

**‘Translated [...] with an addition of divers other poems’:
Translation as poetic practice in mid seventeenth-century England**

The mid seventeenth century may be ‘generally recognised as the golden age of poetic translation in English culture’,¹ but the position of translation as a recognisable literary practice in the canon is still very much up for debate.

In addition to the expected Latin and Greek translations of Ovid, Horace, Martial, Virgil and company, translations of continental poets were a common sight. Ambitious poets travelling to the continent – either for pleasure or exile – return with a chest full of fresh, strange verses in Italian, French and Spanish, and quickly begin to publish their own versions of their continental counterparts. The translations are published and publicised alongside original pieces by the translators, implying a connection between the work of the poet and the work of the translator.

In this paper, I will look closely at the publications of Richard Fanshawe, which include both translations and original poetry. Fanshawe offers a particularly interesting case-study because, although his poems circulated in manuscript, they were never published on their own in his lifetime. Instead, a selection of Fanshawe’s original poetry is appended to his translation of Guarini’s play, *Il Pastor Fido* (1648), and even that selection incorporates some other translations from the Spanish. Unlike the majority of his contemporaries, Fanshawe foregrounds not his original poetry in the press, but his translations.

Studying the complex relationship between original and translated literature in Fanshawe’s canon, I will argue that translation was seen as a valid poetic practice on par with any other form of original literary work in mid seventeenth-century England, and that, for poets such as Fanshawe, translations were an integral part of their poetic voice.

¹ Paul Davis, *Translation and the Poet’s Life: the Ethics of Translating in English Culture, 1646-1726* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21.