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Translating, Rewriting and Omitting: Subversive Welsh Translators in Great Britain in the 1790s

This essay focuses on the uses of translation from imperial English into colonised Welsh during the Franco-British war of 1793–1802. It explores the complex relationship between political domination and the translator's position as interpreter of power, but also as part of a Welsh tradition based on the Bible translation of writing fluent TTs which enriched their native TL and culture (Bassnett 2014: 56–60). One of the main goals is to draw attention to the translation experience *into colonised languages within Europe* before the twentieth century, which, apart from the work of Michael Cronin (Cronin 1996: 3; Cronin 2004), remains neglected in translation research.[1] I will argue that, in the case of translation into such colonised languages, a domesticating strategy which results in fluent translations does not necessarily amount to the 'ethnocentric violence' which, according to Venuti, characterises such translation *from colonised into colonial* languages (2008: 16), and has lead him to favour a foreignising strategy (Venuti 1995: 273–306). Related to this, I will demonstrate that, during the 1790s, it was the attempted foreignisation of a Welsh TT in the direction of the colonial SL English by a translator, which was rejected by Welsh TL guardians as a threat to the continuity of the Welsh textual tradition. Last but not least, this article will contend that an 'invisibility' of the translator in the TT, rather than denigrating the translator as is often asserted, can save him/her from political persecution by the dominant group.

During the French Revolutionary Wars of 1793–1802, Welsh translators were able to draw on their centuries-old translation tradition to voice specifically Welsh protests against British state ideology and to pursue their own cultural projects. Three case studies from the beginning of the war demonstrate the complex relationships between British imperial state

power, the Welsh nation and the cultural and ideological aims of Welsh translators. In 1793, the official translator of liturgies issued by the Anglican Church, i.e. the British state church, in support of the British war effort used his position between political centre and internal colony to further his Enlightenment-inspired aim of modernising the Welsh language. He achieved this by publishing the TT in an orthography he had devised himself. Significantly, his attempt foundered on the opposition of Welsh intellectuals, who rejected this as a foreignisation of Welsh print culture. In 1795, a preacher from an illegal Protestant denomination which had dissented from the Anglican state church subverted the pro-war message of these liturgies by translating separate pacifist English satires on them into Welsh and joining them into a larger Welsh TT. He thus intensified the radical message of the ST, but also reinforced Welsh religious identity outside the British state church. In 1796, an anonymous translator transformed a grand pro-war ST into a short pacifist TT by omission and translation of a small part only. All three cases highlight how the central place of translators in negotiating colonial dominance enabled them to radically rewrite STs to express political opinions and influence their native textual tradition. The colonisation of ethnic groups by centralising states in early modern Europe thus did not necessarily mean hegemonic rule over the politics and culture of the colonised. In Wales, translators into the Welsh language successfully used their position to refute English-language, British hegemony.

Political domination, religion and language in early modern Great Britain

Welsh is a Celtic language spoken in Wales, which by the twelfth century had developed a written literary standard and was part of the medieval and Renaissance translation cultures that rendered texts from the classical languages into European vernaculars (Russel 1995: 111–13, 131). Wales was incorporated into the emerging British state by King Henry VIII's 'Acts of Union' of 1536 and 1543 (Williams 1987: 258–75) and thus became what has been called an 'internal colony' (Hechter 1998: 59–112; Evans 1991: 235–64; Williams 2005: 1–22).[2] The unequal power relationship between colonial English and colonised Welsh was

codified by the Act of 1536. The state language English, spoken by less than 10% of the Welsh population, was declared 'the natural mother tongue' for the whole of Great Britain, the language of law courts and an essential qualification for the holding of office (Bowen 1908: 87; Roberts 1997: 123–52). As a result of this legislation, the native Welsh ruling class embarked on a process of Anglicisation, with many moving to the rising centre of imperial power, London.

At the same time, this emerging British state sought to replace Catholicism with a Protestant state church, an objective which would be furthered by the use of Welsh, the language spoken by the population. Hence, in 1563 Queen Elizabeth I passed 'An Act for the Translating of the Bible and the Divine Service into the Welsh Tongue' which decreed that 'the Bible, consisting of the New Testament and the Old, together with the Book of Common Prayer and the Administration of the Sacraments should be translated into the British or Welsh tongue', and that a copy should be placed in every church in areas where Welsh was spoken. The dominance of English was ensured by noting that an English Bible and Book of Common Prayer should be placed next to the Welsh versions so that 'such as do not understand the said Language, may by conferring both Tongues together, the sooner attain to the Knowledge of the English Tongue' (Bowen 1908: 149ff.). The ensuing 1588 translation of the Bible into Welsh (from Hebrew and Latin) 'effectively saved the Welsh language from extinction' (Bassnett 2011: 98) and led to the development of a translation culture that valued fluency and intelligibility above all else.[3] Though Welsh and English belong to different branches of the Indo-European 'family' (Celtic and Germanic respectively), Welsh-language culture survived as a peripheral part of the dominant English-language state culture, with fluent translations and adaptations from English STs constituting the larger part of Welsh literary texts until the beginning of the nineteenth century (Ashton 1893: 18; Parry 1953: 226–7). This made the translator a central cultural agent in Wales, who had the power to influence if and how values from the dominant source culture were introduced into Welsh life. The domesticating approach to translation adopted by Welsh translators aimed at deleting all

traces of English culture from Welsh TTs, thereby committing acts of 'ethnocentric violence' against the dominant English culture and in resistance to it.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Anglican state church was a powerful instrument of state hegemony in early modern Britain. It provided the administrative structure of the state through its parish system and disseminated state ideology through English-language sermons, liturgies, hymns, prayers and catechisms. These could be bought and read privately, but most importantly, every parish priest was obliged to perform them with church audiences in religious services. At times of pestilence and war, additional religious ceremonies of public fasting were decreed by the reigning King or Queen, who constituted the head of the state and of the Anglican Church. For all such days of 'fasting, humiliation, and the imploring of divine intercession', official liturgies were published as pamphlets and distributed to parishes (Bartel 1955). In order to ensure observance of these state church rituals in Wales, translations of such texts into Welsh were produced from at least 1683 (Morris 1983). These were undertaken by translators employed by the Crown and published by the licensed royal printers at the centre of imperial power, in London. Neither the ST nor the TT featured the names of author or translator at that time. Both were invisible instruments of state hegemony.

Case study 1: Official translation and cultural subversion

At the outset of the war against the French Republic, King George III of England proclaimed an additional public day of fast for 19 April 1793. The population was to abstain from food and worship on the basis of texts published and distributed to all parishes. The official Welsh translation of this *Form of Prayer to be used in all Churches and Chapels throughout that Part of Great Britain called England, Dominion of Wales and Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed* was entitled *Furv Gweddi, i'w Harver o vewn y Rhan o Brydain Vawr à Elwir Lloegyr, Tywysogaeth Cynmru, a Threv Berwic-ar-Dwid*. An anonymous London Welshman had produced a fluent translation whose text was laid out exactly in the same format as the English text, and both ST and TT were published by Eyre and Strahan, 'Printers to the King's Most Excellent Majesty'

in London. The TT, *Furv Gweddi*, employed the Welsh language – a symbol of the cultural Welsh nation – to further the British state patriotism against a French enemy. The translator fully rendered the 'Morning Prayer' (Borëawl Weddi), 'Communion Service' (Gwasanaeth y Cymmun) and 'Order for Evening Prayer' (Y Drevyn am Brydnawnawl Weddi), and the intervening hymns and dialogues between priest and congregation into Welsh. As is usual in official translation, the translator had little space for creativity, constrained by the fact that the state was patron and employer. Within these limits, however, he demonstrated an eagerness to further the state ideology by a choice of lexis which went beyond the original text and bordered on mistranslation. Where, for instance, in a passage which occurred in the morning and evening prayer, God was asked to "assist our warfare against an enemy to all Christian Kings, Princes and States", the word **warfare** was omitted in the TT, and God instead implored to simply assist **our effort**, i.e., "ein hymdrech yn erbyn gelyn i holl Vreninodd, Tywysogion, a Thaleithiau Cristynogawl" (our effort against the enemy of all Kings, Princes and Christian States). By rewriting **warfare** as the more neutral **effort** in the TT the translator hoped to ensure that a Welsh audience, which he perceived as more intensely religious than the Englishmen among whom he lived, would not perceive this request to God as blasphemous. Throughout, the translator provided a fluent translation of this official ST into his native colonial language to the best of his ability, thus helping maintain the unequal power relationship between political centre and periphery.

Unnoticed by the state authorities, however, the translator of this 1793 *Form of Prayer* into *Furv Gweddi* used his paid employment to attempt a change in the Welsh textual tradition by altering its orthography. Indeed, his identity was revealed through his attempt to present the TT in his new orthography, which he had devised to correspond with contemporary Enlightenment ideals of rationality and transparency. He was revealed as William Owen Pughe (1759–1835), a key member of the Welsh intellectual diaspora in London, which was then developing the tenets of Welsh cultural nationalism (Carr 2000). As other colonised nations have been shown to do, they collected, published and translated Welsh literary treasures into

English, but they also worked on modernising Welsh on the basis of what they perceived to be Enlightenment principles. Pughe (who later wrote a Welsh version of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*) was one of the editors of the first volumes of published medieval Welsh poetry and prose, but his main focus was language reform. In an effort to 'restore the Welsh language to its primitive purity as well as to improve the minds of our countrymen' (Williams 1942: 132), he postulated a limited number of 223 'elementary words' from which all other lexical items were derived. This, among other changes, included a major reorganisation of the established Welsh orthography to replace the double consonants used in Welsh printed texts, **ch, dd, ff, ng, ll and rh** (denoting the sounds |x|, |ð|, |f|, |ŋ|, |ɬ| and the aspirated alveolar |r|), with single letters. In turn, this then necessitated the introduction of the grapheme **v** – unusual in Welsh print – to denote the sound |v|, since the **f** which had fulfilled this function now denoted |f|.

Pughe, a Welshman who lived in the capital London, was well aware of the dominance of the British state church, whose parishes provided the administrative structure for Great Britain. By securing the commission of translating the 1793 *Form of Prayer*, he hoped that his position as royal translator would enable him to use the TT to establish his 'rational' orthography in the TL. His TT, *Furv Gweddi*, was used in every parish church throughout Wales on the official day of fast, on 19 April 1793, during the mandatory religious service on that day. Reading material was relatively scarce at the time, and thus the TT was kept for years and consulted time and again, prolonging its impact.

The state remained unaware of this cultural subversion of its official publications. Nevertheless, Pughe's attempt to break with 500 years of Welsh printing conventions, was unsuccessful. He had not accounted for the strong feelings aroused by his violation of the Welsh cultural identity represented by the appearance of the TT. The native clergy of Wales who constituted the larger part of its intelligentsia were politically pro-British and held a considerable amount of power as employees of the state church. But at the same time, they exerted considerable cultural influence in maintaining Welsh traditions and were thus able to reject Pughe's reform. As Venuti (1998: 68), suggests, 'translation constructs a domestic

representation for a foreign text and culture', but 'it simultaneously constructs a domestic subject, a position of intelligibility that is also an ideological position, informed by the codes and canons, interests and agendas of certain domestic social groups'. The Welsh Bible and Welsh religious publications in the traditional orthography had been at the heart of the canon of Welsh culture since the sixteenth century. The attempt to change their orthography, their visual representation, was therefore seen as an attack on the linguistic integrity of this canon (see also Cronin 1996: 66), which was guarded by the culturally dominant social group, the Welsh clergy . The English letter **v** instead of the Welsh **f** present even in the first word of the title page *Furv Gweddi* evoked a hostile reaction from Anglican state church priests, Welsh schoolmasters and Dissenting Protestant ministers alike. They overcame their religious disagreements in defence of their common cultural tradition. Rev John Williams of Llanrwst in north Wales was the first to condemn the TT on the grounds that it lacked Welsh patriotism:

> The *infamous translation*, as it is stiled (sic], of the Prayer for the late <u>Fast</u>, the Clergy of this country attribute to <u>You</u>: and they are indignant, to a high degree, on the occasion. And so am I, who boast as great love to my native language & country, as the best of them. (Morris 1983: 136–7).

Williams was not attacking the fluency of the TT, what he perceived as 'infamous' was its appearance in a foreignising orthography. Letters by other Welsh intellectuals indicate that the disapproval was general. Henry Parry from Holyhead on the isle of Anglesey informed the famous poet and author Walter Davies that:

> William Owen Pughe has broken his shins with the Welsh clergy by his introduction of the new Orthography to the Welsh Language in the Form of Prayer for the General Fast. I am so far of his opinion that necessity first brought the double characters to use; it is, indeed a clumsy contrivance, but since it has been so long sanctioned by custom and habit, it is dangerous to meddle with (Jenkins 1908, III: 27).

The reply by Davies, a measured man who in general welcomed Pughe's efforts, clarifies the reasons for the rejection of the new orthography. Noting that 'innovations in the Welsh

Orthography [were] W^m. Owen's hobby horse of late', he complained that a text printed in this orthography looked 'Cornish, or at least did so when I saw it Sunday last' (Jenkins 1908, III: 27). Cornish, the Celtic language native to the Duchy of Cornwall in south-west England, whose last native speaker was said to have died in 1777, had not benefited from a Bible translation as Welsh had. The few surviving texts in the Cornish language had been 'written down using the contemporary English orthography' (Russell 1995: 113–14, 222), and thereby the 'specificity' of the language, of which vocabulary and spelling are a part, severely compromised by English influence. Like early modern Irish and Welsh, Cornish had come under 'intense pressure' (Cronin 1996: 66) from colonial English, unlike them it had yielded and disintegrated. Davies's derision of the *Cornish* appearance of Pughe's texts was a rejection of the foreign appearance of the Welsh TT, especially the fact that it resembled the Anglicised ruins of a dead Celtic language.

Despite the negative response, Pughe persisted in using his position as official translator to gain access to the circles which, by editing and publishing new editions of the Bible, influenced Welsh cultural identity greatly. He secured the commission for the translation of the *Form of Prayer* again in 1794, and from 1795 turned to the influential Methodist leader Thomas Charles of Bala, whom he wished to adopt his orthography in one of several Bible editions then underway. Charles appeared susceptible to his advances, but opposition arose once more against this alien orthography, seen as an affront to Welsh cultural identity. Rev John Roberts of Tremeirchion (near St Asaph), one of a team of translators from the classical languages into Welsh, campaigned against it because:

> It will do much harm. The orthography of the copy prepared for the press, is very much changed and altered, and makes the language a different dialect from that of the Bible in present use. ... The present orthography of the Welsh version of the Bible, has been thought for centuries not only unexceptionable, but a model of purity and correctness, and considered as the established standard of criticism and pure language. Any

departure from the national standard will be particularly inconvenient to the public (Jenkins 1908, II: 556).

It is significant that the change in spelling was perceived by Roberts to be 'inconvenient to the public', creating what Venuti has called 'resistancy' – a 'strange and estranging' appearance of the text in the target culture (Venuti 1995: 305). It challenged the TL norms, in this case the expected orthography (Munday 2012: 220–1, Figure 9.1). Thereby, the 'purity' and 'correctness' of what Roberts described as a 'national standard' for his cultural nation, embodied in the Bible as a central artefact of Welsh culture, was under threat from culturally foreign intrusion. Pughe's attempted use of official translation in the service of the state to change the appearance of Welsh TTs generally thus foundered on the cultural nationalism of the Welsh religious intelligentsia, who were stalwart supporters of the British state and its Church, but rejected an orthography that made printed Welsh texts appear Anglicised, foreign and disintegrated. Foreignisation was in this case peceived as an act of violence against the Welsh textual tradition.

Case study 2: Radical translation and the subversion of dominant ideology

One of the immediate effects of the French Revolution of 1789 had been the inclusion of previously socially and ethnically marginal groups into the public discourse. From 1793, the war conducted by Great Britain against the young French Republic witnessed the emergence of an unprecedented wave of anti-war texts from such quarters in the dominant English language. As English artisans and workers began to write and to publish politically radical and anti-war texts, their Welsh counterparts were drawn to these as potential STs for political translations by which they could subvert the British state ideology. This may be described in terms of Steiner's '*Wahlverwandschaft* (elective affinity)', whereby the translator overcomes linguistic and cultural differences by being drawn to the ST a text 'because he is kindred to it' (Steiner 1998: 398). Welsh translators recognised their own nascent political radicalism in the new wave of English radical ideology which emerged in the 1790s. The result was a steep rise

in political translation from English. Between 1700 and 1789, only five political pamphlets had been translated into Welsh, yet the decade following the revolution of 1789 witnessed the publication of at least twenty. Once the war had commenced, English radicals intralingually rewrote official state Church publications like the *Form of Prayer* into politically radical texts whose purpose was diametrically opposed to that of the official STs. Welsh translators rewrote even more drastically by selecting disparate English STs, translating them into Welsh and reconstructing them in ways that strengthened their original radical or anti-war message.

Thomas Evans (1764–1833), a weaver and Unitarian minister who lived and preached far from the imperial metropolis in the tiny hamlet of Brechfa near Carmarthen in south-west Wales, created some of the most innovative and radical Welsh TTs in this genre (Davies 1926: 56–65). Self-taught in English, he corresponded with and translated the works of the foremost English religious radicals of the time, Joseph Priestley and Theophilus Lindsay. One of the first proponents of Unitarianism in Wales – a radical Protestant sect which under the Religious Toleration Act (1689) was illegal in Britain until 1813, he founded the Welsh periodical *The Miscellaneous Treasury: Neu Y Drysorfa Gymmysgedig*, whose contents, despite the bilingual title (expressing how recently the concept of the periodical had been borrowed from English culture) was entirely in Welsh (Löffler 2012: 28–9). For this he translated from English and wrote original texts that were influenced by English models, his TTs contributing to creating the new Welsh cultural reality of political radicalism, which the French Revolution had set in train.[5] Among his most subversive pieces are two series of prayers and hymns that combine a rewriting of *Furv Gweddi*, the Welsh translation of the official *Form of Prayer*, with translations of radical English STs that had subverted that official English liturgy. For these, he used the official *Form of Prayer*, its Welsh translation as *Furv Gweddi* of 1793 and 1794, and the political subversions of the English *Form of Prayer* in the satirical London serial, *Politics for the People*, of 1794. He translated the latter STs and assembled them into cultural artefacts that sought to steer Welsh cultural identity towards an almost republican pacifism,

which until then had not existed in Welsh culture, and was at times politically more radical than the English STs.

The first series of these TTs appeared in the first number of Evans's *Miscellaneous Repository* in spring 1795 and will be analysed here. Of the variety of material contained in *Politics for the People*, Evans chose pieces that mocked the official *Form of Prayer* of 1794. He closely translated 'A prayer for the people who live under despotic governments' (*Politics for the People* II/5 1794: 4–6) as 'Gweddi i'w harfer gan y bobl a fyddo yn byw dan lywodraeth greulon drahaus, ar ddydd ympryd' (A Prayer to be used by those people who live under a cruel and tyrannical government, on a day of fast). This was followed by a radical hymn from an earlier issue of *Politics for the People*, 'An HYMN for the FAST DAY, to be sung by the FRIENDS OF MANKIND' (*Politics for the People*, II/4 1794: 3–7), which he interpreted more freely by rearranging the ST, adding at least three new stanzas and calling it 'HYMN i'w chanu ar ddydd ympryd gan gyfeillion dynolryw' (A HYMN to be sung on the fast day by the friends of mankind). The sequence closed with 'Gweddi arall i'w harfer gan gyfeillion dynolryw ar ddiwedd addoliad' (Another prayer to be used by the friends of mankind at the end of worship), for which no ST has been discovered so far.[6] If Evans used Pughe's *Furv Gweddi* as a ST for intralingual translation, it is significant that he too rejected Pughe's new orthography, preferring the traditional spelling as part of his bid to write fluent texts acceptable to his target audience.

Evans added to the ideological impact of the STs by combining them in his TT and by renaming them with clear reference to official fast-day worship. The first prayer had no directions for use in the ST, but in the TT was described as for the **ddydd ympryd**, i.e. the **day of fast**. Evans closely translated this text, the process perhaps enabling him to discover key themes and vocabulary for his further writing. The radical themes for the whole series were established as a lament for the destruction and suffering caused by tyrannical wars, a plea to God to assist mankind by removing despots, and a hope of recovering the **natural liberty** of man, one of the key themes of the French Revolution. In the course of translation, Evans developed political meanings and synonyms for terms until then used in the religious

domain only, as for instance for **tyrants** and **despots** as **treiswyr**, **trawslywodraethwyr**, **gormeswyr** and **gorthrymmydd** (i.e. **rapists**, **misgovernors**, **tyrants** and **oppressor)**. This enabled him and future religious assemblies to discuss the [**c]amddefnyddio [eu] hawdurdod**, i.e. the "misuse of [their] authority" (Löffler 2012: 226–7), by the hegemonic powers. The clause on the 'misuse of authority' was an addition by Evans which helped transport his TT from the pacifism of the English ST to political radicalism.

The second text in the series was an eighteen-stanza hymn modelled on a fifteen-stanza 'HYMN for the FAST Day, to be sung by THE FRIENDS OF MANKIND', which in the TT was rearranged and extended. It reads as if the translator was now searching for his ideological direction in translating more freely. Where the first stanza of the ST uses the more abstract "destruction" (*Politics for the People*, II/4 1794: 3), for instance, Evans specifies as **rhyfeloedd**, i.e. **wars**. Yet, where the anonymous English poet dares mention "monarchs and princes" as disturbers of the "people's peace" (*Politics for the People*, II/4 1794: 4), Evans still retreats into the more generic **[y]sglyfaethwyr**, i.e. **predators**, and refers to "pob rhyw wlad" – "every country", rather than the more politically laden "people" (*Politics for the People*, II/4 1794: 4), like the ST. In Evans's stanza 9, the impersonal wish of the ST that "the dread tyrants of the world down from their lofty thrones be hurl'd" (*Politics for the People*, II/4 1794: 4), is rewritten into a direct plea to God, to "yn bendramwnwgl bŵr i lawr, holl dreiswyr byd mewn munud awr" – "throw down headlong all the tyrants of the world in an instant". Perhaps in a bid to further religious toleration in his target culture, Evans inserts a new stanza 13 to highlight the "murder and molest" of Christian sects like his own illegal and persecuted Unitarian denomination. ST stanzas 12 and 13, and an additional stanza 14 in the TT rejoice in the fact that the profits of people's labour will no longer be used to "besgi ysglyfaethwyr câs", i.e. "fatten evil predators". The English ST concludes in a stanza which again asks indirectly that "tyrants from their thrones be hurl'd" *(Politics for the People*, II/4 1794: 5). This is extended into two closing stanzas (17 and 18) in the TT, both of which avoid reference to the royal thrones that would specify the nature of the tyranny alluded to. On the other hand the final stanza again

asks for the removal of "treiswyr drwg", i.e. "evil despots" everywhere and adds urgency to the action by describing it as "gwaith y dydd", i.e. "this day's task", a phrase which is absent in the ST.

The closing piece of the TT series was a second prayer designed for use "gan gyfeillion dynolryw ar ddiwedd addoliad", i.e. "by the friends of mankind at the end of worship". "Friends of mankind" was commonly used by radical politial circles in the 1790s, which therefore marked the prayer as political even in the heading (Goodwin 1979). It was also present in the ST of the second piece Evans had translated and indicates the connection between both pieces. The body of the TT challenges English political hegemony and the institution of European monarchy. Evans now dares to name the destroyers of mankind as **brenhinoedd CRISTIANOGOL**, i.e. **CHRISTIAN kings**, which is both blasphemous and politically seditious. Shorter than the opening prayer and the hymn, Evans has stripped away what Tymoczko and Gentzler call 'leftovers' and Venuti the 'remainder' (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002: xx–xxi), i.e. those texts and parts of ST and source culture which would restrain his political message of anti-slavery, pro-liberty and republican sentiments. The process of translating the two previous texts appears to have enabled him to create a TT that challenged the dominant political status quo (from a religious perspective, as is to be expected in early modern Europe). The core passage of the last part of the TT calls upon God to:

> attal y llifogydd mawrion o waed dynol ac sydd yn boddi y ddaear wrth ewyllys
> brenhinoedd CRISTIANOGOL, y tu hwnt i bob esiampl yn yr oesoedd mwyaf creulon,
> barbaraidd, anwybodus a thywyll. Siomma ddychymmygion pawb o ddifrodwyr
> gwaedlyd ddynolryw ac sydd yn ymgyssylltu yn erbyn rhydd-did a gwybodaeth, y rhai
> ydynt wir *synagog satan,* a dychwel eu calonnau, diddymma bob egwyddor o
> greulondeb gwladol ym mhob dwyfron; fel na byddo creulondeb rhyfel a chelanedd
> yn aros ond yn unig mewn hanes, fel coffadwriaeth arswydus am ffyrnigrwydd a
> chreulondeb dyn! (in Löffler 2012: 234)

(stem the great floods of human blood which, beyond any example from the cruellest, darkest, most barbaric and ignorant ages, drown the earth by the will of CHRISTIAN kings. Disappoint the designs of all the bloody despoilers of mankind who join forces against liberty and knowledge, they are the true *assembly of satan*, and turn their hearts, dissolve every rudiment of political cruelty in every bosom; so that the cruelty of war and carnage remain only in history, a terrible memorial of the ferocity and cruelty of man! (in Löffler 2012: 234–5)

To call the Christian kings of Europe the 'true assembly of satan' was not only blasphemous but politically seditious in the late eighteenth century and could have earned Evans the death sentence for High Treason. It is no surprise that these TTs were mentioned in the speech given by Judge George Hardinge, when Evans was sentenced to two years in prison and to stand in the stocks twice for singing a political song in 1802. Hardinge noted that the severity of the sentence was due to the prosecution's knowledge that Evans had 'altered and corrupted the form of prayer ... for the fast day' in 1795, because he was 'disaffected to our Government' (Löffler 2013: 104–05). The judge then quoted the official *Form of Prayer* as evidence. The state was thus aware of the official ST whose ideology had been radically challenged and thus 'embarrassed' (Venuti 1998: 68; see below) by the translator Thomas Evans. It was unaware of the presence of the subversive English STs from *Politics of the People*, since Evans had adopted a domesticating approach and also omitted reference to an STs. Publishing his TTs anonymously, he had also tried his very best to make himself invisible in order to escape political persecution, unsuccessfully so, as his imprisonment shows. The impact of Evans's TT was enhanced by the fact that it was sold as an affordable Welsh periodical distributed by travelling salesmen. Echoing as it did, the official *Form of Prayer*, it was also ready to use in pacifist religious services held by the illegal Unitarian denomination on the fast day. It is more than possible, given the attention paid Evans's subversion of the official Form of Prayer at his court case in 1802 seven years after the text appeared, that he and other Unitarian ministers

used this TT to perform anti-war religious services in the Carmarthen area in the second half of the 1790s.

Because Welsh academics have tended to consider translated texts as secondary products of cultural colonialism which would read inferior to 'original' work, Evans's fluent TTs were long (mis)understood as 'original' writing by him. In addition, the translation of radical political texts from English into Welsh was taken to be almost impossible in this deeply religious, rural colony bereft of a university at the end of the eighteenth century. This meant that the origin of Evans's TTs in translation was only revealed in the twenty-first century (Löffler 2012: 46–9). The existence of Evans's texts confirms Venuti's claim that 'the identity-forming power of translation always threatens to embarrass cultural and political institutions because it reveals the shaky foundations of their social authority' (Venuti 1998: 68). The social and political authority of the British state was challenged by Evans's domesticating approach and resultant fluent translation, which also assisted in the creation of a political vocabulary that enabled further expression of radically new political ideas in a colonised language. Venuti's experience that a domesticating approach to translation constitutes an 'act of ethnocentric violence' was not confirmed. On the contrary, the process of translating and wishing to produce fluent TTs appears to have enabled Evans to write more sophisticated Welsh in the political domain, and thus had an educational effect.[7]

Case study 3: Subverting the ST by omission and translation

Most politically radical Welsh texts were heavily religious in the 1790s, but there was one exception: a non-religious pacifist text that owed its secularism to the fact that it was translated from a secular English ST of which, however, about 95% had been omitted. In 1795, an anonymous English author had published *An Accurate and Impartial Narrative of the War by an Officer of the Guards In Two Volumes* which admiringly described the British military campaigns on the continent between 1793 and 1795. This account was over 270 pages long and mainly written in verse. In 1796, a fifteen-page Welsh prose publication

entitled *Dioddefiadau y Byddinoedd Brutanaidd yn y Dychweliad trwy Holland, yn y Blynyddoedd 1794, a 1795* (The Sufferings of the British Armies on the Return through Holland in the Years 1794 and 1795) contained the translation of fifteen pages from the end of the 270-page long English ST. Rather than acknowledging the ST, this TT pretended to be an anonymous, gripping first-hand account, which perhaps may be understood as a pseudotranslation (Toury 1984: 83) in reverse. Where the author of a pseudotranslation would write an original text, but present it as a translation from an exotic or prestigious non-existing source in order to enhance its literary status, this translator presented his/her TT as a short, original pamphlet, hiding all connection with the ST in which it originated. The reasons for this act were that the ideology of the TT directly challenged that of the ST (which was supportive of the hegemonic ideology), but also that the title and form of the ST may have led to doubts about the legitimacy of the TT by its intended lower-class Welsh audience. The main tool used by the translator to subvert the ideology of the ST was omission.

The translator discarded nearly 95% of the ST and provided a new title which began with the words **Dioddefiadau**, i.e. **Sufferings**, thus creating a cultural artefact whose ideology was diametrically opposed to that of the ST. Most of the ST, *An Accurate and Impartial Narrative of the War by an Officer of the Guards In Two Volumes*, was a versified glorification of the officer's life on the battlefield and in the ball room, accompanied by detailed prose notes outlining technical details of military campaigns. It had clearly been written for the entertainment of an English upper-class audience. Only its last chapter, 'A Concise Narrative of the Retreat through Holland to Westphalia in the Years 1794, and 1795', which lamented how 'the brilliant conquests of the Allies were ... wrested from their hands in a manner unequalled in the annals of history' (Anonymous 1796, II: 105), was in prose. This chapter was also the only part of the ST which described the suffering of common troops and civilian populations in the Netherlands and in Belgium. The translator only chose two sections from this last chapter for translation into Welsh, thereby omitting

most of the ST because it did not suit his/her ideological purpose of condemning the war against France. In addition, the TT was published as a cheap Welsh pamphlet, thus also changing the socio-ethnic target audience from an English ruling elite to a dominated Welsh group.

Apart from omission, the translator also employed the placement of key words, phrases and passages as a tool in changing the ideological message. The difference in title between ST and TT has been referred to above. Once the reader opened the book, the TT began with the word **afiechyd**, i.e. **illness**, where the ST had given a poetic description of military uniforms. Most of the TT described the suffering of wounded commoners, simple soldiers and their families, who had joined the entourage of the British army on the Continent, in shocking images. Again, the isolation of these descriptions was important. After 240 pages of descriptions of balls and victories, it is questionable whether many English upper-class readers would have proceeded to this very graphic description of how the family of a common sergeant of the 55th Army had frozen to death:

> Near another cart, a little further on the common, we perceived a stout-looking man, and a beautiful young woman with an infant about seven months old at the breast; all three frozen, and dead. The mother had most certainly expired in the act of suckling her child, as with one breast exposed she lay on the drifted snow, the milk to all appearance in a stream, drawn from the nipple by the babe, and instantly congealed. The infant seemed as if its lips had but just been disengaged, and it reposed its little head upon the mother's bosom, with an overflow of milk, frozen as it trickled from the mouth (Anonymous 1795, II: 123).

The very close fluent Welsh translation of this (which is not reproduced here), on the other hand, was the centre piece and high point of the TT (Anonymous 1796: 12–13), which was only fifteen pages long. The main tool used by the translator to change the ideological message of the text from war to anti-war was omission from the ST and central placement within the TT. By deleting most of the ST, the translation of a marginal final chapter in the ST

became the TT. Within this TT, the most shocking paragraph from this marginal chapter of the ST took pride of place.

Cheap pamphlets like *Dioddefiadau y Byddinoedd* were read out aloud during the knitting or spinning evenings that were characteristic of the Welsh home industries at the time. Thus, these deeply disturbing descriptions, which were new to Welsh writing, were presented to listeners and readers who had not been exposed to war on their own territory for centuries, and must have shocked them. The translator had probably been spurred into action by the Supplementary Militia Act decreed in 1796, which demanded the raising of an additional 4,457 Supplementary Militiamen from Wales (Owen 1997: 27). The British government achieved these numbers by forceful recruitment of Welshmen by press gangs, often against their will, and by heightened war propaganda in the form of public posters and pamphlets. The TT attempted to raise suspicions against this oppressive military state patriotism. The success of this short, fifteen-page translation appears confirmed by the problems which military press gangs and state recruiters encountered in the area where it had been published in 1796, and in subsequent years (Howel 2000: 203–05).

Conclusion

Inspired by works which demonstrate the power of the translator – positioned as (s)he is between dominant and subordinate (colonial and colonised) cultures – to choose to faithfully reproduce, select, re-structure, re-assemble, fabricate or omit (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002: xxi; Venuti 1998: 68), I hope to have shown that the relationships between state, subordinate ethnic nation and politically subversive groups negotiated by Welsh translators in the 1790s were complex. While some of the characteristics ascribed to the relationship between European colonial powers and the cultures they colonised outside Europe apply to the situation of subordinate or colonial cultures within early modern Europe,[8] it is significant that in Wales, the dominant domesticating translation strategy *into* the subordinate language Welsh which produced fluent TTs may be perceived to be supportive of the TL, while the

foreignization of an aspect of the TL, was rejected by the target culture. The *Furv Gweddi* produced by official translator William Owen Pughe in an orthography that resembled English was rejected as 'foreignised' by the pro-British, but culturally Welsh intelligentsia, because it was reminiscent of the colonial SL English. Venuti's (angry) suggestion that the dominant domesticating paradigm of translation always constitutes ethnic violence, based as it is on his work on twentieth-century literature in major European languages (Venuti 1995: 273–306), cannot be upheld for early modern translation into a subordinate language. The subversive fluent TTs produced by Thomas Evans in the second case study developed radical ST ideology further by selection, reassembly and rewriting, challenging the political powers of Great Britain and Europe in the process. While Evans's act of translating from English apparently confirms the *culturally* dominant position of the SL English, it enabled him to create TTs which were so fluent that SL and source culture values disappeared into a new Welsh radicalism. The anonymous creator of the non-religious pacifist TT from a pro-war English ST in the third case study chose extreme omission and domestication as his tools, reducing a long pro-war ST verse narrative by 95% in order to produce a short Welsh TT of starkly anti-war prose which was diametrically opposed to the ST ideology. The translators in caes studies two and three thus embarrassed apparently hegemonic political powers by means of translation.

Following the tradition of Welsh religious writing and translation established in 1588, all three translators took a domesticating approach to their ST to produce fluent poetry and prose TTs that endowed Welsh culture with new themes, concepts and lexical items and aimed at deleting source culture values and SL traces. Two of the three translators aimed at remaining invisible in order to escape the political persecution meted out to Welsh, English, Scottish and Irish radicals in Great Britain at the time. While there is no doubt that the legislation of 1536 and 1542 rendered Wales an internal colony of Great Britain with English as the politically dominant language, the complex use and cultural effect of translation from

English to Welsh denies assumptions of a simple political and cultural hegemony by the dominant power.

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[1] Maria Tymoczko's work (1999) is important in the context of colonisation and decolonisation of a Celtic country, the Republic of Ireland, but it considers translation from postcolonial Irish into the former colonial language (English) and is therefore not central to this argument.

[2] There is no doubt that Wales has displayed features of a colony in its relation to medieval England and later Great Britain, especially as regards the power relationship between Welsh and English, but the notion of Wales as a colony or now in a postcolonial situation is debated, as the reference indicate.

[3] Like Martin Luther, who used 'verdeutschen' (to Germanize) (Bassnett 2014: 58–9), early modern Welsh translators routinely used 'Cymreigio' (to Cymricise) instead of to 'translate'.

[5] For a series of publications on this subject, see the Wales and the French Revolution series published by University of Wales Press since 2012.

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[6] For the English STs, *see Politics of the People*, volume II, numbers 4 and 5 (1794). For the three Welsh texts and their back translation into modern English, see Löffler (2012: 226–34).

[7] The educational purpose which lay behind the translation work of some early modern Welsh authors in the privacy of their manuscripts is not the topic of this study, but clearly attested in Welsh manuscripts from the period.

[8] The parallels between Ireland as described in Cronin (1996) and Wales make a comparison of the countries' translation cultures valuable, but their different utilization of print technology in the early modern period predicates against a simplistic ascription of a common (colonial) pattern.