

**JACK LONDON'S *THE SEA-WOLF* (1904)
AND ITS TRANSLATION INTO FRENCH
AS A MARITIME NOVEL,
LE LOUP DES MERS (1927), FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

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A B S T R A C T

JACK LONDON'S *THE SEA-WOLF* (1904) AND ITS TRANSLATION INTO FRENCH AS A "POPULAR" NOVEL, *LE LOUP DES MERS* (1927), FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Arthur Kazakian

The French and English language comparison of Jack London's novel *The Sea-Wolf* aims to disclose a number of explanations as to why translators carry out their craft as they do. Pierre Bourdieu, the famous francophone sociologist, has developed a theory revolving around the *agent*, *habitus*, *illusio* and *capital*, that is worthy of inquiry.

By applying this theoretical framework to London's *The Sea-Wolf*, and in examining its first translators, Louis Postif and Paul Gruyer, we will attempt to establish the reasoning behind their practical translational choices, in this work, given certain sociological *determinants* that Bourdieu's theory takes account of.

Our background, assessment and contrastive analysis will seek to discover why, how, when and where societal *agents* act in a certain way and whether Bourdieu's theory is capable of providing a rationale behind translational choice in the all-too-human error-ridden world of translation. In addition, the hypothesis of Antoine Berman (French translation studies critic) will be viewed according to its workability and how it relates to Bourdieu's theory, when compared to source- and target-text rapport and revelations. We will then round off our journey with a conclusion that will evaluate the various inputs of our reflection and establish whether our propositions are compelling enough to meet the core essence of Bourdieu's theory.

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This step has opened my eyes to the relative truthfulness behind Bourdieu's theory and to the phenomena that lie hidden in the theory's core. In fact, Dr. Gouanvic's recommendations have enabled me to view society through Bourdieu's spectrum and have instilled in me a keen appreciation of theory and a longing to discover further observable facts and descriptions of the human environment that we are all a part of. Once more, I thank Dr. Gouanvic and the other members of the French department for igniting my interest in phenomena that, when studied, reveal a true treasure trove of information; these, in turn, have real-world applicability and lead to discernment and more rational choice by those who aim to arrive at a plausible and more reasoned approach to the explanation of how society works.

For my Family and Perseverance

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Introduction

Jack London was a famous, and some would say infamous, character of literature, who lived and worked mainly in California at the beginning of the twentieth century. His many controversial stances, both cultural and literary, won him the reputation of a scoundrel, at a time when a genteel tradition seemed to hold sway. London may have opposed this prudish – if not stricter and religiously moralistic – but somewhat affected and apparently refined kind of cultural expression. In (at least) several of his books, his main characters struggle with questions of life, meaning, existence, joy and sorrow. Young adults may have been consuming more moralistic types of tales, at that time in history, but this novel and London's support behind it, ranks as a "popular" maritime novel because of its sensationalistic kind of sequences and events throughout the story.

Genteel convention, indeed religious conviction, didn't bear satisfactory enough answers for London. Ownbey's (1978) glance at the author through Sam Baskett's eyes (*Jack London's Heart of Darkness*) suggests that

[t]he principal emphasis of *Martin Eden* [published in 1909] falls on the hero's determined drive to fulfill himself, [...] to reach the social and economic class represented by the Morse family and to become a successful writer (73).

Baskett goes on to say that,

A substantial part of *John Barleycorn* is an amplification of the intellectual pessimism, of the self-dissatisfaction, of the despair which led Martin Eden to suicide (73).

While not altogether adhering to the strictures and considerations of the Bible, London, quoting *Ecclesiastes*, through his character Larsen from *The Sea-Wolf* says

'For a living dog is better than a dead lion' (Ellis in Ownbey, 1978, 93).

These issues of philosophical existence and meaning are recurring themes with London, which conformist attitudes of the times were wont to dismiss. Here lies the rebellious nature of London, who even embraced socialist ideals, if not bona fide values, and tussled with the question of Spencerianism too. Spencer, as a leading Victorian philosopher, advocated

[t]he theory of evolution and believed that the individual is superior to society and that science is superior to religion (Tormont, 1990, 1597).

Having largely cast aside the precepts of religion and taken on beliefs considered more secular and of this world, London would attempt to fit into society and make his way in it. His early work for the fashionable magazines of the times was accompanied by his novels for youth. Adventure is important to youngsters. Fiction is Spencerianism, to a certain extent, but more intricate than that – one or multiple entities attempt to survive through all the tension of a story. It does mean “survival of the fittest” (Darwin), and *The Sea-Wolf* does start off as Spencerianism, but becomes anti-Spencerianism in the end. Thus, London himself may have been influenced by a secular Spencerian attitude towards life and, quite conceivably forsaking religious tenets, replaced religion or its void, by the adoption of more lay principles.

London’s books captivated the American public and later went on to thrill readers abroad. London may not have known the reasons behind his moves, but a century later, if we examine human behavior in terms of a theory, such as the one put forth by Bourdieu, we may be able to gain some more insight into the complex web of action and interaction that arises, in a sociological sense. In citing a few passages by Gordon Mills,

in Ownbey (1978), we can notice some of London's salient traits and attributes, whether in text or personal form:

By 1909, when *Martin Eden* appeared, London was one of the most famous people in the world. It was no secret that this novel was in many ways autobiographical. [...] The author was not uniformly successful in the transformation of the material constituted by his own experience. [...] The entire process can be understood as a transformation of the material of London's personal experience. At its simplest, this transformation is only an idealizing, a romanticizing, but in the end it is much more complex than that. [...] He [London] contributed his time and effort freely to the cause of socialism, for instance, but meanwhile asserted his willingness to sell himself outright to the magazines [Stone, p. 160]

In keeping these characteristics in mind, it therefore becomes fascinating to trace the author's development and to try and discover the meaning and implications of Bourdieu's theory in relation to him.

How did Jack London rise from relative obscurity to literary stardom? How did he ascend the ladder, what was it that drove him and led to his success, both at home and abroad, in France in particular, as his works were translated? We'll treat these and other topics as they relate to London and Bourdieu's theory, as well as the French translation of London's *The Sea-Wolf*, according to Bourdieu's theory. In so doing, we'll be examining the technique and the results of this translation into French by Postif and Gruyer. This collaboration between the translators was one that reflected certain ideas and themes of the times. How are the two translators ensconced in the timeline? What is the fruit of their labour and how does it relate to Bourdieu's theory of the social *agent* acting within the scope of the *field* and *habitus*? Although the main thrust of this thesis is to compare the French and English versions of *The Sea-Wolf*, by means of a study of several chapters

in the text, we will be looking at these and other questions that would arise. Expression of the self can be quite different in these two languages, and, as a result, it is worthwhile to concentrate on social, historical, sociological and cultural components, as we progress in the analysis and examination of the novel. We will undoubtedly come across a number of interesting instances, but our examination of Bourdieu's theory, and other observations, will help shed some light on our quest. Our main thrust is to contrast and to arrive at conclusions that would be based on our reflections, given the facts.

It would appear that the translators customized French literary techniques to suit the original U.S. version, and to take advantage of the burgeoning wave of fascination with America. Thus, they would tap into the *illusio* (or belief, interest and investment in the game), as ideas are imported from the U.S., by more or less tailoring the French literary field to match what was to become a future colossus in the international cultural space.¹ A preliminary view would be that the translators would seem to be adapting their ways and adopting a pro-American approach to their craft. They seem to be gravitating towards that culture, but maintaining a Frenchness nonetheless, for the sake of understandability, acceptance and the preoccupation of holding steady a pleasing pace of events and the interest generated. Acceptance would also mean that certain French cultural standards would have to be adhered to. After all, the translators may now be considered as pioneers and would have been determining certain methods, style and operations of their profession, as it evolved. Bourdieu would probably state that this phenomenon would only lend credence to his theory of the artist determining and being determined by the societal inputs he refers to as determinants, namely the *game*, *interest*,

field, *habitus* and *illusio*. There are numerous contradictions and ironic instances that seem to mesh into a whole that could perhaps be explained through a theory.

What was it that triggered a certain reaction in the translators' behavior, how did they perceive *The Sea-Wolf* in the French sociological context and how did they continue their work in such a fledgling field compared with the explosion of translations in the years following World War II. American customs and lifestyles were beginning to be felt worldwide; how did this affect the French version of London's *The Sea-Wolf*? How pertinent was this translated novel, in the case of young adults? Could Bourdieu's theory be advanced to cover these concepts and, if so, to what degree is it appropriate? Does Bourdieu's theory shed light on London and his outrageous and extravagant ways?

One of the aims of my thesis is to draw attention to Antoine Berman's theory of translation which states that translators are caught up or even over-involved in committing acts of translation that transform the original or source text by means of what he terms "deforming tendencies." Are these tendencies a natural or automatic kind of reaction to the source text, or are they a part of the process that we undergo in our effort to please the target audience and conform to the rules of the *game*, in our quest for production. If the tendencies are more or less universally present, can we develop them further by trying to determine if they relate to Bourdieu's claim that the *habitus* calls for the *agent* to act in specific ways that are friendly to the process of production in the *game*? The *interest* would be well-served. The following tendencies, and some others, will be amplified upon, in the course of this thesis: rationalization, clarification, addition and ennoblement.

By examining Berman's theory, we would be better suited in determining whether or not it appears to have soundness, and whether it can apply in more general and broader terms. *The Sea-Wolf* will serve as the literary text, and examples will be taken from it for the purpose of our study and deduction, through a comparative analysis, leading to a compilation of our findings. The next step would be an evaluation and commentary of the results. If Berman's theory is seen in a positive light, it would only substantiate the overarching theory that Bourdieu has enunciated. By moving from one area to another, we would be able to see corroboration, and thus an across-the-board applicability, of Bourdieu's theory, if the findings so warrant. Therefore, this would represent a significant link between a major theoretician in translation and a towering figure in sociology.

We will explore the sociological theories put forth by Bourdieu, and adapted by Gouanvic to the realm of translation, apply Berman's translational "deforming tendencies" theory, and finally examine how they relate to translation and see if there's a link between the social *agents* and their *fields, habitus* and *illusio*. How did the work of art, or the finished product created by the French translators, fit into the whole path developed by London, his environment, his beliefs, fancies and pursuits, the American cultural, geographic and economic milieu, and to what degree did the translators' own sense, ability, surroundings and "baggage" contribute to the creation of this work of art? Could Bourdieu's propositions be relevant to our quest, and how? This is the kind of orientation we will follow. Our analysis will look into a number of important sociological factors, and by examining the evidence, we will be better positioned to

establish the workability of the stated theories, their usefulness to translation studies and to literature for youth.

Our first point of entry would be the theory and perspective approach on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, as we look at the givens that an author would take on, in the context of the sociology in the U.S. and France and the determinants that we need to examine. In other words, what was the prevalent mood, the level of sociological development, people's cultural pastimes, their responses to war, the stage people had reached that drew them to *The Sea-Wolf*, and other associated questions, in both countries. Our next step would be to situate the position of *The Sea-Wolf*, as literature for young adults and look at the background of maritime novels in both countries. Bourdieu's sociological theory will be studied in detail as well. In the next phase of our venture, we will compare three chapters of *The Sea-Wolf*, in English and French, at the beginning, middle and end of the story, and try to discern their relation to Berman's theory of "deforming tendencies." Bourdieu will be revisited in the Concluding Remarks section, as we look at the overall picture of our endeavour.

**I. THEORY AND PERSPECTIVE
IN TRANSLATION**

We are bound to see similarities between the source-language originators' space and the target area's space in terms of the various players associated with the production and eventual publication of a specific work. The resemblances consist of a number of fields that are given life and energy by the participating societal *agents*, and their place in the institutional make-up of society. These agents, while not necessarily conscious of their role or purpose in the field, or even their impact and place in the grander scheme of things, act to determine the success or otherwise of the specific work in question. Of course, success is a relative term that is chiefly linked to (personal) taste and to the developmental attitudes of a receptive public. Forms of media would consequently enter the fray and create or incite consumption, or the lack thereof, depending on a number of variables, including (among others) the cultural, historic, economic and political levels of development of the society that is being looked at. The attractiveness and enthralling aspects of these types of media forms depend not only on the author's reputation, but also on how they are produced, packaged, promoted and eventually sold, at a market that some prevailing cultural attributes almost dictate. Is the host country economically prepared to absorb such products?

How does a foreign work get exposure in France and what are the stakes involved in its translation and promotion? The question may appear sufficiently simple, but the answer would necessitate a more thorough examination of the criteria in determining its evolution from source text to target text. There exist a number of people and actions that would join to create what we ordinarily would term a successful work and its transition from one culture to another.

The *determinants* that create success are digested by *agents*, but not always communicated to them or acted upon. Factors such as historical and economic events of major proportions, combine with a relevance of taste, degree of market fickleness (or whim) and penetration, a thirst for novelty or innovative themes and styles, appeal to the public through previously untried or unpractised impulses or marketing techniques to create the possibility of a successful work of art. We will not be putting Bourdieu's entire theory under scrutiny, but, for our purposes, we'll be looking into the two main variables of *field* and *illusio*, and shedding some light on the *habitus* as well. While the *field* represents an economic, social, religious or other different realm, the *illusio* signifies belief, interest and/or investment in the *game* and its stakes, according to Bourdieu (1996, 227-28). In this case, London was not only taken up by the *game*, he in fact became lost in it, in his pursuit of "a living" or investment in the *game* of fiction. He tried very hard to be successful, and had to compromise and conform to the rules associated with the creation of an acceptable literary text. In so doing, his originality did shine through, but was also stultified by the constraints placed upon him by previous authors and the proven technical means they used to write winning works. Thus, in playing an active and integral part in the *game*, London contributed to it (some may say through his influence), and was himself shaped by the *game* of fiction, through his initial investment, or *illusio*, in it. The French writer Gustave Flaubert, summed it up quite succinctly when he said, "One does not write what one wants." I would venture to say that this blurring of the roles extended even into London's more personal life and lifestyles, as his interests matured, evolved and were eventually indistinguishable from the more conservative

pursuits he undertook, such as the building of his villa and his trips to exotic destinations in the South Pacific.

Two other ingredients in this theory, as defined by Bourdieu's writings, are the *habitus*, or [the] socially constituted nature, [which] is immediately adjusted to the immanent demands of the *game* – a preliminary definition – and *capital*, where there are different forms of '*capital*' in Bourdieu's work:

'[N]ot only "economic *capital*" in the strict sense [...], but also "cultural *capital*" (i.e. knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications), "symbolic *capital*" (i.e. accumulated prestige or honour), and so on'² (Bourdieu, 1990, 11).

As these institutional components interact, other ingredients are accordingly refined or improved upon to allow for growth and expansion.

As techniques aiming for success, proven methods have their winning formulas and so are bound to be repeated. The major selling-points for America at the start of the twentieth century were its relative youth, style, economic might and potential, vigour, vibrancy and movement, its ability to succeed, the expansiveness of its characters, its joyous feeling of accomplishment, and, very importantly, its sense of "otherness."

Whereas Darko Suvin would concede that relevance can be recognized if theme formation of the social and historical dimension takes place too (Gouanvic, 1999, 25), we can see that even the simple moments, instances and their description are made special through Jack London's style. On the other hand, translators would attempt to exoticize the foreign. They would create an impression of larger-than-life characters in distant, unusual and unfamiliar settings, where a sense of adventure and excitement is prevalent, and where the hero and the not-so-heroic are viewed perhaps as being "better" or more

advanced than “average” people enduring the everyday humdrum routine or hardship. These literary characters, as heroes, encounter what seem to be insurmountable obstacles that they, at times, overcome. They’re also preoccupied by ideas, ideals, concepts, and pursuits that are, in many respects, very different from those chased after, and perhaps in great measure, unattainable by most people. They rise above or are submerged by them, with some other characters remaining in stationary position.

This ethos, or sociological position, brings a sense of fantasy to the preexisting romanticism and acts as a vehicle for escapism. It draws the reader further inwards into the story, and immerses him with the lot or fate that the main characters, along with their preoccupations, have to withstand. The fast-moving pace of events symbolizes only one side of the multi-faceted technique used to recount the maritime story. How do you make or create a readership that is capable of buying your literary works and hankers after your titles? We will be reflecting on the overall method in the ensuing pages.

Caught up in the whirlwind rise of America, London’s work wore a special aura that translators would try to transmit, if not disseminate. Their translation of *The Sea-Wolf*, for example, would necessarily be seen in an initial bright light, considering that it originated in America. The other-worldiness would have a true ring for a target market and would be subject to success, depending on other ensuing factors. Would not this thrilling maritime novel, a success at home, be worthy of translation? Would we not try to send a message to the target French audience, (except for smaller niche overseas territories and other developing markets) either openly or subconsciously, or even perhaps through concealment, or “dissimulation,” that there existed a genre, a country and culture whose people, and thus the characters in the novel, had moved beyond the

ordinary to reach hitherto unknown levels? The active and passive ingredients of a successful translation in a target market would then assemble to construct what could possibly be considered a success.

A purpose is subsequently developed; this goal consists of an element in the institution. It may be the text-reader relationship, or a series of other considerations such as erudition, elevation, education, amusement (pleasure-rendering text), and entertainment in its more general form. Fame, glory, acquisition of wealth and the satisfying of the ego of the original writer also enter the limelight. The selling of countless copies of the text in question is related to pleasing the public and oneself as well. Ironically, it was London's acquiring fame that enabled him to gain more legitimacy and credibility, as he distanced himself from some of his socialist ideals and the constant concern for the common person. After all, he was a rebel, an unconventional critic of the established order through his affinity for socialist ideals and his participation and sympathy for some of their actions, such as the March of the Unemployed.

Gouanvic's views on the sociology of translation, particularly on the creation of a market, the relationships between societal *agents* and the promotion of key figures of the literary field in question, all against a sociological background (1999), indicate that when a translated work is "imported," it goes through a set of steps that aren't random in nature. This would entail that a new series of institutional initiatives are embarked upon, with the possibility of importing more, if market conditions so warrant. Gouanvic proceeds to say that,

À la sociologie bourdieusienne, la traductologie pose une question qui nous paraît centrale. Lorsqu'un type de textes (ou un genre) prend corps dans un groupe social d'un espace culturel (source) et qu'il est traduit dans un autre

espace culturel, par quel groupe social ce type de texte ou ce genre est-il reçu dans l'espace culturel cible ? (142)

The question is relevant especially today when “genre” is so prevalent. It underscores that the proliferation of genre is often fragmented within a society and caters to specific groups. The question is also timely in that branders and marketers are quick to seize on popularity and mass appeal in order to sell a product. They would very likely study the market and then follow suit with their own or proven marketing strategies. But before we enter the realm of business, suffice it to say that in London’s time the specialization of genre or of product was not as advanced as it is today – it seems pristine compared with today’s post-modern and more complex story-telling. But, it did hold the origins of the waves of cultural imports that were to come and later take root in France. This is very significant, since, by establishing themselves on foreign soil, the imports begin a process of institutionalization that displace or render the host country’s cultural heritage more vulnerable.

London’s criticism of the American Dream, throughout his life, may have appeared hollow to some, if one grasps the level of wealth, fame and success he enjoyed, at least for the purists among us. If one grasps the extent to which he was seduced by the outside world into resorting to measures that led to his belonging to this earthly American panacea, one also has to contemplate how he arrived there. Bourdieu does present an explanation, one that encompasses some of the components that we’re dealing with:

It is in the relation between the game and the sense of the game that stakes are generated and values constituted which, although they do not exist outside this relation, impose themselves, within it, with an absolute necessity and self-evidence. This ordinary form of fetishism is at the root of all action. The motor – what is sometimes called motivation – resides neither in the material or

symbolic purpose of action, as naïve finalists imagine, nor in the constraints of the field, as the mechanistic thinkers suppose. It resides in the relation between the habitus and the field which means that the habitus contributes to determining what determines it. The sacred only exists for those who have a sense of the sacred, who nonetheless, when faced with the sacred itself, still experience it as fully transcendent. The same is true of every kind of value. *Illusio*, in the sense of investment in the game, doesn't become illusion, in the ordinary sense of the art of deceiving myself, of *divertissement*, (in Pascal's sense of the term) or of bad faith (in Sartre's sense) until the game is apprehended from outside, from the point of view of the impartial spectator, who invests nothing in the game or in its stakes. This, the point of view of the stranger who does not recognize himself as such, means that one fails to recognize that investments are well-founded illusions [...] (Bourdieu, 1990, 194-5).

London was not an impartial spectator. He may have observed society from a bird's eye view, but he believed that, in attempting to do this, he became tinged with a personal perspective that lessened his awareness or impartiality.

He was shaped and influenced by that time in history, a participant in the *game*, in the social context, as a laborer – overworked and underpaid (a painful experience he may not have forgotten), – as a socialist, as a marcher for the rights of the unemployed and as a budding writer for magazines, searching for ways to earn a better living. These are extremely important facets of his life that influenced his later impulses and responses to the fame, wealth and recognition he was accorded. In turning to Bourdieu and some of the determinants of his theory, we may envision London as a character inhabited by a *habitus*, in Bourdieu's sense.

'*Habitus*' [which] can be defined as [...] [a] socially constituted nature and the notion [...] [of] a system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of

action meant [to constitute] the social *agent* [...] (Bourdieu, 1990, 11 and 13).

The *habitus* can be analyzed across a wide variety of *fields*, and the *interest* displayed can be understood to be,

[...] a condition of the functioning of a field, (a scientific field, the field of haute couture, etc.), insofar as it is what 'gets people moving,' what makes them get together, compete and struggle with each other, and a product of the way the field functions (Bourdieu, 1990, 88).

In an effort to substantiate the preceding, we may say that London, invested with a *habitus* in the literary space, was looking for a way of "breaking out" of his modest circumstances, when he was writing for popular magazines. Having improved his talent for writing, by means of advice and research, he was able to move to the space of fiction (novels, adventure tales and maritime stories for young people). Was he contributing to determining what he was determined by? This will be looked into below.

Doubtless, London harbored some economic and other types of *interest* in this line of work. He had struggled with much difficulty over the years to earn a decent living that would lift him out of the poor conditions he was experiencing and raise his social status to a level commensurate with his intellectual abilities. Others would say that judging from his actions over the years, his *interest* was considerable.

For Bourdieu, it is the *habitus* and *field* relationship that prevails. He then cites Pareto:

[...] [E]conomic interest in the sense of utilitarianism, and its form of economics, is merely a particular case among a world of forms of interest which are observed in reality. It is simultaneously the precondition and the product of the emergence of the economic field which is constituted by instituting the quest for the maximization of monetary profit as a fundamental law. Even if it is a historical

institution in the same way as the artistic *illusio*, the economic *illusio*, as interest in the *game* founded on economic interest in the restricted sense, presents itself with all the appearances of logical universality (1996, 228).

Bourdieu would argue that each *field*, whether it's political, cultural, religious or other, can present legitimate “rewards” to its agents, referred to as “[realization of] desires” (228), founded upon the specifics of individual tastes.

Due to a number of interrelationships available in a *field* – structure and function included – satisfaction is obtained or yearned for, in a given instance. Strategy is developed taking into account the inherent logic of the *game*, although the symbolism of the game is or is not outwardly expressed as such. We note with interest that

[i]t is only exceptionally, especially in moments of crisis, that certain agents may develop a conscious and explicit representation of the game as a game, one which destroys the investment in the game, the *illusio*, by making it appear what it always objectively is (to an observer foreign to the game, indifferent to it) – that is, a historical fiction [...] (Bourdieu, 1996, 382, n19).

Bourdieu may even go so far as to say that artistic value doesn't depend on the artist; he would instead maintain that it does on the field of production, saying that widespread belief in the object of art as valuable art – or fetish – stems from “producing a belief in the creative power of the artist” (1996, 229).

London's creative streak was prolific. He produced many works, after having refined his art to suit the environment he was aiming for. There were many fans, or a clientele that he had built over the years (and his notoriety was not negligible). The belief in his talent or artistic value had reached enviable levels, as explained by Bourdieu's assessment of art as

[...] [the] socially instituted [...] work of art by spectators endowed with the aesthetic disposition and competence necessary to know it and recognize it as such [...] (1996, 229).

It would then make sense to suppose that London acted as an agent for his own interests, accompanied by others whom he met over the years and that, as a product of his time, and along with the interaction that ensued, this led to a series of events which catapulted him to wealth, fame and recognition. But, the creation of his works, as art, had much to do with his valuable talent as did the mystique of his notoriety and the publicity that sprang from it. We have to recall that his rise to fame took place over a number of years.

Bourdieu's theory is applicable to all *agents*, such as those in other *fields*, operating and cooperating in tandem, who take up the gauntlet for the production of more works that would be considered suitable for publication. They range from the author's *agent* to the administrative staff in the publishing business and the other *agents* involved in distribution and promotion. Translators would fit into this mould. This would be pertinent to other *fields* and *sub-fields* of societal endeavour, where *agents* meet, congregate, carry out societal functions, and who through tradition and a sense of legacy, would act to perpetuate the heritage, by their very function and participation.

As the translators Postif and Gruyer inhabited a certain *field* and acted within its frontiers, as *agents*, they were likely to perceive the pragmatism of matters as they unfolded within the French literary *field*. I would venture to say that they may not have been completely aware of the long-term implications of their translated work, having borrowed a measure of the American technique from the impending cultural giant that the United States was becoming.

Simultaneously, Postif and Gruyer's practice of rationalization, addition and subtraction, for instance, falls within the realm of Bourdieu's thinking, in that he would contend that their actions, whether conscious or unconscious, were integrally part of the entire *agent*, acting to advance in the *game*, complicit in the grander wave of cultural imports from America, and conforming to the more dominant player. We will also study the elements that may be useful in determining whether or not, in fact, the translators were adjusting their *habitus* to conform to the ongoing demands of the *game*, in order to present a product that would please the French (or francophone) readers. Berman would say that "deforming tendencies" are employed to render a text more readable; it would then appear that by adjusting to the demands of the *game*, Bourdieu's pronouncement bears considerable weight. Adjustment of the *habitus* in a host of circumstances and time periods is something that we have noticed, whether on a personal level or within society-at-large. After all, everyone (within reason) can be viewed upon as an *agent* within a *field*. It is very common to see pop icons and lesser-known stars behave very modestly at the start of their careers and then explode into more blatant or complex forms of art, as time goes by. It is probably what re-inventing oneself may be all about. Politicians are also very "guilty" of this, as they may begin as ordinary assembly members and then rise, constantly adjusting their *habitus*, to higher echelons of fame, wealth, power, influence, position and leadership. Even nations begin with as groups, city-states, alliances, federations, nation-states, empires and other forms of government, to reach unheard-of heights, before declining or stagnating to more regular levels. Is this not some form of evidence that *habitus*-adjustment is working itself throughout the systems of human

endeavour? Before we delve too much into history, suffice it to say that we will be discussing the *habitus* more profoundly later.

To what degree are *agents* caught up with the rewards that await them? I would put forth that London was entangled with the whole proposition that he was presented with, enthralled by its glamour and the lifestyle it signified, to such a level that he may have lost track of some of the early societal traits and preoccupations he possessed, especially his socialist sympathies. He may have become unrecognizable to himself: his very humble beginnings had vanished and had been replaced with loftier goals, accomplishments and societal functions that had a conforming aspect to them.

By looking briefly at Postif and Gruyer's early history, we can determine whether they were to be susceptible to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*-adjustment and whether the circumstances under which they were living are apt to affect them in their world-outlook and horizon. One's specific environment and attitude can govern one's future life-path in ways that we can conclude are related intrinsically to that distinct person. A whole set of conditions flow together to create and shape the individual, from the parental, economic, political, social, cultural, historic, military, health- and talent-related, even genetic, artistic, intellectual and a multitude of other environmental aspects.

Postif and Gruyer were children of the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their world in Europe was decidedly different from the events taking place in the United States. Europe was gearing up for war, with alliances being formed and an armaments' buildup sweeping the continent. This state of affairs would lead to one of the most destructive and most senseless wars the world had ever witnessed. On the other hand, the genteel tradition held sway in an America largely at peace. This economic,

military, political and cultural might of the nation would soon engulf a world that, in hindsight, was keen to devour all things American.

It is worthy to recall that, at the individual level, much hardship and suffering were being endured by the great swathes of Europe's people, as the average person saw that his or her personal life was going to be irreversibly affected. Empires were about to crumble, dictatorships were going to be formed, economic troubles in the form of inflation and unemployment were lurking in the background, against a United States that offered hope, romance, a larger-than-life aura of promise and reward, and the all-inspiring American Dream. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, millions of people came to U.S. shores as immigrants to construct what they had heard about and envisioned only in their minds.

It was in this setting that Postif and Gruyer had found themselves, as children of France, striving to make a living and become successful as translators, in a *field* that was hardly as developed as the one we have today. In fact, it was rudimentary, if we follow today's criteria. There was no overriding body to regulate the profession, and education and training for would-be translators was minimal. The field of translation studies had hardly been as developed as the one we have today, if it at all existed in some states. International travel was just beginning to expand in the industrial age, and air travel would wait until after World War II to advance and gain an ever-increasing clientele. Thus, the opportunity for direct exchange in the field of translation was restricted.

According to Noël Mauberret himself, who has fairly recently spearheaded the drive to retranslate London's works, in an e-mail correspondence addressed to us,

Paul Gruyer was an author of tourist guides at the beginning of the twentieth century. He began to translate

London, and then discovered that Louis Postif was also doing the same thing; they therefore joined forces with each other.

Louis Postif was born in 1897 in Doubs [a *département* of the Franche-Comté region]. His father passed away early and left his family with very few resources. He travelled through France and England and returned in 1914.

He was captured during the autumn of 1914 and had to spend four years in Germany with English and Russian fellow prisoners. One day, out of pure *ennui*, he took a hold of *White Fang* from the English library and began to translate it.

Once set free in 1918, he wanted to publish it and learned that a man called Gruyer was going to do the same. They consequently went into partnership and their collaboration lasted until 1930, when Gruyer died.

Postif translated 200 works, among them those of Curwood and Agatha Christie. He translated all of London too, but some of his political texts were only published in left-leaning magazines (Maubertret, April 2, 2007).

We can see from the start that both these translators were quite cultured and refined in their outlook and world perspective. They had traveled extensively (even if only in their minds) and were subjected to the political pressures of the twentieth century. Postif's liberation from prison echoed the sound of America's victorious involvement in World War I and all the implications of a mighty superpower, about to dominate that century.

As a translation team, Postif and Gruyer had developed their intellect and brain power enough to realize that the world had changed irreversibly after America's victory in the Great War and that there was no turning back. It is a testament to U.S. might that an American novel found itself, in of all places, a British library for Allied prisoners in Germany. This is certainly proof of tremendous cultural penetration of a product ready to see even greater growth in subsequent times. London and his entourage of fans, friends

and admirers would have been pleased to hear of it. After all, their hero was headed towards greatness, due to the talent, spontaneity, descriptive power, story-telling ability and sheer star status of London and the amazing backdrop that America provided for international consumption.

Therefore, we were bound to see compliance or silent collusion with a force that appeared inviting and seductive, reigning in the most rebellious of desperados and shaping them according to the new *determinants* of the age. The translators were no exception and were to see the process move into their areas of interests, as other *agents* in a particular *field* were to witness this form of adjustment and adaptation linger in their daily existence. Bourdieu's statements regarding *agents* and their *habitus* will begin to ring rather rowdily once we examine this route more deeply. Today, the main difference in the analysis of such a subject is that, in our age, we are able to define the phenomena of *agent*, *habitus*, *illusio*, and other determinants, whereas in the past, we had a plethora of other reasons enunciated by numerous other philosophers, to which we tried to hold onto in order to explain our behaviour and reactions.

One of the most important observances that can be drawn between Berman and Bourdieu is the high level of alignments, indeed parallels, in their commentaries and philosophical goals. Just as London, as author, was capable of committing innumerable compromises throughout his career, from the start to his later years, the translators of *The Sea-Wolf* saw it fit to cut corners and perhaps present the novel with many trade-offs, where meaning was closely and nearly mirrored, but at times was accommodated. In other words, concessions were made on the part of the translators. They were (un)thinkingly using their *habitus* to express themselves, through London's work, but

simultaneously adjusting it to suit the nature of their purpose, which was to translate and put London's work to market.

The end-*game* was the purpose to be arrived at. This is true of both London and the translators, and again leads us to believe that along this special end-*game* path, the changeability of the agents, in terms of their *habitus* and circumstances, and the requisites of the *game* itself, almost constrain and compel the *agent* to make arrangements or come to terms with the various impulses in the environment. Bourdieu has consistently pointed out that the *agent's habitus* is susceptible to adjustment; this is evident at almost all levels of society's *agents* and *fields*.

The translators were just as heavily investing in the *game* and were just as drawn by the *illusio* as London had been, whether he was aware of his actions or not. It's this glistening and exciting part that has an appeal, which the sociological agent acts on and verbalizes so as to reach the goal of the *game* at an incremental pace. In other words, sociological action runs parallel to the wishes of the greater society and impels one to conform to the dictates of the greater whole.

When the translators committed additions, deletions, rationalizations, vulgarizations or ennoblements, they were acting in much the same manner that Bourdieu had described in his theory. In this sense, Berman and Bourdieu are technically aligned in their theories. The social reasons for their agents' actions are very much related. London was an archetypal *agent*, followed by the translators and others in the field. Yet, the overriding principle that lies behind Bourdieu's theory is that it is almost universally applicable. London's *The Sea-Wolf* was transformed (deformed) by the translators in much the same way that London had massively changed from the neophyte author he had

been at the beginning of his career, to the accomplished, wealthy, successful and metamorphosed star that he had become. Bourdieu's proposition is a very solid and convincing theory, one that may have been somehow unfairly overlooked in the North American context, given the preponderant emphasis that is accorded to more glitzy sociological theories and the exposure that they receive throughout the mainstream media. Some of these treat such variables as age, income, social rank and environment, gender, education, and others, and are vital in the sociological outcomes that emerge for a variety of issues. By looking deeply into Bourdieu's theory, we may be able to arrive at consistent reasons why changes occurred at the translators' level of work, and at why London behaved as he did.

If the translators were capable of deforming at the literary level, is it then not possible to adjust or transform one's behavior – and all that this entails – from one's wishes, thoughts, pursuits, interests, political, social and economic leanings, social outlook, cultural (pre)dispositions, in fact, the entire persona of an individual at the personal level? The answer is in the affirmative, and perhaps it is here that Bourdieu's theory has not attained its full potential in North America.

We did notice a litany of significant behavioral changes in London, where he abandoned, or overlooked certain of his political beliefs, pursued the incipient Hollywood lifestyle, maybe even years before Hollywood had become a major cultural hub. In this way, he can be considered archetypal, if not a role model. The seeking of new and evermore varied distractions – from owning yachts to building a new villa – are examples of the transformational force that lay behind London's urge to succeed and fulfill his Bourdieusian *illusio*. At a more pragmatic level, Louis Postif and Paul Gruyer were just

as Bourdieusian, in their subliminal and more overt actions, in changing significant portions of London's *The Sea-Wolf*.

Bourdieu's notions are exemplary in that both the translators and London were subject to the whims of societal constraint, as reflected by the times of their lives. All were affected by society; they were all products of the era, as we today could very well be. The pattern that emerged and that was sustained throughout *The Sea-Wolf* may lead to a questioning or the raising of doubts and concerns about fidelity and the expediency of purpose. As *agents*, we are all influenced by the massive conformity around us, be it in homes, schools, the media, workplaces, institutions and other arenas, as we go about our daily lives. We are then tested in these *fields*, as the translators were, for example, when they proceeded to condense, rationalize and quantitatively impoverish London's novel.

A further rationalization, at the psychological level, would be the impulses we receive and emit. London's friendship with Cloudesley Johns (and others) facilitated his adoption of numerous traits that enabled him to reach the top of his class, as he digested the stimuli from his environment. His critical mind did absorb the conforming aspects of his epoch, to the point where a number of his pursuits had become almost indistinguishable from those of the contemporary upper classes of the genteel era. Two notable exceptions were his extensive *socialization* with (with sometimes disappointing results), and support of the less privileged people of society and his lead, or vanguard backing, of socialist causes.

Similarly, the translators Postif and Gruyer succumbed to the societal spurs of the nineteen-twenties as they were facing hard times in a France still recuperating from a

devastating world war and in need of a method of escapism. *The Sea-Wolf* matched societal requisites and demands, as a way of living vicariously through the American larger-than-life heroes in the novel, providing hope to the war-weary and to those who had any means of obtaining enjoyment in a land experiencing social, cultural, political and economic transformation. France in the inter-war years was a country of turmoil and distress, as it faced external threats to its borders and internal instability. As we were to later see, the one element that united the French was their patriotism towards the state, as France embarked on and prepared to fight a second world war. It could very well be that the end(-game) justified the means, in both the case of London and the translators, as their *illusio* was being satisfied with the many successful results of their professions and the feedback that they received from the hungry for escapist entertainment and for a certain level of security, even if illusory.

Gouanvic has written an article dealing with translation and *scotomisation*. The latter term is described in *le Petit Robert* as “an unconscious exclusion of an external reality from the field of the conscious” (1781), and Gouanvic (2006) states that,

[...] Bourdieusian sociology regarding translation teaches us that works, as products of the writer’s *habitus*, are integral to the conditions that have given them life, or the social spaces and notably *fields* where they have grown (132).

It is thus the case that when Berman’s deforming tendencies are added to this crucial aspect of “scotomization,” which in the original Greek refers to a suppression of life, we can perceive the compromise and rationalization in their most unconscious forms. It is as though an automatic reaction takes place leading us to a more acceptable and readable level of translation.

In speaking of the Klondike, London and the translators, Gouanvic (2006) proceeds to say that

[t]he environment is treated in an offhand way, without rigour, and whole sentences have been trimmed in the translation. The result is an approximate translation that undermines the integrity of London's style. In short, in Gruyer and Postif's translation, the reader confronts a text that tells of the various struggles the dogs face in their environment, but without the frightening proportions that the environment reaches in the original (137).

Once more, we observe that exactness is not adhered to in the case of Gruyer and Postif and that expediency may have worked its way into the translation, as a way of facilitating and advertising *The Sea-Wolf* to a market ready to greedily absorb it off the shelves of bookstores. The novelty it embodied surely helped it to reach additional readers across a spectrum of the social strata.

We have to keep in mind the economic aspect of the translation of *The Sea-Wolf* too, in that Postif, having been released from a German prison at the end of World War I, had to find the necessary means to support himself and move forward in life, as millions of others did at the same time. By entering into a partnership with Gruyer, his chances would have been better served, and we can see that their association lasted until 1930, when Gruyer passed on.

As part of his concluding remarks on the question, Gouanvic (2006) affirms that,

Scotomization, which is another word for *décentrement*, is intimately tied to the transformation that translation and adaptation necessarily subject the original text and which renegotiates the text according to a new order, that of the target literary field. This in turn, imprints upon the translation those stakes that are related to the legitimacy of the source field in the target field where the translation is produced. As a result, scotomization is a general process through which every translation exists and by which the

meaning of the original is derived, thus contributing to the building of future and forthcoming cultures and by universalizing them (138).

We did notice a considerable number of instances in our contrastive analysis, which had obvious gaps in the target text and which were therefore concessions to the target field, as the translators were remiss in their dealing with preciseness, to the degree that we would be today. This illustrates how far the field of translation has progressed since those early years of the twentieth century, when accuracy was not such a prime factor in the translation profession.

One of the strategic reasons for translation is to transmit knowledge to “the other” and to be able to effectively communicate with him/her/them, or at even the level of the institution or nation-state. Translation was not as evolved as is it today, “simply” because it was not regulated and education was somehow lax in providing the training to would-be translators. We today are more preoccupied with preciseness and comprehensiveness, but in the past, this was not always the case. Education in general was not as developed or as widespread as it is in the post-modern world. People had different priorities of survival in the past. Translation, as praxis, did not focus on being precise and translation studies had not even been conceived of, except by those who were literate enough to undertake the profession of translator on their own and to diffuse their knowledge on a limited basis.

Since then, progress has been made, in that the main mission for translation has been fulfilled, by communicating successfully – even if not completely, as the adage of “lost in translation” always remains. Meaning does come across, but we do lack in many other qualities. The whole communications revolution is such that today, as globalization

marches on, instant translations can be made, whether through live translators and interpreters or software-assisted methods. Then again, progress has to be tempered with problems, in a heavily globalized world and all that it occasions. Progress has a definite ring to it, but may mean opportunity or regression, in some situations.

As further illustration of the give-and-take perspective that translators are in the habit of engaging in, Gouanvic (2005) states that,

[t]hus we see that the *illusio* is closely linked to the dynamics of a *field*, existing only in the action of *agents* equipped with the *habitus* and symbolic *capital* acquired in that field. Translation responds to these diverse determinations as a specific practice in the act of being carried out (164).

This *illusio*, or interest and investment in the *game*, interplays with the *habitus*, but it is chiefly the *habitus* (or socially constituted nature) that bears the most weight upon the execution and final product of a translated work.

Gouanvic concludes his assertion by saying that,

[...] [w]hatever the case, it is always the *habitus* of a translator that influences the way translation is practiced, and this *habitus* cannot be interpreted separately from its rapport with the foreign culture, which is endowed with a greater or lesser aura of legitimacy that is transmitted through translation and tends to dictate a new orientation in the receiving culture, a new social future (164).

The allowances made by Postif and Gruyer to the target francophone culture were substantial. Their ease of translation in their native French language enabled them to respond to the challenge of translating a famous American author, by resorting to the Bermanian deforming tendencies we spoke of earlier, and by using their *habitus* in such a way, so as to adjust to the “immanent demands of the *game*.”

As social beings, humans have a tendency to congregate and exchange with each other, a great deal more on the intellectual level and ability, than our forefathers did. The massive communications revolution of the past twenty-five or so years can attest to that. We express and attempt to influence each other, sometimes vying for dominion over others, as we get swept up in the chauvinism of our particular culture. Postif and Gruyer were at the cutting-edge of this communications expansion that began after World War I. America's triumph was not necessarily geographic territorial extension into Europe, but more cultural and economic. Postif and Gruyer were perhaps so involved with earning their daily bread and eking out an existence in a war-ravaged land, that they did not really mind the deforming tendencies that they engaged in committing, when translating and completing their translation of *The Sea-Wolf*. But, it can also be said that the new French receiving culture, was a willing target (culture) susceptible to the whims of the translators, at their specific level, and more comprehensively at the national level, when the onslaught of American cultural products began to immerse nations at the international level too.

In a fairly recent article devoted to a new edition of a number of London's retranslated works, Noël Mauberret, a renowned expert on London had this to say about the famous American author:

Noël Mauberret: This was not our goal. In *les Enfants du froid* [or *Children of the Frost*], errors in geographic terms and names are present. Aside from the enormity of these types of oversights, "hills" was replaced by "mountains," for example. However, overall, this did not impact the comprehension of the work too seriously, whereas in *The People of the Abyss*, translated by Louis Postif, major gaps did appear... and his son agrees. He was good enough to allow us to rework that which did not fit appropriately enough. (In fact, the new translation was carried out by

Noël Mauberret and Robert Strick, both of whom hail from the publisher Phébus. The whole project was supervised by Jeanne Campbell-Reesman, who really knows everything about London, NDLR.) Another example would be the twenty-seven quotations heading the twenty-seven initial chapters, while there are only three in the Postif edition. One of these is a complete mistranslation, and is based on a poem by Swinburne (G. C. *l'Humanité*, 1999).

The preceding excerpts from the article indicate once more a confirmation that even in other translation situations, Postif and Gruyer were more relaxed about preciseness and prone to overlook the translation criteria we hold dear today. Gaps may have appeared yesteryear, whereas today we would comply more strictly with translation norms that have evolved since World War II. This holds true for both target-oriented and source-oriented instances. For instance, a “cliff,” as “falaise” is quite correct, whereas “montagne,” while not completely out of the question, raises doubts as to descriptiveness and somehow lacks in offering a sense of the visual.

As we scroll further down in the interview,

[L'Humanité]: The typical case would be *The Call of the Wild*, loosely translated as *l'Appel de la forêt*, by the Countess of Galard (*sic*) at the beginning of the [twentieth] century, and prefaced with a letter by Paul Bourget. In the 1976 first edition of the magazine *Europe*, dedicated to London, Pierre Pascal-Furth already underscores that “wild,” a generic and untranslatable term, should be replaced by “regional” synonyms such as [limestone] expanses, scrub or bush, jungle, pampas or steppes. Wild indeed. The result was a revision of the translations of Gruyer and Postif, according to the rules.

Noël Mauberret: We actually had to translate “Call of the Savage” or of the force, indeed, “Vital Call.” London was too modern and too realistic for his era.

Citing London's modernism and ability to project realism in his works, Mauberret evokes a recurring theme about the author, in that these qualities that London possessed were pillars of his character throughout his career and his personal and social life.

**II. *THE SEA-WOLF* – THE PLOT: ITS POSITION IN
LONDON’S WORK AS POPULAR LITERATURE AND
TRANSLATIONAL CHOICE FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

The Sea-Wolf tells the story of a harrowing experience suffered by Humphrey Van Weyden aboard the sealing-schooner, *The Ghost*, as it travels from California to catch seals off the coast of Japan, near the Farallones. Hump, as he is referred to by its captain, Wolf Larsen, comes from a relatively wealthy and comfortable lifestyle at the beginning of the twentieth century, is cultivated and well-educated, but totally unaccustomed and unprepared to face the trials and tribulations that await him. In fact, he refers to himself as “a scholar and a dilettante [...] in things artistic and literary” (London, 31).

Jack London possesses an uncanny ability to render a superb and detailed description; the images he creates stem from a variety of different ordinary and extraordinary situations. His use of alliteration is frequent in the English format. Humphrey Van Weyden is forced to become a cabin-boy, while the seal hunters aboard become increasingly apprehensive about the dangers that they may have to face. Humphrey decides to share his fate in this manner, after having been rescued from drowning by *The Ghost's* captain, following the sinking of the ferry, *The Martinez*, off San Francisco. The main characters are Henderson, Smoke and Jack Horner, who are hunters, Thomas Mugridge, a Cockney and a cook, Johansen, the new ship's mate, and Johnson, one of the sailors. There are also Louis, the helmsman, and George Leach, the former cabin-boy. Later, we are introduced to Maud Brewster, a very well-known writer and the romantic interest in the story.

As *The Ghost* soon embarks on its trip, the cruelty as well as the physical and psychological terror that seem to lie in store for the unsuspecting Humphrey are a rude and painful awakening, a struggle for survival, and at times, a battle between good and evil. His low-ranking job aboard the sealing-schooner and his assignment to help the

ship's Cockney cook, a mean-spirited and cruel character, bring him shock and humiliation. The incidents of unusual and unwarranted pain and punishment inflicted by Wolf Larsen on Hump and the rest of the ship's crew summon images of brutality in the minds of the readers. Philosophical questions of life and death are sometimes debated, where reversion to evil and its practices seem expedient, unnecessary, repulsive and a way of yielding to the baser nature of human beings.

Previously, the world had never witnessed such an inchoate civilization springing forth. America appeared unique. However, London as an energetic author had to work from within the confines of the system to express his ideas. His friends and associates would voice their opinions on the ways towards greater salability of the novel, in particular Cloudesley Johns, with whom London corresponded on many occasions. London would listen carefully and attempt to implement the recommendations, after having digested their meaning and applicability to his predicament. Having started off as a writer for magazines, London would aspire to greater heights, all the while conscious of his social level, as someone with lesser means.³ He would move ahead as a social being, one who would interact with the multitude of agents in the social sphere and whose input he valued. In this respect, he was a product of his time, but also a societally influenced artist.

Was London actually writing for a young audience? The answer is complex in itself. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed a unique phenomenon in the U.S. in that both children and adults were keen in voraciously reading many books of common interest to them. This resulted as social mores "dictated" conservative and moralistic attitudes, respecting the virtues of that era.⁴ Books for both young and old

were meant to hark back to medieval times, for instance, where action, legend and adventure were *de rigueur* and thought to reign supreme. Literary esthetic caused a common interest in books of this genre. Our present-day equivalent would perhaps be the Harry Potter zeal and enthusiasm that many children and adults experience through books and films. As Anne S. McLeod (1991) states in her article, referring to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

À la recherche de « beauté, de passion et de danger », la littérature prit de nouvelles orientations. Les lecteurs américains délaissèrent le réalisme domestique pour se tourner vers le mythe, la tradition populaire et l'histoire romancée (75).

This represented a sea change in the history of literature, which perhaps wouldn't be replicated in its extent for many years. Its scope was vast in that so much of American period culture was enveloped in it. It heralded a new age which would receive and absorb new forms of art, establishing them within a given culture and leaving behind the genteel tradition. In looking back to the beginnings of the twentieth century and the cultural shift that occurred, the transformation would indeed be epic and would lead to a series of steps that gradually displaced the genteel tradition with other kinds of socio-cultural traditions.

London, who was very well-versed in the cultural behavior of America, would most likely have not only been aware of this, but also catering to an audience he may have seen as more numerous in terms of size. The question of whether he observed the cultural mores in his children's books is another matter. As someone who decried convention and bourgeois values, he may have been more prone to rebelliousness and anti-establishmentarianism than is widely thought. He may have custom-tailored his

books to suit both adults and children, bypassing the strict moral code of that time. We'll undertake to consider London's role as a writer for young adults, in the course of this thesis.

The artist in London had been unique and revolutionary, but the results of his works, both at home and in France, were delineated by societal considerations that both London and his foreign translators complied with. We will deal more extensively with this matter in the ensuing pages. For now, suffice it to say that translation target markets have to be created. They are formed through a variety of relations between *agents*, even if the genre is new and countercultural in essence. The birth of such markets is then cultivated to the point where they become accepted and institutionalized within society. We would argue that these *agents* would then promote the translated "cultural production," or discourse, beyond its original frontiers and make it more international in scope to meet the needs of a logically and logistically receptive market.

Berman's view that the target culture is wont to misshape or alter the source text is appropriate here. In an effort to appear readable and capable of proceeding at an acceptable pace with the action of the novel, translators are bound to succumb to these practical tendencies. Not only would syntax and expressions suffer, were it not the case, but the target language's rules of form and grammar would be tampered with, thus appearing unintelligible and liable to ridicule. By adhering to the target language's rules, the "message" of the novel is communicated to the reader, leaving the translator in the role of intermediary, through which the filtering and transmitting of information are carried out for the sake of that same reader. Berman would probably consider this type of change Freudian or unconscious, with a Cartesian perspective as well. It is difficult to

ascribe responsibility in translating a given word or work, when we don't know the "composition" of the (thought) processes necessary to carry out that particular act of translation. It's definitely a complex route and one that we are about to, or only starting to uncover and explore, hopefully through interdisciplinary means (psychology, sociology and translation studies, for instance). If we did know, our communicative skills would be much better served.

We thus arrive at the conundrum many translators face when they're confronted by a text that they have to translate. Are they the ones who are to sweep aside tradition, or should they march onto revolutionary ground and set new standards, respecting the source language and its cultural baggage? I believe that, barring exceptional circumstances, translators through their class, income, education, emotional and intellectual outlook, cultural or national affiliation, historical progression through their years, cultural and national impact, degree of openness and receptivity to other cultural systems and beliefs, political correctness, as well as a host of other reasons/variables are more likely to "distort" (in variation) as Berman would assert, and less likely to concede to source-language defense and promotion. Still, this doesn't mean that there wouldn't be instances of source-language promulgation and advertising, where it is thought suitable, consciously or not. It does also depend on the degree of passion, conscientiousness, resoluteness, dedication and attachment to craft exercised by the translator.

**III. THE SEA-WOLF AND THE TRADITION OF
MARITIME NOVELS IN THE U.S. AND FRANCE**

In considering a contemporary of London, Joseph Conrad, we are confronted with the fixation of natural selection, which ties in with a similar theme in other nautical-style novels, written by both figures. They highlight survival in its pure sense and survival of the fittest, in broader terms, where the weak and defenseless are defeated or cast aside. Joseph Conrad would treat the affliction of solitude, the longing and pursuit of adventure and the struggle against superior odds, in ways that resemble London's treatment of these issues. Both authors are suspected of having the shroud of suicide hanging over them.

Both authors wrote about social questions and saw the disparities of their times, which did roughly but chronologically coincide. Nevertheless, their reactions to social differences and to their risks and rewards were glaringly divergent, London being of a socialist persuasion (despite the contradiction of his wealth), and Conrad possessing an anarchist streak.

Meanwhile, it must be admitted that children's adventure stories should have story lines that are more congruent with children's level of development. The themes that were undertaken by some maritime adventure writers surpass the usual dose of literary fare, available to young people at that time of Victorian sensibilities. The nihilism expressed by London, a lack of a clear and concrete vision of morality, as the times may have demanded and in strict conformity with the rest of society, in *The Sea-Wolf*, may have been berated by critics of the book. Coincidentally, the violent scenes on *The Ghost*, borne out of frustration, a sense of wickedness, despair and desperation, and even a misinterpretation of conventional attitudes of morality, not compatible with the broader society, lead one to think that young people would have found *The Sea-Wolf* disturbing, revolutionary and countercultural, as an art form. It would have definitely

seemed unaligned with the more accepted kinds of books authored in mainstream American culture, which tried to be paradigmatic to young people and instillers of moral values. In addition, it may have set the pace for similar works to be published later. London did later have many imitators. Alternatively, it would have struck a chord with mainstream youth who would have seen in *The Sea-Wolf* an abysmal side of life, one that has to be fought against and avoided.

Let us view creation as revolution for a moment: Is this what London had in mind when he interspersed *The Sea-Wolf* with violent twists and turns, when he figuratively shook the ship itself with the disturbing philosophical and quasi-religious debates, disagreements and flare-ups, as the main characters sought to compete for power and mastery? Wasn't it so when Wolf Larsen's unpredictable, sometimes chaotic behaviour, threw misery, disorder and confusion onto Hump and the rest of his shipmates? Youngsters would be shocked to encounter such patently aggressive scenes of mayhem.

The power of naming, in particular of naming the unnamable, that which is still unnoticed or repressed, is a considerable power. Words, said Sartre, can wreak havoc. This is the case, for instance, when they bring into public and thus official and open existence, when they show or half-show, things which existed only in an implicit, confused, or even repressed state. To represent, to bring to light, is no small task. And one can, in this sense, speak of creation (Bourdieu, 1990, 149).

These examples are ones that typify the conflict and turmoil on board *The Ghost*. Only London would have been capable of responding – even refusing to reply – given the sensitive nature of the affirmation and its stridency, that he may have been an authentic iconoclast. Apologists would have gleaned a redeeming social message in that the overall violence may have stemmed and curtailed similar impulses in readers in their

everyday existence. The incidental results of fear, and thus conformity, to both the silent and vocal “norms” of society by succeeding generations, is the counterargument, one that Bourdieu would most likely agree with, in that revolutionaries don’t find support and adherents that would drastically alter society in the long-run.

If we view the revolutionary nature of *The Sea-Wolf* as disturbing in the United States, the impact in France would have been just as astounding. France was in the midst of a socioeconomic upheaval, quite dissimilar to the relative economic prosperity of America in the early 1900s, one that had brought with it a certain level of peace, security, stability and certainty. The arrival of the translated version of *The Sea-Wolf* nevertheless caused a measure of shock and indignation, as people attempted to reconcile their war-weariness and more traditional values with the blatant physical and psychological violence present in the pages of the novel. However appealing the far-off setting and the romantic themes in the story, people in general must have been shocked at the brute force, infighting, deep hostility, rebelliousness and amorality that characterize an extensive part of the story. This is especially true of the target audience in question, or the young people of France, facing a heretofore unheard of and unseen type of art form, breaking with convention in such a manifestly brazen fashion.

The genre of sea adventure that London employed was not new to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It had a tradition in Western literature that dates back to Homer’s *Odyssey* or at least some would add since the earliest times.

Edwin M. Hall provides a useful working definition of the sea adventure story: “It is a fictional prose narrative of which at least half takes place on shipboard and in which the handling of the ship is important to the plot. Hall argues that James Fenimore Cooper invented the genre with the publication of *The Pilot* (1824). If Cooper invented it,

however, Captain Frederick Marryat (1792-1848) not only set a high standard of accuracy in writing nautical fiction, but also popularized the sea story as a form of adventure and romance (Moss, 1983, 13).

Marryat is credited with the popularization of the sea story, having been at sea for years and having served in various capacities while abroad. His novel, *Masterman Ready*, is a moral tale, which, it is claimed laid the foundation for a sub-genre in children's literature. Religious themes are ubiquitous throughout the work, in keeping with the tradition of the era.

Marryat's later work, *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, would not be as concentrated on didacticism of a religious nature:

Mr. Midshipman Easy recounts the quest of Mr. Midshipman Jack Easy to become a respectable nineteenth-century gentleman of property. Marryat blends aspects of eighteenth-century realistic fiction and the trappings of romance in writing this sea adventure, which remains readable because of its humorous characterizations and its exciting, if somewhat episodic, plot (Moss, 1983, 13).

Simultaneously, there had grown a tradition of violence surrounding the writing of nautical tales, especially in the nineteenth century. This is illustrated when we're told that,

This wild and wonderful fiction invariably included bold adventurous sea captains who battled bloodthirsty pirates led by a villainous and infernal chief, rescued helpless maidens in the thrall of the pirate chief, and triumphantly discovered buried treasure. James Barrie and Robert Louis Stevenson, authors of classic sea adventure stories, both admit that they had devoured "penny-dreadfuls" and that they especially preferred to read about pirates in their goriest form. [...] [B]lood and plenty of it [were standard fare]. Where did these conventions originate? [...] What Wallace Stevens called "the everhooded and tragic-gestured sea," the savage source with its power, mystery, and, to human consciousness at least, apparent will of its

own, has inspired a range of literature from the earliest times to the present – from ephemeral popular works to enduring classics [...] (Moss, 1983, 13).

It was into this environment that Jack London had found himself when he set out to write *The Sea-Wolf*, adopting the conventions laid out beforehand and adapting them for the American reader. He had tirelessly studied the techniques of others and had admitted as much to his friends. The incessant rhythm of cruelty and violence had their origins in previous stories, as these induce interest and curiosity in the reader as he awaits the outcome.

As mentioned earlier, London may have been accommodating that fleeting trend that arose in the late nineteenth century and which lasted until about 1910, when children and adults shared an equal fervor for action, excitement and adventure of epic proportions, in books directed towards both markets. If this wasn't the case, then *The Sea-Wolf* may have marked a departure from the more moralistic and didactic tales he wrote which conformed to the conventions of the early twentieth century. As Susan Ward states, quoting, in part, London's contemporary American author and social commentator Horatio Alger,

[...] '[h]onesty, industry, frugality, and a worthy ambition' as virtues to be enforced through the medium of a story, give an indication of some of the qualities the age regarded as essential. London's children embodied all of these qualities. He sometimes allowed his adult heroes to do without a prescribed virtue, but never his children. His hesitancy was a tacit acknowledgement of the stringent censorship applied to the children's literature of the period (99 - 100).

As a struggling and impoverished artist, she had previously stated that

[...] London was aware of the conventions which governed fiction and [...] he knew he had to conform to those rules if

he wished his children's stories to be published. [...] In the same letter [to Cloudesley Johns] he noted pragmatically: "Though such work won't live, it at least brings the ready cash" (92 – 93).

According to Ward, "London respected all these taboos" (100), when he wrote stories for children, and vices were customarily dealt with, in conformity with the times.

French readers were treated to the maritime novel when Eugène Sue and Edouard Corbière originated the home-grown version of the medium in France. The maritime novel is somewhat disputed as a genre by Théophile Gautier, who writes in *La Chronique de Paris* (1836):

Le Pilote, le Corsaire rouge sont et demeureront, je pense, les chefs-d'oeuvre du genre. [James Fenimore] Cooper, né sur un sol vierge et à peine défriché, excelle à peindre la lutte de l'homme avec la nature [...]. L'idée qui éclate à chaque page est celle exprimée par le proverbe breton : « Ma barque est si petite et la mer est si grande ! » (www.ifremer.fr, janvier 2005)

On the other hand, Sainte-Beuve (1840) credits Eugène Sue with the honor of bringing the elaborately descriptive maritime novel to the French shore. Sainte-Beuve specifies that

[l]e genre qui importait chez nous fut à l'instant suivi et pratiqué avec succès par plusieurs ; les juges compétents paraissent reconnaître que de nos romanciers de mer, le plus exact à la manoeuvre est M. Corbière, l'auteur du roman *Le négrier*. E. Sue, chirurgien de la marine ayant peu navigué, avait des ambitions mondaines qui étaient moins de remplir Le Havre que de remonter la Seine (www.ifremer.fr, janvier 2005).

Even if it had its roots elsewhere, it did find a receptive public in France, at roughly the same time period or later, ready to embrace the thrill, action and adventure which are the essential elements of this genre.

**IV. ESSENTIAL SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS
ABOUT THE FRENCH TRANSLATION
AND BOURDIEU'S ASSESSMENT**

A bourgeois, or upper middle-class backdrop, is present in the French translation, both in the person of Humphrey Van Weyden and in the narration. If social status cuts across cultures to a considerable degree, the similarities of pursuit and preoccupation are present, as is the description of the essence of being, and other philosophical positions. On the other hand, the contrast that exists is best explained according to the cultural dissimilarities between the French and American ways of life and their respective outlooks on the world.

Certain adjectives are meant to impress a higher level of consciousness onto the French reader, one that takes into account an adventurous spirit, an attitude of conquest, in that anything is possible, according to the American opinion of our earthly existence. The French version is filled with such expressions, describing a bourgeois or upper bourgeois (almost theatrical) setting, with the characters playing out their roles in tandem with their social status, executing their purposes as Bourdieusian *agents*.

A word like “tourbillonnant” brings out a fullness of tone, as if to sway the French reader towards the American text, out of sympathy and empathy for the characters. In *The Sea-Wolf's* chapter II, there is a series of words or phrases, such as “dans le processus de mon rêve étrange,” “à intervalles plus rapprochés,” “sur un sol caillouteux,” “avec un imperceptible accent,” “avec un joyeux empressement,” “de commentaires véhéments,” “reflété par les mille facettes cristallines de la mer,” “qui semblait exprimer une profonde délivrance,” and “les grossièretés de langage m’ont toujours répugné.” These expressions not only harmonize with the original English version, but they dovetail neatly into the French translation, bringing out the entire level of their usage. All these

expressions, and many others, point to an upper-middle class ethos that is being portrayed by the author.

Despite the fictional aspect of the characters, there's almost an attempt, in the French version, to lasso or co-opt the reader into the American experience, boundless in imagination. Was there a conscious or unconscious attempt on the part of the translators to place a matrix onto the French reader – a prism through which he/she can see this other culture? Was there identification with the American version, in terms of culture and purpose? In other words, where are we headed in *The Sea-Wolf*, and equally of course, in “real” life?

But, coincidentally, perhaps the translators had not yet arrived at a threshold where banishment of a foreign culture or foreign cultural influences had become an option. Moreover, is or was there such a possibility, especially in our day and age? The French version is not devoid of Frenchness: it does carry a solid weight of French cultural preponderance. A method of screening out or dismissing Americanness had not been devised; nor is it likely that it will do so completely. Language purity is extremely complex, especially when cultures collide.

Does the French reader buy into the American culture? The French long-term infatuation and fascination with America (which had begun during the War of Independence) had grown steadily over time. Besides political considerations and historical congruities, the cultural genre represented by *The Sea-Wolf* highlights a specialized form of the literary genre, in that it was a forerunner of a broader and much more massive invasion of American cultural imports, which were to follow in the course of the twentieth century.

If Bourdieu's concept of *illusio* can largely transcend cultures, the *agents*, in the form of the translators, had seen an opportunity by taking advantage of this infatuation with America. It was to mean a better income for them, a higher level of recognition, a fulfilment of dreams, an acceptance of moving forward (or a precept of American progress), that the receiving culture was malleable enough to absorb. The agents were acting within their *fields*, promulgating a foreign culture and its icons, by acting in their *interests*, all the while. The cultural might of America was such that, in retrospect, the rest of Europe had also been smitten by America's charm, as the entire planet has. One individual's personal dream can be accommodated within the larger context of the American Dream and its related cultural parts; a cultural transfer of almost inconceivable proportions occurs on a personal scale, and is reconciled, justified and amplified through the communicative process, embracing and appropriating what I would term an external physical and internal psychological matrix.

The rapture felt by consumers of the American cultural product is matched by its ability and power to attract, hypnotize and envelop – even through its most non-mainstream by-products. Here, London's ability to enhance the children's maritime novel with stylistic maneuverings may have been due to his attempts at reaching as wide an audience as possible, and in a bid to make this genre more marketable. He was certainly experiencing financial difficulties at the time, and his numerous letters to Cloudesley Johns point to a distinct insecurity as to his writing abilities and his perceived need to improve them (Hendricks, 1965). London was also comfortable in relating to Johns, asking him for advice and using him as a sounding board for his ideas. London did his best to enhance his skills as an author, listening intently to Johns' advice on

writing matters. Here's where London's appetite for getting ahead was further nurtured, in his capacity as *agent*, targeting the *illusio*, in a specific *field*. It emphasizes Bourdieu's premise that the *agent* acts consciously and unconsciously in ways intended at advancing his own *interests*, and maybe even his glory. Still, London's whole psyche must have been caught up in his ambition to excel and succeed throughout his writing career, but particularly at its *début*, considering his previously extremely precarious circumstances.

London's lifestyle was to change drastically over a relatively short period of time. It would involve high living, luxurious surroundings, with lavish parties and outlandish characters, opulence and indulgence. We can see here the clear outline of the agent adapting to ever-higher levels of income and standards of living. Physical excesses and dependence were also part of his way of life – in summary, a lifestyle that was sadly imitated in the following decades by numerous Hollywood stars, evoking the theory propounded by Bourdieu and its applicability; chasing after the *illusio* and being drawn ever more deeply into the orchestration laid down by the dictates of the *agent*.

However, whereas London's lifestyle was considered to be lacking in coherence on more than one occasion when compared with some of his novels, a number of his works seem to be out of the ordinary when both adults and young adults appear to be London's target readers, as in *The Sea-Wolf*. Why was it the case? London's psychology was diametrically opposed to previous social models (or even matrices). His strong affiliation with the socialist movement of the time is just one clear indication. As one who experienced the horrors of poverty and neglect, he had arrived at a point where he had characteristically constructed what one can term a counter-paradigm. This was a defining moment for London, in that he was targeting sacred cows. *The Sea-Wolf* is

replete with images of bedlam and confusion, instead of the traditional values meant to shield and protect youngsters from the risks and dangers of the world.

The reasons that London took this path of honing in on both adults and young adults can be summarized as follows:

- a) It represented a break with the past, and would (hopefully, for the author) usher in a new socialist order, in defiance of the constraints posed by tradition;
- b) It was a celebration of imagination;
- c) It had universal appeal;
- d) It signified a kind of escapism from the harsh facts of nineteenth century reality, namely, industrialization and urbanization;
- e) *The Sea-Wolf* was an absorbing book and harboured some exotic themes;
- f) It meant that a greater market would be reached for mass exposure;
- g) It provided reassurance by means of a happy ending, despite the almost impossible odds.

One cannot help but notice that the tradition of the past had to be replaced by a suitable counterpart. This is almost certainly the case when a cultural void opens up. A counterforce must intercede to fill it. London was wed to the idea that socialist ideals had to be tried; the relative amorality inherent in some of those precepts, and his own insertion of violent passages in some of his novels, point to a patent revolution of sorts, socially, morally, culturally and politically.

Therefore, is there a trade-off between the artist's vibrant and perhaps overzealous desire to become a purely artistic persona, and the demands placed on him to conform to the dictates of society and work within the confines of overriding structures? Consequently, what measures is the artist ready to assume, accept or "entertain," if he is to fulfill this burning desire for artistic status, coupled with the external demands of the artistic marketplace and society at large? London's excesses - both in his private and

public lives - may have been an attempt to focus attention on the priorities of survival, expediency of function and an overwhelming desire to burnish his image for posterity. In spite of his firebrand and unorthodox methods, he did have a go-with-the-flow mentality considering his background and his being a product of his times. He did display a sense of self-censorship for the sake of greater acceptability and an almost situation-ethics style of approach to relationships (we're reminded of Bourdieu and his view that an agent may adjust his *habitus* instantaneously to the inherent requirements of the *game*), surrounding his colleagues, his competitors and his business dealings. Even fast-moving events left little time, as London's activity-filled life made evident that quality relationships are a precious "commodity." His socialist sympathies were brought out through his trusting and generous nature towards his friends; he was short-changed as a result. Had his existence been more peaceable and sedate, his quest for success, his artistic profile and his achievements may have been fulfilled (or not) in ways that would have been substantially less edgy or jagged – his extremes in fiction and in "real" life would have been mitigated.

Bourdieu's theory of the *agent* would have still been apparent, but London's artistic spirit and radicalism would have been tamed. We would then be asking ourselves the following question: Would the body of London's artistic works have suffered? Would he have been less critically acclaimed or been less extreme in nature? London's ambition was such that it drove his art, social and private lives at a breakneck pace, through a prism of events that he could not sustain indefinitely. The fast-burning flame had to be extinguished by the sheer force of the wind. Had London been less keen on leaving behind a legacy, all wrapped up in the Bourdieusian concept of *agent*, he may

have committed less extravagant gestures, especially in the later stages of his life, and thus been a longer-term survivor.

London's artistic progression is open to debate; his artistic legacy is a considerable one. His private life, peppered with outrageousness, some would say notoriety, was not exactly a model that parents, either today or yesteryear, would wish to impart on their children. The fast living, carousing, drinking – the impulsiveness of his character that shines through his works – indeed his creativity borne of experience (or the School of Hard Knocks), may not have had the ideal features, didactically speaking. By incorporating this ethos into his works, London was on the vanguard of a wave he helped to create, in that Hollywood screen legends would, in a sense, unwittingly and unwillingly, adopt lifestyles that the genteel tradition found shocking and reprehensible. A good number of these artists communicated a portion of their values, as they acted within their *field*. They cultivated their relations in a social space that is very malleable.

Unfortunately, some of the artists became casualties, or an evolved by-product of a process that takes a historical duration to mature, but is subject to change because of its inherent traits: *field, habitus, illusio, agent*. The latter interact in myriad fashion as,

[...] [I]t is the structure (the tensions, the oppositions, the relations of power which constitute the structure of a specific field or of the social field as a totality at a given point in time) which constitutes the principle of the strategies aimed at preserving or transforming the structure (Bourdieu, 1990, 118).

These “intangible” structures are, paradoxically, the basic components of this flow of energy that occurs between the animate among themselves and the inanimate, as they proceed to the next level that would not necessarily be more “advanced.” This echelon could very well be a regression, with a “déjà vu” about it. The paradox lies in the

belief that by moving forward, progress has been made; transformativeness of the situation may be present, but a betterment does not necessarily occur. In fact, Bourdieu speaks of these relations eloquently enough, and then we're driven to ask if there is anything new under the sun. In returning to the relations of tension and opposition, do we not have to be focusing our attention on them more directly – these abstract associations that reside in the minds of people, or *agents*, and through which we shape our structure of social space? Do we not need to retarget ourselves towards these transitory, but nevertheless non-illusional aspects of social existence and devote more time to them as more realistic interactions?

Was London under the spell of the market and its *habitus/field* and *illusio* enchantment that he would have to come to grips with? This will be explored more fully in the ensuing pages, as we elaborate on the determinants that made Jack London what he was, the factors that led him to do certain things later, what he produced through *The Sea-Wolf* and what he transmitted as valuable art to his readership, and subsequently to his readers in France.

In turning to Bourdieu's idea of sedimentation that occurs over time, but which is reflected in the works or artifacts that result from it, we can infer a number of secondary proposals:

The sociologists of the future (but it's already true of us) will discover more and more in the reality they study the sedimented products of their predecessors (1990, 54).

The steady references to American culture and “norms,” values, aspirations, standards of theory and practice, produce a “sleeper effect” on people. Individuals fall into the habit of measuring their own culture's sub-units and their personal culture's rate of success by

the standards of the more dominant or overwhelming culture; this is done at various levels and across cultures. This way, just as translation was at an incipient stage when London was still writing, considering America's then-burgeoning power, its developmental timeline was able to "deposit" a considerable amount of "sedimentation" on a gamut of other cultures that it impacted. People are capable of accessing and creating in themselves a kind of "feel" for the general pool of an informational – all-pervasive, media-inspired and directed – culture.

To coin two specific terms, I can think of "translusion" to eventually become "translumination," or a state of enlightenment. If Bourdieu were asked to comment, his thoughts on these neologisms and the state of relative unconsciousness would very likely summon a passing or transitory illusion. This long-lasting mirage, when coupled with a smidgeon of remorse, yields to a far greater realization and attainment of what Bourdieu would consider enlightenment, reached after contemplative thinking and acceptance of the theorist's basic tenets, as he laid them down in his works.

A great number of us cannot fathom the absence of a spiritual element in Bourdieu's theory. Otherwise, the rationality and extensive explanation behind it serve as a secular response to a sociological conundrum that has eluded a satisfactory resolution among those in the field and in academia. Once the premises of Bourdieu's theory are accepted as given, the theory itself takes on or is enveloped by a freshness, an innovative shine which would ordinarily sideline its contemporary counterparts.

Bourdieu's theory is viable, dynamic and ongoing, based on his rationale and the principles behind it, casting aside the more conventional, if not revolutionary and concentrated prerequisites that are derived from leftist ideology. But, as most things in

life revolve around the political and economic dimensions – and their workings – let us briefly scan them to shed some light on the subject.

Power, through the use and possession of capital, can be a force that constrains and acts as both foreground and background influence, through which agents at almost every level feel compelled to obey. Artists like London who work their way up the ladder of generally accepted success, do so willingly and unwillingly; and keeping in mind the cultural ethos of capital, propelling them forward and exerting power, even during times that they're caught off guard – because the power of capital is so heavily entrenched in society.

This is what Bourdieu has to say about the notions of power, capital and some of their consequences:

I contend that a power or capital becomes symbolic, and exerts a specific effect of domination, which I call symbolic power or symbolic violence, when it is known and recognized (*connu et reconnu*), that is, when it is the object of an act of knowledge and recognition (1990, 111).

In his early life, we can thus see that London, as a member of a disadvantaged class, was susceptible to upper mobility – his aspirations and communication with Cloudesley Johns, his desire to render himself more marketable, a good if not great author – all lead to a field of endeavor, the literary one, where the maneuverings within this field take place.

Bourdieu would say that London adjusted his *habitus*. An extract from his book reveals that

[...] [t]he dominant agents appear distinguished only because, being so to speak born into a position that is distinguished positively, their *habitus*, their socially constituted nature, is immediately adjusted to the immanent

demands of the game, and they can thus assert their difference without needing to want to, that is, with the unselfconsciousness that is the mark of so-called ‘natural’ distinction[,] [...] that is, naturally distinguished from those who are obliged to strive for distinction (1990, 11).

Is it that we, as agents, became ensnared in, entangled with or entrapped – very tenderly, of course – by the glitter of what others reject? Are agents all doomed to a whole, an entity of culture, where no one escapes from, and all carry along a vestige of some kind thereof? Wasn’t London an integral part of this entity, as he worked so fiercely to contribute to and derive from his own *habitus*, the elements that made for his setbacks and success? Therein lie the roots of ineffability and impossibility of escape.

London was inescapably an inordinately unusual agent who set down a pattern that was to be repeated numerous times throughout the twentieth century, especially by artists in Hollywood. This is something that he could not have envisioned. He does nonetheless appear to have created a prototype. His many extravagances may have been a part of his consciousness, as self-probing as he was, but his other less prominent traits of politics and philosophy worked, throughout his life, to impel him forward and shape his future. There were numerous instances where his influence on literature was a very personal contribution, coupled with his own ingredients that he added to inject a distinctiveness to art.

London’s wealth and success were undoubtedly conscious, since he acted as creator / artist to escape the long-running deprivation he was surrounded by. At the same time, his highly intellectual nature told him of the possibilities that lay within his grasp, as he progressed in his works. How self-conscious he was about this temptation to accede to a more natural state of being and reside among the denizens of his field, in his

quest for continued success, is almost impossible to measure. However, we can be persuaded that his unflinching determination and perseverance were so vastly developed, that he was almost destined to achieve greatness and leave behind the grinding misery of his youth.

The relationship between capital and London's unconscious side, and the drive to acquire more wealth, is indisputably a very intriguing one. One can deduce from the external facts and London's lifestyle that he was hard-driven, resolute and living very intensely. Other artists may have been more circumspect, when it came to their pace of living, but I contend that as London's wealth increased in value, he became rowdier and behaved even more outlandishly. What remains today is the speculation about London's drive to accomplish ever more and how he really felt about accumulating more capital. How did he feel, in his later years, as he had reached a more elevated level of security and enjoyed a greater degree of leisure? The psychological aspect of London's being was complex, and there were frequently a number of corollaries to his inner and outer existences in the form of irony, contradictions and a clear sense of paradox. To this day, he remains a fascinating figure of literature.

Bourdieu's theory breaks some sociological taboos by unraveling the motives, pathways, and destinations that people are aiming for, and somehow arrive at, through their adopted life stages. What at first appears to the human eye as a mystery, is given an explanation and a solution through an entirely new perspective. Bourdieu's revelations are both timely and still insightful. For instance, we are apt to make a leap from the "existence of the name to the existence of the thing named," as he claims that,

[...] [s]ocial agents struggle for what I have called symbolic power, of which this power is constitutive

naming, which by naming things brings them into being
[...] (1990, 55).

Our analysis of the nature of existence is such that we hardly blink when the nature of being is described or stated. As Bourdieu would say, when philosophizing, France is big. But, we first have to accept France as a thing that exists, and then take the next step to bigness. Our use and choice of words are very important in how we put a message across.

Working within the divisions of social space may lead to a complexity of the inputs associated with Bourdieu's theory, which, in general, covers most of the bases of the socio-literary field.

[...] [T]he contradictions built into the mechanisms which tend to secure the reproduction of the social structure by eliminating children differentially according to the volume of their inherited cultural capital are at the basis of the individual and collective strategies (such as student movements) through which the victims of elimination (or at least the most socially privileged of them) aim at transforming the structures which the mechanisms of elimination, and thereby of reproduction of structures, tend to preserve (1990, 119).

London's active and very heavy involvement in the quite early socialist movement and the March of the Unemployed, bears witness to this observable fact, as it relates to him. He was trying to effect change from within the system, before the terminology of the expression had even ever been voiced. It's a classic example of what may be prototypic and even archetypal, in trying to transform the system, along with other rebels, turned revolutionaries, with a mission aimed at effectively changing a whole entity in modern society. London's later disillusionment with the socialist cause is a reminder of how

Bourdieu has claimed that the *habitus* is inherently adjusted according to the demands of the *game*.

Bourdieu's theory is crucial, in that we see summarized in it, perhaps an essence of his message to us:

[It is] a theory of action, or of practice, in rupture with ordinary alternatives; a construction of social space, which solves by dissolving it, the long-standing issue of social 'classes'; a theory of symbolic domination which recognizes the specificity of symbolic logic at the same time that it grounds it in the objective structures of the distribution of different species of capital (or powers) (1990, 119).

This represents a radical shift from the more traditionally, left and left-of-centre explanations, or even exegeses that had previously been expounded, or put forth. Bourdieu has followed an avant-garde approach that seems to hold water more securely than other theories – the nuances and definitions are there to enhance his views, but they go beyond the regular cut-and-dry attitude of inflexibility of the earlier followers and adherents of Marx. Bourdieu has transcended his predecessors here as well. Moreover, Bourdieu appears more relevant when he speaks of a theory of “action” and of “practice,” since even today his theory is as applicable and believable, long after London's departure.

Postif and Gruyer struggled to impart a culture, whose agent, London, had played the *game* shrewdly, from his vantage point in the U.S., as the vanguard of American culture was gaining strength and momentum. If I may suggest, osmosis, or the transmission of culture was occurring, as the permeating influence of Americanness was being felt globally. But, Postif and Gruyer were mesmerized by that culture and were

perhaps unaware of the long-term consequences for the French, and for that matter, the world's other disparate cultures.

A brief glimpse into the social life of the capital would reveal the clear idea of Paris as a cosmopolitan centre of culture and exchange.

The presence of foreigners was not a homogeneous one. American writers, who in the 1920s had fled the United States and could be found at the Shakespeare Library or in the company of Gertrude Stein, did not belong to the same milieu as Algerian workers who had come looking for employment. There were also Spanish architects, Scandinavians, Brazilians and North Americans who built some of the most remarkable monuments of contemporary Paris. In addition, painters could be found trying to survive in Montparnasse, before the most talented of them went on to reach immortal glory! (www.parisia.com, January 2006)

Paris could also boast a number of other ethnic groups who went on to establish themselves and contribute to the cultural mix of the city. Although this marked a new start for the French, the American input was to be relatively subdued, but having commenced, it would proceed to gather even more momentum as the inter-war period progressed and there loomed a new danger of conflict on the horizon. We must remember that the degree of sensitivity to outside cultural influences depended on the most powerful of them being capable of producing a response, capturing the imagination, beguiling and seducing the receiving culture and of conjuring up the most palatable of lifestyles in the consumer nation.

In looking at the French context of the period, sociopolitical and economic turmoil had gripped France during the inter-war years. The country was divided among competing forces of a variety of political, cultural (between the differing and different social divisions) and economic hues. On the one hand, socialism and communism

confronted the right and the extreme right sectors, namely in the form of fascism and Nazism, on the other. These kinds of fraternal disputes brought forth sociopolitical uncertainty, resulting in widespread economic and political instability, ultimately instilling a “moroseness” to the general mood of the 1930s. Subsequently, regional matters speedily disintegrated to usher in the Second World War.

The cultural picture in France was not a rosy one, considering the postwar debate between the more nationalist pro-Catholic and traditionalist side and the relatively new but assertive defenders of the demobilization of literature in the country. A heave-ho relationship developed between the two, bringing stinging acrimony and emotional debate to the nation, which had been at odds with an external enemy, but had now moved on to more peacetime fractious disputes. Einfalt (1995) relates:

That has as a consequence that [the] very literary standpoint is inevitably at the level of a political debate, each writer being forced to clarify his literary position starting from its point of view of the political situation (<http://latina.phil2.uni-freiburg.de/einfalt/Projekt.html>, (January 2006).

The situation in France was unusual in the sense that artistic freedom was being questioned and a degree of loyalty and attachment was being demanded of those who strayed a little from the more conventional path. The late twentieth century was far more open and liberal by comparison, enabling the country to revel, in the almost inevitable manner, among the Parisian (interminable) debates that its intellectuals found so thrilling, productive and motivational, despite their partisan charm and complexity.

The mood in 1920s literary France was more shrouded in concerns about security and the uncertainty of Germany’s intentions, with stridency being an underlying factor in the outspokenness being practiced by some of the leading and influential literary figures,

as they traded snipes at and severe critical attacks on each other, and as viewed by Einfalt:

This literary and intellectual debate is carried out in literary reviews which reappear after the war or which are founded in the sight of the current situation. An analysis of [the] most important of these reviews can give a more or less complete inventory of the positions of the field. In a completely general way, one can note on a side a regrouping of the preserving, catholic and nationalist writers representing the traditional literary values, and whose reviews are subjected to the considerable influence of the French Action. [On] the other side, one finds reviews almost exclusively literary defending the intrinsic value of the literature and which decide for a demobilization of the literature, as well as cosmopolitan reviews and even internationalists (thus of the political and literary reviews). The reviews of [the] avant-garde are added to it, which are almost exclusively reviews artistic and literary (except for the surrealist reviews), and which does not publish that for a restricted circle of initiates [...] (<http://latina.phil2.uni-freiburg.de/einfalt/Projekt.html>, January 2006).

The divisiveness of the country made for strong debate, but it also occurred in a setting that was relatively democratic. This allowed for literary matters to be discussed, albeit under a political umbrella. The disarray that took place following World War I across the continent was not limited to France. The perils of the socioeconomic and political situation were widespread and varied in degree from one nation to another, but undoubtedly influenced the course of events across a variety of states. We need to understand that while de-politicization was an option, less people were inclined to be won over by it, with the overriding reason being the sheer aftermath of war, in any country for that matter, and all its ensuing consequences, brought on by years of conflict and destruction. France was therefore definitely and very openly susceptible to outside influences.

Until then, America had been considered a bastion of what could be possible, and (re)presented an alternative dream to the pessimism prevalent in Europe at the time. London's *The Sea-Wolf* offered a welcome escape from the drudgery of daily existence, where fast-paced events and the winning formula of a love story combined to lift the spirit of the French public from the exacting nature of their routine and hardship.

The translators were taken in by the ambiance of the times. The somberness did not prevent Postif and Gruyer, who, as leaders in their field, were drawn to *The Sea-Wolf* as escapist entertainment, where energy, vitality and perseverance of spirit win handily over the violence, cruelty and vengeance of the brute, where trials and tribulations were numerous and excruciating. This may have been a kind of backdrop to the turbulence in post World War I France. The translators were nonetheless prepared to accept a theme that embraces a "happy ending" in the classical Hollywood sense, and transpose it to the metropolitan French milieu. Similarly, they not only "trans-lated" a work, transferring ideas and exchanging heavily towards the French sector, but also a cultural icon in London himself and what he represented.

They were capable of bringing in that glamour and the romanticized version of America and its indomitable spirit into the daily life of the ordinary French person. This is extremely telling and significant because of its sheer power and influence in shaping the lives of a different culture, distant and detached by appearances, but increasingly linked through the momentum of a galloping globalization – meant to take on a mammoth velocity towards the close of the twentieth century.

The fraternal infighting and divisiveness that characterized France in the 1920s and 1930s could be treated with the medicinal qualities, albeit too brief, of a dose of a

fantastic story replete with twists and turns that involve the reader and keep his interest pencil sharp, imparting genuine excitement. The method that Postif and Gruyer employed to transport the French reader, or should that be lead through, as in “traduction,” to a given fictional location in *The Sea-Wolf*, was in keeping with the original English version by London, except that now the translators were to adapt that method to suit the purposes of the French (or francophone) setting. Bourdieu would view this as a vindication of his theory, where the *agent(s)* adjust their *habitus* to the situation at hand (or to the demands of the *game*), and perhaps advance their investment in the game. In other words, the translators used their intellectual abilities to promote a cultural product intended to awaken an inner slumbering “happiness” or contentment, by embellishing or rationalizing, in the Bermanian sense of deforming tendencies, to reach an audience within their *field* in the francophone target market.

The cultural thrust of a dominant culture is such that agents are more prone to advance a given project, such as the translation of *The Sea-Wolf*, according to previous experience gained while carrying out translations of other works.

Objective power relations tend to reproduce themselves in symbolic power relations. In the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for a monopoly over legitimate naming, agents put into action the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles and which can be juridically guaranteed (Bourdieu, 1990, 135).

Would it not follow that they would apply similar tenets learned beforehand? In the case of Postif and Gruyer, it may have been an additional “step up the ladder” from their earlier works, a type of translation that was now a novel situation, involving *The Sea-Wolf*.

As a prototype-like figure, London did set an example, through his tumultuous private life, external persona, his numerous social(ist) relationships, social commitments and involvements, his brand of intellectual fervor, questioning and advocacy, and even his very untimely demise. All these characteristics led to new, but tragic consequences for a Californian existence drenched with the highs and lows of excitement, unpredictability and instability – as measured by the undoubtedly conventional genteel tradition of his generation.

This evolving paradigm is worthy of note. It would set the stage for a larger and more profound impact, as post-World War II France attempted to rebuild and recover. The War's aftermath saw an explosion of imported cultural products, especially those originating in the U.S. Translators were in demand, as their symbolic capital was destined to be used extensively in the (re)creation of American works of literature. If we stop and look at the level that mass culture has achieved so far, we can discern a salient and very powerful phenomenon, which has come as a culmination of the development that has occurred in the post-war era. To flash-forward for a moment,

[b]ut the leading edge of the economy – biotech, software, communications, design – will be knowledge intensive, and more of what follows in its wake – banking, pharmaceuticals, engineering, products related to eco-modernization – will become increasingly knowledge intensive (Hargreaves *et al.*, 1998, 17).

This represents a clear trend in the direction of the modern economy, as knowledge makes increasingly greater gains and outpaces its percentage slice of an economy's overall pie. Knowledge and information have become intertwined and are at the base of our tangible and intangible products. Yet, as with all goods, their trade is conducted by means of communication and information; and cultural items are included in this realm as

well. Postif and Gruyer had used their cultural and symbolic capital ahead of this cultural wave, as it came roaring in, in the wake of the Allied victory in Europe.

It may be equally asserted that the translators had provided a kind of legitimacy to the translation of fiction, as a profession, having covered a major author like London, and having set precedent-like guidelines that future translators would use in their particular field.

The matrix had been fashioned by the translators who had learned their craft from their predecessors. As translators, they would have had to adjust their *habitus* (socially constituted nature) to a considerable degree, as Bourdieu would declare; Berman would then reply that the rationalization that occurred within the limits of the translation of *The Sea-Wolf*, would find its parallel in Bourdieu's theory, as result of this operation. The instances of these occurrences were very frequent and underlie a major portion of the functions undertaken to carry out this translation. Therefore, we can observe a uniting feature here between Berman and Bourdieu, in connection with their theoretical stances and the practical application of their propositions.

Translation strategies had seen a further honing during the inter-war years. However, translators' skills went through their modern prolonged growth and evolution, as translators scrambled to superpose American imports onto the French cultural landscape.

Inputs of secondary cultural attribution, onto the receiving culture, would be the idea of human capital, i.e. brainpower interceding to (un)consciously impose longed for (or what appears to be desirable) secondary cultural provenances, stemming from the primary culture's ambivalence over this foreign, but fascinating and enticing, cultural

appeal. This dichotomy is present in France – and all across Europe – even to this day. Nevertheless, its appropriation is not fully or widely understood and evaluated. It is instead at once resented, secretly desired, and, perceived of as obtrusive. It is appreciated for its sheer grandeur of size, but simultaneously derided for its shortcomings.

We are again reminded of Bourdieu's interpretation, and of how the *habitus* can act "at once [as] a system of models for the production of practices and a system of models for the perception and appreciation of practices" (1990, 131).

[...] Thus, the *habitus* implies a 'sense of one's place' but also a 'sense of the other's place' (1990, 131).

By being exposed to the icons and images of the American stereotype, the world's consuming people have become so overexposed, that a kind of imprinting has occurred over this trade, and through the number of transactions that have taken place. The stereotype later became more of a main matrix, with adjuncts to it and subsidiary roles, as it grew to be more complex. Bourdieu would add that,

[...] [t]he complexity lies in the social reality [...] [and that] '[t]he simple,' Bachelard used to say, 'is never anything more than the simplified' (1990, 139).

The distinctive nature of the American mould would set about its mission to travel worldwide and to bring its pattern to various lands. This contour would be repeated countless times, because its characteristic strength and resiliency were so overpowering.

Our perception of who we are, and who we would like to be, influences us in the formation, maintenance and propagation of our identity. This cuts across most *fields* and most cultures, with environment playing a decisive role in shaping an identity which is so malleable, that exposure to our surroundings may lead to short- and long-term consequences in identity and *illusio* formation. This is also where the *agent* acts and

reacts to long-held conscious and subliminal views that provide an impetus to the agent's growth and development.

London's boundless energy, as expressed in his novels and particularly in *The Sea-Wolf*, would therefore have to be expressed in the translated version(s) of his work(s); an element which is inevitable and inescapable, if the true reflection of London and of his background American reality is to shine through, in the French translation of *The Sea-Wolf*. Here, we've arrived at the source-oriented disposition and inclination of the translators who would proceed to transmit London's exuberance and vitality, despite the rationalization and even "destructive" tendencies that reduce the original text along the way. Berman's thoughts on this issue would gravitate towards reader palatability. However, meaning, as such, in the academic and scientific senses, as well as in the more wide-ranging immediate, philosophical and life-altering experience that a work of art is capable of transmitting, carries an incredibly substantial responsibility, inherently bound within its form. Recognition of this presence is necessary in the development of culture; the various routes culture could pursue, if left to the devices of an unattended marketplace, are too serious and would cause dislocation, if measures are not taken to preserve local or state culture from the juggernaut of mass, potent, uniformized and influential external sources.

Have we actually found a happy medium to transcend our source-oriented and target-oriented "opposites?" Have we reconciled the two in the years since the novel's translation? Attempts have definitely been made, in the two directions, and in the pursuit of what I would call the "twin-track" approach that combines both. We personally feel that even if transcendence is a worthy goal, its achievement would be illusory, because

culture is so diverse and individuals are so unique that transparenence becomes “*translusional*,” or a transitory illusion.

Translation can assist in the development of nations, but it can also be a double-edged sword. By chipping away at the traditional and more fragile of cultures, it can bring about identification with the most commanding and authoritative of states, or that nation (ethnic group) which is the most predominant within a given state, as is generally internationally recognized. Even if a work of art is small, by international standards, it can impact a nation, dependent on global players for political and economic sustenance.

The Americanization of the nation-state would skyrocket in the successive years of the twentieth century, but Postif and Gruyer did not think that its thrust and pervasive character would be as Herculean and as all-encompassing, as would later prove to be the case. The translators saw an opportunity and were enticed into it as probably a short-term proposition. As social agents in their field, they contributed in their own small way to the greater whole, struggling for symbolic power, as Bourdieu would say, by bringing into being (or naming) those things that would gradually lead onto the unavoidable road towards Americanization. The individual becomes transfixed, under the spell of what I have termed the “*translusion*,” (or temporary mirage), and may eventually attain a kind of “*translumination*,” or state of heightened enlightenment, if he is subject to a kind of reflexive rethink of this state of consciousness.

Collectively, the Anglo-American world would have a colossal impact on cultures, just as the Greco-Roman world imparted a mass hellenization and latinization of the then-ancient world. Osmosis did take place, as the penetrating force of one culture

onto another's domain was hastened by the actions, behavior, and ultimately, the literary works of the dominant culture's *agents* playing the *game*.

V. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Careful observation will indicate that Berman was on the right path when he pronounced himself on the issue of deforming tendencies and the literary text. Deforming tendencies are yielded when an agent's *habitus* is adjusted, mainly in an unconscious way and by a vast majority of people, to the immanent demands of the *game*. Postif and Gruyer were interested in producing the translation of London's work, so as to get it to market and revel in the success that it would bring, however relative that would be. This adjustment in their *habitus* meant that compromises would take place and exactness would not be adhered to, as expediency entered the equation and exerted much influence. The most evident ones are the additions, deletions (in several senses), clarifications, rationalizations, qualitative and quantitative reductions. Further examination will doubtless yield more evidence; this will be further explored as we look at examples from across the novel.

a) Berman's Considerations

In addition to the preceding, we can better understand the workings of a translation by examining an excerpt from Berman's text:

La destruction des systématismes internes d'un texte

Le systématisme du texte dépasse le niveau des signifiants, des métaphores, etc. : il s'étend au type de phrases, de constructions de phrases employées. [...] Rationalisation, clarification, allongement, etc. détruisent ce système du texte et y introduisent des éléments que ce système, par essence, exclut. D'où une curieuse conséquence : alors que le texte de la traduction est plus « homogène » que l'original (plus « stylé » au sens banal), il est également plus *incohérent* et, d'une certaine façon, plus hétérogène, plus *inconsistant*. C'est un *patchwork* de différents types d'écriture employés par le traducteur (comme l'ennoblissement plus la vulgarisation là où l'original n'est

qu'oralité). Et cela découle aussi de la position du traducteur, qui au fond, recourt à toutes les lectures pour traduire l'original. Si bien que la traduction risque toujours d'apparaître comme *homogène et incohérente* à la fois, et Meschonnic l'a montré à propos de la traduction de Celan. L'analyse textuelle d'un original et de sa traduction, menée à fond, démontrerait que la langue-de-la-traduction, l'écriture-de-la-traduction est *a-systématique*, comme celle de ces œuvres de néophytes que rejettent dès la première page les lecteurs de maison d'édition. Sauf que, dans le cas de la traduction, cette a-systématicité est inapparente, et en fait dissimulée par ce qui reste tout de même de la systématicité de l'original. Le lecteur perçoit cependant cette inconsistance du texte de la traduction, dans la mesure où il lui accorde rarement sa confiance, et ne le vit pas comme le « vrai » texte ni comme un « vrai » texte. Par delà les préjugés, il a raison : ce n'est pas un « vrai » texte, il n'a pas les marques d'un texte, et en premier lieu la systématicité. *L'homogénéisation ne peut pas plus dissimuler l'a-systématicité que l'allongement ne peut dissimuler l'appauvrissement quantitatif* (Berman, 1985, 77).

Heterogeneity and homogeneity are taken up by Berman as concepts that apply to translation. These occur as a duality, and may I add, with a duality of purpose, both voluntarily and involuntarily, being in constant interplay and competition with each other. This is where a paradox exists and how the challenge of translation may be characterized in its difficulty.

We also have the view that it is impossible to create a perfect translation. The task is sufficiently daunting to the individual and a strictly personal one, at least on one level, amidst a myriad of possibilities available among a target culture. For that reason, the asystematicity is likely to appear time and again, to the trained and untrained eye, despite efforts to homogenize and thus hide it. Berman has struck a chord among translators and lay people with this astute observation, as we've witnessed asystematicity in translations. Still, we have come to realize that homogeneity is linked to

asystematicity, and heterogeneity is associated with systematicity, as translators attempt to produce a good-acceptable-excellent work of translation, by generally acknowledged, established and time-honored standards. The (a)systematicity and its presence or absence depend on the ability of the observer to decipher them, either consciously or unconsciously.

b) Contrastive Analysis in Detail

How does a translator, charged with transmitting a turbulent seascape story of a voyage aboard a sealing vessel, go about his craft and what are the elements that guide him along? Antoine Berman has set down a theory that aims to encompass most of the analysis of what he terms “déformation,” (Berman, 1986, 69) in translation. By studying the points and tendencies he has raised, we will attempt to establish a link between Berman’s theory and the translation of *The Sea-Wolf*, and thus determine whether there’s a sound basis for it, in this instance. By observing translation ploys and methods, we will be better capable of understanding the reasoning behind them and to see whether translation, as a cultural tool, is sociologically significant and how.

It may be that translators into French (or translators, in general) are just so completely caught up and absorbed by their craft that they may not even analyze their choices, rationally or consciously, or even realize their potential. Translation may be a cultural phenomenon that is present as a fact, and has to be accepted as such. It may also be that translation serves a number of purposes in the dissemination of information in the cultural, scientific, commercial, religious, political, economic and other spheres.

However, its impact can be enormous, as we see for example with the translation of the Bible and the resulting consequences for Western civilization.

Berman's theory is not the only one of its kind. Its relevance to *The Sea-Wolf* will be assessed after careful consideration. Could Berman's theory be sound, cogent and applicable in this context? This will be defined through the following exercise, as we turn to the more concrete aspects of Berman's theory and its pertinence to London's work.

In looking more deeply into Antoine Berman's propositions, we would first have to present his theory about translation. According to Berman, translation may be seen as a strong foreign language challenge in two ways: by creating a relation (or rapport) between the home-grown (target culture and readership) and the foreign (source culture and readership), and by uprooting a work from its native soil, translation through feedback (or *übersetzung*) forces us to look at the original work under another light.

When translation focuses on the meaning and not the letter, it becomes an act that denies as well as appropriates the foreign, something akin to naturalization. Berman longs for a code of ethics in translation, one that would recognize that foreignness. He turns his attention to the need for an analysis of translation (the study of text misrepresentation – distortion, misshaping) that neutralizes the ethical trust of translation that he divides into two types of analysis: Cartesian and Freudian. This latter system of distortion is above all unconscious; it is about deforming forces or tendencies.

By engaging in a measure of psychoanalysis, the translator can use his talents to dispose of these deforming tendencies. A novel is almost by nature "badly written" and we have to respect this unacceptable writing that is highly noteworthy. It may be badly

written because it doesn't conform to the "norms" of writing, employing undesirable syntax and vocabulary for example.

According to Berman, there are twelve almost inevitable deforming tendencies that serve as a basis in analyzing the translation of a novel:

1. Rationalization: refers to syntactic structures; not including poor writing in the text is tantamount to rationalizing it and destroys the concreteness of prose.
2. Clarification: when a definite term is used in expressing the indefinite of a source text; positive clarification makes explicit and thus sheds more light on the hidden elements of a translation, when seen from a new point of view; negative clarification brings to light what would otherwise remain obscure in the source text.
3. Expansion: often referred to as "over-translation," it's used in part because of the first two tendencies; may make the text more cumbersome.
4. Ennoblement and Vulgarization: ennoblement is a characteristic employed by the "*belles infidèles*" style of writing, consisting of rewriting at the expense of the source text; it dispenses with the oral and polylingual nature of communication; vernacular translation is favored over the oral one. Vulgarization, being the other side of the coin, or complementary to ennoblement, is meant for passages of text deemed too "popular," with an unquestioning recourse to a pseudo-slang that vulgarizes the original, or to a "spoken" language that only shows *confusion between the oral and the spoken*.
5. Qualitative Impoverishment: occurs when powerfully evocative terms are translated by terms lacking the same phonetics and meaning of the message.
6. Quantitative Impoverishment: takes place when a text possesses less signifiers in its translated form, referring to a signified concept, than there are in a source text; or, loss.
7. The Destruction of Rhythms: an unacceptable translation can greatly alter the rhythmic flow of a text, for example, and by changing its punctuation.
8. The Destruction of Underlying Networks of Signification: quite often in literary texts there exists a subtext containing keywords from the work; these signifiers

are *augmentatives* which strengthen the meaning of the work, and highlight the importance of rendering these networks in the translation in order to avoid a loss of meaning; there are also “groupings of major signifiers” that must be portrayed in the target text, consisting of signifiers around which a novel revolves.

9. The Destruction of Linguistic Patternings: these are found in style and in sentence construction; for instance, the use of certain tenses or subordinates qualifies as an essential system; deforming tendencies are capable of destroying the text’s systematic nature, by including some elements in the target text that the source text omits or excludes.
10. The Destruction of Vernacular Networks or their Exoticization: one would usually try to translate vernacular languages by exoticizing them, i.e. illustrating the word in italics, which can isolate, or by adding more information to make it more realistic; another way to translate the vernacular is to use a local vernacular, but this may not work because vernaculars are directly linked to a culture.
11. The Destruction of Expressions and Idioms: in Berman’s opinion, expressions and proverbs should be translated word-for-word and not by their equivalent expressions and proverbs.
12. The Effacement of the Superposition of Languages: herein lies the tendency to homogenize the target text, by not rendering the superposition of languages – or, the joint use of dialects and the common language, or two or more common languages.

The preceding analysis was meant to showcase these universal deforming tendencies that are inherent to translation as such. In the twentieth century, we are no longer bound by classical “norms,” but, nevertheless, these universal ones still persist.⁵

However, history changes languages constantly. Even if these deforming tendencies exist in a text, by virtue of the fact of inevitability, the history and evolution of a language would preclude the perfect or eternal translation. It then becomes a matter of recognizing and enhancing the status of the foreign, putting an emphasis on its worth and

prestige. We can adopt a policy of sacrificing our own “poetics” for the sake of stressing the literal form.

All the tendencies that Berman has treated in his theory arrive at the same result: They produce a “clearer,” more “elegant” text, one that “flows” better, and is “purer” than the original. They are tantamount to destruction of the letter at the expense of meaning. Berman favours more literary ventures in translating and in fashioning languages according to this principle. With the espousing of this course of action, he does not, nonetheless, advocate absolutism. As he states, “Every translation is, and must be, a restoration of meaning” (80). He does not wish to limit translation only to this boundary but to allow it to create and expand into the literal and bring out the fullness of its mission and potential to shape languages. The great western languages have evolved as much because of literality as with their preoccupation with meaning. If translation had been confined only to the restoration of meaning, it would never have had such a powerful trans-formative role.

This is why Bourdieu’s theory is so timely. Translators, or translator-agents, are pivotal in bringing about change and in transmitting a culture borrowed from elsewhere. They ride the fulcrum of this balance that exists between civilizations, and have endured the hardships of war, destruction and massive change, as well as the more enlightening aspects of religion, politics and culture when these “commodities” or institutions permit such pleasures.

When France was emerging from years of brutal war in the trenches and having been subjected to tremendous internal and external jolts, shocks, devastation and suffering, there appeared on the horizon a different culture and philosophy in the name of

America. Postif and Gruyer were ready to take on a role of transmitters of knowledge, and acted as translators would under the circumstances. Their position was central to the existing theme of the times, which was to put an end to all wars. But, at the same time, the translators were bona fide social *agents*, who would adjust their outlook to suit the purposes of the situation in order to fill their “[...] true role as practical operator[s] of the construction of objects” (Bourdieu, 1990, 13). We’re reminded again of Bourdieu’s standpoint, as the famous sociologist says that

[c]onstructing the notion of *habitus* [occurs] as a system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment (13).

Dispositions are key to Bourdieu and he does establish that

[...] [a]gents participate in accordance with their position in the social space and with the mental structures through which they apprehended this space (14).

Postif and Gruyer fit into this Bourdieusian mould in the sense that the turmoil in postwar France had left a cultural need for entertainment that the translators and many others were ready to fill. World War I had been a very shattering experience and can be considered as a seismic shift in the historical timeline of nations. The translators use of Bermanian deforming tendencies allowed for this kind of rationalization, clarification, addition, ennoblement and lengthening because they were acting within the bounds of the cultural conventions of the times and had been drawn, from time immemorial, to the social space that translators head for when these types of cultural changes arise. We can think of other colossal shifts in European history, from Charlemagne to the Renaissance and to Queen Victoria’s reign, as wars, trade patterns, social, religious and political movements

wrought change across the continent over a period of almost two thousand years. The ever-present variable of flux is perhaps a constant that determines our fate.

Concurrently, the notions that Bourdieu has put forward seem scientifically credible, as far as their validity is concerned. *Field*, *habitus*, and *illusio* have the right ingredients for plausibility. On the other hand, Postif and Gruyer, as translator-*agents*, would resort to some expedient measures that would put the textual message across, albeit with literary style. Cutting corners or using an intuitive sense of procedure, one that conforms to the target area's thirst for a sense of belonging and desire to vicariously live the exotic experience, becomes a commonplace occurrence in the translated text. Their intuition would dictate that a particular word or expression fits, is suitable, adequate or appropriate in a particular situation involving the text. In their own special way, they conform to the target area's aspiration to and an appetite for Americanness.

In addition, Postif and Gruyer's method would be inclined to correspond to the demands placed on it by the kind of literary translation geared towards children's maritime stories. As an example, Hump and Maude become engaged in the French text of *The Sea-Wolf*, whereas no mention is made of this betrothal in the English. Were French cultural attitudes more traditional in nature, or was there a more constrained sense of morality in France during the 1920s? Rules would have to be observed, even if the original text was freer. Self-imposed restrictions, had there been any, would enter the equation too. In our search, we will be looking for indications of cultural differences, among others, in the literary translation of the time and attempt to gauge the *field* in the translated text.

The difficulty here is how to transmit the message to the French public, without it sounding too foreign, but to nevertheless impart a kind of experience or however possibly real involvement or realistic participation to the target-area reader, with all the resounding impact that the inherent Americanness holds. The object is meant to transport the reader and sell large quantities of the translation, which, in its original English, was successful in America. The interaction between Bourdieu's variables and the Bermanian approach to translation will be looked at more fully in the pages that follow.

The balance between source and target that is needed here would necessarily shift at one time or another. Having determined that Americanness was the wave of the future, especially following the American victory in World War I and the soaring popularity of American culture, the translators may have latched onto a fascinating vehicle, one that would be of *interest* to them in the overarching Bourdieusian meaning of the word, and naturally, in the *game* itself. The bandwagon effect is definitely very strong, and is often realized in retrospect. Translation's portrayal of American culture was apparently a long-term proposition. The trend became an obsession and may have even been institutionalized by the various *agents* in the *field*, eager to earn their livelihood and participate in the *game*. Earning their living may have been a key consideration, when the social *agent*, his/her *habitus*, entered the market or arena and attempted to construct a work of art, or translation, within the then-bounds of a postwar France, still recovering from war and in need of exotic escapist entertainment.

A careful analysis of the French and English versions of *The Sea-Wolf* may divulge some interesting reasons behind the actions of the translators, compared with its more complex evolution throughout the decades following the publication of the French

version of *The Sea-Wolf*. By examining the interplay between the Bermanian and Bourdieusian, it's hoped that we may gain additional insight and knowledge into the inner workings of the modern budding field of translation.

c) Chapter 1

We can see from the start that “a hot and dusty existence in the city” becomes “l’atmosphère étouffante et poussiéreuse de la ville,” (London 1 respectively). The cultural difficulty in transmitting an acceptable message to the French reader is somewhat lessened by this modification and is evidence of target-orientedness.

A free spirit of translation is present. *Le Loup des mers*, as a translation, is an excellent example of the liberties taken by the translators to render it more acceptable in the French literary field. From the outset, we see that Gruyer and Postif employ a considerable degree of freedom, not only in sentence structure, use of French expressions and nuances of terms, but also in punctuation (which certainly qualifies as disturbing or altering the rhythmic flow), paragraph structure and perhaps even americanisms.⁶

More additions are included and clarifications are made for what is judged to be acceptable by the reader. For example, “I had little apprehension,” becomes “médiocrement rassuré,” (London 1, in both texts) perhaps to ensure a better flow. The change is obvious and there's somewhat of a leap from one state to the other. But, this can be attributed to the spirit that the translators have adopted, where additions and clarifications are used to keep the texts moving forward. “To lay hold of my imagination,” (1) is rendered by “philosopher” (2, in the French version), which is fine in concrete terms, but omits “imagination.” Incidentally, “[e]n proie à un malaise vague,”

(1) is used where “[...] I remember the placid exaltation [...]” is the original English (1). The change of meaning is evident.

The use of the *passé simple* brings an air of formality, but it does serve well, considering the story-telling aspect of the times. To this day, the *passé simple* is still used, with no real alternative for it in English. The above comments point to a kind of “déformation,” as cited by Berman, whether these are changes, additions or deletions. Perhaps we are on the road to a target-oriented acceptability where “déformation” is almost inevitable. Bringing all this to bear on our starting point, the target-oriented assumption, the latter could be reformulated to read as follows:

Translations are facts of target cultures; on occasion facts of a special status, sometimes even constituting identifiable (sub)systems of their own, but of the target culture in any event (Toury, 1995, 28-29).

It is clear that Postif and Gruyer had chosen to abide by an orientation that was significantly concentrated upon the target suitability of their translated text, even at this very early stage in the history of mass translation towards French.

Not only are paragraph structures not strictly observed in the French translation, but the translators use their role as cultural ambassadors, in a serious way, to welcome the “foreign” or source text into the host culture. They accomplish this with grace and agility, or with the use of a phrase, while respecting the source text and the target audience, at the same time. By a phrase, it is meant that a French term may be used to ease or slip into an ensuing topic or theme, without “disturbing” the flow or deviating too much from the overall meaning. These tools, as used by the translators, are important in “institutionalizing” the French translation and making it acceptable to the francophone

reader.⁷ They proceed in establishing a link between the original author and the target reader, a link that all good stories must observe, if they meet the required standards. A good story is one that brings magic to the reader, one that keeps him turning the pages and brings seat-of-the-pants excitement, satisfaction or a communicative resonance between the author and the reader. This would be a lengthy subject on its own, and would deserve more attention through a different medium.

Leaving things out, or by doing so, using a short phrase to generalize them, as with “certitudes mathématiques,” (3) to describe a series of steps in the navigation of a ship, in the English version, can become an often-used feature. The English use of prepositions is common, but a French translation doesn’t always apply and would have to be modified in many circumstances – “lean backwards against the air,” (3) becomes “comme s’il s’appuyait sur le brouillard” (3). “S’appuyer” suggests support, while “leaning backwards” refers to an action that is more energetic. At other times, by omitting a word or sentence, the reader is deprived of the knowledge of a detail that can shed some light on the proceedings, or on something that is of personal interest to the main character. Furthermore, the order in which the proceedings are conducted in a paragraph is, frequently, different. However, the order for the most part is observed. As a note of interest, “I looked to my companion for enlightenment” (4) is omitted in the French text, lending credence to Berman’s “appauvrissement quantitative.”

The difficulty of translation is obvious in the following example: “The while I thought I rode clear-eyed through the mystery” (5) is rendered by “sans m’en apercevoir, dans une brume passablement nébuleuse,” (5) which understandably has to undergo a series of logical steps to arrive at its French “equivalent.” These difficulties are many

and do require a short or long period of reflection, before they're set down on paper. Here, a degree of meaning is retained, but while “clear-eyed” and “mystery” stand out, as conjuring up images, “brume passablement nébuleuse” evokes a lesser or slightly different image, revolving more around “[la] brume nébuleuse.” This may be an example of the “appauvrissement qualitatif” that Berman had in mind when he referred to:

[I]l renvoie au remplacement de termes, expressions, tournures, etc. de l'original par des termes, expressions, tournures n'ayant ni leur richesse sonore, ni, corrélativement, leur richesse signifiante ou « iconique ». Est iconique le terme qui, par rapport à son référent, « fait image », produit une conscience de « ressemblance » (Berman, 74).

This skilful ability to ignite almost an instant image is one of the most useful tools in yielding reader interest.

Nuances of meaning appear once more as “comfortable [...] division” (2) becomes “avantageuse [...] la spécialisation” (2). Yet, while phrases are taken from one sentence and fused onto another, in the same paragraph, it is noted that part of a sentence, for instance, “sufficed for many thousands of people who knew no more of the sea and navigation than I knew” (2), is left out in the French version. Furthermore, “I concentrated it on a few particular things” (2) becomes “m’adonner avec fruit à d’autres études plus spéculatives” (2). It is apparent that liberties are definitely taken to render the French text more readable and “friendlier” to its target audience, in terms of the then-usage, a Bermanian quality of “littérisation,” or second nature inherent to translators. The preoccupation towards target-orientedness is there to please and to refrain from sounding too foreign.⁸ Therefore, embellishments do take place as well, perhaps to further underline a point or make the translation sound more “holistic” or complete.

By page 2, “[...] Jeter sur mon calepin quelques notes” is an outcome of “I made a mental note of the topic”. The end result can be conceivably the same; however, the means of achieving it is altered (as the former is “active,” while the latter is “passive”), and as the original English expression may not have surfaced in France until later. Transformation of the original occurs quite often. “Keen enjoyment” (2) is removed, but is then extrapolated to become “enchanté de me faire un brin de conversation,” (3) further down the line. The translators do command a certain presence with this kind of intervention, as skilled intermediaries should. Nevertheless, this is a subject of major debate and of equally strong controversy that is better suited to experts in the field, who hold learned views on the issue.

d) Differences in Translation and Berman’s Stance

In returning to *The Sea-Wolf’s* chapter 1, we can discern that Postif and Gruyer resort to a double negative to describe what is essentially a positive way of “gazing with a like intentness,” (5) or “fixant, avec non moins d’attention” (5). “Rage” (6) becomes “terreur” (5) or, alternately, when an expression or comment in either language has different connotations or sets a different tone, these may be said to be an expression of the transformations carried out throughout the translation.

“The screaming bedlam of women” (7) is translated by the use of several sentences describing a frightful scene of chaos and confusion when the passenger ferry, the *Martinez*, is struck by what turns out to be the schooner, the *Ghost*. The translators use their imagination, as this addition is arrived at through inventiveness. Berman would

refer to it as “un allongement.” Omission crops up again, further on, but the essence of the story is retained.

Through the interplay of words such as “sudden laughter” and “hysterical,” (7) with “comique involontaire” and “éclater de rire” (7), we see a different interpretation of a fictional moment aboard the *Martinez*. It’s a matter of opinion as to whether this constitutes “un ennoblissement,” or a preference for the polite term, shunning the pejorative, “hysterical.”

The scene aboard the *Martinez* evolves to the point where pandemonium is the order of the day. The use of “devant cette *triviale* analogie (italics ours), l’horreur qui était en moi [...]” (7) describes a moment when the women were facing imminent drowning. They are then compared with “squealing pigs under the knife of a butcher” (7). The original English states “horror at the vividness of the analogy.” We are again reminded that in today’s times of political correctness and increased preciseness, this appears as a Bermanian “destruction des systématismes internes d’un texte,” in which,

[l]e systématisme du texte dépasse le niveau des signifiants, des métaphores, etc. : il s’étend au type de phrases, de constructions de phrases employées. L’emploi des temps peut être un tel systématisme ; le recours à un tel type de subordonnées (le “*because*” de Faulkner cité par Gresset). C’est tout le système qu’étudie Spitzer à propos de Racine ou de Proust, et qu’il appelle encore le « style » (Berman 77).

In this case, rationalization does occur, but the reasons for it are speculative. Rationalization may be present too when “I was seized by the consequent panic,” (8) is changed to “Je fis comme tout le monde,” (8) to describe Humphrey’s leap into the frigid waters when the *Martinez* began to sink.

Another instance of “ennoblissement,” or ennoblement, is noted when “[...] a gray primordial vastness” (9) is translated by “une immensité grise, pareille à celle des premiers âges du monde” (9). The adjective precedes the noun, “ages,” and recalls an as yet embryonic and undeveloped time dating back tens of thousands of years, as the world emerged from some form of cataclysmic event. Still on page 9, “a great foaming and gurgling” is translated by “un large sillon d’écume,” reinforcing the regular placing of the adjective before the noun. We may revert to a source-oriented nature that conjures up intense reflections in the imaginations of both the French and English readers. A second look at Berman’s citation would uncover that we may be witnessing yet another example of,

[c]’est un *patchwork* de différents types d’écriture employés par le traducteur (comme l’ennoblissement plus la vulgarisation là où l’original n’est qu’oralité). Et cela découle aussi de la position du traducteur qui, au fond, recourt à toutes les lectures pour traduire l’original. Si bien que la traduction risque toujours d’apparaître comme *homogène et incohérente* à la fois [...] (77).

When Humphrey experiences a period of “a madness [that] seize[s] [him]” (9), the French translation, despite mentioning “une crise passagère de folie,” is prompted to refer to it next as “un état indéfinissable [...]” (9). Madness would decidedly qualify as a recurring theme in *The Sea-Wolf*, or be a *leitmotiv*, especially when taken in both its senses. We will determine later whether this can be considered as a kind of “destruction des réseaux signifiants sous-jacents,” as enunciated by Berman in the following description:

C’est donc le *sous-texte*, qui porte le réseau des mots-obsessions de l’œuvre. [...] [O]n trouve à d’assez grandes distances les uns des autres – parfois dans des chapitres différents – et sans que le contexte justifie ou appelle leur

emploi, un certain type de mots qui atteste la présence d'une obsession, d'une hantise, d'une perception particulière (75 – 76).

We must remember as well that the addition of “cet état indéfinissable” may indicate a concession towards a French way of describing such an overwhelming state of being, and thus be designated here as more target-oriented.

As we proceed, we distinguish that “my arms were heavy and lifeless” (10) as having been translated by “Mes bras refusèrent de m'obéir” (9), suggesting rationalization. It does transmit the apparent meaning, but it skips from the concrete to the abstract. In the same paragraph, (10), “Again I strove to call out, but made no sound,” is retold in French by “Mon gosier n'émit aucun son” (10). “Gosier” may be viewed as a popularization, almost bordering on a Bermanian “vulgarization,” but not of the most indelicate kind. Comparatively speaking, “[...] [d]oing little else than smoke a cigar” (10) is elevated to “[...] avoir pour unique occupation de fumer un cigare” (10), suggesting “ennoblissement.”

During a moment of suspense in the novel, “But his eyes did light upon me, and look squarely into mine; and he did see me [...]” (10) is rationalized into “Nos yeux, au contraire, se croisèrent” (10). One is reminded of Berman's :

Cette rationalisation/abstraction est d'autant plus pernicieuse qu'elle n'est pas *totale*. Et que son sens est de ne pas l'être. Car elle se contente d'*inverser* le rapport du formel et de l'informel, de l'ordonné et du désordonné, de l'abstrait et du concret qui prévaut dans l'original. Cette conversion – typique de la traduction ethno-centrique – fait que l'œuvre, sans paraître changer de forme et de sens, change de *signe*, de *statut*. [...] [L]a rationalisation déforme l'original en *inversant* sa tendance de base (72).

At the end of London's chapter, a part of the sentence "and tried with all the power of my will to fight above the suffocating blankness and darkness that *was* (italics mine) rising around me" (10 – 11), is entirely omitted in the French version. This could have to do with the fact that its latter elements are somewhat loosely repeated towards the end of the chapter.⁹

The deforming tendencies and the original plot of *The Sea-Wolf* act to evoke a kind of fear which reaches a crescendo or peak at numerous times in the text, drawing the young readers ever more intensively into the story and keeping his/her interest alive throughout. This has all the hallmarks of a successful and therefore popular book, as word-of-mouth and acclaim from different readerships bring in more sales and raise the awareness and fame of the author. Moreover, it is in keeping with the kind of story line that other sea novels possess, where heroes confront various forms of adversity, personal drama and seemingly unbeatable odds and tragedy, but who emerge from their fear, hardships and tribulations as true heroes so often do, leaving a legacy in their fictional lives, as well as in their "real" lives as the literary persona begins to take on the features of the fictional hero.

As we move to other examples in the text we will delve more extensively into the special characteristics that appear as outstanding Bermanian phenomena and attempt to establish whether a link exists between the theoretical position that Berman has advocated and the gathering of data on the analytical front. Berman's theory has so far generated illustrations that seem to point to the likelihood that deforming tendencies are present and that the act of translation is strewn with these almost automatic and well thought-out acts that translators are capable of producing.

e) Chapter 20 in English and French

“The young slip of a gale, having wetted our gills” (190) becomes “parmi quelques averses qui nous firent que nous mouiller les joues” (174). We can immediately discover the transformation of a “gale” or storm, into “quelques averses,” or a toning down of the imagery, provided by the French version. “Gale” is often used to describe a real tempest at sea, and in many maritime novels, whereas here it is used in dealing with adventure-chasing seafarers, who set out to conquer the sea and reap its rewards. Postif and Gruyer could have chosen a more biting term, but clearly for the sake of brevity, and perhaps flow and ease of reading, may have opted for a lesser equivalent in “parmi quelques averses,” which is not as descriptive as its English counterpart. The word “gills” is absolutely a marine term – having been resurrected here to describe the unlikely creatures of the sea – or Hump and the rest of the crew, in a setting fit to be called their own. The word “gill” is primarily used in reference to “fish” or marine animals which possess them for the purpose of their breathing mechanism. “Joues” is therefore quite a leap – physically, in the grand evolutionary sense, and figuratively – from the original term. Overall, these two instances represent an “appauvrissement qualitatif,” while delivering a particular message to the reader.

In terms of Hump’s, “[...] I know that I was a bit shy, not quite self-possessed” (191), the French translation mentions that Hump is “un peu ému” (174) – the complete idea of Hump’s emotion having been jettisoned in favor of a shorter version. However, further down, on the same pages, it is Wolf Larsen who is described as “[c]e n’était pas qu’il fût précisément intimidé.” Larsen is not attributed this trait that Hump may be guilty of instead.

The omission of phrases in the French text and the resulting attribution of meaning to other people or things again raise the point of how the translators enjoyed a high level of liberty in their pursuit of the translating task. Another example of this method can be seen in “[...] he replied, nodding to me with a mischievous twinkle” (191). The French counterpart consists of “Il fit un geste vers moi, et reprit” (175). This benign generality somehow loses the clear sparkle and definitiveness that the original possesses, both in “mischievous” and in “twinkle.” We witness another instance of “appauvrissement qualitatif” as explained by Berman.

In the core sense of translation, Louis Postif and Paul Gruyer are very committed to their work and very adept at expressing the underlying meaning, thrust and goal of *The Sea-Wolf*. Nevertheless, expediency, or resorting to editorial measures of convenience, is often employed to work around difficulties. Page 192 illustrates that point, when Humphrey says: “But I had decided that the part I was to play was a neutral one, so I did not answer.” Its French twin becomes: “Je jugeai plus prudent de rester muet en cette affaire et gardai le silence” (175). This sentence calls attention to the idea of neutrality, as it is missing, and deepens the meaning of “silence” in the French version, as it is evoked twice, through “muet” and “silence” itself. We may thus infer a kind of subtraction from the original in this latter sense, as the idea of “rester neutre” is absent. Neutrality in political situations sometimes becomes indispensable. Interestingly enough, the French words chosen, “[...] [j]udged it more prudent to remain silent [...],” giving us an appraisal of the whole situation in which Hump had found himself, leaves the word “decided” to its more mundane meaning in the original English. We may so conclude that a kind of over-translation has occurred, where the translators, through their bird’s eye

view, reckoned that it was wise to use the word “judge” over its English corresponding part.

The borrowing of phrases from one sentence and paragraph and its reinsertion in another, just preceding or further along in the French text, is common:

“Not that he is much to speak of now,” Wolf Larsen went on, “but he has improved wonderfully. You should have seen him when he came on board. A more scrawny, pitiful specimen of humanity one could hardly conceive. Isn’t that so, Kerfoot?” (192)

And its French counterpart,

Mr. Van Weyden a parlé ! déclara Loup Larsen. Il faut nous en tenir à son opinion. Oh, ce n’est pas que ce soit, au total, un homme d’une valeur considérable... Mais il parle ici par expérience. Son séjour sur le *Fantôme* lui a été, à lui-même, on ne peut plus profitable. J’aurais voulu que vous le vissiez quand il vint à bord. Il était difficile d’imaginer un spécimen d’homme plus pitoyable. N’est-ce pas, Kerfoot? (175).

“But he has improved wonderfully [...]” becomes, “Son séjour sur le *Fantôme* lui a été, à lui-même, on ne peut plus profitable.” The concept of improvement has an inherent meaning of “goodness” whereas “profitable” is more general and does not address a specific aspect of Humphrey’s behavior. Moreover, it is “séjour” or his time on board *The Ghost* that is the object of description. The English phrase refers to Humphrey directly as somehow having taken charge of his own behavior and having consciously improved it, as a matter of choice. The word “scrawny” in the French is omitted, yielding an “appauvrissement quantitatif” and “qualitative.”

“Developed himself by peeling potatoes and washing dishes. Eh, Kerfoot?” (192) is transformed into “– Mais il est en notable progrès, je le reconnais, continua Loup Larsen. C’est en pelant des pommes de terre et en lavant la vaisselle qu’il est devenu

quelqu'un. Hein, Kerfoot?" (176). Here, we see the positioning of the phrase "Mais il est en notable progress," to depict Humphrey's developmental trajectory, alluding to his "profitable" experience and time on board *The Ghost*, in other words, his "séjour." We are gently reminded of Wolf Larsen's English declaration that Hump "has improved wonderfully," cited a few sentences earlier in the English text, but inserted here for effect and continuity. As mentioned previously, this special skill is used very frequently.

Page 193 is indicative of yet another deforming tendency:

"The hunters were snickering, but she looked at me with sympathy in her eye which more than compensated for Wolf Larsen's nastiness. In truth, it had been so long since I had received sympathy that I softened, and I became then, and gladly, her willing slave. But I was angry with Wolf Larsen. He was challenging my manhood with his slurs, challenging the very legs he claimed to be instrumental in getting for me."

And in the French version,

Les chasseurs de phoques riaient sous cape et j'étais furieux contre Loup Larsen, qui insultait, devant une femme, à ma dignité d'homme et raillait les jambes qu'il prétendait m'avoir données.

Mais l'inconnue, au lieu de rire de moi, me considérait avec une évidente sympathie. Elle comprenait, sans aucun doute, que j'étais une victime. Et, de cet instant, toute la morgue factice que j'avais affectée vis-à-vis d'elle tomba. Je me sentis devenir son très humble et très dévoué serviteur (176).

In this case, we notice that sympathy is repeated a second time in the English quotation. With this in mind, the French translation is considerably altered. We again see that transposition of one phrase from one part of a paragraph to another, namely, "[...] raillait les jambes qu'il prétendait m'avoir données." Mockery is one thing, but slurs and challenges are quite different, especially in the context of this scene of interaction

between the characters. Strikingly enough, “devant une femme” is an addition to the French, despite its implicit nature in the English version.

Even more singularly, “toute la morgue factice que j’avais affectée vis-à-vis d’elle” is used by the translators to portray, “[i]t had been so long since I had received sympathy [from Maud] [...]” “Morgue factice” is false pride or haughtiness, while receiving sympathy from Maud changes the meaning completely. This may be due to the fact that in the original English “sympathy” is used twice and that the translators were diligent enough to spot this and correct – or perhaps deform – the French version by inserting what they thought would be appropriate. In the event, this alteration causes a shift in the perception of the personal dynamics between the novel’s two main protagonists, Humphrey and Maud.

Page 195 of the English chapter tells the reader that “[...] [s]he was frightened and bewildered, and that she was bravely striving to hide it, was plain to me.” The French “equivalent” or “approximation,” depending on the reader’s point of view, is “ Et j’eus peine, pour elle, de son désarroi, qu’elle tentait de dissimuler de son mieux” (178). We are presented with a few elements with this example: The idea of fright or terror and bewilderment is rather condensed into “désarroi,” which is one of the states we have grown accustomed to, as a kind of recurring theme in the novel. Added to this is the description of humiliation that Hump has been subjected to, and we are not surprised at this upsetting state felt by most people on board *The Ghost*. The disarray forms a backdrop, all the more accentuated here, due to the lead-up that London has penned. Its generalness however is more evident in that the states of fear and bewilderment are not spelled out as such. We estimate therefore that we see a rationalization that is taking

place through the use of “*désarroi*,” which puts an image across to the reader, but does not pinpoint the causes (of intense fear and profound bewilderment) in as straightforward a way. This rationalization carries traces of qualitative impoverishment in its wake as well.

The translators have been skilled at crafting their work in a way that delivers the message and keeps the reader in the same suspense-like mode of thinking that London was capable of creating in the minds of Anglophone readers. But, in this use of rationalization, clarification, qualitative and quantitative impoverishment, destruction of English expressions (or a downgrading of the source language text), and a large number of other “deforming tendencies,” we can appreciate that a certain loss occurs in relation to the source language original. We, as readers, want to experience the adventure and excitement that London has in store for us. We have been informed for decades, since its inception, of that spectacular country to the west of France and its most daring and thrilling culture, on the move, growing and building itself ever-westward, towards the shores of the Pacific and beyond. It has assisted us in our battles and War against our enemy, just as we are now emerging from that horrific time of senseless suffering and pointless annihilation, which ravaged our country and cost the lives of millions of people. Now, we wish to partake of America’s culture in a more lively way, for it provides hope and helps us to identify with its literary characters, such as the figures in London’s work. We feel as though we are present in the story, the inhospitable locales and the exoticism, through the translation brought to life by Postif and Gruyer.

We rush headlong into this proposition and are content to enjoy its entertainment value, informative aspects and sheer scale and daring of the interacting characters in the

novel. This is a start for some French readers, not yet familiar with the cultural fare that was to be consumed and followed by an even more massive conquest of culture in subsequent decades. Translators would be Bourdieu's agents-in-waiting, as the capture of culture, its expansion and influence were to gain a firm footing in diverse parts of the world, for the purpose of delivering a message, meeting or exceeding expectations and carrying out financial transactions in the process.

Page 196 features an expression of interest. In response to Wolf Larsen's question about Maud's history of work, she replies: "Yes, I have [worked]," she answered slowly, and I could have laughed aloud at his crestfallen visage." For its part, the French version says: "Mais, certainement... répondit-elle lentement, en pesant ses paroles, tandis que s'allongeait le nez de Loup Larsen" (179 – 180). The two characters in question are related by the fact of their conversational exchange. However, since Wolf Larsen is seen as a villain, it is *his* nose that seems to be growing, Pinocchio-style, in its French counterpart, even though Maud is put on the spot for a truthful answer. No mention is made in the English text of anyone being economical with the truth. The roles are somehow reversed. Larsen's "crestfallen face," "visage triste," in the strict, perhaps general sense of the word, has been transformed to suit the impulse or freedom that the translators saw fit to employ, probably for effect, and in an attempt to further vilify Wolf Larsen and his ferocity.

On another point in the same vein, "Maud answer[s] slowly," whereas in French, Maud is "carefully weighing her words." The meaning has changed, but the overall purpose of the exercise is maintained. In Berman's words, we may have here a case of "clarification," where the indefinite is made more definite. Incidentally, Maud's

reticence could have been due to her dread and fear at finding herself in this situation, in the first place. In the case of the Pinocchio-style analogy, we may perhaps be witnessing a situation where the translators became a little more enthusiastic and decided to elaborate further, in their own way of judgment.

Page 197 reveals another example of rationalization when Maud is "...[t]oo unused as yet to the whims of the man to accept them with equanimity." The French refers to her as "[n]'était pas suffisamment accoutumée aux sautes de caractère de Loup Larsen, pour les subir sans trouble" (180). "Equanimity" is a state of evenness of character. "Trouble" is a variance, but does not bring out a complete sense of that feeling of steadiness and coolness of spirit that people long for.

When Humphrey Van Weyden discovers the identity of Maud Brewster, he tells himself, "[...] I was proud that it did mean something to me, and for the first time in a weary while I was convincingly conscious of a superiority over him" (197). The French version does not include Humphrey's preceding thoughts, which are à propos here, because of the back-and-forth figurative sparring that has been occurring between Humphrey and Wolf Larsen, especially in the presence of the lady. Humphrey's reflections add an interesting remark, but are by no means absolutely essential. Once more, we do see a case of rationalization taking place.

Page 198 contains a full paragraph of about five or six sentences that are summarized into two in the French translation (181), leaving out details of this first encounter between Maud and Humphrey, who are trying to place each other, as they deliver compliments of a poetic nature one to the other:

"We can measure the unknown only by the known," I replied, in my finest academic manner. "As a critic I was

compelled to place you. You have now become a yardstick yourself. Seven of your thin little volumes are on my shelves; and there are two thicker volumes, the essays, which, you will pardon my saying, and I know not which is flattered more, fully equal your verse. The time is not far distant when some unknown will arise in England and the critics will name her the English Maud Brewster.”

“You are very kind, I am sure,” she murmured; and the very conventionality of her tones and words, with the host of associations it aroused of the old life on the other side of the world, gave me a quick thrill – rich with remembrance but stinging sharp with homesickness [...].”

And the French text’s version,

Et ce bref colloque, le ton châtié de mon interlocutrice, l’atticisme mutuel de nos propos, firent soudain resurgir en moi l’image de ma vie passée. Tout un monde disparu, riche en souvenirs nostalgiques, s’était réveillé dans mon esprit, en un douloureux frisson (181).

The second English paragraph of one or two sentences is greatly left out and thus forms part of this rationalization of ample scale. It is as though an adaptation of sorts has taken place in which a summary of thoughts are condensed into a shortened form. In terms of meaning, “... s’était réveillé dans mon esprit, en un douloureux frisson” is quite a distance away from “... gave me a quick thrill.” “Thrill” has more of an association with a feeling of happiness, momentary as it is, but a shiver or shudder connotes more of an unpleasant sensation, especially when sadness is related to it. “Thrill” may have developed over time to describe a positive, if somehow risky, feeling, even though it may still have a remnant significance connected to it, for example, with a fever or cold or state of fear.

Towards the end of this chapter (pages 199 and 182 of the English and French texts, respectively), Maud and Humphrey have finally discovered each other’s identity, as the famous poetess and the renowned critic. Incidentally, the professions of the couple

are revealed in the French version, but only alluded to in the English one. Slightly prior to that, upon receiving a generous compliment from Maud, Humphrey replies, “Not at all,” “I denied valiantly,” (198) while the French omits this gallant reference to his credit and bravery. Do we then begin to observe a budding attraction between the pair, one that the translators would conceive of, having had foreknowledge of *The Sea-Wolf*? Upon being asked whether he was on *The Ghost* to gather material for his forthcoming novel, Humphrey states that he, “[has] neither aptitude nor inclination for fiction” (199). How ironic this appears to be, given London’s prodigious work in this realm and his runaway success! In addition, this part of Humphrey’s answer has been left out in the French, having been rationalized too.

Page 199 has one more rationalization, when Humphrey recounts that he, “... [b]roke short off in the middle of a sentence...,” or “Je m’arrêterai de parler...” (182). We notice that quantitative impoverishment in relation to the source text is evident, as it contains a lesser number of reference terms compared with the original. Overall, this chapter is replete with such instances, as we identify a continuity of this kind of rationalization and related “deforming tendencies” that serve the purpose of putting the message across to the reader. Simultaneously, they seem to rely on the notion that through their use, the translators are creating a product which is meant to be launched onto the French market, with many bells and whistles, destined to enrapture French fans of the then- and now-famous American novelist, as both he and the social forces behind him, even down to the last identifiable *agent*, work to put across this American Dream, by means of a labyrinth of social interactions.

f) *The Sea-Wolf's* Chapter 30 and *Le Loup des mers'* Chapter 29

From the very start on page 284, chapter 30's first sentence states, "No wonder we called it Endeavor Island." With the help of rearranging the punctuation and incidentally incorporating chapter 30's second sentence into the first, the French equivalent on page 250 for "No wonder..." is "... digne du nom que nous avons donné à notre île..." This exemplifies how, at times, an English expression is not and cannot be rendered by a closer or more precise definition in its French form. Berman would have perhaps shuddered at the thought of leaving out such source-oriented originalities in meaning by referring more to "worth" rather than "wonder," spotlighting a destruction of expressions – which by most standards of measure – would not fit in the French language, as a matter of convention.

A few lines down in this same first paragraph, London speaks of Maud's "...pittance of strength bending to the tasks of a peasant woman..." "Pittance" in English alludes to an allotment or small portion (quantity) of something that Maud, "... avec sa misérable force, à se plier à une besogne de femme du peuple" cannot bring about too fully. This may be a "vulgarisation" in Berman's terms, as the quantity of Maud's strength is reduced to a state of "pitiful" strength that the observer can become conscious of and sympathize with. On the other hand, by some estimates, "femme du peuple" may be considered to be more along the lines of a populist leading figure, or someone who works for general social, political or economic purposes, in traditional politics or industrial concerns. Even though a peasant woman does not, for the most part, share these (pre)-occupations, the elevation to this status by the translators, may be deemed a Bermanian "ennoblissement."

We encounter ennoblement once more on page 251, as we notice that “J’étais un médiocre tireur” is chosen for “I did not know how to shoot, but I proceeded to learn” (284). Again, being unknowledgeable about something is raised to mediocre status by the translators, who impart some, if little, skill to the main character, whereby outright unawareness is avoided. Humphrey’s willingness to learn qualifies as ennoblement as well, in the reverse sense of the rationale. His willingness, though, is omitted in the French text.

On page 285, Humphrey is quoted as saying “We must club the seals,” I announced, when convinced of my poor marksmanship,” divulging another representative situation of quantitative impoverishment, coupled with qualitative impoverishment, as “...when convinced of my poor marksmanship...” is edited out of the French text. This shows that a pattern is emerging in the French version, where the French translators have been using a method that, so far, has been replete with this type of “translative” or “translational” maneuver, meant to speed up the process of translation. Had they dwelt much further on the translation, they may have surmised that the length could have been somewhat excessive. A good portion of parts of the latter chapters of the English original have been struck out, and overall, the French version is substantially more condensed, which would ordinarily not be the case, vis-à-vis an English text. The total number of English chapters is 39, by far eclipsing the French translation’s figure of 33, when we would have by and large expected the opposite to be true. This brings to the fore the usual standard of longer French versions of English texts, in the general scheme of things.

When faced with the task of building a hut for their protection and shelter, Humphrey and Maud confront each other over the issue of clubbing seals for their fur (285 and 251). Maud recoils at the prospect, but at Humphrey's insistence and explanation that their security is paramount over the existence of the seals, they agree to proceed, while Maud decides to refrain from looking at selected intervals. The English text enters into a discussion of about eight or nine sentences of exchange between the couple, which the French text either briefly summarizes or excludes. The French reader quickly moves onto the next fast-moving sequence or continuation of this challenge faced by the two, but is left rather quantitatively and qualitatively impoverished – especially as we can gain an inside view into what would develop most certainly between the couple concerned, as a man and a woman of the times.

There takes place a similar exchange between Maud and Humphrey, but a few lines further down in the English text, over the apprehension felt by the two, if they invaded the seals' territory and attempted to club the seals to provide for the roof of their hut. A set of eight or nine sentences is again left out, leading the reader to deduce that the resulting quantitative and qualitative impoverishment is due to reasons of expediency, as both the translators and the publisher would be most keen to see that the work is put to market most swiftly.

We notice another similar but shorter exchange of quantitative and qualitative impoverishment occurring, and as a pattern has thus been unfolding, it lends more credence to it. Still, both in today's and yesteryear's terms, this kind of impoverishment entails that the target market is somehow deprived of a male-female overview providing insight into the sexes roughly a century ago.

We do come upon other examples of expressions in English being translated by other expressions in French. But, crucially, in many instances the meaning is sought, either directly or indirectly. The French version by Postif and Gruyer is definitely commendable, with descriptive passages bringing out much meaning, solid substance and powerful images – as London would have surely approved of. In looking back now, some ninety years later, it may have been preferable to have reconsidered including some of the omitted passages, for the sake of greater depth and richness. In all fairness, ennoblement and other cases of qualitative addition are common traits.

Maud's reaction to the sequence of events leading up to the capture of seals is questioned by Humphrey. He forcefully, if laughingly, asserts: "It seems to me that your fighting instinct is aroused..." (288). The French speaks of Maud's "goût du meurtre," (254) as having reached her, thereby in some way deranking the "fighting instinct" that one usually associates with a sense of positivism and bravery in the face of imminent danger. It triggers a response from us that a "vulgarisation" has taken place, which may have brought about a reaction of sympathy from the francophone reader, at to Maud's daring ability, tenacity, fortitude and willingness to see this episode through, since the reality of the fast-moving events around the couple unraveled. It was literally a question of survival.

This section is next accompanied by another conversation between Maud and Humphrey, which is omitted in large part in the French text. Humphrey's sortie among the seals is something that he approaches with a great deal of consternation. "[B]ut I confess my heart was in my mouth as I thought of going through the heart of that monstrous herd" (289). The French does seize a fine portion of the meaning in "Ce n'est

pas sans émotion, et sans un tremblement nerveux, que la jeune femme et moi, nous nous engageâmes au milieu du monstrueux troupeau” (254). Granted that he feels nervous energy and emotion in his heart, but the idea of his heart in his mouth raises the question of alarm, dread and anxiety, as he and Maud try to escape the herd of seals. Perhaps the French equivalent does not fully describe the fright and apprehension one would expect to feel in a similar situation. (Incidentally, the word “heart” is repeated once more in the original English sentence.) For these reasons, there may exist here a qualitative impoverishment, as the sentence is rendered among more general lines of expression than an open and direct translation would warrant.

The next few English paragraphs that deal with the beleaguered couple’s escape from the herd are almost adapted into the French, with significant portions missing, but, nevertheless, all the while retaining the onward thrust and direction of the story. Short summaries of paragraphs are presented and the main points are covered, and emotions and the environment are described to the point of virtually being able to be heard amid the clamor of the passage. This “adaptation” of sorts, and the term is employed only very loosely, would perhaps be a common characteristic, as segments of a number of the latter chapters of the text are removed and condensed. Hence, wholesale deletions are quite common and this would qualify as a feature that would bind the novel with a more clearly open and transparent form of adaptation. (However, this is not to say that the translated novel is manifestly an adaptation.)

Bourdieu’s outlook will also be revisited shortly in order to ascertain if the translators have conformed to the notion that, as *agents* in the realm of translation, they’ve responded to the impulses that the theoretical perspective demands of them.

Since there's a relationship between the translation and the original work, we'll try to establish, in the concluding remarks section of our work, whether the French *field* and the translators' *habitus* have interacted in the way that Bourdieu has suggested. We have to keep in mind that the *field* is narrowed down more precisely for the American text and the French text, as opposed to the more general space that is at times alluded to. Publishers and other *agents* will be looked at to uncover clues towards the kind of roles they play in the process of institutionalizing the translator's task and towards their fields of endeavor, as they join other participants to aim for a successful venture.

We have therefore witnessed a merging of the Bermanian and Bourdieusian spheres into a gel which can be considered as the outcome or legacy left for us by Berman, Bourdieu and the translators: a veritable treasure trove meant to inform, educate and entice readers who perhaps would not ordinarily look too deeply into the reasoning or rationale behind a translation. Whereas Berman and Bourdieu have to be honoured for their accomplishments, ordinary *agents* must also be cited, recognized, acknowledged and thanked for their participation in the *game* and their struggle to achieve the level of *illusio* that many yearn for.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It almost becomes a matter of course to see more additions and omissions as the text progresses. These and other deforming tendencies come to the fore very often, as there materializes a clear pattern incorporating them throughout the novel. The translators have seen to it that these maneuvers are employed to make the French text more culturally suitable to the average French, if not francophone reader. Postif and Gruyer had found themselves in the French cultural milieu and, as agents playing the game, they were more prone to underpin the Frenchness and French cultural context in that respect, perhaps as second nature, without thinking, and even strongly reflecting in their use of terms which were part of the mainstream of the French literary circles, whether high or more popular in their drive.

When the intricate web of associations and relationships is examined, it will be fascinating to learn of its contribution to the production of a translated work. Not everyone would necessarily collaborate openly, with deliberation, willingly or involuntarily. The signs would point to such *fields* as the author, genre, public, publisher, translators and their interrelationships. It can be said that they belong to their own field, but to the complex web of interrelationships as a whole too. How institutionalized are they? To what degree would they cooperate in the translation venture? How would the translators' input be viewed in relation to Berman's theory of tendencies that deform the original? By analyzing the evidence, we will try to establish whether the theory carries the weight it's reported to exert. An evaluation of our findings, accompanied by a further interpretation and commentary will thus follow.

Yet, it is as though the French rendition harks to capture an "Americanness" or a feeling of the then-prevalent Americanness, and bring it into the French milieu. By

Americanness, it is meant that present in the text are the spirit of adventure, conquest, a sense of expansiveness bordering on dominance, as well as a feeling that anything is possible, a kind of boundless, self-justified rationalization of America's place in the world. These characteristics are imported into literature for youth, but in accordance with French literary methods and values. As the translators proceed in their work, their background is almost inevitably transmitted in the finished translation product. They don the mantle of upper-middle-class status, and they are thus capable of conveying their values and pursuits in this, their form of expression. France's culture is accordingly communicated to the consumer, or francophone reader, through the mediating eyes of the translators. It may therefore be said that literature for youth and literature for the masses do overlap to a degree.

Although the story of the novel is told in superb language, the more detailed and unabridged English version brings out a completeness and preciseness of meaning that the true connoisseur of London would revel in. Bourdieu's assertion that *agents* adjust their *habitus* to different circumstances to improve their aims, is more apparent in the case of the translators' drive to produce a work emanating from a culture and civilization that would proceed to deluge the entire world with the double impact of its very presence. Overwhelmed as France was by this unexpected and unprecedented level of power, it must be added that the whole world bore the brunt of this twentieth century meteor that shook many different worlds and cultures.

Most importantly, we are still subject to the globalized impact and instantaneous communications links that American culture sends across its frontiers to the four corners of the world. These connections are being perfected and rendered ever more efficient and

powerful, while the velocity of the technological strides being made in this field shrink the planet, and interfere with and/or outstrip our ability to adapt and adjust. Bourdieu would admit that we adjust to certain situations, but if we reach a point where the rate of the technological advances we are capable of is overriding and unbearable to the languages and cultures that crisscross international borders, how could we then adjust to new realities and to the competitive nature of the cultural consumer goods that we produce? The globalization process can be so cold and unforgiving that it can leave the unprepared to one side, while a prominent cultural vehicle holds sway.

The total impact on millions of such fairly educated readers of the French translation of *The Sea-Wolf* cannot be accurately or scientifically determined, but it nevertheless does create a tidal wave, culturally speaking. Perhaps it's less massive than the one that instant communications shocks currently deliver. The scale may have been mitigated in the 1920s, but it would steadily march forth on the cultural continuum, despite momentous political, military, economic, historical, social, demographic and cultural changes.

France in the 1920s was more sensitive to foreign methods and foreign culture, considering the full impact of America on the world at that time. Berman's assertion and kinship with the foreign can unfortunately be exaggerated. If American usage or Americanness is taken too far, does it not risk being a catalyst for one's own cultural dilution? I believe Western Europe was in fact very unprepared for the forthcoming immense wave of Americanness of culture, military and scientific technology and know-how and the historical watershed of World War II. Predictions of the consequences of World War I and its aftermath defied belief; they were completely stupendous, if not

foreseeable. World War I, after all, was meant to be the war to end all wars. We may rest assured though, if not consoled, that the impact has been striking.

Even today, as we move more deeply into the twenty-first century, the prospect of partaking of another different culture is a daunting one. If one decides to do so, and engages in it to a considerable degree, it is very often a matter of economic survival, if not overt cultural interest. Modern globalization is a question of an immense cultural wave and those who share and participate in it may not be able to fully cope with its consequences. We only have to look around us to see the effects of globalization and cultural shift, as the additional evidence of social and economic influence and power are present in our lands and adopted products of the mind and body. The globalization blitz is a serious challenge to any country. In the final analysis, it depends on the individual and his or her sense of willingness to take part in the changes that lie before us, and how best to cope with the cultural experiment that globalization presents.

The cultural changes may even have been initiated by the gradual entry and lasting impact of the American cultural paradigm. When we speak of Americanization, which is somehow decried in some areas of the world, we have to remember that it has taken place over a period of decades, if not longer. Its thrust and jolt may have been more solid and powerful following World War II, but its roots lie in the distant past.

We see a transmission of an American ethos, or a way of looking at the world and the environment, through the use of Anglo-American terms. It's as though the French translators long to capture that spirit of Americanness, which is partly source-oriented, and communicate this translated essence to the francophone reader. To what extent does this succeed, in either direction? I would contend that this depends on the overall

individual reader and his ability to understand, absorb and partake of the cultural shift that is occurring and the various impulses he draws from it. Again, emphasis must be placed on the individual and his or her ability to earnestly consider how to take up the gauntlet of this astoundingly fast-paced globalized world, and how to react to the issues of home and host culture(s) that this may bestow.

When asked what use a writer can draw from his theory, Bourdieu had partly this to say about Manet in response:

[...] Manet, for instance, brings about a real symbolic revolution, in the same way as do certain great religious or political prophets. He profoundly transforms our world-view, that is, the categories of perception and evaluation of the world, the principles of construction of the social world, the definition of what is important and what isn't, of what deserves to be represented and what doesn't [...] (1990, 148 – 149).

London can be viewed as a symbolic revolutionary, riding the crest of his wave of success, and as a real creative revolutionary through his abundant works that called into question the so-called societal givens. He was definitely riding very high, as his prestige, reputation and celebrity status were all intertwined in his quest for earthly satisfaction and his yearning to be understood. These elements blended in such a manner that the lines between art as creation and a life actively lived, continued to blur. London's children's novels and his use of violence were directly contradictory and ran counter to the genteel tradition of the times.

But, London's use of cruelty and brutality were in keeping with the tradition of such novels for adult readers of the period, and could today be considered as a then avant-garde ploy. Today, many children's toys, films and television programs are mostly strewn with the violence that was pioneered in the distant past and continues as a

recurrent theme in many works geared towards children. It seems that America's fascination with and people's addiction to action and violence is still an ongoing subject matter that has the regular individual, experts and specialists wondering about its use, risks and relevance. In reference to Manet once more, Bourdieu writes:

[...] [T]he symbolic revolution, which overturns mental structures and deeply upsets people's minds – which explains the violence of the reactions of bourgeois critics and public – may be called the revolution *par excellence*. The critics, who perceive and denounce the avant-garde painter as a political revolutionary, aren't altogether wrong, even if the symbolic revolution is doomed, most of the time, to remain confined to the symbolic domain (Bourdieu, 1990, 149).

Have conventions been certainly and dramatically overturned? It would seem so, leaving many to wonder about them, decry them and yearn to return to a longer, steadier and more peaceful cycle in the cultural continuum. But, the attraction of violence seems to be ever-present, shattering bourgeois institutions, then as now, and making greater inroads into mainstream culture.

Can we universalize Bourdieu's theory? Yes, to a certain extent, since we did say that London was prototypical, as an author, in what was to be an American century, punctuated by what were to be Hollywood-style productions of the artist-thinker-philosopher-adventurer-author. One can think of Hemingway and his impact in approximately the mid-century, although I am referring here to the intensity of his existence, his hold on people's imagination and the very tragic consequences of that thrill and agony of the modern-day Renaissance man – who goes beyond his own single specialization to embrace the wider world's experience of life. Sadly, both London and Hemingway met very unfortunate and contentious ends.

There have been others who have been less multi-talented, although their lives have been equally intense and powerful in their effect. Their cultural being stems from a primordial *malaise* or *angst* in their lives, and does not provide long-termness or stability. London can be said to have been a victim of his own success, but his early demise, like that of other Hollywood artists, was to be likened and compared with later stars and literati of the American cultural pantheon; mourned by millions worldwide, who poured their grief, almost cult-like, wishing to capture an essence of what might have been, longing, never quite accepting, a tremendous loss.

The glamour connected with it, the embodiment and symbolism behind the young American writer, expected to conquer and seize possession of so many aspects of a model lifestyle, sense of adventure, exuberance, limitless possibilities in the social and then-burgeoning technological world, all give it a standard to look up to and attempt to imitate. The budding entertainment industry co-opted recruits to its ranks, in the form of agents, similar to London's persona. Not only did the turn-of-the-century embrace the accoutrements and *habitus* of American culture, or as Bourdieu would say, in this instance, with emphasis and as a reminder,

The *habitus* is at once a system of models for the production of practices and a system of models for the perception and appreciation of practices (1990, 131).

It also continuously turned to U.S. culture for guidance and direction, singling it out as being a prototype and a leader in the field.

American culture symbolized the *summum bonum* of human civilization, but London as a writer, brought energy, vitality, youth and style. Weren't these attributes present in his works, ready to be reassembled into the French version, by the very

translators who understood the *habitus* of London's background and the symbolic value it represented? The next step would be left to Berman and his theory of deforming tendencies, apt to rationalize, add, subtract or change, in order to render the text more palatable to a consuming public.

I would reassert that the translators were (pre)disposed to imparting these qualities to their francophone readers, for the very reasons that *agents* use to act in the ways they are accustomed to behaving. By capturing the essence or meaning of a work, they transmit its spirit and accessories, at the same time, through the artistic flair that they have for keeping in conformity with the social condition and position that they occupy in a particular social space and time. For these reasons, Postif and Gruyer seem to fit the description that Bourdieu has painted of the agents and their role in society and their almost unconscious journey towards their numerous destinations:

All they have to do is to follow their dispositions which, being adjusted to their positions, 'naturally' generate practices adjusted to the situation (1990, 108).

We have frequently witnessed this phenomenon. London seemed to be so contradictory in so many ways. However, Bourdieu's analysis and preceding statement go quite far in explaining this kind of oxymoron occurrence, as far as London's behaviour is concerned, his likes and dislikes, his philosophy and political positions, his social and economic stances, and what at first seems to be erratic and less consistent.

London's leanings may have led him to question the thrust of the then-current system, but later on in his life, London adopted many of the trappings of wealth and fame, enjoying an extravagant lifestyle that might have contributed to his early demise. He has certainly had an afterlife, or staying power, throughout the last century, as new

fans and enthusiasts join across borders to enjoy his works. He had arrived as a raging fireball, a shining meteor, but he extinguished himself through excess, leaving behind a powerful and intriguing legend.

Bourdieu claims that the *agent* is constantly adjusting his *habitus* to the immanent demands of the *game*. If this is the case, the artist-*agent* is, almost by definition, just as guilty of this allegation. The artist-*agent*'s representation of the ideals of art is constantly shifting as well. We can and have discovered innumerable examples of this state of affairs. Since the artist-*agent* seeks to reflect life and reality as well and as much as possible, does it not hold true that the artist-*agent*'s representation of life and art is subject to the perpetual change in his/her *habitus* to conform to the circumstantial demands of the game? The answer is definitely in the affirmative.

Just as London was habitually changing his *habitus*, the same can be said of the translators of his work, Postif and Gruyer. As *agents*, they saw the door to opportunity beckoning them, with America's rise to superpower status, its cultural and entertainment products expanding rapidly, the world feeling spellbound by U. S. status, power and propulsion surging forward, and as the translators were swept up by the waves originating across the western Atlantic.

We saw plentiful examples of rationalization, addition, "deletion" or subtraction, ennoblement, vulgarization and other such tendencies, in Postif and Gruyer's translation of *The Sea-Wolf*. Berman's explanation still stands, as the changes, indeed "deforming tendencies," appear ceaselessly in the text. Here again, we see from the results that we collected that the *habitus* of the translators underwent adjustment to the demands of the *game*, as they proceeded to complete the translation, even by rationalizing a number of

chapters and reducing their number in the French version. Bourdieu had previously posited that this phenomenon occurs with frequency, as *agents* in the *field*, are keen to maintain or improve their status in the playing out of the *game*.

Our main preoccupation is that as artists are incessantly adjusting their *habitus* to the immanent demands of the *game*, their artistic output, or representation of life and reality, is seriously affected. The underlying truth behind that work of art is thus flawed, and reality is rendered a disservice, as it is unremittingly revised; which leads to our conclusion: The true artist is hard, if at all possible, to find... very much the real truth, since there exist so many layers or patterns from which to glean a clearer picture of what the artist is trying to portray.

An artist sees the world through a particular perspective and once he or she achieves more mass appeal, he or she is labeled as being great. Nevertheless, how can an artist truly be a “real” artist, if he or she is made of flesh and bone and is only human? Many other artists are confined to the shores of their country and are no less artistic than the masters of our age and of centuries’ past. How can one interpretation of a (doubtful) theme be an artistic masterpiece or a popular representation of art, if it is set aside, neglected, demolished or becomes “outdated” in subsequent centuries. How relevant can art be today, if it loses functionality or is subject to the whims of a popular marketplace one year, but is shunned the next? These questions only lead one to think that art is in the mind of the beholder and that the real artist, in a perhaps idealized sense, is impossible to find. Eternal art can be found only in a continuous representation of it, and through that momentary glimpse, a human being can be edified by constantly trying to seek it.

Berman's source-oriented approach may have been compromised and Meschonnic would perhaps have cringed at the thought of a diluted version of an original work. But, the *agent* in the *field* is so self-oriented that the ideals of art are somehow negotiated, if not reconciled, as trade-offs are made to redress and mediate. Therefore, as the evidence suggests, Bourdieu's theory is, by most standards, thoroughly plausible and reasonable. From our point of view, based in translation, the *agent* uses his ever-changing *habitus* to correspond or conform to the demands of the *game*. Across-the-board applicability can be achieved only by means of extensive research in various other *fields* as well – although similarities are bound to occur.

The French version of *The Sea-Wolf* does capture a Frenchness about it and is true to the logic of the original. The translators' use of French expressions and a French style are grounded in the cultural context of France, but the reader may be left with the impression that the story is being recounted (perhaps by the translators themselves), given on how Americans behave or go about these kinds of trials and tribulations, when at sea. The snug feeling one gets when one is totally immersed and reading a purely French novel – one that is free from all communicative inconsistencies – is somehow absent, as the larger-than-life heroes of *The Sea-Wolf* ironically and simultaneously inspire some healthy distance from and favorable fascination with American culture.

Endnotes

INTRODUCTION:

¹ The terms used will be defined more amply later, and we'll be examining the relationship between Bourdieu and Berman in closer detail.

CHAPTER I: Theory and Perspective in Translation

² This description forms part of the notes found in Bourdieu's *The Rules of Art*, and cites John O. Thompson, Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991, 14). *Trans.* Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. (Bourdieu, 1996, 351, n33).

CHAPTER II: *The Sea-Wolf* - The Plot: Its Position in London's Work as Popular Literature and Translational Choice for Young Adults

³ He is thought to have been the first American author to earn one million dollars a year.

⁴ Children were idealized and seen as embodying righteousness and other values.

CHAPTER V: Contrastive Analysis V.b) Contrastive Analysis in Detail

⁵ The outline and description of Berman's deforming tendencies are mainly drawn from pp. 71-81 of "La Traduction comme épreuve de l'étranger." Obviously, these are detailed more fully in his work, but they did inspire me to comment on them and on their relevance to *The Sea-Wolf*.

V.c) Chapter 1

⁶ The word “cottage” had been used in France since 1754 (*Le Petit Robert*, 401), but it had originated in England.

⁷ By “institutionalizing” we refer to the traits or tendencies, often mentioned by Berman.

⁸ This road is travelled in both directions, and it will be looked at more extensively later.

V.d) Differences in Translation and Berman’s Stance

⁹ In the original English, a grammatical oversight should have indicated instead that “the blankness and darkness were rising around me.”

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