

MASTER IN ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDIES:
LANGUAGES AND CULTURES IN CONTACT

Departamento de Filología Inglesa
2015-2016



Universidad de Valladolid

Final Master Thesis

Juan De la Dehesa's Translation of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into
the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*

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VALLADOLID 2016

The work presented in this MA thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. The work in this thesis has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master in Advanced English Studies:
Languages and Cultures in Contact

to
Universidad de Valladolid

by
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September 2016

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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes Juan De la Dehesa's translation of Edmund Burke's '*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*' written in 1807. The main purpose is to examine whether this translation achieves to fully translate the philosophical content of the text successfully taking into account different considerations such as the edition which has been translated; whether there is anything missing or if anything has been added; if the translation is from English to Spanish or a French translation has been used. For this the use of contemporary works such as historical dictionaries and other translation from English to Spanish will be used.

Keywords: Translation; Sublime; Edmund Burke; Juan De la Dehesa; Beautiful

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1. Introduction

The relevance of the concept of the sublime goes beyond rhetoric, where its origin dates back to Ancient Greece; however, in the eighteenth century, it developed a pertinent role in the domain of aesthetics, proper of the field of philosophy; in fact, it also became an important notion in literature, both in style and in storyline. From ancient epic to the romantic period and gothic literature, and particularly in that genre, the sublime has been a goal for many authors. One of the milestones in the development this term underwent was conceived by the Anglo-Irish author Edmund Burke (1729-1797). In his writing, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), he examines what are exactly the concepts of the sublime and beauty.

Burke's *Enquiry* was indeed a milestone for the evolution of the concept of the sublime, and that is why Juan De la Dehesa deemed relevant its translation from English to Spanish in 1807. Edmund Burke, 1729-1797, is recognized as a politician rather than as a philosopher, however, his treatise represented an enormous advance in the philosophical field, and it was a greatly read and reviewed work by literary and philosophical critics. It gained such an importance that a second edition was released in 1759, only two years later than the first edition, which gives an illustrative idea of the popularity gained by the *Enquiry*. It was an important writing not only in England, but also in the rest of Europe as "it serves as a bridge between the empiricism of early eighteenth-century British criticism (Addison, Shaftsbury, Hutcheson) and the development of philosophical aesthetics in Germany in the latter half of eighteenth century (Mendelssohn, Lessing, Kant)" (Doran 141) as well as it expanded the aesthetics of terror in literature.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine both the translation and the original text to see how they differ from one another and if the translation makes an appropriate job in its intention to make Burke's analysis of the concepts of the sublime and the beautiful available for the Spanish reader interested in this aesthetic matter. Something to take in consideration is that in contrast to literary writings, in which sometimes it is not as important to be as faithful to the original as possible and in which the various modifications and inventions may help to create a brilliant new piece of its own; in the philosophical field and more formal writings where there are complex concepts and where small aspects that may primarily seem inconsequential are actually relevant, the fewer alterations there are the better because as it has been explained before, most words have connotations that may seem unimportant but can radically change the meaning of a text and what is inferred from it by the reader (Lafarga and Pegenaute 211).

Noting this, the methodology that this dissertation will use is the following: first of all, a brief biography of the author of the translation, information about other works by him and about the translation, such as the number of copies, reprints, and editions will be given. In regards to the translation process, several facts will be considered: whether it is a direct translation from the original English version or if it is a translation from a previous French translation; which edition was translated; the purpose the translator had, to translate the *Enquiry* faithfully, or if he changes the actual text; if he tries to translate Burke's style and be as close to the original version as possible or he changes the structures to sound more natural in Spanish; and finally if he achieves to translate this scientific writing into the Spanish culture successfully, with the intended meaning of the original author.

To do so, the translator prologue, the translation structure, and the actual translated text will be analyzed. Also, a list of terms will be given and examined separately to see details of the translation accuracy; among them some are terms with an important meaning in the field of aesthetics, and crucial to this philosophical treatise, and other words have debatable translations. To check for this accuracy, the *Diccionario de autoridades*, a historical dictionary contemporary to both writings, and the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* will be used. Additionally, Munarriz's translation of Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* will be also be used with this purpose.

2. Theoretical Background

The conception of the sublime and its usage precedes Pseudo-Longinus, an unknown Greek writer who is attributed the authorship of the work *Peri Hypsos*, written between 1st and 3rd century A.D, and by his time it was a widely spread term in the field of rhetoric, however, Pseudo-Longinus' work is by far the most influential one (Doran 30; Monk 10). Although the writing is not complete, what has survived has a great relevance due to its incursion from rhetoric to the aesthetic and metaphysical domain. Many writers have dealt with this concept in rhetoric and in literature before Pseudo-Longinus, Plato and Aristotle among them, nevertheless, Pseudo-Longinus goes a step beyond and places the idea of the sublime out of a rhetorical and composition style, that is to say, that with Pseudo-Longinus, the sublime slowly begins its journey from being exclusively a style in writing into having a whole new abstract notion attached to it, getting closer to the present-days perception of the sublime (Barreto 258).

The Pseudo-Longinus' sublime has 5 main sources: grand conceptions, strong emotions, figures of speech, diction, and word arrangement. The three latter are concerned only with textual sources of sublimity, textual devices used to magnify a passage and give it that epic grandeur, emblematic of the sublime. However, the two first, grand conceptions and strong emotions, are particularly interesting to understand the transition of the sublime from rhetoric to aesthetics (Monk 14). Pseudo-Longinus argues that for a text to be sublime, it is a necessity for the author to have a certain inclination towards grand thoughts, therefore not everyone can write a sublime text, only people with a natural predisposition to these kind of thoughts can achieve sublime texts; in his own words, "Sublimity is the echo of a great soul. For it is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims prevailing throughout their lives should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality" (Doran 61; Hall 19; Cruz 1).

But not only a natural predisposition is necessary, it is specified for these grand thoughts to be intrinsically linked to moral values, which is to say that only men with immaculate morals have the possibility to create sublimity. Along with a grand thought, strong emotions are required to be able to produce sublimity in the reader or hearer, something that will be later largely developed by Burke in his treatise, and which is the point of connection between the reader and the writer. The author has to be able to express and translate his passion to his writings in a way that the readers will be able to feel them as if they were their own (Doran 49).

Another subject which Pseudo-Longinus emphasizes is the fact that education is consequential for the author to be able to write a sublime text, that is to say that even though this talent is crucial, it is not the only thing needed, because someone with that

capacity towards grand thoughts without the proper education is not going to achieve it any better than someone with a deep understanding of the nature of the sublime text in the stylistic manner without the talent; if they are lacking one of the two things, they will create unavoidably an incomplete text. Proper of epic texts, where what is being narrated is characteristically sublime, the importance is to be able to transmit the passion of those actions which can be augmented by stylistic devices and with comparisons, but it must not be forced or overused because it may tire or distract the reader from the true source of sublimity (Doran 52).

The examples given by Pseudo-Longinus of true epic and sublime texts are the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, or the beginning of the Bible, in the Genesis; writings which fame has long surpassed their times and have become timeless as they continue to provoke great passions among their readers throughout time, something that proofs their sublimity according to Pseudo-Longinus (Doran 54). Furthermore, Pseudo-Longinus defends that the first two notions are the most important ones and that the rest, the stylistic additions, are mostly unnecessary and their overproduction may only corrupt the text and take away the reader's attention from the real source of the sublime, the subject of the text, those grand thoughts and strong emotions (Doran 80).

However, it is not until the seventeenth century that Pseudo-Longinus is rediscovered and translated into French by Boileau in his book *Traité du Sublime*. Boileau, a French poet who takes the ideas from Pseudo-Longinus and makes a clear distinction between the sublime and the sublime style, because it is important to understand that Pseudo-Longinus did not make this distinction clear, for him the sublime was a stylistic matter that needed external factors to access its true potential but he did not aspire to create a philosophical concept (Doran 103; Barreto 261; Monk

31). Another important figure is John Dennis, who introduces the connection of terror with the sublime in his book *Miscellanies* (1693), an idea that will stay connected to the concept of the sublime from then onwards. In fact, it is the most remarkable feature of the sublime throughout its development and something that will carry a lot of importance in the Romantic and Gothic imaginary and that will create a very distinctive setting for their novels (Doran 133; González Moreno 31; Monk 52). It is also an idea that Burke will expand on in his treatise.

Burke is the next important figure in the history of the sublime. In 1757 he wrote *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* where he took the previous ideas of the sublime and focused on the ideas related to the strong emotions, giving the sublime a new Empiric background (Barreto 264). He expanded on the idea of Taste, how it is related to the emotions, how these are enhanced or diminished by feeling, by the surroundings and what exactly can excite the human mind into the sensation of sublimity (González Moreno 32). At this point it is relevant to point the difference between the concepts of “emotion” and “feeling” due to the fact that Burke’s treatise is based on the sensory Empiricism. “Feeling” is a concept related to the senses, it is the information that is received by experiencing the surrounding world, “emotion” is a word related to whatever that makes an impression on the human mind. The description given by the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford Dictionary* is: “an agitation of mind; an excited mental state. Subsequently: any strong mental or instinctive feeling, as pleasure, grief, hope, fear, etc., deriving esp. from one's circumstances, mood, or relationship with others”. Therefore, only strong feelings can cause emotions.

He also makes a comparison and differentiation of the concepts of beauty and the sublime, two ideas that have long been introduced and related one to another but without delimiting the two of them clearly; they were known to be different but no one before had been able set them apart, to make the dividing line explicit. At the beginning of his treatise, Burke explains the idea of Taste, in a basic level every single person has the same preferences, this means that the feelings and perceptions that are received by the human senses do not differ from one to another, therefore, the primary emotions and perceptions should be the same in a basic level:

All the natural powers in man, which I know, that are conversant about external objects, are the senses; the imagination; and the judgment ... But as there will be little doubt that bodies present similar images to the whole species, it must necessarily be allowed, that the pleasures and the pains which every object excites in one man, it must raise in all mankind.
(Burke 13)

However, due to cultural and individual characteristics and experiences people have different preferences but overall every human being has the same initial inclinations. Particularly, everyone is attracted and affected the same way when dealing with pleasure and pain, and this is where the heart of the matter resides, the sublime cannot be achieved by any other means than by strong emotions, pain and pleasure, and their dynamics. Generally, a person stays in a state of indifference, neutral, and only when there is a strong emotion, whether it is caused by pain or pleasure, that there is a possibility of sublimity. However, pain and pleasure by themselves are not enough to feel sublimity, pleasure can lead to a very strong emotion but whatever this emotion may be, it is a source of beauty, an emotion

beneath anything sublime, the zenith; and pain, true pain devoid of any pleasure, cannot be sublime because no one can enjoy pain by itself (Burke 32).

Therefore, if pleasure can only incite beauty and pain cannot produce enjoyment, it must be the mixture of the two what creates sublimity; if it is by removal of pleasure, it creates a kind of pain that is not truly painful, it creates suffering due to absence, and if it is pain what is removed, that creates a contentment due to relief, these situations where pain and pleasure are interconnected are the ones that may trigger sublimity in an individual. Taking these notions and translating them into a text, it is only when the situations described have the capacity to move the reader into feeling such complex passions when the text can be described as sublime (Burke 39).

The following quote is under the Section VII: of the Sublime:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. (Burke 39)

In relation to this issue, Burke explains that terror by itself cannot be sublime because it is a particular type of pain in which there are no traces of pleasure, someone who is terrified cannot find it pleasurable. Yet, Dennis stated that terror is a primary source of the sublime, and it is one of the most characteristic resources of Gothic literature, then, how is it possible to combine the two theories? Burke will explain in his treatise that texts that inspire terror may move the reader into remembering their own past experiences with fear and dread, however, they are perfectly aware that it is not a real situation, they fear for the characters of the story and their empathy may

cause strong emotions in them, but they are able to find pleasure in it knowing it is a distant event (Burke 134). Another source of sublimity is nature and its proportions, the sublimity of landscape that will be used repeatedly in literature and painting.

Terror and wonder engendered the emotional bases of a sublime aesthetic response to wild nature... Tremendous mountains, deep valleys, and cataclysmic storms...were typical subjects of sublime landscapes. (qtd. in Smith n.p.)

Burke's dissertation was greatly influenced by Locke's theory of Empiricism, and it will be later reviewed and criticized by Kant, a philosopher who blended Empiricism with Rationalism. Kant's view on the Sublime takes Burke's treatise and rationalizes it, connects it with the scientific world, with mathematics for example, and tries to make a more thorough representation of the sublime and the beautiful taking into account the spectrum of the mind and reason. In his works, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* and *Critique of Judgment*, Kant divides the sublime into three different aspects: firstly, the noble, the splendid, and the terrifying; later in the *Critique*, he bisects it into the mathematical and the dynamical. For him, the principal feature that differentiates the concepts of beautiful and sublime, contrary to Burke, are the proportions and the boundaries of the objects in relation to our perception of them, those objects which can be regarded and framed by our sight, which their outline can be seized by it and which can be perceived as pleasant, are considered beautiful; those objects that are so big that our senses are overwhelmed by them, by their width or height, are regarded as sublime (Doran 181; New World Encyclopedia; Cruz 3).

In this way a sea or an ocean can only be esteemed as sublime, as their width cannot be taken in by our mind, one finds oneself overwhelmed by their nature and it is not possible to fully comprehend their extension. Which takes us to the next step in Kant's theory, when is an idea beautiful and when is it sublime? The path to follow is very similar to the one described before, the breaking point is whether the human mind can fully comprehend the nature of the concept or if one can only reason its implications, in other words, if they can be understood or if they can only be reasoned. Therefore, if something can be understood, it means that it can be fully comprehended, so it is a beautiful thought; however, if the mind struggles to delimit and discern all the connotations derived from it, then it can only be reasoned and therefore it is sublime (Doran 228; Barreto 290; Cruz 4; González Moreno 35). This is also an explanation to why there are so many discussions and why it is so complex to describe the concept of sublimity itself, and why it has been confused with the idea of beauty over the centuries. It is worth to note that, as Burnham mentions, due to the importance that the ideas of reason and freedom held for Kant, the sublime has a noticeable trace of that morality which Pseudo-Longinus had connected to it and which Burke had glanced over (IEP Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

3. Methodology

Once the concept of the sublime and its evolution has been identified, it is time to understand exactly what can be expected from a translation and what processes have taken place. To analyze a translation, there is something to have in mind, the historical context of the country in which the translation is being made; this serves as a dual purpose, on the one hand, it is important to know if translations were well received

and which kinds, if there were any impediments on the task of writing, and on the other hand, to see if the language itself is different or has developed in some way that may make the translation adequate for its time but unsatisfactory for present day standards.

Due to the growth of cultural exchanges between Spain and Great Britain the number of translations in Spain increased exponentially in the eighteenth century, especially in the second half and at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The problems that Spain had had until the second half of the eighteenth century were mainly three: firstly, the principal philosophical trend in England was the Empiricism of Locke and Hume, which was taken with scepticism by the prevailing traditional thought (Lafarga and Pegenaute 292); secondly, up until then most of the foreign influences were taken from the French, the previous animosity between England and Spain made the latter reticent to accept the former's influence and it was not until Spain started to reject the French previously large influence due to the Napoleonic invasion that this started to change (Lafarga and Pegenaute 328).

This is why most of the English influence up until the late eighteenth century came from French translations later on translated into Spanish, although the translation of the *Enquiry* by De la Dehesa is not one of them. And thirdly, English romanticism was originally democratic, it is supposed to be dark and represent a crude transition from the previous privileged lifestyle into a new confusing reality in which the social classes are being questioned, a reality that the Spanish aristocracy would not experiment until much later (Lafarga and Pegenaute 338, Teneiro Prego 63). Due to this realism and the rawness depicted in the English novel of the eighteenth century, many Spanish writers felt the need to manipulate them into something more morally

acceptable within the Spanish context (Lafarga and Pegenaute 280). In fact, most of them were translated about 50 years later than their original publication as a consequence of Spanish censorship (Lafarga and Pegenaute 281).

While it is true that Spain had opened its frontiers to the cultural relationships with other countries, that does not mean that there was a total freedom for cultural exchange or freedom of opinion, in fact at that time there was not only one type of censorship, but two: one by the government, which was preventive, and one by the Church, a repressive one (Perojo 192). One of the problems with the censorship system was that, even after the Inquisition lost part of its power, with the subterfuge of literature having to be useful many books were forbidden. One example provided by Perojo is the translation of Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* made by Agustín Munárriz; in this work the translator added his opinion about Spanish literature, which was severely criticized by his literary opponents, some of them involved in the censorship system of the time, and although his translation was approved by the government, and in fact it had been published as four different volumes, a Compendium of this work was censored in 1805 and not published until 1815, even though the translation of the whole work had already been issued (199).

Nevertheless, even though there were difficulties with the publishing process, the English influence on Spanish romanticism is undeniable and traceable. The English novel may not have had a warm welcoming in Spain but English poetry certainly did. The translation of poetry presents many obstacles, however, that did not deter Spanish writers in their aim to translated James Macpherson's Ossianic poetry, which had several translations, alongside with works by Edward Young, Alexander Pope, James Thomson, and Thomas Gray. Byron was not only translated, he was an important

figure for both Spanish writers and Spanish media, especially in the years 1828-37 (Lafarga and Pegenaute 380-2; Lafarga 321). Emilia Pardo Bazán, for instance, was highly influenced by the Gothic fiction, more particularly by Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley, and the Brontë sisters, authors she “unconditionally praises” (Teneiro Prego, 63) along with Jane Austen, Bram Stoker and Lord Byron, and proves to be familiar with Burke’s *Enquiry* (Teneiro Prego, 77).

The principal problematic issue regarding the eighteenth and nineteenth century translations is the matter of accuracy. In many cases, the translator would change large parts of the text and sometimes replace it with his own ideas, as it is reflected in this quote:

Cuando traduzca lo haré libremente, y jamás al pie de la letra; alteraré, mudaré, quitaré o añadiré lo que me pareciere a propósito para mejorar el original, y reformaré hasta el plan y la conducta de la fábula cuando juzgue que así conviene. (Cándido María Trigueros, *apud* Lafarga and Pegenaute 211)

However, the general consensus at the time was to try to find a balance between being the closest possible to the original work and to find the most accurate word regarding meaning, and succeeding in making the translation as natural and comfortable to the reader as possible, even if this meant taking liberties in the translation process; whereas this was by paraphrasing, nationalizing the examples, actualizing the text, by adding a prologue, or otherwise (Urzainqui 624; Enríquez Aranda 103). Yet, they made a distinction depending on the type of writing they are translating, it is not the same to translate a scientific text than a poem. The goal for one is to convey all the data in the most accurate way with no regards towards the

original author's style, but with poetry, the style, rhythm, and rhyme are issues of utmost importance and, therefore, the translation process and the decisions are very different (Lafarga and Pegenaute 211; Enríquez Aranda 16).

In regards to the analysis of the translation, several things will be considered. First of all, a brief introduction to the translator will be made. Then, the translation process of the *Enquiry* will be examined to see what type of translation it is, whether it was translated from English or if there are signs that it was originally translated to French and then translated into Spanish; for this, not only De la Dehesa's prologue will be taken into account, but also aspects such as the structure of the sentences, the content of the translation, whether there is something missing or added, and some further information about the translation will be given.

Following this, some words will be further analyzed; among them there will be important concepts that are essential for the complete comprehension of the *Enquiry*, concepts with a relevant rhetorical meaning; and some of the words will be translations that may be controversial. For this, three sources will be used to examine their accuracy or their lack of correctness: the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* will be used to take the possible meanings that a given word can have and then the *Diccionario de autoridades*, contemporary to this translation, will be used for its Spanish counterpart.

Then the two entries will be compared and quotes will be given to see if the Spanish words are suitable or not. Moreover, Munarriz's translation of Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* will be also be checked to see if these words were used in this translation, and see if De la Dehesa could have been influenced by this work when translating Burke's *Enquiry*. This is important not only because the

translation was published not long before De la Dehesa's, but also because many of the words appear in it. In fact, Burke's *Enquiry* was a very influential work for the author of the *Lectures*, and there is a relevant mention of it in Blair's work. Once all the words have been examined, an overall analysis will be given about the translation and it will be determined whether this translation manages to successfully transfer this part of British culture into the Spanish one (Even-Zohar 62; Enríquez Aranda 110).

4. Analysis

About the translator of the *Enquire* there is not much information available, and most of it, if not all, comes from the prologues found in his translations: *Constitución de Inglaterra, o descripción del Gobierno inglés comparado con el democrático, y con las otras monarquías de Europa / escrita por el abogado J.L. de Lolme, ... y traducida del inglés por Don Juan De la Dehesa*, and the one being analyzed in this paper, the translation of the *Enquiry*. Juan De la Dehesa was a professor of Law at the University of Alcalá, where he published both of his translations, and he was for four months, from the 19th of February of 1835 until the 13th of June of the same year, Minister of the Ministry of Mercy and Justice (De Urquijo y Goitia 34-35). He also translated *Constitución de Inglaterra, o descripción del Gobierno inglés comparado con el democrático, y con las otras monarquías de Europa / escrita por el abogado J.L. de Lolme, ... y traducida del inglés por Don Juan De la Dehesa*, an important political treatise that had a noticeable impact in the field of politics. It was written soon after the Constitution of Cádiz to review the growing influence of French books in Spain (Schiera 63).

According to the records of the *Biblioteca nacional de España* and *Catálogo colectivo del patrimonio bibliográfico español*, De la Dehesa's translation was published in Alcalá, Oficina de la Real Universidad, in 1807, the first being also the only edition. However, there are 29 copies registered in the *Catálogo colectivo del patrimonio bibliográfico español* spread through several libraries and universities, which shows that it was well received. De la Dehesa begins his translation with a brief introduction into the ideas of the beautiful and the sublime, giving information taken from the French *Encyclopedia* and declaring to have found a French translation of the *Enquiry* at the University of Alcalá written anonymously in 1763. Right after that he compares his translation with the French one, apparently the other translator made his translation too scientific and strained; however, De la Dehesa's translation manages to get a better approach and successfully reaches a balance between correctness and naturalness, at least in his opinion.

He also writes about Blair's *Lectures*, and acknowledges the existence of a translation, although he does not state whether he has used it to help him in his translation or not, and going as far as to criticise the original work in relation to the passages where Blair speaks about Burke's sublime. And it is in this prologue where De la Dehesa states the edition of which he makes the translation, the second one; this is also corroborated by the fact that he not only translates the treatise but also the prologue that can be found in the second edition, published in 1757, with the addition of an introduction to the concept of taste which can also be found in this translation. This clearly shows that the translation was made of the second edition. Although he states that the translation is made directly from the original English version, it is necessary to check this.

The original version is composed of the following parts: the introduction on taste and five parts with their corresponding sections: Part I has 19 sections, Part II has 22 sections, Part III has 27 sections, Part IV has 25 sections, and Part V has 7 sections; the translated version has the same sections with the same titles. Reading the translation and comparing it to the original it seems to be translated almost word-to-word, there is not a single passage missing and there are no additions made by De la Dehesa; all changes are made so that the Spanish version sounds natural to the reader, but there is no information missing. This indicates that the translation has indeed been made from the original English version into Spanish, since it would be almost impossible for a translation of a translation to be as close to the original as this translation is. Furthermore, the level of information given at the beginning shows a detailed knowledge of the treatise which also suggests a direct translation.

The next methodological procedure of this Master Thesis is the analysis of a list of key words, mainly related to the empiricist and sensualist philosophical background of Burke's work, that are going to be examined in order to see the level of accuracy De la Dehesa achieved in his translation and to what extent the sensualist background is transmitted in the Spanish text. The list consists of 12 words, which are going to be grouped in 11 sections as two of them have the same translation. The 8 of them are crucial concepts needed to fully comprehend the philosophical topic that the *Enquiry* has and the other 3 show the cultural differences between the original and the target cultures. This treatise has its base in sensual Empiricism, which puts the sensory capacities as one of the main sources of information that the humans have to make sense of the world. What this means is that all the concepts surrounding the ideas of sublimity and beauty are established by everything that is taken by the senses;

particularly, Burke establishes the origins of sublimity in the feelings of pain and pleasure.

All of them have a capital role in the text as they are the base to understand the idea of the sublime. Therefore, the Spanish rendering counterpart of these terms are fundamental for an accurate translation. For this, a number of texts will be used to determine the accuracy of the translation to successfully convey the original meaning and its philosophical and cultural background: the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Diccionario de autoridades de la Real Academia Española*, and the translation of Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* made by Munárriz, the last two contemporary works that could have been employed by De la Dehesa himself in the translation process.

4.1 Pain

One of the first and most important concepts that Burke uses to delimit the origins of the sublime is the necessity of pain. As it has been explained before, Burke, and therefore his perception of the sublime, is based on Empiricism, and more precisely on the senses. According to him, pain is one of the first feelings that any human being experiences, for instance, it is because of the pain of hunger why babies cry. As one grows older this feeling of pain can be expanded and classified into more particular types of pain, but nevertheless, it is a global experience for everyone.

The chosen translation for "Pain" in De la Dehesa's texts is "pena", described in the *Diccionario de autoridades*, 1737 edition, as: "cuidado, sentimiento, congoja y dessazón grande", and "Se toma assimismo por dolor, tormento, o sentimiento

corporal. Latín. Dolor. Molestia”. It is true that “pena” is a direct translation of “pain”, and that the same term was used in other translations, nevertheless, in the following fragments “pain” is translated with two different words whereas in the original it is the same word:

- a. “Therefore, to clear up the nature of these qualities, it may be necessary to explain the nature of pain and pleasure on which they depend” (Burke 131) translated as “Así que, para aclarar la naturaleza de estas qualidades, puede ser necesario explicar la del dolor y del placer, de los quales dependen” (De la Dehesa 175)
- b. “For hence I conclude that pain, and fear, act upon the same parts of the body, and in the same manner, though somewhat differing in degree” (Burke 131-132) translated as “De esto infiero que la pena y el temor obran sobre las mismas partes del cuerpo, y del mismo modo, aunque se diferencien algo con respecto á su grado” (De la Dehesa 176)
- c. “The only difference between pain and terror, is that things which cause pain operate in the mind, by the intervention of the body” (Burke 132) translated as “La única diferencia que hay entre la pena y el temor, es que las cosas que causan dolor, obran sobre el ánimo por medió del cuerpo” (De la Dehesa 176).

Furthermore, there is another term related to “pain” which has the same issue of multiple translations, “painful”, “penoso”, which the *Diccionario de autoridades*, 1737 edition, defines as: “Lo que causa pena, o cuesta gran dificultad o trabajo”. In

the following excerpt, De la Dehesa changes once again his chosen translation for “painful” and introduces another word in the same paragraph:

It is Mr. Locke's opinion, that darkness is not naturally an idea of terror; and that, though an excessive light is painful to the sense, the greatest excess of darkness is no ways troublesome. He observes indeed in another place, that a nurse or an old woman having once associated the ideas of ghosts and goblins with that of darkness, night, ever after, becomes painful and horrible to the imagination. (Burke 143)

Mr. Locke opina que la obscuridad no es naturalmente una idea de terror, y que aunque es dolorosa para el sentido la excesiva luz, de ningun modo es penoso el exceso de obscuridad. Observa también en otra parte que la noche se hace mas penosa y horrible á la imaginacion, despues que alguna vieja ó nodriza ha asociado una vez las ideas de fantasmas y duendes á la obscuridad. (De la Dehesa 194)

While “dolor” and “doloroso” are not the words initially chosen by De la Dehesa, they are also used to translate “pain” and “painful” in the text, something that can make the translation seem inconsistent and even be confusing because in some places “pena” is used as “pain” whereas in others it is used as sadness, and then “dolor” is also introduced in the text. To understand why he makes this separation, it is important to have its description and compare it to the ones above:

Es una acción viciada y triste sensación, causada en las partes sensitivas por objetos que dañan y molestan el asiento o órgano de los sentidos externos: y por esto los humores, el cerebro y los huesos se libran de dolores. Su causa es un material sensible dentro o fuera del cuerpo, que

en llegando a dañar, molestar o alterar el órgano o asiento del sentido, causa el dolor, que es lo que nos inquieta y desplace. (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1737)

Both “pena” and “dolor” are acceptable translations for “pain”, however, “dolor” is more specifically related to physical pain and probably the reason why in the instances specified above the translator chose to change the term to be more explicit in the type of pain that was being described. Then why choose “pena”? Apart from the fact that it does mean “pain”, it is probable that De la Dehesa was influenced by Munárriz, who also translates “pain” as “pena” in his translation of Blair’s *Lessons*, not only this was one of the few books translated directly from English into Spanish at that time, but it also talks precisely about Burke’s *Enquiry* and about the necessary emotions of “pain” and “terror” derived from the sublime, as it can be seen in the following quotes:

The author of “a Philosophical inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,” to whom we are indebted for several ingenious and original thoughts upon this subject, proposes a formal theory upon this foundation; That terror is the sources of the Sublime, and that no objects have this character but such as produce impressions of pain and danger. (Blair 31)

El autor de la Investigación filosófica sobre el origen de las ideas de lo sublime y de lo bello", á quien debemos varios pensamientos ingeniosos, y originales en la materia, propone una completa teoria fundada en que el terror es la fuente del sublime; y que ningunos objetos tienen este

carácter, sino los que nos hacen impresión de terror y de pena. (Munárriz 71)

The fact that De la Dehesa introduces “dolor” is relevant to this analysis because it would have been easier for De la Dehesa to follow the same path Munárriz took; after all, Munárriz’s translation was considerably popular. Nevertheless, he chooses to make an explicit division between “pena”, which could be considered as a broader “pain”, and “dolor” to emphasize the importance of the senses, the physicality of the sensualist Empirical philosophy, which was not extensively spread within the Spanish tradition.

4.2 Pleasure

Pleasure is one of the two pillars of the sublime, the contrary concept of pain. By itself, pleasure can conceive beauty, strong emotions which the human beings seek all throughout their lives, yet, once these pleasures converge with some sort of pain, they create the highest existing concept, the sublime. As it happens with pain, it is, once again, a notion intrinsic to the sensualist Empiricism, an idea irrevocably attached to the senses, to the body, and to passion. De la Dehesa translates it as “placer”, a fitting translation for this term as it conveys this same notion of physicality without it being the only aspect it suggests, as one of the entries that the *Diccionario de autoridades*, 1737 edition, gives is “Gusto, contento, alegría, regocijo o diversión”.

4.3 Terror

Another concept which is essential in the conception of sublimity is “terror”. It has been explained that the two main sources of the sublime are pain and pleasure, yet, “terror” is a specific kind of pain, one caused by fear. Burke affirms: “terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime” (58). But what is the difference between the two? The following excerpt explains it:

The only difference between pain and terror, is, that things which cause pain operate on the mind, by the intervention of the body; whereas things that cause terror generally affect the bodily organs by the operation of the mind suggesting the danger; but both agreeing, either primarily, or secondarily, in producing a tension, contraction, or violent emotion of the nerves. (Burke 132)

Once more, the distinction is about the physicality that terror implies, which “fear” does not necessarily possess; in the same way “dolor” gives the implied meaning of bodily pain, “terror” gives this connotation that “fear” does not obligatorily carry. In De la Dehesa’s translation, “terror” is a translation shared with “fear”. But this predilection to translate both “terror” and “fear” as “terror” rather than just by “miedo” is not a coincidence, “terror” accentuates this sensory connotation that “miedo” would have missed and that is compulsory to highlight in some of the instances.

4.4 Taste

The importance of the senses has been explained all throughout this dissertation; as a matter of fact, it is so important to the idea of the sublime that Burke adds an introduction to the concept of Taste in the second edition of the *Enquiry*. This word, “taste”, is semantically very rich as it has many acceptations ranging from the ones dealing exclusively with the senses i.e. the sense of taste, the sense of touch, to have experienced something; to the more metaphoric meanings such as: sense of what is appropriate, to have a preference, to have a stylish or aesthetic discernment (*Oxford Historical Thesaurus*). Thus it is an ideal word to explain the connection that the sensualist Empiricism makes between the real world and one’s perception of it.

The chosen translation for “taste” is “gusto”, a fitting adaptation as it has very similar meanings, whether related to the senses: “Uno de los cinco sentidos corporales, que reside en la lengua”, “Se toma tambien por el sabor que tienen en sí las mismas cosas”; or otherwise: “Significa algunas veces elección: y así se dice, Fulano es hombre de buen gusto”, “Vale tambien complacencia, deléite o deseo de alguna cosa”, “Significa asimismo propria voluntad, determinación, o arbitrio” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1734). And it was important to come up with a translation like this, as Burke uses “taste” in the *Enquiry* with all of these meanings. Munárriz agrees with this translation, although Blair uses “taste” with the metaphorical sense rather than with the physicality that Burke’s treatise requires.

4.5 Emotion

Alongside with “taste”, the word “emotion” is frequently used throughout the *Enquiry* in relation to the influence of the senses in men, as it is by the senses that

feelings, both metaphorically and sensory, appear. But feelings derive into emotion only when they cause a significant impression on the mind. The *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* gives the following description for “emotion”: “Originally: an agitation of mind; an excited mental state. Subsequently: any strong mental or instinctive feeling, as pleasure, grief, hope, fear, etc., deriving esp. from one's circumstances, mood, or relationship with others” (1602, 1660, 1712) but also as “Movement; disturbance, perturbation; an instance of this” (1594, 1652, 1692, 1708).

“Emotion” is translated as “movimiento”, meaning “Se toma por alteración, inquietúd o conmoción” and “Se toma tambien por el ímpetu de alguna pasión con que empieza a manifestarse” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1734). Considering that they have the same meanings it does not strike as something peculiar at first. Traditionally, it was used together with “conmover” in the rhetorical tradition, but De la Dehesa chooses it rather than “conmover” thus highlighting the physicality that feelings can have in the human being, as it can be seen in the following examples: “The first and the simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind is curiosity” (Burke 31); “El primero y el mas simple movimiento que descubrimos en el corazon humano, es la curiosidad” (De la Dehesa 25). Besides, the word “move” was the one traditionally used in the English rhetorical context, so there is maintained with this choice the rhetorical original background of the concept of the sublime.

¹ From now onwards the references given by the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* will be followed by the dates of the examples of the entry until the date of the *Enquiry*

4.6 Mind

“Mind” is a complicated word in this translation, charged with philosophical connotations, which are not reflected in the Spanish translation chosen for it, “corazón”. There is clearly a cultural chasm between both texts in this respect, an illustration for it can be found in literature. Traditionally in the English novel there was a high intellectual weight, of course passions were important as England had an empiricist tradition, but the writings were aimed to have a moral purpose; good examples of this are Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*, Henry Fielding’s *Amelia*, and Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*. However, due to the Spanish tradition, distanced from the British empiricism, on account of the problems with censorship, in the translation of these novels this intellectual intention is lost and only the sensitive side remains obtaining the name of “novelas lacrimógenas”.

Whether De la Dehesa knew the intended meaning and the tradition of the English novel of the eighteenth century cannot be known. He translates “mind” as “corazón”, described as “Vale assimismo ánimo, espíritu” in the *Diccionario de autoridades*, 1729 edition; and also as “ánimo”, explained as “El alma, el espíritu que hace discurrir y moverse los animales” (1726). It is probable that he decided to translate it as such carried by the lack of a modern philosophical tradition in Spain and also by the recent Spanish tradition of sentimental literature.

Some examples are: “Section X: How far the idea of beauty may be applied to the qualities of the mind” (Burke 110) with the correspondent “Sección X: Como puede aplicarse a las Qualidades del Animo la idea de Belleza” (De la Dehesa 145). Or “The first and the simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind is curiosity” (Burke 31) and “El primero y el mas simple movimiento que descubrimos en el

corazon humano, es la curiosidad” (De la Dehesa 25). It is evident that these translations are not very accurate in relation to the intended meaning of the original, but they were chosen due to cultural differences.

4.7 Strike and Affect

These two terms are included in the same section because, similarly to what happens with “pain” having two translations, while in the original work they are two words, in the Spanish version they are at times translated with the same word, and at times translated with another one. They are translated as “herir”, which means “golpear, dar con algo en alguna parte” and “Romper el continuo del cuerpo del animal con algún instrumento, o darle golpe: y por extensión en otro qualquier cuerpo” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1734). “Herir” is used for both terms even though the description given by the entries do not match the meaning of “strike” and “affect”, at least not the ones that are relevant for the writing, as it can be seen in the following quotes:

- a. “Is it not wrapt up in the shades of its own incomprehensible darkness, more awful, more striking, more terrible, than the liveliest description, than the clearest painting, could possibly represent it?” (Burke 63) translated as “¿No es mas terrible y respetuosa, y no hieremas que como la mas viva descripcion y la pintura mas clara pudieran representarla?” (De la Dehesa 63)
- b. After a long succession of noises, as the fall of waters, or the beating of forge-hammers, the hammers beat and the waters roar in the

imagination long after the first sounds have ceased to affect it. ... The senses, strongly affected in some one manner, cannot quickly change their tenor, or adapt themselves to other things. (Burke 73)

Despues de una larga sucesion de ruidos, como el fracaso de las aguas, como el golpeo de los martillos de fragua, los martillos golpean todavía, y las aguas braman en la imaginacion, quando ya han dexado de herirla los primeros sonidos. ... Quando los sentidos han recibido una impresion fuerte, no pueden mudar prontamente de tenor, ó adaptarse á otras cosas. (De la Dehesa 90)

“Dar golpe”, meaning “Además del sentido literal que vale cascar o golpear: metafóricamente significa causar armonía al entendimiento, armar mucho a la razón algún dicho, argumento, viveza, o conjetúra” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1732), is another translation given for “strike”. Comparing the following excerpt: “A man to whom sculpture is new, sees a barber’s block, or some ordinary piece of statuary; he is immediately struck and pleased, because he sees something like a human figure” (Burke 18) with its translation “A un hombre para quien es nueva la escultura, un molde de pelucas que vea, ó alguna pieza comun de estatuaria, inmediatamente le dá golpe y le agrada, agrada, porque es una cosa semejante á la figura humana” (De la Dehesa 13), it would appear that the meanings of these two sentences are different. Taking all the quotes, the ones from the original and the translation, they do not seem to mean the same. However, De la Dehesa introduces this translation and it immediately gives it a sense of physicality that strikes the reader the same way Burke explains in the quote above. “Dar golpe” and “herir” allow De la

Dehesa to transmit the same metaphorical meaning that “strike” has for the English reader and which is so relevant for the empirical background of the original text.

Likewise, “herir” is not the only translation that “affect” has, “mover” is also used in the text. In this case, the translation is more transparent, meaning: “Metaphoricamente vale dar motivo para alguna cosa, persuadir, inducir o incitar a ella. Y por extensión se dice de los afectos del ánimo, que inclinan o persuaden a hacer alguna cosa” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1734). Its adequacy can be seen in the following quotes: “Now, as words affect, not by original power, but by representation, it might be supposed, that their influence over the passions should be light” (Burke 173) and its translation, “No moviendo, pues, las palabras por alguna virtud originaria, sino por representacion, pudiera suponerse que su influencia en las pasiones habia de ser muy ligera” (De la Dehesa 237); as it has been explained before in the section for “emotion”, “mover” is also the word of the Spanish rhetorical tradition together with “conmover”, and more suitable in this case since it conveys this sense of physicality.

4.8 Swell

The translation chosen for “swell” is “hinchazón” with the acceptation of “Inflamación o elevación, tumor o bulto que causa la apostema o otro accidente” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1734), a fitting translation as it can be seen in “the anatomist, critical in his art, may observe the swell of muscle not quite just in the peculiar action of the figure” translated as “el anatómico, que es crítico en su arte, puede observar que la hinchazon de algun músculo no es del todo correspondiente á la accion de la figura” (De la Dehesa 14).

At other times, the translations for it are: once again “hinchazón”, although with the sense of “Translaticiamente significa vanidad, presunción, soberbia o engreimiento” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1734); and “engreimiento”, which means “Presunción, elación y altivez con que uno se ensoberbece y entona” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1732). These translations are used in the following extract: “produces a sort of swelling and triumph, that is extremely grateful to the human mind; and this swelling is never more perceived” (Burke 50), translated as “produce una especie de hinchazon y triunfo, que es extremadamente agradable al espíritu humano; y este engreimiento nunca se percibe mejor” (De la Dehesa 53). De la Dehesa thus maintains the literal translation at least once thus conveying the idea of physicality needed to achieve the sublime.

4.9 Easy

Another word that has a translation which may initially offer some doubts is “easy”, translated as “insensible”, which means: “Vale tambien lo que no se percibe por algún sentido, o no se conoce, y es imperceptible a los sentidos” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1734). An example of how it can be problematic can be seen in the following quotes: “Let us parallel this with the softness, the winding surface, the unbroken continuance, the easy gradation of the beautiful in other things” (Burke 122) and its translation, “Comparemos esto con la suavidad, la variada superficie, la continuacion no interrumpida, la insensible gradacion de lo bello en otras cosas” (De la Dehesa 165).

The problem with this translation is that it may imply for some readers that the gradation of beauty is not perceived, and whereas in other contexts “insensible” may convey the idea that the transition is soft and “easy”, it is may be a debatable translation because in the text Burke is explaining that there are different degrees that can be perceived, which is the opposite to what “insensible” means. This is clearly not the same meaning, however, what De la Dehesa does with this is to once more introduce the senses as the main source of the aesthetic experience, and manifest the relevance that feeling and the body has in our minds. Instead of using a word to express physicality, he uses “insensible”, a word that expresses the non-physicality of an experience, keeping the reader within the semantic field of the senses.

4.10 Common People

In comparison to the words analyzed above, “common people” is only used once and therefore there are not problems of inconsistency, however, the translation chosen for it is questionable as the English meaning is: “The common body of the people of any place; the community or commonalty; spec. the body of free burgesses of a free town or burgh; sometimes, the commonwealth or state, as a collective entity” (1645) or “The common people, as distinguished from those of rank or dignity; the commonalty. Often viewed politically as an estate of the realm” (1581, 1616, 1664) (*Oxford Historical Thesaurus*).

And the Spanish word is “populacho”, a derogatory word as it can be seen in its description: “Lo ínfimo de la Plebe” (*Diccionario de autoridades 1737*). This is something that considerably changes the meaning of the sentence: “Fermented spirits

please our common people, because they banish care, and all consideration of future or present evils” (Burke 15) compared to “Los licores fermentados agradan á nuestro populacho, porque destierran los cuidados, y toda consideracion de los males presentes y futuros” (De la Dehesa 8). It is obvious, looking at the two of them, that the meaning in the Spanish rendering is pejorative whereas in the English one it is not necessarily such a thing. Yet, the explanation for this may be cultural, as it has been explained before, England had a long history of democracy, Spain however did not. Both Burke and De la Dehesa were conspicuously involved in the field of political thought, but their political culture was obviously different and this translation is a reflection of that difference between the British and the Spanish cultures at that time.

4.11 Rude

Another word in which the meaning in the translation is changed is “rude”, although in this case it is the other way around, the original meaning is derogatory and the translated version is not necessarily so. “Rude” means: “Not gentle, violent, harsh; giving out unkind or severe treatment; marked by unkind or severe treatment of people or living things” (1623, 1693, 1733, 1760), “Devoid of, or deficient in, culture or refinement; uncultured, unrefined. Also in stronger sense: uncivilized, barbarous” (1609, 1624, 1697, 1732), and “Unmannerly, uncivil, impolite; offensively or deliberately discourteous” (1598, 1617, 1674, 1711) (*Oxford Historical Thesaurus*).

Yet, “rústico” is described as “Cosa sencilla, simple o que pertenece al campo” and “Usado como substantivo se toma por hombre del campo” (*Diccionario de autoridades* 1737), not necessarily something bad, it is simply something related to

the countryside. A small change of meaning that can be seen in the following extract: “The rude hearer is affected by the principles which operate in these arts even in their rudest condition; and he is not skilful enough to perceive the defects” (Burke 28), rendered as “El rústico oyente se mueve conforme á los principios que obran en estas artes, aun quando están en la mayor tosquedad, y él no tiene la habilidad suficiente para percibir sus defectos” (De la Dehesa 22).

This is another instance where the difference between the British and the Spanish historical and cultural backgrounds is evidenced. “Rude” refers to lack of refinement, no matter whether the setting for it is rural or urban, whereas this lack of refinement is marked as rural with “rústico”. By the time, in the British context, the Industrialization had already begun and most people were working in cities. In Spain, on the contrary, the majority of the population lived and worked in the countryside. Obviously Burke’s and De la Dehesa’s perspectives regarding where unrefined people can be found do not coincide.

5. Conclusion

After all these considerations, it can be concluded that De la Dehesa manages to translate the sensualist empirical background of the *Enquiry* into Spanish, which is a great success, as this was not a popular trend of thought in Spain. By using the existing vocabulary, he creates a new dimension for it, making it suitable to explain the origins of sublimity and beauty. He also accomplishes a balance between being close to the original when translating the purpose and sense of the *Enquiry* while sounding natural in the majority of the text.

With all this information, it can be said that Juan De la Dehesa's translation of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* written by Edmund Burke does successfully manage to transfer this philosophical treatise into the Spanish culture. An idea to further research into this subject would be to investigate the direct impact of the translation among contemporary thinkers, critics and writers to properly assess its relevance in the Spanish literary and intellectual context.

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