mabbe's additions and possible cuts and then hope to discover whether his translation is strong enough to let elements of Baroque Spain shine through.

Returning now to the text itself and the method I wish to use to frame the translation, I will specifically focus on two aspects found within Mabbe's work. First, the existing variants in the translation will not be scrutinized in order to create a list of shortcomings or to determine how James Mabbe might have failed as a translator. On the contrary, I hope to hypothesize that, as favourably stated by P.E. Russell, "what distinguishes Mabbe is not only the enduring quality of his criticism but his scholarly approach to the authors with whom he concerned himself, his understanding of what they were about and his insistence on translating not what was likely to be most popular but what he thought most worth translating" (Russell 84). More specifically, I want to demonstrate that Mabbe's greatest talent lies in his ability to straddle both camps in

translation studies: “foreignizing” and “domesticating.” As a capable writer and translator, a traveller, and a Hispanist, Mabbe skilfully introduced three of Spain’s most well-known Golden Age authors to an English readership, and his work is still relevant today. Moreover, in contrast to a hegemonic emphasis on domestication, although Mabbe did indeed domesticate the works he translated in order to appeal to his English readership, I believe that the many additions and notes he made to his translations can be used as evidence to prove that many of his readers were well aware that they were in contact with a translation, a foreign text. Seeing as he added margin notes and parenthetical comments, as well as the fact that his epistle dedicatories were highly stylized, I doubt that his readers mistook these asides and notes for the voice of Cervantes.

It is important to mention firstly that Mabbe’s translation is in fact very close, almost literal with regard to the story and plot. He does not omit any action, nor does he change the story or the characters. His single modification is in changing Leocadia’s age from sixteen in the original to seventeen in the translation. Aside from perhaps wanting to temper somewhat the shocking attack on a young girl, I have found no specific evidence that might explain Mabbe’s deviation. As noted beforehand, many scholars have primarily focused on his translation of *La Celestina* and *Guzmán de Alfarache* and have noted Mabbe’s partiality to make major modifications. In the case of *Celestina*, he has been called a “pagan” by H.P. Houck in 1939 due to his omission of most, if not all, religious references in the book. John R. Yamamoto-Wilson, in “James Mabbe’s Achievement in his Translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache*,” has detailed Mabbe’s embellishments of the original text and the notes that he left in the margin of his

translation. He explains that “Mabbe translates passages which appeal to him with a particular flourish, and frequently embellishes the text, thus giving valuable clues to his own preoccupations” (138). This is revealing because in his *Exemplarie Novells*, there are many examples of his desire to expand the story, to add his own personal views, and to comment on certain characteristics of Spanish culture and literature.

In a close analysis of the translation of “La fuerza de la sangre,” first and foremost, we must examine Mabbe’s affinity for amplification, or *amplificatio*, in Latin. Not only does he have a propensity for turning one Spanish word into two English ones (usually in the case of adjectives, which are more often than not rendered as alliterations in the English), but he also enjoys incorporating his own interpretation, personal comments, and further details to the story. Most passages of the translation are notably longer than the original since they contain information added by the translator himself. He seems to genuinely imagine the story in vivid detail and then adds his own vision of events. I have counted approximately 180 incidences of Mabbe’s own words and passages that do not appear in the original being added to the translation, ranging from one word to a complete sentence. His additions range from short add-ons to the translator’s own voice being introduced. Examples of these are as follows: “riqueza” becomes “*great* wealth,” (180), “contra todo su pensamiento” becomes “contrary wholly to his thought *and quite beyond all imagination*” (180), and “Alborotóse el viejo y reprochóles y afeóles su atrevimiento” is extended to “The old man, *and I cannot blame him*, was somewhat moved thereat, reproved them for it, and told them they might be ashamed, *had they any shame in them to offer such an affront to gentlewomen*” (180). This last example is highly interesting because the translator introduces his own voice to

the translation with the added “and I cannot blame him.” Was this an attempt on Mabbe’s part to distance himself, as a translator, from the violence of the original? Is he protecting himself? Is he expressing his revolt and discontent with the story’s action? As a reader of Spanish literature and especially as a close reader of Cervantes, was Mabbe aware of the many levels of possible interpretation of the original with which he worked? For the aware contemporary reader, it feels as if Mabbe is trying to poke through Venuti’s theory about the translator’s invisibility. Like the painter Velázquez, the artist is peeking through his work at the audience/reader, making his presence known. However, this is merely a supposition, a mild hope that Mabbe was perhaps leaving a hint of humanity behind through his work. As Pym affirms, “True, translators do much else as well; they are also humans. But in this field we can only reach those other activities and that humanity through translational documents. There is no instant humanization” (38).

In other examples of additions in Mabbe’s translation, we find a general consistency in his use of amplification. When Rodolfo and his cronies meet up with the old hidalgo’s family, Cervantes describes them as approaching with “deshonesta desenvoltura (sic)” (Cervantes 77). The word “desenvoltura” in Spanish can mean “ease” or “fluency” when speaking of movement, “confidence” or “self-confidence,” “forwardness” or “brazenness” bordering on impudence (Oxford English Dictionary). However, Mabbe’s rendition gives a more severe reproach to their actions: “in a most uncivil kind of manner, void of all shame and honesty” (Mabbe 180). He adds both in terms of word-count and also of morality. To further advance the undercurrent of moral condemnation of Rodolfo’s acts and to garner sympathy for Leocadia and her family, addition can be noted in the following instances:

“Y en un instante comunicó su pensamiento con sus camaradas,”
(Cervantes 78)

“and in an instant, *as sudden as his passion*, he imparted his mind to his
companions,” (Mabbe 180)

“se resolvieron de volver y robarla por dar gusto a Rodolfo,” (Cervantes
78)

“they presently resolved to return back and take her *from her parents by
force*, only therein for to please Rodolfo,” (Mabbe 180)

The following example shows the considerable difference in length as the source
Spanish moves into the target English:

“Arremetió Rodolfo con Leocadia, y cogiéndola en brazos, dio a huir con
ella, la cual no tuvo fuerzas para defenderse, y el sobresalto le quitó la voz
para quejarse, y aun la luz de los ojos, pues desmayada y sin sentido, no
vio quién la llevaba, ni adónde la llevaban.” (Cervantes 78)

“Rodolfo seized on Leocadia, and taking her up in his arms, ran away with
her *with all the haste he could*; who had not strength *enough* to defend her
*from this violence, and the sudden passion that possessed her was so
prevalent that it* took away the use of her voice, so that she could not cry
out, and likewise the light of her eyes, since that she being in a swound,
and without any sense, she neither saw who carried her nor whither they
did carry her.” (Mabbe 181)

In this case, it would be interesting to look closely at the differences in lexical undertones or, as Berman called it, the destruction of underlying networks of signification. However, here the translation seems to add new semantic fields to the story. In terms of expansion, it adds the feeling of hurriedness with “with all the haste he could” and “sudden passion,” whereas in the original the obvious rush comes from the single term “huir” (to run away or flee). There is also an addition of violence. Mabbe describes Leocadia “who had not strength enough to defend her from this violence,” whereas the Spanish restricts itself to the use of “sobresalto” (fright, scare, or sudden shock). The Spanish Leocadia is weak with fear and shock, faints, and is unable to determine who has abducted her or where he is taking her. The English Leocadia is almost indignant, openly acknowledging that she is violently plucked from her element of comfort, and this dramatic “sudden passion that possessed her was so prevalent” that she falls into a “swound.”

A second example of this type of addition can be found in the scene in which Rodolfo takes his prisoner to his private room in his home. While Leocadia is still unconscious, he accomplishes the dark deed for which he stole her away:

“antes que de su desmayo volviese Leocadia, había cumplido su deseo
Rodolfo: que los ímpetus no castos de la mocedad pocas veces o ninguna,
reparan en comodidades y requisitos, que más los inciten y levanten.”
(Cervantes 79)

“Before that Leocadia had recovered her swooning Rodolfo had satisfied
his *lustful* desire; for the unchaste violences of youth seldom or never
*respect either time or place, but run on headlong whither their unbridled
lust leads them, letting loose the reins to all licentiousness.*” (Mabbe 182)

The theme of violence is repeated here in the English translation, with the addition of lust and uncontrollable urges. The original emphasizes spontaneity and unpredictability in that Rodolfo acts without thinking or being able to wait: “los ímpetus no castos de la mocedad pocas veces o ninguna, reparan en comodidades y requisitos,” together with the sexual reference, “que más los inciten y levanten” (a veiled reference, most probably to the phallus). Unable to wait for his victim to awaken, he satisfies his animal instinct. But the translation modifies the references to spontaneity and manhood, opting to draw an interesting parallel between sexual urges and a wild animal, most probably a horse, which is also a reference to nobility. The drawn-out alliteration conjures images of an unruly stampede, with Leocadia being ravished in the centre of furious activity. And although there is a clear overtone of condemnation in the translator’s words, they also bring a rush of titillation to the story.

There are many more occasions in which Mabbe adds his own descriptions and explanations to the story. To give but a few other examples, he often adds extra descriptions to characters. When the child from the brutal union is born, Cervantes describes the child, Luis, as being

“de rostro hermoso, de condición mansa, de ingenio agudo, y en todas las acciones que en aquella edad tierna podía hacer, daba señales de ser de algún noble padre engendrado, y de tal manera su gracia, belleza y discreción, enamoraron a sus abuelos que vinieron a tener por dicha la desdicha de su hija por haberles dado tal nieto.” (Cervantes 85)

Mabbe's Luys is

“of a fair complexion, *a pleasing countenance, a sweet disposition*, a gentle nature, a quick wit, and in all those his actions which in that tender age he could do he gave apparent signs and tokens that he was begotten by some noble father; and in such sort his wit, beauty, and pretty behaviour did make his grandfather and grandmother so far in love with him that they came to hold their daughter's unhappiness to be a happiness in that she had given them such a nephew.” (Mabbe 192)

Here the translator inserts further epithets and lauds the child as being also of “a pleasing countenance, a sweet disposition.” In this passage, we also find one, perhaps deliberate, change in the translation. Mabbe names Luys as the “nephew” of both grandfather and grandmother instead of using the more appropriate “grandson,” as in the original “nieto.” Though he was raised as their nephew, Cervantes' original still refers to him in many cases as their grandson. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the definition of nephew comes from the Old French “neveu,” which came from the Latin “nepos” which signified both a “grandson and a nephew” (www.askoxford.com). We also note that “gracia” becomes “wit,” “belleza” becomes “beauty,” and “discreción” becomes “pretty behaviour.”

In spite of the fact that Mabbe often resorts to this type of amplification in his translation, in which he adds personal comments denouncing the actions of Rodolfo, modifies semantic connotations, and supplements certain characteristics to please an English readership, he also partakes in a different kind of addition: he often adds cultural explanations and generalizations about the Spanish. It is clear that the English readership

throughout Mabbe's lifetime had an interest in Spain, and these anecdotes would help to nourish their curiosity for all things foreign.

At the time of publishing his *Exemplarie Novells*, Mabbe was nearing seventy, and it is not known whether he continued to manifest as much energy and interest in English politics, as there exist no records of his involvement in the growing division between Parliamentarians and Royalists. A few years before, however, in 1632, Mabbe published, as we have already seen, his translation of Fray Juan de Santa María's *República y Policía christiana* as *Christian Policie, or the Christian Common-wealth*. Russell notes that "The sub-title explained that it was 'published for the good of kings', perhaps a somewhat bold observation so soon after Charles I had begun his experience in personal government" (Russell 82). Russell also claims that Mabbe might have sympathized with his patrons the Strangeways' politics, and for that reason may have translated the work. It is known that the Strangeways family, "in spite of its earlier quarrel with the court, was actively royalist and the family mansion at Abbotsbury was garrisoned for the King in 1644, when it was captured and burnt by the Parliamentarians" (Russell 83). Although Mabbe's last translation was published just prior to the onset of the English Civil War, we do not know whether he lived to see the outbreak of fighting. Certainly he appears to have continued on with his fascination for Spanish literature until the end of his life and endeavoured to include his own small musings and reflections in his translations.

There are several anecdotes of note that Mabbe has also added to *The force of bloud*. Some are explanatory, descriptive and clarifying, while others lean towards being amusing, witty, or even critical and disapproving. When the child is injured during the

horse races, Rodolfo's father carries Luys home in his arms "a paso largo." Mabbe, on the other hand, decides to humorously add that it is not in a Spaniard's custom to walk so quickly in this fashion, and therefore the father's hurried trip home is alliteratively supplemented by "neglecting the grave Spanish pace, with large steps he hied him home to his own house" (193). Earlier in the text, when Rodolfo dumps Leocadia in town, after having his way with her, he leaves her at the "Ayuntamiento" or town hall. Oddly, Mabbe does not use the literal English translation to describe the site, but instead prefers to maintain the original Spanish word and give a brief description of its function: "He brought her then to the place which they *commonly* call by the name of Ayuntamiento, *where the people publicly assemble and meet together*" (188). Another example worthy of note is how Mabbe deals with the Spanish word "hidalgo" (a member of the Spanish nobility). He usually opts for the English "nobleman" in the translation. However, it is important to distinguish between Leocadia's family, who are of noble blood but have no money, and Rodolfo's family, also noble but extremely wealthy and powerful. This explains why the plot gains momentum, first, through Leocadia's family's inability to chase the man who abducts their daughter and, secondly, their wish for secrecy after the heinous event. Although they are of noble blood, they have no power and no recourse to accuse Rodolfo of his crime. In the translation, there is a brief explanation of their status when Cervantes affirms that Leocadia's family has no way of retrieving their daughter after her kidnapping:

"Veíanse necesitados de favor, como hidalgos pobres. No sabían de quién quejarse, sino de su corta ventura." (Cervantes 78)

In the translation, Mabbe explains:

“they saw themselves necessitated for any matter of favour as being poor though nobly descended; they knew not on whom to complain but their own hard fortune.” (Mabbe 181)

Note that Mabbe does not use the expected translation of “poor nobleman,” but explains that even though they are poor, they are nevertheless of noble descent. This confirms their belonging to privileged society, for they are of a genteel caste. It also drives the plot forward, allowing Rodolfo’s mother, Estefania, to design a plan that will have her son marry Leocadia. This would obviously not be possible had the girl not been the daughter of a gentleman.

A final example of Mabbe’s tendency to adapt his translation to the English readership (or domestication) is the scene in which Rodolfo begins his journey to Italy, full of excitement for the promise of freedom and good Italian and French food:

“goloso de lo que había oído decir a algunos soldados de la abundancia de las hosterías de Italia y Francia; de la libertad que en los alojamientos tenían los españoles. Sonábale bien aquel *Ecoli buoni polastri, picioni, presuto et salcie* con otros nombres deste jaez, de quien los soldados se acuerdan.” (Cervantes 84)

“being much taken with that which he had heard some soldiers repeat of the great store of inns in Italy and France, and of the liberty which Spaniards took in their lodgings. That sounded well in his ear, ‘Lo, sir, here be good tender pullets, young pigeons, fine white fat veal, a good gammon of bacon, excellent sausages, and the like;’ which the soldiers did magnify in mentioning them unto him.” (Mabbe 191)

Here Mabbe is adding to the original enumeration, in imperfect Italian, of “polastri, picioni, presunto et salcicie” (hen, pigeon, ham, and sausage). Mabbe does not keep the Italian, though it might have been as accessible to an English reader as it would have been to a Spanish one. Instead, under Mabbe’s pen everything becomes English, and it also undergoes an appetizing twist, whereby the hen, or “pullet” (from the French, “poulet”) is “good tender,” the pigeons are “young,” the ham is in fact “good gammon of bacon,” the sausages are “excellent” and, in order not to leave out any other possibly favourite English dish, he adds “fine white fat veal.” In this case, Mabbe’s decision drains the translation from the original text’s own foreignness. Cervantes’ works are often full of words in foreign languages. Here, Mabbe is facilitating his target text for his English audience.

In Mabbe’s rendition of *La Celestina*, he systematically cut out most references to the Catholic religion. Though this type of editing is not widespread in the current translation, there is one important instance in which Mabbe does leave a reference to God untranslated. It is a case in which Mabbe’s unusual silence speaks louder than his copious additions: the translation is very literal, and he submits a faithful English translation for all of the other references to God and Heaven. In the scene in which Leocadia returns home to her parents after her terrible ordeal, her father swears her to silence, for he warns her that “one ounce of public dishonour doth lie heavier upon us than a pound weight of secret infamy” (Mabbe 190). After this caution, her father says: “y pues puedes vivir honrada con Dios en público, no te pene de estar deshonrada contigo en secreto” (Cervantes 84).

But this accompanying counsel does not appear in the English translation. Whether this omission is deliberate or an oversight is not known; however, judging by the faithfulness of the rest of the translation and its completeness, we must probably opt for the former. Was it because it offended Mabbe's personal sensibilities? Did he fear to spread such an idea to his readership out of worry that they might accept and imitate the guideline? Would Mabbe understand that Leocadia's father is stating that her misfortune was not out of lack of virtue and that she should not feel that she has sinned? Or would he assume it could be misrepresented as blasphemous in the increasingly puritanical susceptibilities present in England at the time? The loss of the original sentence in this case seems to imply that Mabbe purposefully made the cut in order to avoid moral repercussions, and not simply to avoid reproducing a reference to God, as in *The Spanish Bawd*.

A second case in which absence speaks louder than words is Mabbe's failure to translate Cervantes' "prologue to the reader" from the *Novelas ejemplares*. It can be argued that he did not include the famous prologue since he only translated part of the entire work, and perhaps he assumed that an English readership would not be interested in reading about the Spanish author, but it remains disappointing to see that Mabbe did not include such an ambiguous and fascinating passage of Cervantes' work since the prologue serves

the purely functional purpose of providing readers with general information about what they are about to read, but beyond that, and more unusually, for those who do not refuse its challenges, it also offers an induction into the readings skills, or habits of mind, that they will require if they are to properly understand and enjoy the *novelas*. In other words,

the readerly expertise required to understand the enigmas of the Prologue is closely analogous to that demanded by the stories themselves. (Boyd 47)

If we consider that the brilliance of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* lies in the reader's own interpretation and understanding of the work, where does that leave Mabbe as both a reader and a translator? Along with his failure to translate some of Cervantes' more complex novellas from the book, this consists of one of the many questions left for academia to answer and to continue researching.

We must now observe one of Mabbe's favourite techniques in translation. When faced with a Spanish word that causes him interpretative limitations in English, he simply doubles the word, allowing for a greater span of understanding. Not only does this take into account his reader's comprehension, but also it allows him to include an element of his own clever composition by often resorting to the use of alliteration. The following is a list of the most interesting, surprising and amusing of these linguistic couplings.

“La noche era clara” = “The night was clear and bright”

“compañías libres” = “loose and licentious company”

“le hacían hacer cosas y tener atrevimientos” = “made him to do such insolent and extravagant actions”

“renombre de atrevido” = “attribute of impudent and insolent”

“los ricos que dan en liberales” = “rich men which are lewdly and licentiously given”

“aquellos atrevidos” = “those bold and insolent persons”

“alegres se fueron los unos, y tristes se quedaron los otros” = “the one went their way glad and joyful, and the other sad and mournful”

“sin impedimento alguno” = “without any let or hindrance”

“confusos” = “confounded and amazed”

“del cumplimiento dellos” = “the accomplishing and fulfilling of them”

“te ruego” = “I entreat and beseech thee”

“se templará” = “will be tempered and moderated”

“dolor” = “grief and sorrow”

“que el discurso del tiempo temple la justa saña que contra ti tengo” = “that time shall allay or pacify that just rage and indignation which I bear, and still shall, towards thee”

“desdichados” = “unhappy and unfortunate”

“antes que ella tuviese lugar de quitarse el pañuelo” = “before that she had time and leisure to unknit and loosen the handkercher”

These doublings are frequent in the translation. Mabbe is obviously keen to ensure that the full significance of the Spanish is understood, and at the same time he is passing on his own fancy for clever writing. We see this tendency in his translations and even more clearly in the epistle dedicatories composed by his own hand. In his dedicatory note to his translation of *La Celestina*, *The Spanish Bawd*, which he dedicates to Sir Thomas Richardson, Knight, a great many examples of his fondness for doublings can be noted. He admits to his dedicatee that “*Celestina* is not *sine scelere*: yet must I tell you withal, that she cannot be harboured with you *sine utilitate*. Her life is foul, but her precepts fair; her example naught, but her doctrine good; her coat ragged, but her mind enriched with

many a golden sentence: and therefore take her not as she seems, but as she is; and the rather, because black sheep have as good carcasses as white” (*La Celestina*, Epistle Dedicatory). In this extract, the obvious presence of his comparisons and contrasts has a ring similar to that of the couplings of the adjectives, nouns and verbs found in *The force of blood*.

Another notable similarity is Mabbe’s enjoyment of metaphor. As we have already seen in the dedicatory to Mrs Strangeways in his *Exemplarie Novells*, he likens a good variety of literature and readings to a plentiful variety on the dinner table. In his dedicatory to *La Celestina*, he approximates the same type of comparison: “Vouchsafe then, gentle sir, to take a little of this coarse and sour bread; it may be, your stomach, being gluttred with more delicate cates, may take some pleasure to restore your appetite with this homely, though not altogether unsavoury, food. It is good plain household-bread, honest messeline; there is a great deal of rye in it, but the most part of it is pure wheat” (*La Celestina*, Epistle Dedicatory). Once again, Mabbe adopts a culinary metaphor, comparing reading to eating. He repeats his belief that one should choose a variety of literatures as well as a variety on the dinner table.

To further illustrate James Mabbe’s skill with a pen, I would now like to draw attention to what I consider to be his successes in translating “La fuerza de la sangre,” Cervantes’ complex, dark-humoured, labyrinthine work, with its strong emphasis on a reader’s individual interpretation of the actions developing throughout the story. Modern literary criticism has poured over possible interpretations of this story, often comparing it to an allegorical version of Adam and Eve. To obtain a credible in-depth interpretation of the *novela*, I refer to the excellent chapter “*Exemplary Rape: The Central Problem of ‘La*

fuerza de la sangre,” by Anthony Lappin. Due to space constraints, I will not proceed with a full literary analysis of the *novela*, but will highlight some of the main questions and themes that need to be considered when determining whether Mabbe was able to put forth a creditable attempt at translating Cervantes.

Prior to this exercise, let us look at a quote from Maeve Olohan’s book *Introducing Corpora in Translation Studies*, in which she poses an important question with regard to great works of literature in translation:

What is interesting from the point of view of translation studies is that only the tiniest minority of [...] English-speaking readership have had ‘unmediated contact’ with the writers used [...] as examples; admittedly a small number of the newspaper readers may have read Flaubert in French, but significantly fewer will have experienced Tolstoy in Russian. In the context of access through translation, has the greatness of this literature really been grasped ‘at first hand’? McEwan says that ‘from the first sentence, we come into a presence and we can see for ourselves the quality of a particular mind’. But whose presence is this—author or translator? Whose mind are we seeing ‘for ourselves’—author or translator?. (4)

The problem is important here because it calls into question whether Mabbe was in fact successful at introducing not only Cervantes, but Baroque Spanish literature in general to England. We have already seen how Shelton’s translation of *Don Quixote* continues to be regarded as a triumph of Early Modern English translation due to claims that the translator maintained the “spirit” of the original. This is precisely why James Mabbe is often criticized by modern academia, but why was his translation of *Guzmán de*

Alfarache so successful with the English readership of the time? Shelton's translation of *Don Quixote* was indeed a success; however, according to recent research, it has been established that his readership saw the book as an extension of the chivalric romances and perhaps did not immediately come to regard it as a dark-humoured parody of this same type of novel. In a bibliographical note to "The History of Don Quixote, Translated by Thomas Shelton," Alfred W. Pollard claims that

We may wish that he had made many more [of Shelton's corrections], or, in a word, that his translations were as uniformly exact as it is uniformly racy and untrammelled. But the temper in which a man takes upon him to translate a contemporary novel which has pleased him, and that in which he approaches a recognized classic are distinct enough, and in the joyous and courageous handling which results from the contemporary's lack of reverence, though he misrepresent the letter more often than is creditable, he may well catch such a portion of his author's spirit, as more learned and painstaking successors can only envy. In a translator of *Don Quixote* one touch of Cervantes' spirit atones for a dozen verbal slips, and it is because Shelton had a true feeling of kinship with his author that his version has here been preferred to any other (Pollard, online).

Unfortunately, Pollard does not give any specific examples as to which passages in particular so vividly reflect the Cervantine spirit, but it is generally acknowledged that Shelton's translation of *Don Quixote*, the first in any language, was indeed a resounding achievement. Unfortunately no such praise yet exists for Mabbe and his body of work, though I think that without a full analysis of all six of Mabbe's translations of the *Novelas*

ejemplares, it would be difficult to make such a claim as of yet. However, judging from what Mabbe did preserve in his translation—the plot, the themes, the violence, the lack of redemption, and the twisted ending—it is obvious that he introduced Cervantes and some of the labyrinthine threads from Baroque Spain into Reformation England. The readership’s continued interest in the *novelas* after his death proves that it is reasonable to consider that he did produce a body of work of great worth. It may be time for translation studies to seriously analyze his entire corpus and to re-analyze Shelton’s *Don Quixote*: the overly enthusiastic praise by some modern critics now needs to be founded on more than ephemeral, metaphysical ideas and feelings about the text.

As observed earlier, Mabbe’s translation is quite literal in most places. He does not, as in *La Celestina*, change significant references to a specific semantic field, such as religion or mores, in order to obscure parts of the text or add too many unnecessary marginal notes and observations, as in the case of *Guzmán de Alfarache*. The tale told remains the same. He generally does not change or modify the basic plot. The fact that Leocadia has been raped is not glossed over. He does add his own comments of apparent disgust to the translation, perhaps letting the reader know that he does not condone Rodolfo’s actions. However, this has only an indirect impact on the interpretation as a whole and is the only incidence in which he does make his feelings known. Mabbe does not criticize the ending, in which Leocadia is made to marry her abuser. Whether this is due to his agreement with things apparently being “set right” is unknown, but it might also be attributed to the puritanical atmosphere that shrouded England at the time. Further research into a comparison between English romance fiction (and criticism) and Spanish romance fiction at the time could reveal similar plot conventions. In fact, although the

main tendency in translation studies is to domesticate foreign literature in translation, Mabbe's work provides fodder for understanding more about the translator himself and the historical context he was working in.

Returning to a panoramic analysis of the original novella "La fuerza de la sangre," there are several important themes to highlight. First of all, as elucidated in the title, "blood" is by far the most potent element in the story. It refers to the blood shed by Leocadia when she loses her virginity at the hands of Rodolfo, the blood that pours from the child's head after he is injured at the races, and, more importantly, to the nobility of blood in each character. Blood was a far more important theme in Spain than it was in England at the time, as blood is an innate reference to Christ¹⁴, but an English readership still could have made an association between the premise and the plotline. The number of incidences in which the word "sangre" appears in the original are imitated exactly in English: in the title, "sangre ilustre" becomes "nobleness of blood," "derramando mucha sangre de la cabeza" becomes "pouring out much blood from his head," and, in the epilogue, the mirrored repetition of the title "por la fuerza de la sangre" becomes "by the force of that blood."

The second most significant idea is the strength of rumour. When Leocadia returns to her family, they immediately swear her to silence. They warn her that:

"y advierte, hija, que más lastima una onza de deshonra pública que una arroba de infamia secreta." (Cervantes 84)

"And withal consider, dear daughter, that one ounce of public dishonour doth lie heavier upon us than a pound weight of secret infamy." (Mabbe 190)

Here Mabbe faithfully reproduces Spain's obsession with maintaining a respectable public profile¹⁵. This same emphasis on performance in the public spheres is almost literally rendered in English. A careful reader would certainly think about the passage, whether in England or in Spain, and modern critics will recognize that a characteristic of Cervantes' brand of twisted humour is reproduced here. In *Cervantes' Exemplary Fictions: A Study of the Novelas ejemplares*, Thomas R. Hart affirms that "Mabbe shared Cervantes' delight in rhetorical display and made a valiant and generally successful attempt to convey its quality to his English readers" (4).

However, in spite of this quasi-faithful translation, most of Mabbe's work is today unknown. It is to be wondered whether this is due to modern criticism's focus on canonical works, as is the case with Mabbe's translation of *La Celestina*, rather than on what are considered peripheral works of Spanish literature. Although Cervantes is paramount among Baroque Spanish writers, his *Novelas ejemplares* are not *Don Quijote*, nor is Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* another *Lazarillo de Tormes*. In *The Cervantean Heritage*, Arantza Mayo and J.A.G. Ardila lament what Mabbe *could* have produced although they do in fact praise him for his efforts: "In addition to being contemporary to Cervantes' prose, Mabbe's style is elegant and virtually flawless. As with *Celestina* and *Guzmán de Alfarache*, Mabbe did a superior job translating the *Exemplary Novels*, and one can only regret that he did not undertake a translation of *Don Quixote*" (59). With a growing interest for Mabbe and his works, one can hope that soon he will gain his rightful place in the small pantheon of early modern translators.

Conclusions

As we have seen, the figure of James Mabbe remains elusive and, until a full examination of all his work, including the remaining five *novelas* that he translated, is completed, he may remain so for some time. However, drawing upon past criticism and praise for his work, it is possible to reach several conclusions with regard to the translations Mabbe produced during his lifetime.

What is certain is that Mabbe remains a fascinating translator in the history of early modern England, due both to his choice of Spanish works to translate for the English audience, to his style of translating, which serves the modern translation critic as a guide to Mabbe's sensibilities, preoccupations and prose style, and especially the volume of work he produced. These factors are themselves a reflection of the literary environment in Renaissance England, as it proves that there was in fact a demand and an interest in Golden Age Spain and its literature during that time, and Mabbe's varying degree of success with his translations gives a good idea of what exactly the readership enjoyed and pursued.

By choosing such authors as Rojas, Cervantes, Fonseca, Alemán, and Santa María above other perhaps more popular ones of the age, particularly those producing devotional literature, navigational treatises, and pamphlets, Mabbe proves himself to be a tasteful translator, one who was interested in offering his readership a variety of literature. He says so himself in the epistle dedicatory to his *Exemplarie Novells*, in which he states that a reader can tire or bloat his stomach should he strive to constantly read or

eat the same thing over and over. Mabbe may have been disappointed or disillusioned with the reception of his works at times, since his dedicatory notes often make reference to his desire to translate more from the same author should his first attempt prove successful, and sadly, this was not to be the case. He was able to offer the readership the second part of *Guzmán de Alfarache* years after his first publication, but his promise of further works by Fonseca, for whom he had a particular fondness, or Cervantes, perhaps hinting that he would complete the remaining six *novelas*, was not meant to be. Whether his growing sufferings from gout or his unexpected death sometime around 1642 prevented him from completing the final six stories from Cervantes, we will never know. But this, his last translation, is still more than worthy of study and praise today, despite existing criticism. In the article “¿Fueron censuradas las *Novelas ejemplares*?” Frances Luttikhuizen claims that:

Un caso de censura bien conocido es el del primer traductor inglés de las *Novelas*, James Mabbe. Este traductor isabelino —celoso educador del pueblo en los valores nacionales— suprime todo aquello que pudiera ofender la susceptibilidad de sus compatriotas. El relato de “La española inglesa,” donde hay católicos secretos infiltrados en los ejércitos de la reina y los ingleses son los piratas que saquean ciudades y raptan niñas inocentes, queda casi irreconocible. (par. 2)

However, this “well-known case” has never appeared as published research, and a panoramic search for further evidence of this claim produces nothing. Mabbe did in fact play loosely with “La española inglesa,” as he did with his translation of *La Celestina*, but perhaps not for the reasons Luttikhuizen blames him for. It has already been

established that an increasingly puritanical Britain did not take pleasure in heretical language or references, and perhaps Mabbe's translation was a necessary precaution and not a deliberate attempt to censure Cervantes or Spain. It appears in fact, to be another case of unfounded, generalized prejudice against Mabbe and his work, which needs to be put to rest through further research.

It would be difficult, however, if not almost impossible, to determine whether Mabbe managed to introduce elements of Baroque Spain through his translations. Without empirical evidence to support the claim, an answer can only be hinted at through the clues to be found throughout his work. One of the most credible hypotheses P.E. Russell's affirmation that Mabbe was the first serious Hispanist, based on his choice of works to translate. Indeed, Mabbe stands out as a prose translator of good taste. Whereas his colleagues were working on a variety of non-literary texts, he stood out in his desire to impart the literature of Golden Age Spain to England. In a climate in which England saw Spain as a nation to be both feared and loathed, Mabbe understood that there would also be an interest in exploring enemy territory, and he almost single-handedly quenched the English readership's thirst for novelty and Spanish literary prose during those years. It is also impossible to deny the great wealth of inspiration from Spanish literature that was transposed into English literature and drama. Many of the great Elizabethan plays demonstrate elements of the Spanish tragicomedies.

Mabbe's body of work also serves to remind contemporary scholars that there is still unknown terrain to explore in the literary exchanges between Spain and England. It is undeniable that many English authors of the time had read Spanish works and were heavily influenced by the stories they discovered. Many scholars have searched for

tangible examples of the parallels between some of the metaphysical poets, for example John Donne and Richard Crashaw, and the Spanish mystics, such as Santa Teresa and San Juan de la Cruz. Though these links remain frail and unsubstantial, and do not directly involve James Mabbe, they reinforce the claim that despite England's apparent mistrust of Spain, there was also a deep undercurrent of fascination.

Within the current context of early modern translation, James Mabbe remains a vitally important translator. As part of a small circle of Hispanists at Oxford University's Magdalen College, he was one of the only ones who ventured out, travelled to Spain, learned its customs, language, and culture, and then brought them back with him to England through his translations. Though he has often been criticized for his outdated prose, it in fact provides contemporary readers with critical information about a Jacobean's approach to translation and the type of writing that would have appealed to a Jacobean reading public.

Finally, Mabbe proves himself to be a worthy figure in the history of literary translation, both for his great sensibility and taste in choosing the texts that he would introduce to Renaissance England, and for his ability to bring an English flavour to these Spanish works, which would then appeal to his audience. To that extent, James Mabbe was indeed able to transport Golden Age Spain to England, by clothing the Spanish Baroque in English cloth.

Endnotes

1. Available at <http://www.ems.kcl.ac.uk/apps/index.html>
2. Available at <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>
3. For more dates concerning Mabbe's academic career, see *Register of the Members of St. Mary Magdalen College* by W.D. Macray, and *Athenae Oxonienses* by Anthony à Wood.
4. An unpublished manuscript prepared by Mabbe between 1603 and 1611, which contains a partial translation of *La Celestina*.
5. For more information about John Frampton, see "The Legacy of John Frampton: Elizabethan Trader and Translator" by Donald Beecher, *Renaissance Studies*. 20.3 (2006): 320-339.
6. More information about Lord Berners is available in "This Rude Labourer": Lord Berners' Translation Methods and Prose Style in *Castell of Love*" by Joyce Boro. *Translation and Literature*. 13.1 (2004): 1-23.
7. For further reading, see *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles' journey to Madrid, 1623* by Alexander Samson. Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, 2006.
8. For further reading about Cervantes in England, see *The Cervantean Heritage: Reception and Influence of Cervantes in Britain* by J.A.G. Ardila. London: Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2009.
9. See "English Translations of the *Celestina* in the Sixteenth Century" by Gerard J. Brault, *Hispanic Review*. 28.4 (1960): 301-312, and "Una traducción políticamente correcta: *Celestina* en la Inglaterra Puritana" by J.A.G. Ardila, *Celestinesca*. 22.2 (1998): 33-48.

10. For further information see *Copyright in historical perspective* by Lyman Ray Patterson, Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt UP, 1968, and *The stationers' company: a history, 1403-1959* by Cyprian Blagden, Stanford, California: Stanford UP, 1960.
11. Polysystems in Translation Studies were first coined by Itamar Even-Zohar in his book *Papers in Historical Poetry*, Tel Aviv: Porter Institute, 1978. The concept is summarized by Anthony Pym in *Exploring Translation Studies*, New York: Routledge, 2010. Pym describes them as: “the relation between translations and cultures [...] made up of many other systems (linguistic, literary, economic, political, military, culinary)” (72). Polysystems can be explained and defined using “norms” in translation to understand and analyze the various underlying systems. The concept of norms in Translation Studies was developed most prominently by Gideon Toury whereby he sought to observe, describe and then hopefully predict general trends of translation behaviour and the decision-making processes of translators, taking specific social constraints of a given period into consideration. As cited in Munday (2008) (111), Toury proposed a definition of norms as ‘the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community –as to what is right or wrong, adequate or inadequate—into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations. (Toury 1995: 55)’

12. For a full explanation of the influences these two translations had on the English translation of *La Celestina*, see Gerard J. Brault's article "English Translations of the *Celestina* in the Sixteenth Century," *Hispanic Review*. 28.4 (1960): 301-312.
13. See "Fictionalizing God: Providence, Nature, and the Significance of Rape in 'La fuerza de la sangre'" by Paul Lewis-Smith in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), 886-897.
14. See note 13.
15. Further information about Spanish Baroque culture and society can be found in the many works by José Antonio Maravall, Fernando Ordóñez, David Castillo, Massimo Lollini, and Bradley J. Nelson.

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