

**The translations as a conduit for the commerce of ideas: the case of the
Negotiant Anglois
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In my paper I will study from a political and economic perspective the topic of the Anglo-French connections during the long eighteenth century focusing on the role played by the book trade in reshaping the international relationships between the two "Natural and Necessary Enemies". I will argue that during the war of Austrian succession the French ruling class, being aware that commerce was the true basis of the richness of the state, consciously adopted a strategy aimed to create a public discussion on the role and scope of signing maritime and commercial treaties. Precisely for this reason, after the peace of Aix, the implications of the commercial treaties signed at Utrecht in 1713 -the commercial treaties between France and England, between England and Spain and between France and the Netherlands- were deeply scrutinized in France; a great number of books and pamphlets appeared to comment the diplomatic and economic aspects of the choices made by the French representatives in Utrecht and renewed in subsequent treaties, such as in the French-Dutch commercial treaty of 1739. The aim of this campaign was to persuade the French government not to sign commercial treaties that subordinate vital economic interests to the obtaining of dynastic objectives.

A prominent role in this French public discussion was played by the translations of Spanish and English texts into French: thanks to the Gournay group, a deep commerce of English economic ideas was arranged. The translations that appeared between 1752 and 1760 represent a very interesting case-study of the consumption of English economic ideas promoted by the Gournay group: as in the case of Butel-Dumont's *Essay sur l'Etat du Commerce d'Angleterre* recently studied by Sophus Reinert, the original English text was rewritten; in other cases, the original English texts were enriched by Prefaces and notes, as it occurs in the French translation / selection of *The British Merchant*.

Provided by Forbonnais, *Le Négociant anglois* appeared anonymously in two times, in 1753 and in 1776: I suggest that both the translations must be related to the overtures made by the English government for re actualize the Utrecht Treaty - although signed in Utrecht in 1713 it never came into force because the parliament opposition. I propose to relate this translation, that familiarized into French the English way to negotiation, to the purpose of having respected the principle of reciprocity.