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## Translating (or Not) a South American Philosopher The paratexts of the works of José Enrique Rodó in English

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## **Translating (or not) a South American Philosopher:**

### **An analysis of the paratexts of the works of José Enrique Rodó in English**

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#### **Abstract**

This study will consider translation as a tool to transfer ideas from Latin America to North America (and the rest of the English-speaking world). It will do so by exploring some of the paratextual strategies that have been employed in transmitting the ideas of Latin American philosophers to the English-speaking world. Specifically, it will rely on a case study, namely, the translation into English of the works of José Enrique Rodó, an important South American philosopher from the early twentieth century. The paper will outline Rodó's work as translated into English, focusing not on the quality of the translated texts themselves but rather on what the translations were expected to do. As a way to understand their expected functions, the present study will describe the paratextual apparatuses that surround the translations. Such an analysis will rely on Gérard Genette's work on paratexts to draw conclusions regarding the role of translation in the flow of ideas from the Global South to the Global North.

#### **Keywords**

José Enrique Rodó, Latin American Philosophy, translation, paratexts

## 1. Introduction

In stressing the importance of translation, writers at times rely on authorities like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (see Steiner 1998, 273). Of course, it does not take Goethe to prove the importance of translation. All it may take is the observation that people throughout the world interact with each other, and sometimes these people do not speak the same language; if they are to understand one another in such situations, translation becomes a necessity in the hopes of communicating across cultures that speak different languages. There are some assumptions behind this argument for the value of translation. The first is that the different cultures that communicate through different languages often have different worldviews. The second is that exchanging these different ways of understanding the world has the potential to be enriching. Thus, a world where people can communicate across languages becomes preferable over one where speakers of a language are only exposed to ideas from speakers of their own language.

In a field like translation studies, scholars will often accept these premises and will tend to see translation favorably. Some scholars, upon looking closely at interlingual translation, have provided some nuance to this idealized version of a world interchanging ideas through translation. In a quantitative analysis of global language networks, Ronen et al. (2014, E5621) conclude that “the world’s languages exhibit a hierarchical structure dominated by a central hub, English, and a halo of intermediate hubs, which include other global languages such as German, French, and Spanish.” In short: most of the speaking is taking place in English. In addition, when translating, a lot more translation takes place out of the central hub (English) than into it. Ronen et al. (2014, Appendix, 7), based on data collected from UNESCO’s Index Translationum, highlight that between the years 1979 and 2012, 146,294 book translations *into* English were published compared to 1,225,237 translations *out of* English. In other words, only 10.7% of all

total book translations involving the central hub were *into* English. In essence, the worldviews and messages espoused originally in English are being communicated through translation much more widely than those espoused by speakers of other languages, including intermediate hubs like Spanish. This is evidence of an uneven traffic of ideas.

This uneven volume in the flow of ideas between English in Spanish has probably been taking place long since before 1979, as research into translation history suggests. For example, a veritable amount of translation took place in Spanish America's Wars of Independence, and while some of it took place into English, it moved mostly *into Spanish* (see González Núñez 2018). This continued to be the case after Independence, as the new Republics began engaging in nation building, including through the carrying out of educational reforms, which resulted in many translations *into* Spanish but not necessarily out of Spanish and into English (e.g., González Núñez 2019).

Therefore, the traffic of ideas between the mostly English-speaking North America and the mostly Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Latin America is uneven, with ideas flowing mainly out of the Americas' Anglosphere and into its Latinsphere. While in principle there is nothing wrong with ideas from North America flowing southward, the problem seems to be that there is no significant counterflow. In other words, no large-scale exchange is taking place. This is perhaps unfortunate in that English speakers in North America and the rest of the world fail to be enriched by much of the original thinking that has been taking place in Latin America.

This problem can be seen playing out in the study of philosophy. Philosophy is a field that seeks to answer some of life's most basic questions through the study of different problems. In Latin America, this task has been taken on by *pensadores*, or thinkers, who have been approaching these basic questions for at least two centuries by studying Latin America's

problems and developing their own insights (Nuccetelli 2020). In their thinking, these philosophers have been enriched by ideas emerging from the global North. Major philosophical developments (e.g., the introduction of positivism) often came into the region via translation (Fronzizi 2004, 296-298). The reverse is not true. Historically, other than among a subset of philosophers interested in Latin America, the ideas of the region's thinkers were generally not part of the philosophical establishment in places like the United States (US).

This is part of a broader historical reality. On the one hand, philosophy is a field that is “thoroughly multilingual” whose key players have been multilingual individuals and who on occasion have even “undertaken serious philosophical translations” (Rée 2001, 230-231). As a field, philosophy relies heavily on translation “because translation has been the means through which philosophy has circulated and been read by other philosophers” (Young 2014, 43). And yet the translation of philosophical texts has shown “marked asymmetries in directions of travel, favouring translation out of the principal languages of Western philosophy—Greek, Latin, French, German, English—into other vernaculars” (Large 2022, 268; see also Lange 2021). Thus, historically it has been more likely that an English philosopher would be translated into Spanish than the other way around.

To be fair, some of this may currently be changing among US-based philosophers where there seems to be greater interest in Latin American philosophy thanks to the efforts of “Latino and Latina philosophers who were born in Latin America and went on to become professors in the US” (Stehn 2014). But the question remains as to whether Latin American thought can become part of the philosophical establishment and whether it can ever reach the general population.

On this topic, Jorge Gracia (2003, 302) explains that what he calls “Hispanic philosophy,” or philosophy produced by Hispanics, has been unable to flourish in the US. In trying to explain why this is, he argues that the obstacles are attitudinal, e.g., Academia’s favoring “of non-Iberian European and of American philosophy” and the “perception of foreignness” as it relates to Hispanics (2003, 302-306). Perhaps surprisingly, in Gracia’s evaluation of the problem, there is no mention of the role that language plays in disseminating Hispanic thought. Specifically, the bulk of Hispanic philosophers are in Spanish America and consequently produce most, if not all, of their writing in Spanish. (The same could be said for Brazilian philosophers with the Portuguese language.) Consequently, there is a language barrier making it difficult for their ideas to flow into the US and be broadly disseminated. Of course, if there is a language impediment to the flow of ideas, then translation can play a role in overcoming that obstacle.

The present study seeks to shed light on how translation might help in the relevant flow northward of ideas. Specifically, it will consider how philosophical ideas move from Latin America to North America and the rest of the English-speaking world through translation. It asks this question: what paratextual strategies have been employed to help bring ideas from Latin American thinkers to the US through translation? To explore possible answers, it will rely on a case study. It will look at the translation into English of the works of José Enrique Rodó, an important South American philosopher from the early twentieth century.

In order to do this, the paper will next present some needed background information regarding Rodó’s life and work. Then it will present an analysis of the data gathered for this study. Specifically, it will outline Rodó’s work in translation. For purposes of this study, we will consider what the translations were expected to do and not so much their quality or success as

translations. The present study will therefore describe the paratextual apparatuses that surround the translations in an effort to understand the expected function of the translations. Such an analysis will rely on Gérard Genette's (1997) seminal work on paratexts, as translated into English. The closing part of this paper will draw some conclusions that bring us closer to understanding the answer to the research question.

## **2. Background**

When surveying Latin American philosophy, Rodó is generally presented as a towering intellectual figure who made important contributions. In a text on Uruguayan thinkers aimed at a general readership, Carlos Pacheco (2018, 88) describes Rodó as “*un intelectual desapegado del poder, hundido hasta la médula en la realidad, apasionado por lo sublime, defensor de su verdad, y un interrogador inteligente.*”<sup>1</sup> His writings may be considered foundational to modern Latin American thought. He wrote at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when Latin America was secure in its political independence from Spain and, through nation-building efforts, had engaged in a project of cultural independence as well. Rodó considered Latin American realities and provided critiques that were meant to spur certain values. Some of his key writings were a reaction to social changes that were taking place due to trends stemming from the US. This type of work “exerted tremendous influence on other Latin American intellectuals” (Stehn 2014). His influence was felt for decades, as will be seen below, and it helped his readers think of Latin America as unique with the context of more widely extended European and North American ideas. For these reasons, including Rodó's ability to look at his own culture in relation

to other cultures, his work becomes interesting when considering the role of translation in helping ideas flow across cultures, specifically from Latin America to North America.

A survey of his life is in order for readers unfamiliar with him.<sup>2</sup> Rodó was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1871. He was raised in an environment where he was exposed to politics, philosophy, and religion (San Román 2018, 39). From an early age he was interested in journalism and broader issues (San Román 2018, 75-76). By 1895, he and some friends founded a literary magazine called *Revista Nacional de Literatura y Ciencias Sociales*, and it was in its pages where he started publishing his first pieces of literary criticism (Rodríguez Monegal 1967, 25). The magazine closed in 1897, and Rodó turned his creative energy to other projects of literary criticism, including a series of essays published as pamphlets (Rodríguez Monegal 1967, 26-27). Rodó was sensitive to the problems and realities his country and region faced, and he entered into political journalism starting in 1897 (Rodríguez Monegal 1967, 28). He then became involved in politics on and off as member of congress starting in 1902 (Rodríguez Monegal 1967, 34). Even so, by the end of the nineteenth century, Rodó had become engrossed in a series of writing projects, including a long-term project that produced writings on a wide range of topics: aesthetics, ethics, metaphysics, etc. (Rodríguez Monegal 1967, 28). In 1898, he joined the national university as a literature professor (San Román 2018, 126-127). In 1900, he published an essay titled *Ariel*, and in 1909, he published a book titled *Motivos de Proteo*, both of which will be described below. By this time, Rodó had become a key figure in his country's literary establishment and was well known internationally. His ideas were captured in myriad articles and essays. Some of them were later published in collected works such as 1913's *El mirador de Próspero*, which “*se convierte así en un ejemplario de sus inquietudes intelectuales, en repertorio de sus temas, en diario de su espíritu, y hasta en muestra de los sucesivos y diferentes*



*estilos, la obra que mejor lo representa y en la que se encuentran sus páginas más perdurables”* (Rodríguez Monegal 1967, 54).<sup>3</sup> The outbreak of World War I provided Rodó with the possibility of traveling to Europe, as a cultural correspondent (Rodríguez Monegal 1967, 59). He departed in 1916, and on 1 May, while staying in Palermo, he unexpectedly died at the age of 45 due to apparent kidney disease (San Román 2018, 428-432).

While Rodó’s bibliography is extensive, this study will focus on his two works that were translated into English, namely, *Ariel* and *Motivos de Proteo*. The first of these books, *Ariel* is considered an excellent work of literature, but more importantly, it is a foundational text of modern Latin American thought. Krause (2011, 43) describes it as “*una homilía moral dedicada a los jóvenes [...] que cambiaría la historia ideológica de Hispanoamérica.*”<sup>4</sup> Rodó wrote this essay in the footsteps of the Spanish-American War, which provoked a crisis in Spain and had repercussions throughout Latin America. The region’s love affair with its northern neighbor was over, and José Martí’s misgivings about an imperial US were clearly not a theoretical matter. *Ariel* was written in response to the profound geopolitical changes brought about by the US military interventions. In its pages, an old teacher named Prospero gives one last lecture to his students. The lecture is a philosophical call to action in which Rodó outlines what Latin America ought to be and ought not to be. Latin America ought to be a place where individuals seek to develop the fullness of their potential as human beings. Latin America ought not to be a place where individuals are engaged in the pursuit of purely utilitarian values. Rodó argues that while the US is an admirable society in many respects, it is also the embodiment of utilitarianism and thus a cautionary tale of the road not to be followed by those who seek the higher ideals of the spirit. In rejecting utilitarianism and calling for idealism, *Ariel* becomes an influential “rallying

cry for the involvement of intellectuals in the construction of Latin American identity” (San Román 2001, 1).

The second of the works in translation, *Motivos de Proteo*, did not have as far-reaching an effect as *Ariel*. Even so, Rodó considered it his best work (Jones 1963, 327). Gustavo San Román (2018, 295) finds it is “Rodó’s *magnum opus*,” and Emir Rodríguez Monegal (1967, 48) argues that “[c]omo pensador y como estilista, alcanza Rodó en esta obra el primer rango entre los escritores de habla hispánica.”<sup>5</sup> The book was the result of a long-term project in which Rodó methodically crafted a theory of individual development. In this lengthy treatise, he argues that to be truly alive, individuals need to be constantly renewing themselves. This renewal requires thoughtful, ongoing introspection which helps find one’s aptitudes, or natural abilities. These aptitudes, paired with a sense of vocation, provide a path forward in life, and that path can only be pursued through the exercise of one’s will. Importantly, this should be faced as ongoing process which keeps the individual from stagnating and moves him or her from one place to another in a constant path forward. To make his arguments, Rodó relies heavily on many European sources, examples, and ideas, placing himself squarely within the philosophical traditions emanated from Europe.

As indicated above, *Ariel* and *Motivos de Proteo* are not Rodó’s only influential works, but they are the focus of this study because they are the only two that have been fully translated into English.<sup>6</sup> This study asks how translation was intended to help move Latin American thought into the US and the broader English-speaking world, and an analysis of Rodó’s two translated works can help shed light on the question. Specifically, an analysis of the paratexts accompanying the translations can help provide insights into why these texts were translated. It is to that analysis that we now turn.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1 Paratexts defined

Genette's work on paratexts has provided "*les définitions canoniques*" for the term and several associated concepts (Bastin 2010, 48).<sup>7</sup> According to him, paratexts are to be understood as those texts that surround a work in a way that it can be presented as a book, offering "the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back" (Genette 1997, 1-2). Kathryn Batchelor (2018, 12) summarizes much of Genette's understanding of paratext as follows:

The paratext consists of any element which conveys comment on the text, or presents the text to readers, or influences how the text is received. Paratextual elements may or may not be manifested materially; where they are, that manifestation may be physically attached to the text (peritext) or may be separate from it (epitext).

In turn, Richard Watts (2000, 42) argues convincingly that "there is no experience of the text, of any text, that is unmediated," because "the text is inevitably framed by paratextual material of some kind." This mediation is not innocent—the intent of the paratext, after all, is to influence the public's perception in favor of the book (Genette 1997, 2).

This framing and thus mediating role of paratext becomes especially important when the book that is being presented to the reader originates in a different culture and language. The reader of a translation may not be as familiar with the author or the context that led to the text's creation in the first place. By providing this information in a light that might predispose potential

readers to engage favorably with a text, the translation's paratextual apparatus becomes an instrument whereby culture might be transferred. At the very least, in such contexts, the paratext can tell us something about the strategies adopted in an effort to transfer the ideas found within the book in question.

To shed light on those efforts as regards Rodó's work, this study will focus on two specific peritextual elements: prefatorial writings and notes.<sup>8</sup> Genette (1997, 161) defines prefatorial writings as "every type of introductory (preludial or postludial) text, authorial or allographic, consisting of a discourse produced on the subject of the text that follows or precedes it." This includes material like introductions, prefaces, and postscripts. Genette (1997, 319) then defines notes as any "statement [...] connected to a more or less definite segment of text and either placed opposite or keyed to this segment." As can be inferred from the previous paragraph, these two types of peritext are likely to provide insights into the attempted transfer mechanisms that support the translations.

### *3.2 Translations of Ariel*

Translated excerpts of *Ariel* abound, ranging from short quotes in academic articles to several pages of text in books on Latin American philosophy.<sup>9</sup> No doubt these excerpted texts in translation contribute to disseminating Rodó's ideas, but for methodological purposes, this study will focus on full translations. There are two such translations of *Ariel* into English.

The first is a 1922 book published by the Houghton Mifflin Company, a publisher of literature, non-fiction, reference works, and educational materials. The book contains an 18-page "Prefatory Essay" authored by Frederic Jesup Stimson, who was also the translator. Stimson was

a writer himself, who wrote novels under the penname J.S. of Dale and books on the law under the penname of F.J. Stimson.

More importantly in terms of this study, Stimson was the first person to bear the title of US Ambassador to Argentina. It is likely that he became aware of Rodó's writings during his 1915-1921 service in said country. Stimson published his translation of *Ariel* at a time when the Roosevelt Corollary (to the Monroe Doctrine) —a policy that called for US military interventions in Latin America to further US economic interests— was in full force. During the 1910s and 1920s, the US intervened in Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and others. In 1922, the year *Ariel* was published in English, the US had occupying forces in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua.

Stimson sought to make US readers aware of Latin American thought. In this context of imperial US interventions in Latin America, he authored a largely allographic preface to recommend the book.<sup>10</sup> About this, Genette (1997, 197) explains that one function of a prefatory introduction is “to get the book read.” To that effect, Stimson loses no time but begins to entice his potential readers by promptly stating that Rodó is “perhaps the greatest of modern American idealists” despite his being “still little known in North America” (1922, v). Another function of prefatory introductions is getting “the book read properly” (Genette 1997, 197), and Stimson also attempts this by preparing the reader's mind for the message that will be found in *Ariel*. To this end, Stimson (1922, vii-x) states that material advancement and accumulation of goods can feed the body but starve the soul if people fail to recognize the true value of ideals. He then offers a warning: materialism is taking over the world “[a]nd some of us are losing heart” (Stimson 1922, vii-x). Specially in the aftermath of World War I, Stimson seeks to provide a sense of urgency to the message of *Ariel*.

Stimson is not naïve about how a message from a South American might be received in the US in the 1920s. Anticipating that North American readers might feel a South American author is too far removed to be relevant, Stimson argues (1922, vi) that “the hopes of the world” rest in the Americas, and that there is consequent pan-American mission in which South America plays a role. He additionally argues that while Rodó is not unique in sounding this message, it is a message that is mostly coming “from South America” and from those “of Latin stock” because they put value in things that are not strictly material (Stimson 1922, xiii). In Stimson’s argument, this should make the message more worthwhile:

This work of Rodo’s, when it first appeared, some years since, lay in piles of popular editions in every bookstall in Buenos Aires and other South American cities. One can hardly hope for such a general reading here. But it is a typical message from South America; and, as such, well worth our attention. (1922, xvi)

Ever the diplomat, Stimson further tries to entice his American readers by appealing to their sympathy. This is perhaps ironic, given that *Ariel* provides mixed messages about the US, but Stimson sidesteps the issue in his introductory essay. Rather, he argues that people in South America look kindly upon the US, and as evidence of this, he points to the fact that most South American states eventually declared war on Germany and favored the US during World War I.

Stimson also employs this essay to briefly comment on his own translation.<sup>11</sup> He indicates that “Spanish scholars will note that (in order to conform their way of writing to ours in English) I have a little simplified the style of Rodó, particularly toward the end” (1922, xvi). By writing this, he sides culturally with his potential readers in the US, which can strategically

generate trust in the messenger. In addition, he claims faithfulness, a value he assumes will be expected by his target audience: “I hope that it is faithfully reproduced; and that in the process of translating, not all the beauty of the marvellous Spanish has been lost” (1922, xvi).

Stimson’s strategy seems to include avoidance of an explicit political context for the book in favor of broad praise for the values promoted in the book. At the same time, he assures readers that this book is representative of the best thinking put forth by Latin America, a region which is construed as friendly to the US.

A second translation of *Ariel* was published in 1988 by the University of Texas Press. The book contains a 4-page “Foreword” by James W. Symington, who was a member of the US House of Representatives for nearly a decade. Significantly, he was US Department of State Chief of Protocol in 1966-1968. By Symington’s (1988, 7) own account in the foreword, he became acquainted with Rodo’s *Ariel* while attending the 1967 Conference of American Presidents held in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

Thus, like with the first translation of *Ariel*, this second one seems to be rooted in diplomatic experiences. This, however, is a different time. While the Roosevelt Corollary had been officially repudiated in the late 1920s, the start of the Cold War again led to US intervention in the region, this time to gain ground against the advances of the Soviet Union. This led during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to aggressions such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion, further military intervention in the Dominican Republic, the implementation of Operation Condor, and the occurrence of US-backed coups d’état and dictatorships. In 1988, when the second English version of *Ariel* was published, the Cold War was beginning to thaw but had profoundly affected Latin America.

In this context of a thawing but still very real Cold War, Symington takes it upon himself to create a prefatory writing that will improve the book's chances. Genette (1997, 210) explains that one of the functions of a prefatory writing may be to "inform the reader about the origin of the work, the circumstances in which it was written, the stages of its creation." Symington's foreword does this by relating how he first encountered *Ariel* and why he thought it relevant. He also (1988, 10) identifies himself as the commissioner of the new edition, including the translation, which he claims was created "with clarity, sensitivity, and elegance."

Symington's motivation in explaining how the new edition came into existence are linked to his function as recommender of the text, that is, to his desire to motivate individuals to read it. He (1988, 8) approaches this task by relating that upon first reading *Ariel*, he sensed the text "seemed, in fact, to be addressing a much wider audience, including generations to come—and most particularly our own." He too seeks to bring *Ariel* to readers by arguing there is a certain urgency to its message. It is presented as a message from which "the 'me generation' of today" can benefit (Symington 1988, 8). This leads to the claim that "*Ariel* should be read by students in this country [the US] between the ages of eighteen and eighty" (Symington 1988, 10-11).

Symington anticipates some resistance to *Ariel* due to its criticism of the US. He seeks to overcome this first through a diplomatic, two-fold assurance: first, "some, not all, of his [Rodo's] criticisms are valid," and second, the book is also highly praising of the US (Symington 1988, 9-10). In doing this, Symington (1988, 10) stresses that *Ariel* is worth reading because it raises issues for which "as far as the general public is concerned, every school of thought on these questions has been on vacation."

In essence, like Stimson before him, Symington's strategy seems to include avoidance of explicit political postures in favor of broad praise for the ideas in the book. Symington carefully



contextualizes the development of the book in English in order to present it as useful against certain societal ills (e.g., “the ‘me’ generation”) while assuring that its more critical aspects can have some value.

The foreword is followed by a 15-page “Prologue” penned by acclaimed Mexican author Carlos Fuentes. This prologue fulfils one of the functions identified by Genette for allographic or third-party prefaces, namely, to contextualize the work (see Genette 1997, 267). Fuentes (1988, 15) contextualizes *Ariel* as “an essential book in the protracted Latin American search for identity.” Fuentes argues that *Ariel* is as relevant at the end of the twentieth century as it ever was, but he also finds many faults with it, including its style. In discussing this, he (1988, 14) praises the translator’s “superb translation, which, while being perfectly faithful, simply finds more neutral equivalents to some of Rodó’s excesses.” The translator’s “lucidity” helps the reader see “why the insufferable Rodó and his moth-eaten *Ariel* matter” (Fuentes 1998, 14).

Both Symington and Fuentes offer high praise for the translation. The translated text, which follows the Prologue, was crafted by renowned translator Margaret Sayers Peden. Her long literary translation career includes some of the Spanish language most well-known contemporary and historical writers, such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, César Vallejo, Isabel Allende, Arturo Pérez-Reverte, and the aforementioned Carlos Fuentes. For her translation of *Ariel*, she also created extensive peritextual materials. The translation itself has no footnotes, but she follows it with a “Reader’s Reference” that is comprised of 10 pages of short entries, usually three or four lines each, identifying authors or concepts named by either Rodó in *Ariel* or by Fuentes in the Prologue. She then adds an “Annotated Bibliography,” a 34-page listing of works about *Ariel* specifically and Rodó generally, including “Editions of *Ariel*,” “Works about *Ariel*,” works “In Spanish and Portuguese,” some French-language translations, and reference works.

There is no “full-length study of the reception of Rodó in the USA,” but Peden’s annotated bibliography is so extensive that it is the closest thing to such a study (San Román 2001, 4). The book closes with an uncredited “Index,” a 5-page, two-column listing of authors and key terms in *Ariel*.

### 3.3 Translation of *Motivos de Proteo*

*Motivos de Proteo* was translated into English as *The Motives of Proteus*. The translation was published in 1928 by Brentano’s, a New York-based bookstore chain that had a publishing arm during the early twentieth century. In 1929, British publisher George Allen & Unwin released a British edition of this book which is a reprint of the 1928 edition. The book contains a 10-page “Introduction” by Havelock Ellis, who has been described as a “distinguished British writer on moral philosophy, social affairs and sexual medicine” (San Román 2001, 92).

What makes this Introduction different from the prefatorial writings associated with *Ariel* is that it was not written for the book it introduces. According to San Román (2001, 95), this introduction was originally “published in London in November 1917 as a review of a Spanish edition of some of Rodó’s essays (*Cinco ensayos*, issued in Madrid in 1915) [...] It was later included in Ellis’s *The Philosophy of Conflict* in 1919.” In other words, this was an epitext for a Spanish-language book by Rodó that eleven years later became a peritext for an English-language translation of a different book by Rodó. Consequently, this Introduction is linked to *The Motives of Proteus* only tenuously and could be dismissed as irrelevant for purposes of this study. However, brief consideration of it may be helpful; after all, its inclusion as a peritext indicates that the publisher thought this text could fulfill a function in relation to the translation. Specifically, the Introduction fulfills the function of helping readers “read the book properly” by

providing some background on the life and work of Rodó. It is “a concise, sensitive and thoroughly positive account of Rodó’s ideas” (San Román 2001, 97), but it provides no specific insights as to *The Motives of Proteus* or why the translation should be read.

The Introduction is followed by the translated text. The translation was crafted by Ángel Flores, “a prolific Puerto Rican hispanist” (San Román 2001, 93). Flores was a scholar, literary critic, and translator who worked in both Spanish and English, and his published work includes translating Pablo Neruda into English and T.S. Eliot into Spanish. The translation parallels the structure of the Spanish-language source text with only one slight deviation. The Spanish is structured as follows: a one-paragraph introduction, 158 chapters, and a detailed “*Índice*” that lists one- or two-line summaries of each chapter. In the English-language version, the *Índice* is rebranded as “Contents” and is moved from the back to the front, between the introduction and the 158 chapters. We don’t place much weight on the changing position of this index of contents, as it seems to be an adjustment in compliance with common editorial practices at the time. The translated text has no footnotes. It is followed by a seven-page bibliography of “Works by Rodó,” “Essays about Rodó,” and “Periodical Articles about Rodó.” The book ends with a seven-page, two-column Index of authors and some key terms.

### *3.4 Nontranslations of Rodó’s work*

The peritexts surrounding the translation of *Ariel* and *The Motives of Proteus* suggest that Rodó’s message was relevant at the time the books were published in English. His ideas were presented in a positive light as a rejection of materialism and even a useful critique coming at a crucial time from a lucid thinker. The peritexts suggest that these messages were important enough to at least be translated and distributed. Even so, not everyone who valued Rodó’s ideas seemed to agree

that they were to be disseminated through translation. Specifically, three *untranslated* editions of *Ariel* were also prepared specifically for the Anglosphere and published by academic presses.

The first was a 1928 edition prepared by Alberto Nin Frías and John D. Fitz-Gerald, which was published by academic publisher Benjamin H. Sanborn & Co. Nin Frías was, among other things, a professor at the University of Montevideo and a diplomat. For this edition he authored a seven-page Introduction which states that the book's purpose is to make available to Spanish students in the US "a modern specimen of Spanish-American literature which is justly considered a masterpiece wherever the Spanish tongue is spoken" (Nin Frías 1928, v). The other producer of the book's peritext was Fitz-Gerald, a Professor of Romance Philology at the University of Illinois. Like the two editions mentioned below, the text of *Ariel* itself is preserved in Spanish, but all the peritext that couches it is in English. This edition includes 135 footnotes, in English to explain key phrases or terms and to provide biographical information on the authors cited by Rodó. The book ends with a 43-page, double-column, Spanish-to-English glossary. The peritext is unambiguous about the function of this edition of *Ariel*: it is for students of Spanish in the US to have access to fine literature and thought.

This was quickly followed by a 1929 edition prepared by William F. Rice and published by the University of Chicago Press. Rice was the chairman of the Spanish Department at the University of Southern California, and the peritexts he authored include a three-page "Preface," a ten-page "Introduction," and 219 footnotes. These notes define key terms, explain certain phrases, or provide biographical background to the authors cited by Rodó. The book closes with a one-page, thirteen-entry bibliography. The preface praises Rodó as a writer of "exceptionally fine quality" who is representative of Latin America's best prose (Rice 1929, vii-viii), and the Introduction provides an accounting of Rodó's writings. Tellingly, the preface offers *Ariel* "as a

textbook” (Rice 1929, viii). Thus, while the target audience is not explicitly identified, the peritext clearly signals that the function of this edition of *Ariel* is as a tool for the study of Latin American literature, presumably by university students of the Spanish language.

The third is a 1967 edition prepared by Gordon Brotherston and published by Cambridge University Press. Brotherston was a lecturer in the Department of Literature at the University of Essex, and the peritexts he authored include a nineteen-page “Introduction,” a two-page “Notes on the Present Edition,” and 104 footnotes. These notes are usually bibliographical, with occasional brief explanations to contextualize Rodó’s sources. Some reproduce the quotes Rodó is relying on in their original languages: English, French, German, Greek, Latin, or Spanish. The book closes with a section titled “Index of Names,” a two-page, double-column listing of authors referred to in the footnotes. The introduction is an essay that both contextualizes and analyzes *Ariel*. The introductory Notes on the Present Edition describes the method followed to create this 1967 edition. This book makes no mention of intended purposes or audiences, but the academic register of the introduction coupled with the rigorous research in tracking down over a hundred up-to-that-point unidentified sources signal an academic readership. Thus, the book seems geared to scholars of Rodó in the English-speaking world.

In addition to the editions that were prepared in English but preserve the text in Spanish, one might consider other writings that were not translated. There are many texts by Rodó that were neither translated nor prepared for distribution in the Anglosphere. Other works that could have been translated include *La novela nueva* (1897), *El que vendrá* (1897), *Rubén Darío* (1899), *Liberalismo y jacobinismo* (1906), and *El mirador de Próspero* (1913). Some of these might be dismissed as candidates for translation because their scope is arguably too narrow to garner much interest. The first two of those publications are works of literary criticism that seem

to have lost their timeliness. The third was an early study of Darío which, while valuable, only covers a portion of the poet's work. The fourth arose as a response to a political controversy in Uruguay over the removal of crosses from public hospitals and thus has less of a universal appeal.

As regards *El mirador de Próspero*, this is a collection of forty-five essays which cover a wide range of topics that were of interest to Rodó. If the purpose behind translating Rodó was to provide the English-speaking world with a representative sample of his writings, this book would be a strong candidate for translation. If the purpose behind distributing Rodó in the Anglosphere was to provide students or scholars with high-quality, intellectually challenging writings in Spanish, this book would also be worth the publishing effort. Consequently, the non-translation of *El mirador de Próspero* suggests that the reason *Ariel* and *The Motives of Proteus* are translated has something to do with the message itself. Both of these works provide an eloquent call for societies and individuals to aspire to continual improvement. They specifically provide an alternative worldview where the acquisition of material comfort and possessions is secondary to the nurturing of the immaterial values that promise to make people better. In a way, this is a message against which it is hard to argue. Thus, we can surmise that when it comes to translating this Latin American philosopher, the message itself weights more heavily than the literary value of the writing.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In closing, Rodó is an inescapable name in Latin American philosophy because of both his place in the history of and his continuing relevance to Latin American thought, as evidenced through a

recent live broadcast focusing on him by the Royal Spanish Academy (Real Academia Española 2021). It is to be expected, therefore, that excerpts from his writings, specially from the now classic *Ariel*, continue to appear through translation in English-language works dedicated to Latin American ideas. Such excerpts play an important role in raising awareness about the existence of a specific author, but to get a more complete vision of any author's ideas, translations of full works—talks, essays, books—become necessary.

Because this study is about the transfer of such ideas, we focus on the paratextual apparatus surrounding the translations, or more precisely their peritext. This is done to obtain an understanding of the strategies employed with the aim of helping the ideas in the books reach an English-speaking audience. The first observation is that all the translations, and even the Spanish-language editions with English-language peritexts for US audiences, surround Rodó's works with paratext. The books analyzed above include one or several prefatorial writings, footnotes, indexes, and bibliographies. The existence of these, particularly the reference materials (e.g., the bibliographies) tells us something about the intended audience. Such peritexts points to an audience not of general readers but of scholars and university students. This is confirmed by the observation that the books were published by educational or academic presses.

Looking beyond the intended audience, these peritexts, particularly the prefatorial writings, reveal something about the perceived need to increase the chances of the work being read in the Anglosphere. Of course, scholars and university students appreciate forewords and footnotes and indexes, but the content of the prefatorial writings indicates an understanding that the original works by Rodó cannot stand on their own without support. A good image to describe this might be that of a bridge. Every bridge needs an abutment, or a support structure that connects the bridge to the road. The abutment is essential for a bridge to fulfill its purpose

because it secures the bridge in place and because it allows for traffic to move from the road onto the bridge uneventfully. If the translated *Ariel* or *Motives of Proteus* are bridges to transfer ideas from the Latinsphere to the Anglosphere, the paratexts in question are the abutments that provide usefulness to the bridge.

This abutment function is evidenced by the specific strategies that were presented in the analysis above. There are certain strategies that are found, at one point or another, in every peritext. First, we see that all prefatorial writings engage in recommending the work, either directly (as in the case of the editions of *Ariel*) or indirectly (as in the case of *The Motives of Proteus*). The prefatorial writings attached to *Ariel* all argue that the work is important, that it must be read. They do this by claiming a sense of urgency to the message, even eight or nine decades after it was originally written. They also anticipate possible objections to the content and attempt to resolve them, particularly because *Ariel* is both praising and critical of the US (where a lot of the English-language readers will be found). Even in the epitext-turned-peritext used as an introduction to *The Motives of Proteus*, there is an implicit invitation to read the work. While this introduction does not directly reference the translated work, it offers such sympathetic praise for the ideas of Rodó that readers would be inclined to read on.

Second, the abutment function is evidenced in the way the prefatorial writings contextualize the work. They all assume, and often explicitly say, that the potential readers of these editions are not familiar with Rodó or his work. Thus, when seeking to transition the readers into *Ariel* or *The Motives of Proteus*, the prefatorial writings in question all provide some basic information about Rodó's life and the relevance of his writings.

A third way in which the abutment function is evidenced has to do with explicitly stating that these are translated works, as seen in both the 1922 and 1988 translations of *Ariel*. By



bringing the translated nature of the book to the forefront, the implication is that the message is worth the time and effort to translate. As stated above, Stimson explains that he felt the need to break up some of the lengthier sentences for ease of reading but hoped to retain the beauty of the original Spanish. It would be in poor form for Stimson to praise his own work, but there is a veiled suggestion there that the translation is both beautiful and accessible. In turn, in assessing Penden's translation, Symington praises it as clear, perceptive, and elegant, while Fuentes finds the translation to be better at communicating Rodó's ideas than Rodó ever was. In that sense, "[t]he English language reader [...] is privileged," he claims (1988, 14). These two are unequivocal about their high estimation for the translation. By stating that *Ariel* is worth translating and that the translations are good translations, these three authors of prefatorial writings aim at bringing the reader into the text.

In short, the editions of *Ariel* and *Motives of Proteus* for the English-speaking world provide a glimpse into the strategies that are engaged in effort to balance the flow of ideas between the English and Spanish, between the Anglosphere and the Latinsphere, and one might argue, the Global North and Global South. An analysis of the paratexts attached to these editions indicates that translation plays a role in transferring ideas but that translation alone is not enough. There is a perceived need for materials that will support the translation by acting an abutment to connect the translation to its potential readers. Paratextual strategies adopted in these materials include claims of relevance (even urgency), contextualization of the work and its author, and praise for the translation. This latter strategy makes translation visible and highlights its importance. And while that may not be enough to counter the overwhelming flow of ideas *out of* English, it provides insights into the strategies aimed at giving the trickle of ideas *into* English a better chance.

## Notes

1. “an intellectual who was detached from power, deeply rooted in the real world, passionate about all things sublime, a defender of his truth, and an intelligent inquisitor.” All translations in the notes are our own.
2. Because the basic facts of his life are largely uncontested, this study draws on two bibliographical sources: Rodríguez Monegal (1967), who in turn draws on works by Pérez Petit (1937) and others, and San Román (2018).
3. “thus turns into a showcase for his intellectual concerns, a repertoire of his topics, a journal to his spirit, and even a sampling of his successive and varying styles, and it is therefore the work that best represents him and which holds his most enduring writing.”
4. “a moral homily dedicated to young people [...] that would go on to change the history of ideas in Spanish America.”
5. “As a thinker and stylist, Rodó reaches in this book the top tier of Spanish-speaking writers.”
6. That these are the only two fully translated works was determined by accessing relevant databases. Specifically, we searched for books by Rodó in the online catalogs provided by the following institutions: WorldCat, the Library of Congress, and the British Library. Once the translations were identified, hard copies or digital copies of the first editions were obtained through our own university library, the interlibrary loan service, or online repositories such as Archive.org.
7. “canonical definitions”

8. This study does not treat the translations themselves as paratexts of the source text. Rather, it considers them to be later versions of said text. This falls in line with the majority approach taken by translation studies scholars: “disposing of the authorial intention criterion and limiting the paratext effectively to Genette’s peritext” (Batchelor 2018, 142). For further discussion on this, see Tahir Gürçağlar (2002, 45-47) and Batchelor (2018, 19-22, 27-31).

9. Excerpts at times are translated by the author of the book in which they appear. For example, in *Spanish-American Literature in Translation*, Jones (163, 327-330), who is the book’s editor, provides his own translation of the beginning of *Ariel*. Similarly, in a report titled “Welcome to the Fold, Mr. Nixon, or *Ariel* and the Dilemma of the Intellectuals,” Silvert (1958, 9-16) provides his own translation of a lengthy section of *Ariel* where Rodó lays out his impressions about US culture. Other works that excerpt *Ariel* prefer to reproduce already extant English-language translations, as is the case in an introductory textbook titled *Latin American Philosophy* (Nuccetelli and Gary 2004), which reproduces a fragment from the 1988 full translation of *Ariel*.

10. In Genette’s typology, when a translator writes a preface, it is considered allographic because it is written by a third party with the (implied) acceptance of the author, but if the translator begins to comment on their own translation, then the preface is no longer allographic (Batchelor 2018, 21-22). We refer to Stimson’s preface as “largely allographic” because he comments on his translation but only very briefly.

11. Peden, who translated *Ariel* over six decades later, commented on Stimson’s translation too: “One sees the labor of love in this work. Stimson was [...] neither a career translator nor a student of language. The errors of understanding in the translation derive from the latter fact. The often inspired, seemingly intuitive moments evolve from his obvious sympathy for the text” (Peden 1988, 117).

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