Abstract
Translation, in every historical period and in every geographical area, involves three related practices: an interpretive act in which the translator applies formal and thematic interpretants to transform the source text into the translated text; the construction of a network of intertextual relations through the application of interpretants, which create relations to the source text and culture as well as the receiving language and culture; and the establishment, through these practices, of an ethical attitude towards the source text and culture, whereby the translation preserves or challenges the cultural and social status quo in the receiving situation. To preserve is to reinforce the current hierarchy of linguistic and cultural values; to challenge is to register linguistic and cultural differences by upsetting that hierarchy so as to signal a respect for the source text and culture. These points are developed through two case studies, one involving Livius Andronicus's Latin translation of the Homeric Odyssey, the other involving two English versions of Seneca's play, Oedipus, one by the scholar E. F. Watling, the other by the poet Ted Hughes.