# A Linguistic Approach to Intuition in Translation

*by*

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In literary translation 'correctness' is rarely ratified by linguistic rules; it is more often a question of what a sensitive translator feels to be correct. Intuition will therefore play a major part. This intuition is seen here neither as instinctive reaction prompted by experience, nor as native competence, but as an inquiring, self-moderating influence inspired by the language itself. It is treated in this respect as an _informed_ intuition, that is, as having a linguistic base for sensitive judgement. This assumes that the literary translator is both a creative writer and his own critical reader as well as a fine judge of language potential. This line is applied to translating meaning and sense, transferring the very language, imitating the form and style, re-creating the features, and above all, to capturing those unique qualities of the original. After dealing with word-accuracy, the question of literary input demanded by form and style is examined. The treatment of language used for effect features in a section on Kafka. The merits and the problems of translating dialect as dialect for its own sake are looked at closely and in a positive way as are the possibilities of reproducing 'oddities' of language. The immense task of translating the language of Joyce ('Ulysses') with all its vagaries and skilful manipulation of words is examined for the possibility of providing an accurate copy. The ultimate test of reproducing a uniqueness of artistic creation together with the profound thought which inspired it, is reserved for a section on Hopkins. While it is recognized that, owing to the constrictions imposed by the extreme and sensitive use of language, no translation can fully include all that there is in his poems, it might be possible to capture enough of their essence to give an impression of a 'German' Hopkins at work. A major objective throughout is the establishment of a linguistic base for the part played by intuition in literary translation.

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## Introduction

The purpose of all communication is clearly to achieve by whatever means the closest possible approximation of what will be eventually understood to what was originally intended. The complexities of written communication only serve to give this an even greater significance. Across the barrier of language, the most important aim in the act of translating must be to inhibit no further this closeness of understanding-response to the original framed intention; in other words, there should be no gains nor losses due to a (mis)use of language. There is, however, a world of difference between high ideals and the practicality of a successful attainment. This can be nowhere more apparent than in the translation of literary works where a degree of permanence and a measure of æsthetic quality are to be transferred as well as textual meanings. In both literary prose and poetry the very function of language to express concise meaning is tempered by artistic fashioning and leans heavily on imaginative construction. It is not to be denied that *meaning,* here in the sense of 'what the words purport to say', is nothing but central to the process of translating and it is also true that most language systems are capable of handling a whole range of concepts, providing that the user can find or invent a suitable device. Very few languages indeed, however, would admit the *total expression* of human thought in one single representation. There is always scope for some additional clarification, modification, reinforcement, even embellishment.

In its definitive rôle language is rarely exclusively correct; even though some elements of it may assume a degree of exactness, expressive usage tends to introduce a kind of controlled flexibility. Against this background translation could be seen as a process of *more or less precise* substitution and one where the translator cannot rely wholeheartedly on linguistic theory alone, certainly not if he is to operate in the realm of literature. Here, merely 'saying what the text says' could involve considerable input of creative writing based on artistic judgement. At the higher levels of inventive and imaginative construction the real plasticity and infinite subtlety of language introduce into the relationship between the intention of the author and the reader's understanding of it a *margin of error* — this does not refer to a span of possible interpretations but to the variety of ways in which something can be 'correctly' understood and 'properly' appreciated. No two readers receive the message in exactly the same way and here the translator in his initial rôle of surrogate reader is no exception (although he may well be more positively critical in his approach), yet he is charged with the task of precise and objective substitution in his replacement of it.

Although in this respect the language medium and its usage may provide some indication of 'correctness', the translator of a literary text works in the main within the categories of *appropriateness* and *effectiveness* rather than within that of clinical accuracy. Whereas the quality of translation in general sense ensues for the most part from practised expertise and so can be judged by recognized, approved standards, that

of literary translation is far less clear-cut. This is not to say that a literary translator is free to go blundering on in the hope of supplying fitting answers but that he is to a much greater extent compelled to rely on <u>informed</u> <u>intuition</u>, that is, he has to both *know* and *feel* that his rendering is not only the closest, but also the best one possible. Juliane House suggests in "*A Model for Translation Quality Assessment*" that —

"to give priority to native speaker intuition and evidence gained through introspection
is a legitimate procedure if it yields useful insights."

("Tübinger Beiträge zur Linguistik" <Gunter Narr Verlag, Tübingen 1977> page 63)

This may well be true; the question remains: would intuition be equally well informed and operate so effectively if it acquired a linguistic base?

In working within the 'margin of error' the author enjoys far greater artistic freedom but for his translator it brings the danger of slightly missing the point. Could one conclude from this that any translation of a literary work of substance would have little or no chance of being completely perfect and every chance of being deficient in some small way? The objective of literary translation, however, is not just to achieve accuracy by re-labelling items and smoothing out grammar but in an inspired re-creation of a unique work. If the end product is to identify in every way with the original, this total translation would require a great degree of fine judgement. In this a translator is guided by what his own language permits and how it both excludes (unintentional) and manages (intentional) ambiguity; no two languages are entirely commensurate and yet one must be made to respond to the artful designs of the other. While recognizing that translation as an exact science must draw heavily on the theory of language, this would suggest that, as an imitative art form this is often moderated by an assessment which depends ultimately on intuition, albeit well founded.

Translation at any level suffers the intervention of language. This makes some manipulation unavoidable; uniquely 'correct' answers are few indeed, even for perfectly straightforward ready-made expressions — '*wie bist du auf diese Idee gekommen?*', for example, could be in certain circumstances, treated 'mechanically' either as 'how did you get that into your head?' or 'what makes you think that?', the subtle difference making allowance for context, impact, emphasis, etc. Stereotyped renderings would be even fewer where creative and artistic imitation together play a vital part. Here the translator will inevitably employ some instinctive use of language, not willingly and to advantage as does the author, but tentatively and often seeking to evade constraints of form and style. He does so, moreover, knowing that the actual content, real meaning, same shape, similar cultural component, identical quality and a like impression, as well as a *sense of originality*, are unlikely to be achieved in linguistic equivalents alone.

For the literary translator the task is twofold — he has to produce a natural equivalence in that the translation must not be seen as contrived in any way, and at the same time he has to instil a unique identity. To some extent this identity may be

seen as *representation* in that the literary translator is primarily an interpretive artist who endeavours to transpose alien values into the keys of his own language. Both the original and the translation are embedded in their respective languages, each a product of creative imagination and language resource, the first fashioned according to 'open' choice and the second shaped by a restricted one. This leads to the question: to what extent is a work of literary merit the product of language? — and to what extent the product of the author? The answer can be found only in the fund of expressive quality inherent in a language and the author's skill to fully employ, even exploit, this.

In view of this, could a literary text ever be 'uniquely' re-created in another (even, close) language? The number and nature of translated offerings and the sheer variety of artful imitations seem to suggest not, for, as John Hollander claims:

> "Literary works are always unique, canonical, sole, and they seem to guard their official status jealously."
>
> (quoted from Reuben A.Brower: "On Translation" <Oxford University Press 1966> page 223)

To concentrate on some aspects of the original would provide only a partial answer; to value a translation in its own right for what it is, would simply evade the issue and a <u>total</u> translation could only be assumed where like does not just replace like but does so in such a way that the reader knows *what* the author said, *how* he said it, and *why* he did so. This could even mean a re-casting of the original, which would require the combining of appreciative assessment with all the creative and imitative skills of the translator in a way that he 'knows' what is correct and proper.

At this point it is necessary to differentiate between a naturally instinctive response to a language situation (whether resulting from familiarity and convention or not) and "Sprachgefühl", the linguistic instinct arising out of the (possibly acquired) language itself. It would be all too easy to ascribe success in translation simply to the competence of a truly bi-lingual speaker. To do so would merely recognize a fortunate occurrence without identifying the process. In order to understand the process of total translation one must relate the intuitive response to the language and not just to one individual's use of it. It is a well-known fact, moreover, that —

> "native bi-lingual people are unable to translate from one language into another — they usually paraphrase by building word-referents into a new context"
>
> (ref. C.Rabin in Booth: "Aspects of Translation" <Secker & Warburg, London 1958> page 131)

This is clearly seen when translation is compelled to operate in extremely restrictive conditions, for example, in coping with rhyming, rhythmic verse of considerable merit and a profound, perhaps enigmatic, content. Here, the dividing line between an inherent good judgement and practised facility with language becomes decidedly blurred.

The distinction between the two may lie in that the former seeks to resolve a difficulty while the latter contrives a way round it. This study examines the workings of both and their respective contributions to the *re-emergence* of an original piece of

literature in another language. Emphasis will therefore be on both textual accuracy and 'honest' transfer. Combining a degree of literary criticism with the linguistic theory of translation, it seeks to explore a largely uncharted area — the re-enacting of someone else's creation (both the process and the result). It is concerned with special problems rather than purely descriptive analysis of translation *per se*, as are, for example, such authoritative works as J.C.Catford: *"A Linguistic Theory of Translation"*. It must of necessity embrace an element of translation technique but it does not seek to duplicate works purely about methodology, although many prove of value, not least in providing a starting point for ideas (Wolfram Wilss: *"Übersetzungswissenschaft — Probleme und Methoden"*, dealing both with the science and the practice of translation, is a typical example). Such works see 'good translation' in general and of literature in particular largely as a matter of choices and serve mainly in helping the translator to review the criteria for various options. While identifying the factors to be taken into account and suggesting a possible course of action, such works give far less weight to explaining the nature of the reflection involved.

In more recent years the need for such research has been recognized. There is a growing tendency to look into the mental process involved in translation. This is part of a continuum of inquiry starting with early philosophies of translation, through a long line of theory and practice, to a current move towards examining 'the psychology of translation' — Roger Bell's *"Translation and Translating"* <Longman 1991> makes frequent reference to this area. Tied up as it must be in the bare mechanics of translation, the approach is often clinical in its attempt to define the actual mental processes engaged in extracting from one language and injecting into another; translator logic is at one stage defined (using the analogy of a computer) as ''inference mechanism': software that can use the knowledge base to reason or make inferences about the information contained there' (ibid., page 40). This may seem like telling a translator in very precise terms what he instinctively knows.

On the other hand, some works concentrate on dealing with a text for what it is, perhaps with the ultimate aim of maximum faithfulness in transfer. Katharina Reiß (in *"Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik"*, for example) deals extensively with text types and categories of form, style, effect, with a view to bringing about the most *natural* transfer in each case into the other language. Although more informative than instructive, she nevertheless stresses the importance of reproducing the qualities and characteristics of the original together with a correct understanding of it. Closer to the central theme of the present inquiry are a number of essays (by Eugene Nida, Edwin Muir, Douglas Knight, and many others) which deal with the specific difficulties of actual literary works. Invaluable too are those observations of literary appreciative critics / practising translators such as Michael Hamburger and an earlier J.B.Leishman. Most, however, assume an *ideal* understanding of the original and *uninhibited* creative 'originality' in the translation. In short, all depends on the competence, linguistic and

artistic, of the translator. Far too little weight is given to the hidden potential of the language medium and how this itself might encourage a re-cycled 'originality'.

The question as to whether literary merit in the mind of a reader would ensue from a <u>sensitive</u> faithfulness to an original or from <u>creative</u> artistry in a likeness of it, seems to be at the core of such articles as Ann Born: "*The Undefinitive Translation of Poetry*" and Yann Lovelock: "*Translating the Untranslatable*" (see - Bradford Occasional Papers 1990 "Translation in Performance") where specimens are evaluated both against their respective language and against each other. The similarity of language is thus seen in a literary light and the mechanics of transfer are discussed only as far as they affect the end result. Attention is therefore concentrated on the problem of capturing the elusive qualities which make up the æsthetic appeal. The present study will occupy a position midway between this line of inquiry and those involving translation techniques outlined earlier. It breaks new ground, however, in that it relates the 'translating' of such things as beauty of language and poetic nuance to both linguistics and <u>informed intuition</u>.

A perfect grasp of the source material may well be essential but in practical terms the highly imaginative, artistically stimulating, thought provoking nature of most texts would make this only an ideal to be aimed at; no two readers would see things in the same way even though the author may have had a single purpose in mind (here we can exclude deliberate ambiguity). What may be even more crucial to the success of a literary translation, however, is its 'standing' in the new language. Katharina Reiß is keen to point this out in her insistence on the value of mother-tongue translation:

"Allgemein wird heute die Forderung erhoben, daß der Übersetzer die wirkliche Fähigkeit besitzen müsse, die eigene Sprache zu schreiben, da Mißbrauch der Sprache, in die übersetzt wird, die Arbeit gewissermaßen von innen heraus und durchwegs beeinträchtigt, denn, wenn ein Übersetzer seine eigene Sprache mangelhaft handhabt, wenn er nicht zu schreiben versteht, dann muß die Übersetzung schlecht werden, wenn gut auch immer der Text verstanden worden sein mag."

(Reiß: "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik" <Hueber Verlag, München 1971> page 19)

Working as he does in the medium he knows best, the mother-tongue translator is more likely to produce a correct (possibly close) imitation of the text rather than one with imitated (possibly alien) correctness which is often the case with non-mother-tongue translators. He does so, however, by applying a natural intuition that anticipates the outcome in the mind of a fellow native-reader. Could this work in a reverse direction if anticipation is founded on an *informed* judgement based on language itself?

It follows that a real understanding of the original and the facility to render this in a proper and fitting fashion demands not only judgement of a very high order but also a justified confidence in it. The justification can only lie in the efficiency of the translation process itself, its sound linguistic base and the proper application of it. The confidence can only lie in that intuitive sense of 'knowing' what is *exactly right*.

It is perhaps only in the area of literary translation that <u>sensing</u> and <u>knowing</u> play so vital a part. To test this, examples inviting both imaginative and resourceful handling have been chosen (predominantly for suggested treatment, occasionally for criticism of 'standard' translations) especially for the variety of constraints they impose on their aspiring translators. Peculiarities of language will be examined against a background of form, style, individual character and appeal in the area of 'literature' in its widest sense, that is, as an art form to be both read and listened to.

The special problems of translation presented by poetry and dialect (actual, artificial and literary) as well as those of 'styled' prose will be considered with a view to a full and accurate language replacement but the emphasis throughout will be on the profoundness of content and on æsthetic appeal, both of which must find a place in the transferred text. The line followed is that of the *inspired re-creation* of a work in the closest possible copy of its model. This means the bringing together of two texts, one in a language fashioned and exploited by the author, and the other in a language found suitable or adaptable by the translator. In these circumstances the resulting product is almost certain to be a combination of facility and artistry working under the guiding influence of an intuitive (mediating) assessment; that this assessment should be at all times critically sound and linguistically substantiated, is evident. The actual means of achieving this are not so clear-cut, as this study will show.

Chapter I *(Deals with actual language as a key to meaning, style and authorship)*

## Translating by a sensitive linguistic approach

*Owing to the individual character of language, 'formal correspondence' is a perfect, yet unattainable solution in translating, especially if a considerable literary element is involved. Here, any deficiency in formal correspondence may have to be made up by natural equivalence, that is, replacement by 'same terms' having equal application to each language. The extent to which this real equivalence can be achieved in a 'total translation' (of all features of an original) depends ultimately on the textual material and the way it is arranged to give words both deeper meaning and a desired effect. The starting point for translation must be one of meaning. If a text is predominantly informative and put together with clarity, near perfect translation would be possible — 'near perfect' being one which excludes most misunderstanding; if a text is artfully expressive, employing an imprecise vocabulary in many syntactic convolutions, then 'near perfect' would be one to include most understanding. Translations of meaning, however, must be relative to both material and treatment. This requires a clothing of that meaning in the fashion of the original, not only professionally cut to the shape, but in a style bearing the hall-mark of the author. It will be realized that in works of a literary nature, formal accuracy, although demanded, is rarely at a premium. On the other hand, intuitive expertise on the part of the translator may well be so. In what is perhaps the most important factor in literary translation, namely, the ability to employ counterfeit originality, it could be vital. This chapter looks at a possible base for such expertise — a critical appraisal of the text.*

### Demands on translation in terms of meaning

*Re-wording.*     German and English are, by virtue of a wide range in their grammatical shaping and stylistic nuance, extremely flexible in surface meaning and immeasurably adaptable in subtle implication. A comparison of all but the most basic of text segments in the two languages would show that a 'one-to-many' relationship is the general rule; this means that a given idea can be expressed more or less equally well in either language and in a similar variety of ways. In these circumstances, accurate translation of word-meaning is largely a matter of excluding unwanted interpretations. However, shades of meaning are often an essential feature of creative writing. It is not surprising then, that literary translation is rarely a straightforward process of re-wording and re-structuring along similar lines, and even where it appears to be so (in verse or prose patterns, for example), it will not respond to a clinical replacement of language items alone. There is an additional requirement that meaning should be presented, received and understood in a certain way, moreover, in one that neither obscures nor enhances the content. Thus, from a simple 'saying what the text says', which is to a great extent at the mercy of an adequate word-stock, the whole exercise is extended to include an important element of well-intentioned intervention.

This intervention may take various forms. It can, for instance, be little more than explanation (stopping short of interpretation). A translator would certainly have to avoid the danger of over-explaining; at worst this could obscure and confound the real meaning, at best, merely complicate it. The risk is even greater when dealing with short, highly charged pieces without the benefit of context. This is illustrated in the following example, which Wolf Friedrich offers as a model translation of —

"*Palestrinas angstvoller Ruf aus dunkler Tiefe aber öffnet nun den Himmel der Inspiration.*"

as 'But Palestrina's cry of anguish from the dark recesses of his heart now discloses the heavens of inspiration for him.'

(Wolf Friedrich: "Technik des Übersetzens" <Hueber Verlag, München 1969> page 80)

This attempts to explain in extended word groups what the translator intuitively feels in the German. The fact that, for '*aus dunkler Tiefe*' equally justifiable alternatives ('from the dark depths of despair', 'from the very depth of his soul', or simply, 'from deep down') can be found, points to the extent of the subjective interpretation. This is even carried over into the treating of '*öffnet*' as 'discloses', to suggest the revealing of something hidden, where clearly 'opened up, unlocked' is intended. Explaining these words in words rather than interpreting them could have resulted in:

"Palestrina's anguished cry from the gloomy depths, however, now unleashes divine inspiration."

*Illogicality.*    A translator would certainly have to account for, but not necessarily remove, the apparent illogicality in the Australian term, '*a dirty little scrubber*', for instance, if he is to deal with this as it stands. He might do so by correctly relating it to 'maverick' (scrub = 'Buschgebiet', an area where strays are usually found) and not to the cleaning article, 'Schrubber' (see C.W.Turner: "The English Language in Australia and New Zealand" <Longman, London 1966> page 54). The resulting 'schmutziges herrenloses Viehchen' however, although avoiding both the excesses of 'Vieh [= Tier]' and the charm in 'Kalb', could prove unwieldy if applied to a person, as intended here. A more direct route to the meaning may be found in 'urchin' ('Igel' [= 'Bengel']), but this provides little more than a substitute. The urge to explain might give rise to such imaginative concoctions as 'Strauchbube', 'Scheuerpelz' ('scheuern' [reinigen durch kräftiges Reiben] + 'Pelz' as an epithet for a person), 'Scheuerbürste' (scrubbing brush), but then the translator would instinctively realize that the native original expression in no way explains — its true meaning is revealed to the *knowing* by a curious logic and a familiarity with colloquial usage ('scrubber' is an unmarked abandoned stray).

Could a translator work along the same lines to present the right information in the right way? He would be aware that the word 'Strupper' (dialect for 'Schrubber') might be taken for a 'scrubber, scrubbing brush' in the same way and also has similar overtones in 'struppig' (rough, scrubby) and 'Gestrüpp' (bush, shrub). He would have to

give the term some sort of identity, for example, in 'Strupperbürschchen'; whether this would come any closer to translating (Australian) 'scrubber' than other already available terms such as 'Schubbejack' (zerlumpter Kerl), is extremely doubtful. As the expression itself has only a limited currency in Standard English, the best solution may well lie in — 'schmutziges *scrubber*\*' with a footnote (\* verlassenes, herrenloses Viehchen).

Translator intervention can also surface as a considered extraction of meaning, that is, 'as it should be taken'. Peter Newmark puts this clearly when he writes:

" Wittgenstein's statement 'The meaning of a word is its use in the language' is sometimes right, sometimes wrong, but it is good advice to the translator if he can establish the sense in which a misused word is meant from its context, and translate it accordingly."

(Newmark: "A Textbook of Translation" <Prentice Hall International, London 1988> page 220)

Newmark is speaking here, of course, of idiolect and 'misuse', but what happens if the word does not fall into either of these categories? What happens if the meaning depends upon an *unexpected* word deliberately chosen for its 'correctness'? We can see this at work if we attempt an accurate translation of the following sentence —

" *There was something congenial to the season in the mournful magnificence of the old pile.* "

(Washington Irving: "Sketch Book" <reprinted by J.M.Dent, London 1963> page 161)

Here, everything hinges on the key words 'congenial', 'mournful', 'magnificence', 'pile'.

Translation must first give due consideration to these and then carefully select counterparts which isolate and compress the intended meanings into single words:

'congenial': ('sympathisch', 'zusagend', 'angenehm' can be discarded as unsuitable in the context — a description of Westminster Abbey); 'entsprechend', 'angemessen' come close but concentrate on a single issue of applicability. Neither attracts any of the desired meaning embedded in 'congenial'. A less obvious '[in] Zusammenhang [mit]' could provide a solution if the definitive meaning of 'Zusammenhang' could be diffused by a subjunctive — 'als stehe es in einem gewissen Zusammenhang mit'.

'mournful magnificence': is almost a contradiction in terms. The two elements interact in what is essentially a visual description. While 'düster' has visual quality, it lacks the inner emotion of 'traurig'. As 'magnificence' refers to the appearance of the building, it suggests '(herrliches, prächtiges, prachtvolles) Aussehen'. This could be expressed in 'Größe' in a sense of 'Ausmaß'; both the abstract and the visual may be found, however, in '[düsteres] Großaussehen' for 'Großartigkeit'.

'pile': may not be possible in this sense as a single German word (unrelated words such as 'Meiler' can be disregarded), not even by words based on a concept of piling up — 'Turm', 'Haufen', 'Stapel'. As 'pile' is commonly used for a *country seat*, care must be taken to exclude this peripheral meaning in 'Gebäudekomplex' (grandeur), 'Prachtbau' (splendour), 'Bauart' (style), 'Fassade' (edifice), 'Gemäuer' (ruin). As

size and structure are implied, 'das alte massig(e) Gebäude' would fit.

A refining of the simple English syntax to give the right effect to the words provides:

"Es war in seinem düsteren Großaussehen als stehe das alte massig Gebäude in einem gewissen Zusammenhang mit der Jahreszeit."

In its simplest form, therefore, translation is a collection of identified meanings presented in an understandable way. A 'good' translation is one which will employ some moderating intervention, but only to make the contents and effect of a text work in the same way. While one is based on a *pairing of words*, the other assumes that the unique nature of language, although preventing a formal correspondence, is at least compatible enough to allow the 'same' text to appear in another tongue. Wolfram Wilss comments on this 'sameness' as follows:

"Ziel des Übersetzungsprozesses ist die optimale Synchronisation des ausgangssprach-
lichen und zielsprachlichen Textes; sie wird durch den Vergleich der syntaktischen
und lexikalischen Ausdruckspotentiale von Ausgangs- und Zielsprache entscheidend
vorbereitet gesteuert."

(Wilss: "Übersetzungswissenschaft – Probleme und Methoden" <Klett Verlag, Stuttgart 1977> page 69)

In theory this would require a translation, or any part of it, to be interchangeable with the original; in practical terms it means that any piece of translated text should occupy the same position within the new language as the original piece occupied in its own.

A real problem exists when a close translation fails to bring out some aspect, whereas an amendment might do so. Here a translator lives or dies by his 'correction'. He must finely judge the hidden substance in the words as they are set out and then devise a means of weaving this into a word fabric of the same pattern to include it in a completely inobtrusive way. We could take as an example the first line of a well-known English nursery rhyme:

"*Pussy cat, Pussy cat, where have you been? ......* "

This is superficially no more than a direct question. It is possible to detect, however, even in its simple form undertones of inquisitiveness, surprise, wonderment and a little relief. As these are not expressed in so many words, the most precise copy in German — '*Miezkätzchen, Miezkätzchen, wo bist du gewesen?*' — may not bring them to the notice of the reader in the same way. The insertion of 'denn' (permitted by language but not form) in '~,~, wo bist du denn gewesen?' stresses some aspects, eg. admonition, disbelief, at the expense of others. Further inclusions and subtle changes of tense may yet compound the issue, as for instance in '~,~, wo warst du denn nur?'. It follows that the hidden element must remain a part of the formal structure if it is to be properly conveyed. Here a translator might intuitively detect that a repeated 'Pussy cat, Pussy cat' could provide the least obtrusive, yet subtly, the most effective solution in —

"Miezkätzchen, O Miezkätzchen, wo bist du gewesen?"

*Contrived meaning.* With literature, translation is never a simple matter of knowing the rules and applying them correctly. Nevertheless, both the author and his translator require some sort of grammatical consensus as a base for meaning. Often it is little more than that. This is especially true of creative writing, where understanding rarely occurs spontaneously. Here there may be a large input of 'understandable matter' in the very fashioning of the language used. A translator may have to negotiate the problems of preserving by linguistic means all that went into the original; but how can he deal effectively with a sentence such as the following in units of language alone?

> *" There must, be praised, some certainty,*
>
> *If not of loving well, then not,*
>
> *And that is true after perpetual defeat. "*
>
> (Walford Davies: "Dylan Thomas – Selected Poems" <J.M.Dent, London 1964> page 27)

Even if he disentangles the elliptic syntax — 'There must, [God] be praised, [be] some certainty, if not [the certainty] of loving well, then [that of] not [loving well], and that [fact] is true [even] after perpetual defeat' — he might not be able to re-entangle it within the constraints imposed by the German language.

In trying to follow the contortions of the strained syntax, the translator must avoid interpretative intervention and rely on the reader's own ability in the language to make 'sense' of it. His problem is to exclude 'grammatical nonsense' yet exploit to the full the subtleties of language. He knows that the essential quality of the original, its stoic realism, can only survive in the form devised by Dylan Thomas; but he is also intuitively aware, for example, of the enigmatic quality of 'not' and the need for him to reflect this by the best means available in the new language. Could both conditions be met and a workable translation made to survive the syntactic sculpturing in —

"Es muß, [Gott] sei Dank, einige Gewißheit geben, wenn nicht [die] vom Vollieben, dann vom Nicht[lieben], und das gilt [sogar] nach wiederkehrender Ablehnung." — ?

Linguistically, this contrasts 'Voll-lieben' (= 'treu lieben [im Ausmaß]', to account for 'well') with 'Nicht-lieben' while suggestively linking the substantive 'Nicht' with the '(wiederkehrende) Ablehnung'.

Dealing with meaning in creative writing, the translator has to reconcile the two aims, which Ann Born (writing of poetry translation) describes as:

> "total fidelity to the original or an imaginative reconstruction of what the translator sees as the sense and import (of a poem)."
>
> (Ann Born: "Undefinitive Translation of Poetry" <Bradford University Papers № 10, 1990> page 168)

He may do so if he accepts that, although translation can never result in an arbitrary fashion, it does proceed on a basis of 'logic' — any word-thought or meaning is selected only after a considered rejection of others. In this case the key factors seem to be the translatable non-material, the language potential and intuitive expertise.

Each of the foregoing examples shows that meaning is rarely realized in lexical and syntactic matching alone, even when supported by convenient analogous functions in the new language. It may, of course, be left to the competent authority of a truly bi-lingual speaker — he at least should know how something 'ought to be said' — but the danger is that he would not allow the words to speak for themselves (the inability of bi-lingual speakers to *translate* is well known — they will tend, either to paraphrase, or to impose a new context on transferred referents [see paper by C.Rabin in Booth: "Aspects of Translation" <Secker & Warburg, London 1958> page 131]). Both of these extremes place the emphasis on a like-for-like replacement based on the availability of similar resources. Neither the directness of an elaborate system of 'decoding and encoding' (grammatical and objective) nor the circuitous route of a bi-lingual speaker's 'finding something to fit' (natural and subjective) may fully take into account the arbitrary nature of what is to be passed on, that is, words only mean what a writer wants them to mean.

### Preserving the form of the contents

There is no doubt that the form a message takes is important; so too is the way in which a text is both written and presented. In translation this can become a test to see how language differences are managed to provide:

[a] a re-location of the actual text - (within a similar language system)

[b] a provision of corresponding textual meanings - (in parallel form)

[c] a full and exact transfer of 'intention - understanding' relationship - (to operate .

    in the same way for the new reader by using the same lay-out)

[d] a faithful copy of the language pattern used - (reflected in the new language)

The importance of conforming to text-type cannot be ignored; it goes without saying that any translation is much more likely to succeed in the same form. Here 'form' is taken to mean the language medium as well as the fashioning of the information to be conveyed. Speaking of text-types, Katharina Reiß goes further when she insists:

"Der Ausdrucksfunktion der Sprache, die bei den formbetonten Texten im Vorder-
grund steht, entsprechend, muß in der Übersetzung durch Analogie der Form ein
gleichwertiger Eindruck erzielt werden.   Erst dann kann die Übersetzung als
äquivalent gelten."

(Reiß: "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik" <Hueber Verlag, München 1971> page 38 )

Translation may therefore be bound, not in what it says and how it says it, but rather in its ability to conform.

Some texts, while making use of a well established word-stock or a special register for a particular area of application, will also seek to employ a fitting manner of presentation to give greater weight to their words. The German *"Grundgesetz"* of 1949 used a grammatical form of language, not as a means of excluding all unwanted meanings, but to make the text appear definitive and well formulated and yet easily

understood by the average reader. It is a good example of a text designed to establish parameters without resorting to legal 'jargon'. In the following short extract most of the vocabulary items have, if not exact counterparts, at least working equivalents in English. The theme of the document is readily understood; this owes not a little to the careful phrasing of the language employed to set this out:

" *Wegen einer mit Strafe bedrohten Handlung darf ein Abgeordneter nur mit Genehm-igung des Bundestages zur Verantwortung gezogen oder verhaftet werden, es sei denn, daß er bei Begehung der Tat oder im Laufe des folgenden Tages festgenommen wird.* "

("Grundgesetz" Artikel 46 [2] <Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, Bonn 1972> page 40)

There is no doubt that an English translation is helped by certain fixed terms and expressions, the only problem being one of appropriate use —

'eine mit Strafe bedrohte Handlung' = 'indictable offence'

'Genehmigung' = '[legally binding] authorization / [consenting] approval'

'zur Verantwortung ziehen' = 'to be held responsible (made accountable)'

'bei Begehung der Tat' = 'in the act / on the spot / caught committing the offence'

The most important factor, however, is not that it is couched in the right terminology, but that it 'flows', that is, proceeds both logically and orderly. In this respect it may even benefit from a change in the order of reference but it certainly would not tolerate a redistribution of importance given to each item. The text itself immediately suggests a carefully engineered piece of legal composition to be imitated in such as 'arrested or otherwise called to account', both to make up for the *wordiness* in '*zur Verantwortung gezogen oder verhaftet werden* ' and to achieve a *balance* (although 'otherwise' is not in the German as such). English could also be fashioned to reserve the precondition '*nur* ' (only) for the final phrase where its immediate reference to 'authorization' imparts an added stress (as in '*nur mit Genehmigung* ' ).

The translator must respond positively to the straightforward German of the text with a clarity and precision befitting such a legally binding document, for, in the words of Peter Newmark:

"Good or bad writing is good or bad in any language, and nothing exposes the one or the other more tellingly than translation."

(Newmark: "A Textbook of Translation" <Prentice Hall International, London 1988> page 210)

— to which one might add, 'close translation', given the translator's instinct to make the best of everything. As the German is comparatively free of jargon, the task here seems to be mainly one of re-constituting the *public language* in a *legal style* in —

"Unless he is apprehended on the spot or in the course of the following day a deputy may be arrested or otherwise held responsible for any indictable offence only on the authorization of the Federal Government."

Faithfulness to the meaning in the words depends here on presentation of the material.

It certainly does not depend on formal correspondence, that is, translating a verb by a verb, noun by a noun, etc, even in these circumstances, for, as Eugene Nida has it:

"Typically, formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand or to labour unduly hard ...."

<div align="right">(Nida / Tabor: "Theory and Practice of Translation" &lt;Leiden 1969&gt; page 203)</div>

### Can style be translated by merely writing in the same manner?

From a commitment to say what the text says (meanings) with the same means (material) we move on to the important question of style, that is, how it is said. Here especially, informed critical assessment by the translator can be tempered by intuitive 'knowing what is just right'. Expected as he often is, to produce linguistic evidence of a distinctive style, the translator must first know what he is about to copy. One notices an immediate relationship between text-type and style. This can be both functionary in having a phraseology contrived to ease comprehension, and natural in the way that it 'suits' the piece. Fortunately for the translator, both have their roots in the structure of language. Peter Newmark is quite correct in declaring:

"You have to bear in mind that naturalness is grammatical as well as lexical (ie. the most frequent syntactic structures, idioms and words are likely to be appropriately found in that kind of stylistic context), and, through appropriate sentence connectives, may extend to the whole text."

("How You Translate" by Peter Newmark in Keith / Mason: "Translation in the Modern Language Degree"

<div align="right">&lt;'CILT' Publications, London 1987&gt; page 9)</div>

This does, however, place too little emphasis on the writer's own preference for saying what he has to say in the way that best suits his purpose; nevertheless, it does stress the importance (in translation) of being appropriate, not merely 'tastefully' imitative.

Although the transfer of style may be largely at the mercy of the translator's own (instinctive) reaction to its artistic element, a number of linguistic factors can be identified as positive contributory features. Among these may be such markers of style as a predilection for certain words, a preference for a particular sentence structure and perhaps even a predictable approach to the subject matter itself. The extent to which grammatical style is contingent upon text-type can be judged from the following —

"*Thus spoke the considerable personage, the millionaire endower of churches on a scale befitting his native land — the same to whom the doctors used the language of horrible and veiled menaces. He was a man to whom memories were an incumbrance, and anticipations a superfluity. Simply feeling, considering, and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable only to the present.*"

— which is, in fact, not a continuous piece of writing but artificially contrived from separate works by two authors (the first sentence is from Joseph Conrad: "Nostromo" &lt;Penguin

Classics, 1986> page 94; the remaining section is taken from Thomas Hardy: "Far from the Madding Crowd" <Penguin Classics, 1986> page 219). Style here is marked by shape (each section has a natural break), pattern of language and choice of elevated vocabulary.

In this case style is basically a blend of text-type and reader-appeal where the author[s] exploits the one and panders to the other. Language is used purely and simply to enhance the informative content of the material, to impart a greater effect on the one hand, and to make it more attractively readable on the other. The same criteria could be fulfilled in translation by linguistic means — the use of elevated terminology for such words as 'personage', 'endower', 'befitting' and 'superfluity', for example, a preference for appositional or parenthetic phrasing and, significantly, an *unfolding*, not a stating of facts. A translator would also have to fulfil the purpose of the style (clear even in this contrived example), which is to instil in the mind of the reader a picture of a man in a way not open to straightforward description. To do so he might have to negotiate a 'shady'! substance in the words exposed by the style — '*considerable*', for instance, serves to combine eminence, stature with a hint of generosity ('bedeutend'? 'merkwürdig'? or 'ansehnlich'?) while '*simply feeling*' requires much more than just a translation of words ('empfindlich nur'? 'empfänglich für nur'? 'aufgeschlossen nur für'? or a circuitous 'indem er nur das erlebte, was ...'?).

This would indicate a literary approach to the clinical copying of grammatical features making up the style. What must be avoided at all costs is the temptation to over-exploit one's own language. If the translator is able to apply himself <u>equally</u> and <u>fairly</u> to both authors the result should read in the same manner as the example:

> "So sprach die ansehnliche Persönlichkeit, der Millionär, der Kirchen in so einem Ausmaß stiftete, wie es sich für die Größe seines Vaterlandes schickt — dasselbe Land, an das die Ärzte eine Redeweise voll schrecklichen und verschleierten Bedrohungen richteten. // Er war ein Mann, dem Erinnerungen als lästig und Erwartungen als überflüssig schienen. Indem er nur das erlebte, bedachte und schätzte, was ihm gerade vor Augen war, blieb er bloß dem Gegenwärtigen offen."

Often the translator will have to consider those factors which influenced the original writer in his choice of style — for whom the text was intended and its expected reception by eventual readers. If his translation is to truly reflect these he may have to accommodate a 'tasteful distortion' of language. This may hinge on the availability of like expressions and the ability to use/misuse them properly. Referring principally to the spoken language, Catford describes style as:

> "... a variety which correlates with the number and nature of the addressees and the performer's relationship to them. Styles may vary along a scale which may be roughly characterised *formal ... informal.*"

(J.C.Catford: "A Linguistic Theory of Translation" <Oxford University Press, London 1965> page 90)

Translating the transcript of a prepared speech would therefore require the natural skill of a writer exploiting language in a particular situation.

The following is an extract from a speech made by Konrad Adenauer:

1 *"Zu der Frage der arabischen Palästina-Flüchtlinge im einzelnen Stellung zu*

2 *nehmen, hat die Bundesregierung weder ein Recht noch eine Möglichkeit. Ich*

3 *möchte hierzu nur eines sagen: Wir haben genug Erfahrungen mit den Nöten und*

4 *Sorgen von Flüchtlingen, um nicht von ganzem Herzen eine schnelle und alle*

5 *Betroffenen zufriedenstellende Regelung auch dieses Flüchtlingsproblems zu*

6 *wünschen."*

(in "Deutsche Reden und die Technik ihrer Übersetzung" <Hueber Verlag, München 1975> page 10)

In it one can feel both the measure and the conviction of the spoken delivery in the very layout of the sentences; by listening *appreciatively* to the flow of his own words, the translator might intuitively impose a check on the similarity of style.

To make this equally effective in English, the same reasoning approach backed by the right stress patterns must be evident. The language of the speech is elevated but in no way involved in theory or argument. This lack of complexity allows the full weight to be borne by certain 'hinge words' —

'zu der Frage' (line 1) : its position here dictates the tone; as 'zu [der Frage]' - 'on' identifies, 'to' specifies / answers, 'regarding' is neutral, and 'over' commits. The choice of word must also reflect how it was said.

'arabische Palästina-Flüchtlinge' (line 1) : semantically it refers to an Arab contingent amongst the sum total of Palestine-refugees but the intention is 'Palestinian-Arab refugees' (Arab nationals fleeing Palestine) - as a subtle pointer to other refugees?

'genug Erfahrungen' (line 3) : while the style of the language would favour 'being well qualified to' and exclude 'having seen it all before', the thought behind the words (miterleben / miterfahren) is still not brought out fully in 'sufficient experience'. A stylistic imitation of speech pattern may do so in 'enough practical knowledge'.

'Betroffenen' (line 5) : the subtle blend of 'all those concerned / all those afflicted' may prove difficult to put into a single word; 'all affected' might do so and also be in line with both meaning and the style of delivery in the speech.

This could result in something like the following, where wordiness becomes a natural part of style —

"On the question of the Palestinian-Arab refugees, the Federal Government has neither the right nor the competence to make detailed comment. I would just like to add one thing, however: we have enough practical knowledge of the plight and worry of refugees to make us desire wholeheartedly, for this problem too, a speedy and satisfactory resolution for all affected."

— this not only avoids adding further dimensions, but also unnecessary interpretation.

In other cases, style may be a product of prevailing fashion. To accommodate this, a translator has both to write naturally in that style and yet to particularize it for the benefit of his reader. He will, of course, be more successful if the original author favoured a pronounced style, perhaps in the way suggested by Katharina Reiß:

"Sodann wäre zu beurteilen, ob die Übersetzung den stilistischen Instruktionen des Ausgangstextes im Hinblick auf Normal-, Individual- und Zeitstil Rechnung trug und ob bei einzelnen Stilelementen Sprachschöpfungen des Autors vom sprachüblichen Gebrauch unterschieden wurden."

(Reiß: "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik" <Hueber Verlag, München 1971> page 66)

A good example of such an author is provided in Jane Austen, who not only reflects the flavour of an early 19ᵗʰ century English environment and writes in the fashion of the age, but also has a pronounced individual style with considerable originality.

The following extract from Jane Austen's *"Emma"* requires that a translation should [a] flow naturally; [b] reflect the life and time of the original; [c] convey the emotive situation; [d] maintain a correct relationship between speakers; [e] give the proper weight to each word; [f] be in the writer's individual style —

" *"Well," said the still waiting Harriet, "well – and – and – and – what shall I do?"*
*"What shall you do! In what respect? Do you mean in regard to this letter?"*
*"Yes."*
*"But what are you in doubt of? You must answer it, of course, and speedily."*
*"Yes. But what shall I say? Dear Miss Woodhouse, do advise me." "*

(Jane Austen: "Emma" <Penguin Books, 1966> page 78)

Here dialogue makes the work 'come alive'; in translation it must be typical of a *literary verbatim* passage devised by the writer. Clearly it must exhibit the same structural features, such as short phrases to imply hesitancy and uncertainty. It must reveal in the few short words, as does Jane Austen, a wealth of information about the characters, their relationships and feelings, and all in the carefully fashioned language of the age. The markers outlined above are clearly seen in this suggested translation:

"Nun", sagte Harriet, die noch immer wartete, "nun – und – und – und was soll ich tun?"

(flow – situation – force of words)

"Was Sie tun sollen! Inwiefern? Meinen Sie mit Bezug auf diesen Brief?"

(time – social climate – emotive situation – relationship – force of words – writer's style)

"Jawohl."

"Aber worüber sind Sie denn im Zweifel? Sie müssen ihn natürlich beantworten, und zwar eiligst."

(language of the time – emotive situation – relationship – force of words – writer's style)

" Gewiß. Aber, was soll ich sagen? Liebste Miss Woodhouse, raten Sie mir doch."

(full force in each word – language of the time – very emotive – writer's distinctive style)

## Informed intuition in translating author-originality

The question here is whether the distinctive features of individuality can be transferred by linguistic means or whether the translator will be forced into some kind of parallel originality. In the first instance, differences in language structure may be a factor to be reckoned with, especially where a translator is compelled to abuse this for the sake of retaining a semblance of true authorship. Peter Fawcett points to this when he quotes an observation by Katharina Reiß (in Reiß/Vermeer: "Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie" <Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1984> page 63) :

"Average German sentence is 13 - 16 words long, average Ciceronian sentence is 30 words long, the average modern German translation of the Ciceronian sentence 39 words long — neither Cicero nor modern German is being given fair treatment!"

(Peter Fawcett writing in: "Translation in the Modern Language Degree" <CILT 1987> page 36)

The second course, that of imitating authorship, would rely far more on a combination of informed and intuitive judgement. Although initiated by the language of the original, this would however spring from that of the translation.

The individuality of a work is a product of the awareness of language and its use rather than just usage. This is especially true when the moulding of language is a key factor in the proper interpretation and æsthetic appreciation of a work. Much may depend on the writer's skill; much more depends on the originality of that skill. In this case translation must be a sensitive dealing with, not just a successful negotiation of the text. It might by these means avoid the very real danger of a work being seen only in the light of the translator's own original expertise (J.B.Leishman's fine translations of Rilke poems, for instance, expose this danger). Originality itself implies the quality of being attractively unusual. Placed in the invidious position of having to channel this quality yet remain neutral, a translator may have to devise some 'clinical prescription' for originality. This is never more true than when dealing with imaginative authors —

"Stylistically innovatory literature", in the opinion of John London, "changes our (pre)conceptions of language. Literary novelty is thus intrinsically unidiomatic, and the translator is obliged to convey this originality. To be faithful to the originality of the original, he has himself to be original and therefore ceases to be faithful, or, rather, he undertakes what could be called a 'faithful betrayal'."

(J.London: "Translating for the Stage" <Bradford University Occasional Papers №10, 1990> page 142)

In the light of this we might examine the waywardness of the text for inspiration.

The following extract from a poem by Dylan Thomas shows how one language can shape a work and at the same time be shaped by it. In it the poet uses a variety of linguistic devices — verbal inventiveness, symbolic meaning, metaphorical imagery and objective rhetoric, and, what is more, all to his own liking. From a poem written during the London blitz, "Ceremony after a fire raid", the opening verse runs:

1    "*Myselves*

2       *The grievers*

3       *grieve*

4       *Among the street burned to tireless death*

5       *A child of a few hours*

6       *With its kneading mouth*

7       *Charred on the black breast of the grave*

8       *The mother dug, its arms full of fires.*"

In this, so much of what the words seem to mean is bound up in the highly original way Thomas treats them. It would be more productive, therefore, to identify those features which particularly 'betray' the poet's thinking and then make them originally visible in the German language. This involves looking at the following areas —

*Imagery and symbolic metaphor.*    'black breast of the grave' (line 7), the damp mound of freshly dug earth, is the breast of 'Mother Earth', giving in life, taking in death; this is reinforced by '*the mother dug*' (line 8) which is both an earthy reference to 'dug' as nipple and 'dug' meaning that the grave was already waiting from the first moment of life. The visual effect of '*kneading mouth*' (line 6) owes much to a picture of dough being kneaded (bread of life) and to the sucking/chewing action of the mouth. '*tireless death*' (line 4) is a sleepless sleep (sleep is a natural characteristic of a baby) both unremitting and eternal. The '*arms full of fires*' (line 8) refers openly to the still fresh lesions on the child's arms as charred, mottled, ashen spots (left by the incendiary bomb) and secretly to fires as the untold lives which could stem from the child, but now taken from him, in a symbol of the child holding a promise for the future.

*Intention concealed in words.*    '*myselves*' (line 1) can only be plural in the sense of 'images of myself' by which the poet is trying to identify himself with the mourners; he is there in spirit in each one (singular) of them (plural). It is significant that '*grieve*' (line 3) could equally mean 'we grieve', 'they grieve' or 'I grieve' (the poet is speaking for the mourners and himself, and of them); it could also be a pseudo-imperative '[let] us / them / me grieve'. The meaning of 'among' in '*among the street*' (line 4) may well be 'in', but it is more than likely that '*street*' refers to the inhabitants of the street ('street' often assumes a sense of group identity = neighbours), and therefore 'amongst the victims living in (belonging to) the street'; the only other interpretation is that the street is an imaginary one typifying many civilian locations of bombing raids ('*tireless death*' could then mean the community life of the street wiped out forever).

*Interpretations deliberately imposed by language.*    The poet is an exponent of the pun, concealed, subtle, or tantalizingly obvious. Thus '*kneading mouth*' (line 6) links a massaging, churning action of the mouth with a 'need' to be fed (the poem is intended to be heard, not just read). The poet also leaves open the connection between '*mother*

*(earth)'* and *'breast (of the grave)'* (lines 7+8) but the words themselves hold the subtle suggestion of soothing comfort. There is much more implied in the term 'griever' than would be felt in 'mourner' (which usually refers to a close circle of relatives and friends) and the enigmatic syntax of the first three lines brings this out to the full — is the poet identifying himself with the mourners or the faceless (unknown) child? - is he grieving over a sense of loss in himself? If we are to truly convey the poet's originality, could German distinguish here between 'trauern' and '[sich] grämen'?

The actual shape is part of the poet's originality and, while this adds a further restriction, the translation should never be seen as a mere laboured copy. With this in mind, and giving meaning to the words in the way that Thomas does, could result in:

"Manch Ich
Sich grämend
grämt
Von ganz' Straße todewig verbrannt
Ein Kind seit knapp paar Stund'
Sein knetender Mund
An schwarze Grabesbrust verkohlt
Die Muttererbe, Arme voll Flammen."

This attempts to emulate a certain way with words. It does so by fashioning them — 'todewig' compresses all the force of eternal death into one word; — 'Grabesbrust' has poetic depth; this comes from its spoken quality; — 'Kind seit knapp paar Stund' ' is very expressive (as is 'child of a few hours'); this is achieved by giving the words a ring of emotion; — 'Muttererbe' is here both the gift of life (with all its promises) and the sentence of death; the word is designed to be thought-provoking; — 'Flammen' can be taken either as fires or hopes and passions, to be extinguished or fanned into life; the double meaning is emphasized in the final position of the word; — 'manch Ich' has the same individual plurality as 'myself[ves]' with a similar confused grammar; the effect is enhanced here by the syntactic mystery of the words (many a 'myself'). Above all, the translation seeks to capture the poignancy of the author's style.

### Translating the author's originality in his text

Even if the translator is aware of the importance of faithfulness to meaning, form, style and individuality, he still has to reproduce the text for what it is — actual pieces of language, intentionally and purposefully set out in a certain way. He may have a number of rules and procedures for security, but as far as literature is concerned, a great deal depends on a responsive as well as a responsible individual treatment. Here, informed intuition can be at a premium. Describing two distinct methods of translation, Peter Newmark defines the sentence-by-sentence approach as "proceeding mainly by intuition" and the re-read-the-text-through approach as "using the power of analysis" (Newmark: 'How You Translate' in "Translation in Modern Languages Degree" <CILT 1987> page 5), but

this reduces intuition to little more than fortunate chance, while according (con)textual awareness a degree of critical assessment (although, Peter Newmark is really discussing methods of tackling a translation in an exam situation). The term 'informed intuition' is used here to mean *confidence in the sensing of what is correct founded on knowledge of rules, critical judgement, and similar experience* ; it is, in fact, a combination of the of the clinical, the analytical and the functional.

The ultimate aim of re-creating as well as reproducing an *extant* text will be demanding of logical deduction and sensitive appreciation. The particular concentration of these efforts depends on the text itself; a common feature, however, is likely to be the author's exploitation of language. The following passage is marked by a pronounced 'craftsmanship' of language; this may not be easy to imitate by language rules alone:

1   *"How did Garrick speak the soliloquy last night? — Oh, against all rule, my*
2   *Lord, — most ungrammatically! betwixt the substantive and the adjective, which*
3   *should agree together in number, case and gender, he made a breach thus, —*
4   *stopping as if a point wanted settling: and betwixt the nominative case, which*
5   *your Lordship knows should govern the verb, he suspended his voice in the epilogue*
6   *a dozen times three seconds and three fifths by a stopwatch, my Lord, each time.*
7   *— Admirable grammarian! — But in suspending his voice — was the sense*
8   *suspended likewise? Did no expression of attitude or countenance fill up the*
9   *chasm? Was the eye silent? Did you narrowly look? — I only looked at my stop*
10  *watch, my Lord. — Excellent observer! And what of the new book the whole*
11  *world makes such a rout about? — Oh, 'tis out of plumb, my Lord, — quite an*
12  *irregular thing! — not one of the angles at the four corners was a right angle,*
13  *— I had my rule and compasses, etc. in my pocket. — Excellent critic!"*

(taken from Laurence Stern: "Tristram Shandy" <reprinted by J.M.Dent, London 1967> page 130)

Although it may on occasion be advantageous to reconstruct individual phrases to bring out certain nuances which rely on English style, the overall pattern should be maintained. Punctuation and ordering of sentences are vital. While there is little doubt that a 'word replacement' translation using identical phraseology would work, the real need is to put the stamp of the German language on the character of a text which is, to some extent, alien. This does not mean the updating of expressions no longer current, nor the transposing of a reader into another world and time, but rather the preserving of the unique styling by linguistic means so that it can be correctly appreciated. Here 'correctly' implies not only in the way it is intended (as a vehicle for satirical humour), but also in the way it belongs to the text. Much of this derives from the author's skill in using the right expression or turn of phrase as a natural part of an exaggerated and exotic style. The translator must also aim towards this and at the same time never stray far from the substance and pattern of the text as it is set out.

It is essential, therefore, to examine analytically and critically the composition

of the replacement items in relation to the text. The phrase 'he suspended his voice' (line 5) could be translated, either by 'er schaltete den Wortschwall aus' to convey the archaic, wordy flavour, or by 'er setzte seine Stimme aus' to be coldly precise, or by 'er ließ seine Stimme stocken' to capture some measure of the original. One may also have to make full use of every syntactic opportunity to keep both meaning and effect true to the text. Let us examine the effect of 'aussetzen' as it might be variously used to render the essential elements of — "he suspended his voice (in the epilogue) a dozen times (three seconds and three fifths by a stopwatch, my Lord), each time." (lines 5+6):

'er setzte seine Stimme ein Dutzendmal aus, jedesmal ...'

(main verb = he stopped speaking on a dozen occasions, each time for ...)

'dutzendmal ließ er seine Stimme aussetzen, jeweils ...'

(with auxiliary verb = a dozen times he paused, each time for ...)

'er legte ein Dutzendmal eine Pause ein, jede Aussetzung ...'

(= made a pause, the nature of which is identified by a following noun)

Intuition, however, may prompt a delaying of 'Aussetzung' in order to direct attention to the frequency and duration of the pauses, for example, in —

'(er ließ ... ein Dutzendmal die Stimme stocken, jedesmal drei Sekunden ...) - - - - - -
Aber blieb bei jeder Aussetzung der Sinn der Worte ...?'

Looking at the text as a whole, the translator would realize that it does not rely so much on grammatical complexity within the phrases as on their interaction and the way they 'run together'. He will also be conscious of the need to adjust his own language to that of the text, especially regarding the effective meaning of his words. The sentence in question might therefore be considered thus:

Syntactically

he                   in the epilogue

stopped (speaking) ———— a dozen times

three seconds and three fifths

           └———— on a stop watch

Hierarchy of meaning

        he stopped (speaking)

in the epilogue ——┘└— a dozen times

          └—— three seconds and three fifths

            └—— on a stop watch

The structure of the sentences, therefore, not only decides the semantic relationship of the lexical items, but also the way in which the most important features of the original — interpolation, exchange, remark — can figure prominently in the 'styling'.

There still remains the task of carrying over this effectiveness into a lexically cognate German text. Here it is vital to find items which work the same way within

the <u>text</u>. Here intuitive logic might suggest —

*'speak'* (line 1) : here it means to 'declaim', 'orate', 'recite', 'perform', 'interpret' or 'enact' — 'darstellen' / '<u>vortragen</u>' rather than 'sprechen'

*'betwixt'* (line 2) : although basically an obsolete form of 'between', it does emphasize location more than spatial relationship. As German has no corresponding archaic form, this aspect could be brought out in '<u>da zwischen</u>' (= im Zwischenraum)

*'made a breach'* (line 3) : 'pause', 'hesitation', 'stop', 'gap', but here 'breach' implies a space deliberately created — '<u>er legte (eine Pause) ein</u>' avoids a finality in 'er hielt inne' and allows 'Stilpause' for *'breach'* (hiatus), although this may be interpretative

*'as if ... wanted'* (line 4) : the force of *'wanted'* (needed) is that of 'ought to be' or 'would / should have to be', expressed in German by '<u>als müsse ... erledigt werden</u>'

*'suspended his voice'* (line 5) : 'hesitated', 'stopped speaking', 'stifled his voice', point to a deliberate interrupting of the flow of words — '<u>er ließ die Stimme stocken</u>'

*'admirable grammarian'* (line 7) : the German 'Grammatiker', if it is to be qualified by such as '<u>bewundernswert(er)</u>', suggests biting sarcasm and this could be given a more humorous face in the pseudo-Latin form '<u>Grammatikus</u>'

*'was the sense suspended?'* (line 7-8) : here the meaning seems to be 'left in suspense', 'the train of thought broken', 'left hanging'; *'suspended'* here combines 'discontinued' (ausgeschaltet) with 'caught up' (hängenbleiben) — 'den Sinn unterbrechen' and 'den Sinngehalt verderben' could give way to '<u>blieb der Sinn der Worte in der Schwebe?</u>'

*'expression of attitude or countenance'* (line 8) : here *'attitude'* = posture (Positur) and *'countenance'* = look (Miene); in a wider sense 'Geste' and 'Stellung' could apply, but the flavour of the English may be best felt in '<u>Ausdruck in Gebärdenspiel oder Miene</u>'

*'makes such a rout about'* (line 11) : mad about, raving about, but here to enthuse over, to acclaim wildly — German offers many expressions ranging from 'begeistert', 'toll finden', 'schwärmen von' to the definitive 'mit Aufregung begrüssen' or 'tolle Kritik zuerkennen'. These either fail to stress the 'fuss' element or lack a sufficiently out-moded flavour; '<u>so viel Aufhebens machen</u>' satisfies at least one of these criteria

*'out of plumb'* (line 11) : literally 'aus dem Lot' (nicht mehr senkrecht) is used here for 'out of square, not at rightangles' (nicht rechtwinklig). Both in English and German the meaning of mathematical inaccuracy is extended by analogy to 'lacking sense'. The problem is that, while the author obviously plays on the double meaning, the person in his story refers only to angularity. The translator must also do so and yet provide a hint of 'false, erroneous, warped', perhaps in '<u>es sieht so ganz schief aus</u>'

*'excellent'* (lines 10 13) : as the intensity of the praise is progressive, 'trefflich' on the first occasion could be expanded later by the pseudo-superlative, '<u>vortrefflich</u>'

The objective of the translator must be to make the result both readable and enjoyable in the same measure as the original. Therefore he has to be grammatically accurate and stylistically sensitive in his treatment of what is essentially a very natural piece of unnatural language. The following attempt concentrates on presentation —

"Und wie hat Garrick den Monolog gestern Abend vorgetragen? O, ganz gegen die Regel, Euer Gnaden, — überaus ungrammatisch: da zwischen dem Substantiv und dem Adjektiv, die je nach Zahl, Fall und Geschlecht übereinstimmen sollten, hat er eine Pause eingelegt, — er hielt inne, als müsse die Sache zuerst erledigt werden; und zwischen dem Nominativ, der, wie Euer Gnaden wohl wissen, die Beugung des Zeitworts bestimmen sollte, ließ er im Laufe des Epilogs ein Dutzendmal die Stimme stocken, jedesmal drei und drei Fünftel Sekunden lang nach der Stoppuhr, Euer Gnaden. — Bewundernswerter Grammatikus! Aber blieb bei jeder Aussetzung der Stimme auch der Sinn der Worte in der Schwebe? Hat kein Ausdruck im Gebärden-spiel oder in der Miene diese klaffende Lücke ausgefüllt? Hat das Auge geschwiegen? Haben Sie aus der Nähe hingesehen? — Ich habe bloß auf die Stoppuhr geguckt, Euer Gnaden. — Trefflicher Beobachter! Und was halten Sie von dem Buch, von dem alle Welt so viel Aufhebens macht? — O, es sieht so ganz schief aus, Euer Gnaden, ein vollkommen unregelmäßiges Ding. Kein einziger von den Winkeln an den vier Ecken war ein rechter Winkel. In der Tasche hatte ich Lineal, Zirkel usw. mit. — Vortrefflicher Kritiker!"

### Preserving the quality of the text by translating the features of its language

The appropriate language of a particular text-type, if used to full advantage, contributes much to both understanding and appreciation of the material content. This must be reflected in translation. The author's contribution, a 'way with words' to make the language work, must also have its counterpart in the translator even though he is, for the most part, obeying instructions. He must ensure that his own text complies with these instructions sensitively as well as implicitly. Some degree of comparative analysis will be instinctively applied by the translator himself. Instinctive though it may be, this analysis must be supported by a familiarity with the linguistic features involved in literary composition. Here one can accept the definition by Katharina Reiß of some of the most critical areas:

" In bezug auf diese innersprachlichen Instruktionen untersucht nun der Kritiker bei den semantischen Elementen die Äquivalenz, bei den lexikalischen die Adäquatheit, bei den stilistischen die Korrespondenz ihrer Wiedergabe in der Übersetzung. Er muß sich dabei stets der Interdependenz und der Relationen zwischen den einzelnen innersprachlichen Instruktionen untereinander und zwischen ihnen und den texttypischen Erfordernissen bewußt bleiben."

(Reiß: "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik" <Hueber Verlag, München 1971> page 68)

The value of such linguistic cross-examination is even more apparent when translating a text which is itself a calculated exploitation of a particular mode, as in the following example, the language of the novel designed to be compelling, enjoyable and rewarding.

The extract consists of two sentences, the first of which is short, economical and balanced; the second is long, involved and made up entirely of phrases and clauses

which take over and expand ideas, not as a piece of haphazard descriptive writing to capitalize on hastily contrived impressions, but in the imaginative language of the novel. In translating the German (from Günter Grass: *"Die Blechtrommel"*) the main problem is to get the English to run both well and in the same manner. The first sentence runs:

1   *"Die „Radaune" stampfte, Sandbänken geschickt, unterm Beistand wechselnder*

2   *Lotsen ausweichend gegen die lehmtrübe, nur eine Richtung kennende Flut. ..."*

The difference in the structural patterns could be illustrated by comparison, using just one of many possible alternatives in word-correspondence —

### Sentence 1. structure

| German | English |
|---|---|
| 1: die, „Radaune", →stampfte | 2: deftly, avoiding, the, sandbanks |
| 2: Sandbänken, geschickt | 3: with, the, help, of, a, succession, of, pilots |
| 3: unterm, Beistand, wechselnder, Lotsen | 1: the, „Radaune", pounded, its, way |
| 4: ausweichend, gegen, die, lehmtrübe, nur, eine, Richtung, kennende, Flut | 4: against, the, muddied, current, in, full, spate |

Although in a different order of logical / grammatical progression, the basic ideas have been given equivalent expression. To conform to this new arrangement the actual rôle but not the inherent meaning of some words (or word groups) has been changed. This is done (a) to fully preserve the sense — eg. the adjective 'wechselnder [Lotsen]' can assume, as 'changing pilots', a different function in English (by changing pilots); a noun

construction, 'with changes of pilot', is more productive and allows 'sequence → string → succession'; (b) to bring out salient qualities in the actual writing — eg. the phrase 'nur eine Richtung kennende [Flut]' owes its descriptive force entirely to the impact of 'kennend' which collects together the whole idea of 'streaming [headlong] - swirling [onward] - rushing [madly] - flowing [relentlessly]' to be underlined by 'Flut', which is unconsciously opposed to 'Ebbe' to give both direction and current.

The second long sentence is made up of disjointed phrases, some no more than word-pictures, each stemming from, or expanding the previous one. There is very little continuity and a singular absence of main verbs on which to hang the whole sentence.

3   ".. *Links und rechts lag hinter Deichen immer dasselbe, wenn nicht flache, dann*
4   *gehügelte, schon abgeerntete Land, Hecken, Hohlwege, eine Kesselkuhle mit*
5   *Ginster, plan zwischen Einzelgehöften, geschaffen für Kavallerieattacken, für eine*
6   *links im Sandkasten einschwenkende Ulanendivision, für über Hecken hetzende*
7   *Husaren, für die Träume junger Rittmeister, für die Schlacht, die schon dagewesen,*
8   *die immer wieder kommt, für das Gemälde: Tataren flach, Dragoner aufbäumend,*
9   *Schwertritter stürzend, Hochmeister färbend den Ordensmantel, dem Kuraß kein*
10  *Knöpfchen fehlt, bis auf einen, den abhaut Masovians Herzog, und Pferde, kein*
11  *Zirkus hat solche Schimmel, nervös, voller Troddeln, die Sehnen peinlich genau*
12  *und die Nüstern gebläht, karminrot, draus Wölkchen, durchstochen von Lanzen,*
13  *bewimpelt, gesenkt und den Himmel, das Abendrot teilend, die Säbel und dort, im*
14  *Hintergrund — denn jedes Bild hat einen Hintergrund — fest auf dem Horizont*
15  *klebend, schmauchend ein Dörfchen friedich zwischen den Hinterbeinen des*
16  *Rappen, geduckte Katen, bemoost, strohgedeckt; und in den Katen, das konserviert*
17  *sich, die hübschen, vom kommenden Tage träumenden, Panzer, da auch sie ins*
18  *Bild hinausdürfen auf die Ebene hinter Weichseldeichen, gleich leichte Fohlen*
19  *zwischen der schweren Kavallerie. "*

Grammatically, the sentence could be split up but this would almost certainly spoil the effect and destroy the originality. Translation must, therefore, closely follow the same pattern and any changes envisaged should not be to improve the grammar but to get as close as possible to the meanings within the phrases.

The writer uses a number of ways to put over the desired impression — some words revolve around a present participle (often as an adjective) to convey movement, as in '*über Hecken hetzende Husaren*' (line 6), some find descriptive power in the past participle, as in '*durchstochen von Lanzen, bewimpelt, gesenkt*' (line 12), some gain in effect by their very isolation, as '*Tataren flach*' (line 8). The phrases themselves vary from compressed detail, '*wenn nicht flache, dann gehügelte, schon abgeerntete*' (line 3), through the inserted remark, '*kein Zirkus hat solche Schimmel*' (line 11), to the styled poignancy of '*für die Schlacht, die schon dagewesen, die immer wieder kommt*' (line 7). Accepting that the text, as a literary work, is primarily directed towards its original

language, the translator must exploit linguistic means such as outined above if he is to achieve both semantic accuracy and literary effect. Wolfram Wilss, it is true, asserts:

"Texte [weisen] auf lexikalischer und syntaktischer Ebene Konstitutionsmerkmale

auf, die man mit linguistischen Methoden beschreiben, ordnen und erklären kann"

(Wilss: "Übersetzungswissenschaft - Probleme und Methoden" <Klett Verlag, Stuttgart 1977> page 136)

Yet a really worthwhile translation may result from properly accounting for, rather than correctly imitating the linguistic features.

Regarding the frequent occurrence of the present participle, we may find it prudent to use it differently, replace it, omit it, or even re-introduce it elsewhere —

'*links im Sandkasten einschwenkende Ulanendivision*' (line 5) : this can be given verbal, rather than adjectival force in 'a division of Uhlans wheeling in from the left across the sandtable' (actually a military operations table but hints at a sandy plain)

'*über Hecken hetzende Husaren*' (line 6) : this could be retained as an adjective but with more force in 'hedge-hopping hussars' although this may not fully convey the idea of 'hetzen' (chase, harry, pursue); back-translated, 'heckenhüpfend' seems to mean more of 'dicht über dem Boden fliegen' than 'über Hecken jagen / verfolgen'

'*Dragoner aufbäumend, Schwertritter stürzend*' (line 8) : here significant placing is of utmost importance - 'dragoons rearing, knights in armour falling'

'*auf dem Horizont klebend*' (line 14) : while 'sticking to' indicates actively hanging on to, 'hugging' may not; the temptation, however, is to resort to a past participle. Although 'stuck on' or 'firmly pasted on' could give a pictorial idea of perspective, real meaning may be better found in 'firmly perched on the horizon'

'*schmauchend ein Dörfchen friedlich*' (line 15) : it may suit the style of language to see 'schmauchend' as 'a little village smoking peacefully', but this needs explanation, such as, 'the smoking chimneys of'; taking 'smoking' (schmauchend) as a noun may provide 'the leisurely smoke of a little village perched firmly on the horizon'

'*vom kommenden Tage träumenden*' (line 17) : although the adjectival phrase 'dreaming of the coming day' is possible, it would normally be predicated - 'tanks dreaming of ..'; this encourages '.. of the day to come' with the right prophetic nuance.

On the other hand, a translator may have to turn to a present participle (not in the text) to avoid assuming rather than implying what the words really say —

'*Tataren flach*' (line 8) : if 'riding' is assumed, then 'flat out' could refer to both the manner and speed of riding; if it is not, then 'flat' may give a false idea of 'dead'. 'stretched out' could apply to both. As 'crouching' is used for on foot and riding, in this, interpretation is genuinely left to the reader.

He may also have to employ a present participle to render in English, for example, a peculiarity of German style difficult to imitate —

'*Nüstern gebläht, ..., draus Wölkchen*' (line 12) : 'draus' by itself does not contain any

verbal element and 'from them little clouds' would be accurate but unimaginative. German 'draus' gives an impression of 'issuing forth (puffed out)' from the dilated nostrils. Treating the picture as living, active, as well as a vividly painted canvas would allow 'nostrils dilated, carmine red, emitting little clouds of vapour'

In other instances a present participle could help to render succinctly a meaning which might be clouded over in a grammatically correct translation —

'das konserviert sich' (line 16) : the meaning is one of 'held in reserve' + 'in a state of readiness'. Taking 'das' as a neuter collective (the whole body of armour / tanks), would point to the tanks as 'lying in wait' 'holding back until' 'keeping themselves for' (the coming battle)

The translator, however, must not allow himself to be provoked by the author's vivid imagery into wild conjecture in order to give his own language extra fire. He may be well aware, for instance, that the word 'Kesselkuhle' (line 4) could have a military connotation ('einkesseln' to surround, 'Kuhle' Low-German for ditch, trench) and yet not be justified in translating this as 'pocket' (or similar). He may perhaps suppose that 'Tataren flach' (line 8) represents no more than a dreaded invader laid low, but he is not free to put this into words as such. He might suspect that '[das Abendrot] teilend' (line 13) hints at the partitions of Poland, but the words '[sabres] dividing up' would not be appropriate. Everything must be expressed entirely through the language. In this the translator is guided by what he knows to be correct and what he feels to be fitting, as he most surely is, for instance, in translating 'für die Schlacht, die schon dagewesen, die immer wieder kommt' (line 7) as 'for battles long past and yet still to come'.

A combination of the right words and a similar structure could be honed to fit the style of language of the author to produce:

"Deftly avoiding the sandbanks with the aid of a succession of pilots, the „Radaune" pounded its way against the muddied current in full spate. To left and to right, the landscape behind the dikes was always the same, mostly flat and already harvested, but with hills here and there, hedges, ravines, a deep hollow overgrown with gorse, level between the isolated farmsteads, a landscape just made for cavalry attacks, for a division of Uhlans wheeling in from the left across the sandtable, for hedge-hopping hussars, for the fanciful dreams of young, green cavalry captains, for battles long past and yet still to come, and for the picture: Tartars crouching low, dragoons rearing, knights in armour toppling, colouring in the insignia on the robes of the Grand Master, not one little stud missing from a single breastplate, except for the one that the Duke of Masowsza hews off, and horses, no circus has such milk-white steeds, mettlesome, bedecked with trappings, sinews meticulously picked out and nostrils dilated, carmine red, emitting little clouds of vapour pierced by lowered lances hung with pennants, while for the sky, sabres slash to pieces the red sunset and there, in the background — for every painting has a background — the leisurely

smoke of a little hamlet perched firmly on the horizon between the hind legs of the black stallion, squat little thatched cottages hung with moss, and amongst the cottages, holding themselves ready, the pretty little tanks dreaming of the day to come when they too will venture out onto the plain behind the Vistula dikes like frisky little foals amongst the heavy cavalry."

This attempts, above all, to account in a sensitive way for the characteristics of the language used by the author while avoiding unnecessary interpretation and unwarranted inventiveness on the part of the translator.

Chapter II *(Language as a blend of fidelity and analogy)*

# Translating 'meaning' in religious texts

*The translator can by devious means successfully negotiate a time gap between an earlier writing and a later reading; he can cultivate a style, impart a flavour and even manufacture 'obsolescence'. The situation facing a Bible translator is, however, somewhat special. He has to preserve the sanctity of original material as it stands while making it fully accessible to a modern reader in terms that he can understand. The dilemma facing him is: how is he to reconcile reverence with familiarity? Here he must avoid the twin pitfalls, that of introducing an almost runic mysticism, and that of implying superficiality. This he must do, moreover, within the strict limits of textual accuracy expected of him. This makes him conscious of his own imperfections and intuitively aware that he may not be able to convey, by linguistic means alone, the message in the text. He may try to communicate this in a Biblical context using the closest natural equivalents. In this way a faithfulness to the source language is replaced by a certain empathy with it. Unlike the Biblical scholar, who responds to one language (his own) while at the same time understanding another (be it Biblical Hebrew, New Testament Greek or Latin), the Bible translator is forced to bring two languages together which are for the most part incommensurate, both culturally and linguistically. What happens when the translator must be precise? The translation of the Divine Name is a case in point. While he may be able to convey what the Name embodies, the translator is required to substantiate linguistically his rendering of it.*

### The search for a true form of the Divine Name

The translator will be aware that to the Hebrews the name ' יהוה ' (JHWH) was considered too sacred to pronounce and in writing the consonants were given the vowel markings of a substituted word 'אֲדוֹנָי' ('adhonāy) and so making it impossible to utter — the word 'Adonai' is still substituted for the Divine Name and proclaimed as such amongst the Jews of today, as in the prayer:

"*Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad*" (Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One)

(Isador Fishman: "Introduction to Judaism" <Jewish Chronicle Publications, London 1978> page 12)

What means are at the disposal of the translator to convey a similar reverence, awe, fear and respect as well as true meaning? A number of appellations are available and many have been used over the years to reflect what the translators of the day thought appropriate — 'the Almighty', 'Heavenly Father', and so on. Such forms, however, do not equate with the Name but merely personify a concept, that of supreme power. It is interesting to note that quite a different concept has been introduced recently by the Jews into some of their prayers, 'הָרַחֲמָן' (All-Merciful), which is not simply to comply with the prohibition on the Divine Name (ibid., page 42 ff).

In European literature, the usual translation of 'YaHWeH' (where this is not

transferred as it is) goes along the lines of 'Lord' / 'Herr', being equivalents of Greek 'κύριος' or Latin 'dominus', themselves derived from a symbolic title of office given an aura of respect. Here a translator will instinctively feel it necessary to distinguish between the human social application of a 'lord' term and its use as the Divine Name. He may seek to imbue it with majesty, reverence and, above all, 'uniqueness' and there is no doubt that the English 'LORD' is distinct from 'lord' just as is German 'Herrgott' from '[der] Herr'. Both, however, merely imply that the name-word is charged with a spiritual power and neither reveals that it is synonymous with it. The difficulty here is that no language can conjure up a word for some unexplained counterpart in another. Clearly, the culture at the time of the emergence of the name 'JaHWeH' no longer exists and its language conventions can only be artificially acquired. Lacking any sound base for translating the name, the translator could be tempted to accept (and comply with) the observation of Peter Newmark that:

"... the language of other world religions tends to be transferred when it becomes

of TL (target language) interest, the commonest words being naturalised."

(P.Newmark: "A Textbook of Translation" <Prentice Hall International, London 1988> page 102)

On the other hand he might feel that he has to convey 'what the Name has to say', to give it some of its original relevance.

### Translating what was implicit in the name

The probability that there was a purely existential element in the name is well founded — research shows traces of 'to be' represented by non-verbs in many Semitic languages, for example, in Arabic 'he' ( هو [húwa]) as a 'pronoun of separation' functions as 'is' in 'God He the forgiving', where 'the forgiving' is a predicate, not in apposition (see W.M.Verhaar: "The Verb 'To Be' and its Synonyms" – Philosophical and Grammatical Studies, part 4 'Arabic' <D.Reidel, Dordrecht [Holland] 1969> pages 102 + 104). Tempting though it may be to equate the name (Yahweh) with '[Holy] Spirit' / '[Heiliger] Geist', the translator will realize that these forms can only appear as substantives, 'the Holy Spirit', 'der Heilige Geist'. Even though the translator, concerned as he may be with the core-meaning of the word, can find some help in etymological or comparative research, he is prevented by the sheer mechanics of his own language from putting this into practice. He could well be forced into embracing the name as it is and yet intuition will remind him that it may be strangely out of place in the language.

On grounds of accuracy, there is clearly a conflict between a need to express the 'essence' of the Divine Name and the desire to make this function properly in the language of translation. Here the translator is hindered by the fact that, in English or German, no single word (verb) covers all the aspects of Hebrew 'to be' (the dictionary gives 'היה' [haya] as 'to exist', 'to happen', 'to become', 'to come to pass') and even if the elevation of a word like 'being' to a name status were possible, 'Being' could be excluded on grounds of limited accuracy. It would appear that some idea of 'existence' was intended, but not expressed by a grammatical 'to be' and that 'YHWH', as a word

was a synonym, and as a name a metonym, for these concepts.

A real problem exists when the translator has to treat 'I am' (אֶהְיֶה [ehyeh]), a form synonymous with 'existence', as a name; this occurs in *Exodus II verse 4* where Moses asks (Yahweh) his name and is told — *"I am who I am. This is what you have to say to the Israelites "I am has sent you""* (NIV version). The translator may feel here that he has to bring out a sense of 'objective reference', but this is barely possible in English — 'ME, I am what I am' and problematic in German — 'DAS bin ich, was ich bin'. It may also be reasonable to use the idea of 'HE' with a special reference to the speaker — 'I am He ... tell them (it is) HE (who) has sent you', but again this would prove unwieldy in German — 'Ich bin es, DER ist ... "ER, der ist, hat mich gesandt"' and only made possible by employing a logical subject (es) and antecedents not marked in the original. The translator comes up against a problem, not only of missing elements in his language, but also in its grammaticality.

### Translating what was explicit in the name

The Biblical translator, forever torn between engaging in *'hermeneutics'*, that is, a relating of contents to the present world, and a need to see them in the context of the Bible, faces in his dealing with implicit meaning the twofold problem of cultural transfer and semantic adjustment. Does he fare any better, however, with (seemingly) explicit information? If we translate from *Genesis XVII verse 1*, 'the LORD appeared (to Abraham) and said "I am El Shaddai"' / 'ihm erschien der HERR und sagte "ich bin El Shaddai"' we are conveying meaningless information apart from the fact that 'LORD / HERR' is understood and 'El Shaddai' is accepted as a kind of name. The translator will realize that this name(?)/title(?) had some original meaning which could help him relate it to his own language. He may well arm himself with the knowledge that the first element represented 'god / God' ('ęl' is accepted as 'a strong, mighty one; a hero; a god' and with the article, 'hęl', as 'the true God') and the second element is usually seen as 'mighty', but he still has to relate this to the text and, moreover, to make it meaningful to a modern reader.

Meaningful, in this respect, does not just refer to efficient coverage of what the word probably / could have / appeared to have meant, but to a ready understanding of it as well as part of a current language. A consequence of this is a multiplicity of 'versions' each trying to relate the information in the way the translator sees as most fitting. Here he may be influenced by both established conventions and an unconscious desire to 'live up to the nature of the text'. The danger in this is that intuition can be reduced to a selective process where some aspects are enhanced at the cost of others. In the following established translations 'El Shaddai' is treated variously as a qualifying adjective (imperfectly translated), a pure name-referent (unexplained) and as a name-adjunct (interpreted):

(a) <u>Latin</u> (Vulgate) — *'Ego Deus omnipotens'*

('god' element [El] is elevated and 'al-mighty' [Shaddai] treated as a descriptive adjective; the name rôle is taken over by 'God')

(b) <u>German</u> (Luther) — '*Ich bin der allmächtige Gott*'

(attributive adjective with article and common noun - initial capital obscure; not a name construction unless we accept 'Gott' as a title-name)

(c) <u>German</u> (Jerusalem Bible) — '*Ich bin El Shaddai*'

(reads like a name but only meaningful if we understand it as 'I am God Mighty'; the capitals, though necessary, tend to make it look like a strange personal name)

(d) <u>English</u> (Douay) — '*I am the Almighty God*'

('Almighty God' is a composite noun-name, the article emphasizes supremacy and uniqueness but points to a title rather than a name; 'El' is doubly represented by 'the' and 'god/God')

(e) <u>English</u> (NIV) — '*I am God Almighty*'

(lack of article indicates 'God' both as a name and named-title and initial capital converts 'Almighty' into a name to equate with 'Shaddai', of which it can be seen as a reasonable interpretation; it runs close to the original and probably conveys much of what was intended)

(f) <u>French</u> (La Sainte) — '*Je suis le Dieu tout-puissant*'

(adjective adjunct is not converted graphically into a name — this is probably due to a French avoidance of capitals where possible; the inclusion of the article is as much due to French grammar as to an attempt to 'account' for it in translation)

### <u>Translating what was (probably) intended</u>

Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, is intuition most likely to be called upon and most vulnerable to mishap. The translator will instinctively recognize even in conventions of language a communicative value and take it into account. Particularly in translating extended referents for the Divine Name, the rôle played by the definite article is by no means certain. This becomes apparent when a translator is under some pressure to combine 'name' and 'nominated' (the one form in *Genesis XXIV verse 7* is rendered variously as 'Yahweh, God of heaven', 'LORD, the God of heaven', 'the Lord God of heaven', the LORD, the God of heaven'). Are the translators each responding differently to a distinctive use in Hebrew of the definite article, even with a proper noun, to denote a 'supremacy of the named one'? (see Harrison: "Biblical Hebrew" <Hodder & Stoughton Paperbacks, 1980> page 46, or any Hebrew Grammar). From a purely linguistic point of view the use (or misuse) of the definite article in the translations causes a certain amount of confusion of names and titles; as a convention of current language, it could serve to give these more meaning.

This can be seen to operate where human (socially related) titles are employed and the translator senses the pressure to be precise. He may be content, for example, to transfer '*Yahweh Sabaoth*'(Isaiah VI verse 5 and elsewhere)as it is, but he will realize that it will be seen (except by Biblical scholars) either as a foreign name or a special

sign for 'LORD Almighty' (especially in such partial translations as Luther's 'der Herr Zebaoth'). He might even be persuaded into accepting 'Sabaoth' ( = 'of hosts') purely as a descriptive term implying a supremacy and treat it as 'the Almighty', 'Almighty God' / '[der] Allmächtige(r) [Gott]'. With or without the article, however, this simply assimilates 'of hosts' into a kind of epithet for 'commander, supremo, head, lord'. The translator will be aware of the need to restore the spiritual context; he can do this by graphical means — 'the LORD of hosts' / 'der HERR Zebaot'.

Dealing with the '[of] hosts' word is problematic and there is much to be said for rendering this as 'Almighty'. The term has, indeed, become part of Biblical lore. In combinations such as 'Lord of hosts' or 'Lord God of hosts' something of its original significance may be preserved (of the principal European languages only Greek reflects to any extent the meaning it could have carried for the Israelites — 'δύναμις' has a primary meaning of '[supernatural] power' and a secondary one of 'earthly forces'. In the Germanic languages the application of 'hosts' in a heavenly context has been to a great extent acquired (through the Bible); the meaning endemic in 'host' is that of 'a stranger, an enemy' (evident in 'hostile') to become later 'multitude, army'. It would appear to be possible in this way to include '[of] hosts' without strictly translating the word 'Sabaoth'. In the final analysis the translator may have to decide which of the two — 'the LORD Almighty' or 'the Lord of hosts' — has more meaning for readers of today. This should not be seen, however, as an abdication of responsibility on the part of the translator, but as intuition in following one of many 'correct' options.

## Translation as re-constructing, not re-composing a hymn

*The problems facing a translator of a hymn are somewhat different from the ones of Bible translation. It is true that a hymn also reflects the religious-cultural climate of an inspired faith, but its actual structure is based on an art form. While there may be little difficulty in expressing the 'message' content, doing so in the* same words, *the same design, and in some cases, even to fit a ·standard tune, is daunting indeed. Not surprisingly, some 'translations' (in "Penguin Book of German Verse, for example,) abandon all attempts to imitate form, rhyme and style and serve as meaning guides only for non-speakers. On the other hand, sufficiently inspiring originals may give rise to any number of imitative versions of the same message. This is especially true amongst languages, where a place for a truly great hymn· is often assured by a shared faith. A version may even be seen as a copy worthy of artistic merit in its own right; this assumes that identical material is artistically set out in a way that is closely identified with its source of inspiration. The question is: can this 'copy' ever completely replace the original as a* translation *of it? Can all of the original hymn be both linguistically and artistically transferred with no loss of meaning or spiritual impact? The constrictions imposed on such an exercise are many and the end product may not even represent the translator's own natural way of expressing things. Bound by material already labelled and packaged, by a style of presentation already decided and a pattern strictly laid down, he must at all costs disguise his 'ingenuity' as the author's own creative input. The task of dismantling and re-assembling an established hymn is discussed here.*

### What must be translated

The true translator of a hymn, as distinct from the composer of a comparable version, is like a master forger operating within the law and the tools of his trade are words, language skills and the practised eye of critical self-assessment. Areas where a proper application of these is of vital importance may be listed as:

(1) Meaning

[a] the translator must convey both the declared meaning and the intended sense in the very same way

[b] the unit of meaning, for example, a word or phrase, should also apply

[c] the relationship between overt meaning and covert intention, especially in the use of expressive or figurative language, must be maintained; neither should be in any way exploited solely to make up a deficiency in the other

(2) Style

[a] the translator must have due regard for any restrictions of rhyme and metre but also profit from these where possible in the author's style. The fact that there is a 'conventional' hymn style (where words and phrases are often predictable) is not to be taken as an excuse for empty stereotyped expressions

[b] the language of a hymn is fruitful ground for the metaphor and one must not forget that in older hymns the metaphorical implication was not only strong but well recognized; the symbolic use of 'ship', for example, may be far less effective today than formerly in such as — *"Es kommt ein Schiff geladen, ... das Segel ist die Minne, der heilig Geist der Mast"* ("Deutsche Lieder" <Insel Verlag, Frankfurt / Main 1980> page 800) where a strict translation may have to be amended to 'like (a ship) ... where (love is ...)'

(3) Purpose

[a] the character of a hymn usually reflects the author's motivation and this is to be transferred; many of Luther's hymns can be seen as 'battle-cries', declarations of faith marked by a pugnacity of language. This can be imitated, for example, in stressed, rhythmic monosyllables

[b] a hymn is intended above all for communal performance; translation, therefore, must employ a 'performing' language rather than a 'passive' one (many Salvation Army hymns were written to capitalize on popular Victorian music hall tunes). The language of the hymn can be charged with conviction — *"Was hilft uns unser Weh und Ach"* (in verse 2 of a hymn - "Deutsche Lieder" page 777) is much more forceful in English as 'To what avail our wail of woe' than would be, for example, 'It's no use moaning and groaning', although this expresses the basic meaning

The aim then should be to make a translated hymn function outwardly as an original which simply acknowledges its source and inwardly to be indistinguishable from it.

In dealing with any pre-designed work where its appeal is an important factor, such as in a poem, song, etc., the translator may be coerced into a display of language facility or even tempted into a parallel composition. Naturally, he will have a feeling for his own language and what it offers; he must channel this towards the production of an effectively close translation, that is, one which is neither a flight of fancy nor a clinically accurate restatement. We may take as an example the first line of the well-known hymn by Paul Gerhardt (1656) *"O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden"* (clearly inspired itself by the Latin poem of Arnulf von Leowen *'Salve caput cruentatum'*), which could be effectively rendered in English as 'O head so sorely wounded'. In this we see clear evidence of capturing the right way with words rather than the acceptance of readily available precise (word) meanings. Straightforward cross-translation illustrates how the right word is not always the most accurate one —

| | |
|---|---|
| *'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden'* | — 'O head covered with blood and wounds' |
| ↓   ↓  ↓      ↓    ↓ | (accurate but blandly stated) |
| *'O head   so sorely   wounded'* | — 'O Haupt (Kopf) so schwer verwundet' |
| | (keeps the sense and states it pointedly) |

It could be argued here that the English is an equally powerful yet faithful rendering of the original idea as is the German (to which it holds) and therefore a good translation.

Sometimes, however, the actual words may go well in one language but not in another. In this event it is largely intuition which informs the translator whether there is a strong case for seeking a better way out in an alternative. We could see the need for this in Paul Gerhardt's hymn *"Breit aus die Flügel beide, O Jesu, meine Freude, und nimm dein Küchlein ein"*, where a word-bound translation such as 'Spread out both Thy wings, oh Jesus, my joy, and receive Thy chick' (in Leonard Foster: "Penguin Book of German Verse" <Penguin Books, 1959> page 117) expresses the author's intention but allows his very words to impinge on English. An 'unfettered' translation might possibly cope with this, but certainly a <u>hymn</u> would suggest something like 'Spread both Thy wings, O Jesu, Joy, and take me to Thy breast'. This would not only avoid 'chick' for a largely metaphoric *'Küchlein'*, but also run  much better. The language of a hymn thrives on imagery and this might even go so far here as 'Spread Thy angel-wings ... to enfold Thy little one', although the metaphor in the original relates to the writer's real world where this may not entirely do so. It follows that the language of the hymn has its own form and usage and that this needs to be translated sensitively and not just lavishly imitated.

A common factor of most hymns is that they are inspired in some way or other, be it by an admired example, a need to share a firmly held belief, or the strong desire to express a theological / Biblical doctrine with  artistic conviction. Looking at Luther's own paraphrase of Psalm CXXX *('De profundis clamavi, ad te Domine')* we find that he has changed little of the material content but somehow 'set his seal' on the result. He achieves this by accurate translation in a poetically original work where he uses a particularly suitable form (the 'Reformationsstrophe', rhymed lines of four stresses and a strong final unrhymed line) to enhance the force of the original source language:

| | |
|---|---|
| (De profundis clamavi, ad te Domine; | *'Aus tieffer not schrey ich zu dir* |
| Domine, exaudi vocem meam. | *HERR Got erhör mein ruffen.* |
| Fiant aures tuae intendentes | *Dein gnedig ohren ker zu mir* |
| In vocem deprecationes meae. | *und meiner bit sie offen.* |
| Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine | *Denn so du wilt das sehen an* |
| Domine, quis sustenebit? | *was sund und recht ist gethan,* |
| Quia apud te propitiatio est;) | *wer kan Herr für dir bleiben?'* |

(W.A.Coupe: "A Sixteenth Century German Reader" <Oxford Press, 1972> page 256)

In cases where the hymn is to be an inspired expression of already established material, as above, the writer is induced to place great emphasis on stylistic effect and for the translator of an established hymn, this temptation is also evident, as the large number of 'improved', even 'updated' versions, will testify. The difference, however, is, the  writer of a version enjoys the liberty of being able to mould his material to produce a desired effect in the most pleasing combination of words, whereas a translator can only adapt his to the same ends. Considering that a great part of the original theology, meaning, purpose, artistic form must re-appear in any 'new edition' of a hymn, there would seem to be little <u>practical</u> difference between an inspired version and even the

most complete translation, but this denies the one quality of a truly great hymn, its uniqueness, which a translator alone can, to some extent at least, preserve.

## Translating all of a hymn as laid down by its original creator

Although it is a translator's first task to examine <u>actual</u> words used and their semantic and artistic alignment, he must not see this as a purely academic exercise; he should establish a reason for their being so. For this he might have to identify aspects of æsthetics, theology, convention or even 'religious propaganda'. The hymn selected here for such a critical analysis with a view to a suggested <u>translation</u> is a well-known Luther hymn *"Ein feste Burg"*, one which has withstood the ravages of time more than most. We can see how its content, language and style have already been dealt with in ensuing English models, some, honest attempts at translation, others, more in the way of 'versions on a theme' or even 'pretentious imitations'. They all have in common the desire to present a hymn in its own right (except the word-translation in the "Penguin Book of German Verse", intended only as a cross-reference). To see to what extent they each can claim to be <u>the</u> Luther <u>hymn</u> in substance and sense, in rhyme and rhythm, in measure and metre (and to the original German tune!), clothed in English words, these following three examples will be discussed and compared to a proposed translation:

[C] <u>Thomas Carlyle</u> (1795 - 1881)    *"A safe stronghold"*

[H] <u>Frederick Hedge</u> (19ᵗʰ century)    *"A mighty fortress"*

[P] <u>Michael Perry</u> (modern)    *"God is our fortress"*

(in "Hymns for Today's Church" <Hodder & Stoughton, 1982>)

The first could be considered to be an inspired imitative recomposition in the English language, the second as a worthy attempt to parallel the original, and the third, as an adaptation of the theme in an 'updated' copy-presentation.

The text of the Luther hymn itself is that in *"Deutsche Lieder"* (Insel Verlag, Frankfurt / Main 1980) and references will be made to *"Biblia Vulgata"*, *"Die Bibel* [nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers]" (Deutsche Bibelstiftung, Stuttgart) and to the *"Book of Common Prayer"* [Church of England]. A 'full translation' of the hymn is seen as the greatest possible faithfulness in the areas of (1) <u>theology</u> expressed, (2) <u>language</u> used, (3) <u>form</u> maintained, (4) <u>effect</u> achieved. When translating a hymn so complete in itself and so firmly entrenched as *"Ein feste Burg"*, success can only be measured in terms of overcoming, not avoiding, the considerable constrictions to, (1) declare a faith in God, recognize the fallibility of man, look to salvation in Christ, (2) use a strong, rhythmic, positive, figuratively expressive language, (3) equal the æsthetic appeal, (4) act as both a rallying call and a confirmation of faith. Against this background a translator must find the right words to re-assemble the hymn exactly as Luther wrote it.

Responding to the challenges of each line will be largely a matter of intuition and critical comparison with the efforts of others. Keeping to word and design we see :

(line 1) '<u>Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott</u>' — 'feste Burg' allows various interpretations in

line with 'refuge', 'strong, secure fortress', 'stronghold'. In Luther's own translation of Psalm 46 (his 'inspiration') he sees 'Deus noster refugium et virtus' as 'Gott ist unsre Zuversicht und Stärke', pointing to confidence, hope, assurance and support. Here 'C' has 'A safe stronghold our God is still' to emphasize impregnability, refuge, with 'still' added (for rhyme?) and an unnaturally stressed 'stronghold'. 'H' has 'A mighty fortress is our God' to show size, strength, rather than security, but with a correct end-stress on 'God'. The powerful metre of Luther's opening line might come out much better in 'A fortress fast is God indeed' (fast = secure and firm) with 'indeed' for end-stress.

(line 2) 'Ein gute Wehr und Waffen' — the concept of defence by attack reflects a use of both 'sword' and 'shield' as religious symbols; a composite symbol might be found in 'A bulwark never failing' (as in 'H'), but not in 'A (trusty) shield and weapon' of 'C'. 'P' is wildly interpretative with 'our mighty help in danger' (for eye-rhyme - 'anger'). Keeping close to the words and their sense suggests 'His sword and shield protect us'.

(line 3) 'Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not' — 'frei helfen' points to a rescue and in 'Not' we can see distress as well as need. 'H' has 'Our helper He amidst the flood' (no doubt influenced by Luther's translation in Psalm 46 — ... wenngleich das Meer wütete und wallte ..') while 'C' is closer to the words with 'He'll help us clear from all the ill' (a confidence in the future?). 'P' offers a convenient rhyme, not translation. They all find 'Not', as a collective singular noun (= ill[s], trouble[s]), difficult to fit in. The answer could lie, as suggested here, in 'He rescues us in greatest need'.

(line 4) 'Die uns jetzt hat betroffen' — the change in rhythm after a natural stress on ', die ...' ($\acute{}$ - $\acute{}$ $\acute{}$ - $\acute{}$ -) could prove difficult to imitate without repeating initially a stressed word for 'ills' (or a relative pronoun). The word-count may prevent this and English could be compelled to partially restore the rhythm and maintain a grammatical link with 'rescues' in 'From ills that now afflict us'.

(line 5) 'Der alt böse Feind' — this is used as a name referent (Evil One [of old]) for the Devil. 'C' prefers 'The ancient prince of hell' as a substitute name (in accordance with Biblical reference to the 'Prince of this World' ('princeps mundi huius' <John 14.30> and Luther's 'der Fürst der Welt') but 'ancient' seems to imply 'of old age' rather than 'the very same'. The shortness of the line and an interrupted rhythm ('der alt(e) böse') pose problems as there is little room for manœuvre before the next rhyme. A way may be found if this is taken together with the next line — 'The Old Foe now bent (on evil intent)'; this captures the meaning of 'the Evil One really intends it now' in a similar shape and stress pattern to the original.

(line 6) 'Mit Ernst ers jetzt meint' — 'C' captures the intensity with 'hath risen with purpose fell' while 'P' misses the point in 'prolongs his evil fight' and both have little regard for line length or metre.

(line 7) Groß Macht und viel List' — 'C' finds a poetic and figurative use for 'mail' as a suit of armour; 'H' is more direct in 'His craft and power are great' but 'craft' may

not stress cunning and 'power' refers more to a physical energy. To comply with line length (if not fully with metre) may favour 'Might and cunning great' as subjects for a following verb (eg. 'arm him'); it also allows a stressed 'great' to cover the repetitive intensifiers 'groß' and 'viel'.

(line 8) '*Sein grausam Rüstung ist*' — 'arm him with cruel hate' covers equipment and armour and 'hate' (to carry 'cruel') could be considered the complement of 'might and cunning' — it is certainly much closer than 'He weareth in this hour' of 'C' in search of a rhyme.

(line 9) '*Auf Erd ist nichts seins gleichen*' — discounting an effect due to '*nichts seins*', the main problem lies in taking '*gleichen*' to mean his equal (a match for) or his like (a resemblance). 'C' uses 'his fellow', which may have applied in his day; 'P' is more accommodating with 'no earthly force is like him'. While Luther may have indicated an unimaginable (like) 'thing', he seems to intend a matching (equal) 'force'. Both might come through in the straightforward 'On earth he has no equal'.

There are many factors which could dictate the outcome — (a) wrong rhythm and awkward rhyme may prevent an obvious 'A firm stronghold is our Lord God' (line 1) ; (b) halting rhythm and a limit on syllables could rule out 'He rescues us from every (or 'all the') distress' (line 3) ; (c) the unpoetic sound of 'He really intends it now' or the familiarity of 'Now he's really serious about it' could mean a recourse to less accurate alternatives (line 6) ; (d) a limit on syllables prohibits 'Great might and much cunning' (line 7) ; (e) an un-hymnlike quality could exclude 'On earth there's nothing like him', even though this imitates '*nichts seins*', follows the rhythm and holds to the meaning (line 9) . The constrictions are many indeed and the translator will have to rely to a great extent on intuitive good judgement backed by a feeling for the language and the purpose of the hymn. In these circumstances a <u>translation</u> of the first verse could be compared with Luther's original as follows —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,* | (A – 8) | 'A fortress fast is God indeed, |
| 2 | *Ein gute Wehr und Waffen.* | (B – 7) | His sword and shield protect us. |
| 3 | *Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,* | (A – 8) | He rescues us in gravest need |
| 4 | *Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.* | (B – 7) | From ills that now afflict us. |
| 5 | *Der alt böse Feind,* | (C – 5) | The Old Foe's now bent |
| 6 | *Mit Ernst ers jetzt meint,* | (C – 5) | On evil intent; |
| 7 | *Groß Macht und viel List,* | (D – 5) | Might and cunning great |
| 8 | *Sein grausam Rüstung ist,* | (D – 6) | Arm him with cruel hate, |
| 9 | *Auf Erd ist nichts seins gleichen.*" | ( – 7) | On earth he has no equal.' |

### A sensitive approach to the poetic content

Here we may have to consider the motivation behind the replacement of the hymn — does it set out to be an exercise in poetic fervour (as in Carlyle), a stirring battle-cry (as in Hedge), an updated message (as in Perry), or the faithful copy of an

'old edition' made to look and sound good today? Given the original character of the hymn, a translation may have to include all these aspects, not for their own sake, but as part of an 'accurate treatment'. To achieve his own individual objective, each of the translators cited has found it necessary to evade, even ignore, some of the constrictions imposed by his model. Is it possible to make Luther's words work in translation? Under pressure to re-compose the words in both the most pleasing and the most moving way, the translator must not lose sight of what they have to say. While it is quite clear that Luther used a 'poetry of words' to underline his message, the translator can only do so by using other words as poetically as possible. Can we give to the words of verse 2, for instance, a poetic fire without the overindulgence of Carlyle?

The measured declaration in the first lines '*Mit unser Macht ist nichts getan, wir sind gar bald verloren.*' (lines 10 - 11) is converted by 'C' into a wave of dramatic lyricism in 'With force of arms we nothing can, full soon were we down-ridden'. Even allowing for the mode of his day, this seems to be too much of an additional flourish, although the meaning is accurately conveyed. The use of 'can' as an independent verb is unusual in English and so appears contrived (it does, however, attract the end-stress). The second line is full of archaic / poetic expressions such as 'full soon', 'down-ridden', which are felt by the writer to give a dramatic depth to the hymn's profession of faith. In an effort to introduce a sense of 'but for / if not / except that' 'C' loses the rhythm in 'But for us fights the proper man' for '*Es streit' für uns der rechte Mann*' (line 12) and partially restores it in 'Whom God Himself hath bidden' for '*Den Gott hat selbst erkoren*' (line 13). One can detect here an attempt to hang closely to the word order in the belief that it imparts to the English a certain poetic nuance.

No doubt Luther's direct address in his '*Fragst du, wer der ist? Er heißt Jesu Christ*' (lines 14 - 15) is a problem for anyone trying a poetic approach; 'C' combines this with a close following of the words (he even accounts for '*der*' as 'the same') and a similar style of address (with 'ye' as '*du*') in 'Ask ye who is this same? Christ Jesus is His name'. The result is a dramatized flow of words. In the next two lines 'C' may just be at a loss in trying to explain Luther's theology with 'The Lord Sabaoth's Son; He, and no other one' for *Der Herr Zabaoth, Und ist kein ander Gott*' (lines 16 - 17) – or is he merely seeking a rhyme and a possible 'improvement' of the metre? It may be, that in attempting both, he succeeds in neither, for his lines seem somewhat artificial and less than poetic. His final line (of the verse) betrays a change of idiom with 'Shall conquer in the battle', which does have all of the rhythmic force in '*Das Feld muß er behalten*' (line 18) once free of the constrictions of rhyme. Clearly, following Luther's words, in meaning, rhyme and rhythm, is not easy, perhaps less so when attempted by a poet, however motivated he might be.

Can the translator's approach (to language design as well as word meanings) come any closer to the original? Can it re-constitute the poetry of Luther's verse and

not just conveniently re-work it? A possible result of such an attempt, suggested here, will serve to reveal the difficulties:

| 10 | "*Mit unser Macht ist nichts getan,* | (A - 8) | 'Our strength alone avails us nought, |
| 11 | *Wir sind gar bald verloren.* | (B - 7) | To quick defeat subjected, |
| 12 | *Es streit' für uns der rechte Mann,* | (A - 8) | Then fights the True Man in support, |
| 13 | *Den Gott hat selbst erkoren.* | (B - 7) | The One by God elected. |
| 14 | *Fragst du, wer der ist?* | (C - 5) | Who, then, can this be? |
| 15 | *Er heißt Jesu Christ,* | (C - 5) | Called Christ Jesus, He, |
| 16 | *Der Herr Zabaoth,* | (D - 5) | Lord of hosts his name, |
| 17 | *Und ist kein ander Gott,* | (D - 6) | Our only God, the same, |
| 18 | *Das Feld muß er behalten.*" | ( - 7) | And He will win the battle.' |

The words selected for rhythm and rhyme must appear to be the best and not merely the only ones available, even when the latter is true. Although 'nought' (line 10) seems to have a poetic ring, it is rescued by a rhyming 'support'. Featured in line 13 are a strong rhyme and a marked falling tone ( ‾ ‾ -ˊ _ ) to prepare, as in Luther, for a rising 'who, ...?'. Lines 14 and 15 are problematic, not only in having to deal with a direct (rhetorical) question, but having to do so in a limited space and here it could be felt that a direct question with emphatic 'then' may prove to be the best solution. An intrusive 'He' (line 15) forms a counterbalance for 'Who (-?)' in the previous line and acts as a fulcrum for a completing 'Lord of hosts'; a doubling of 'called' — 'his name' emphasizes an identity which can then be rhythmically stressed in 'the same' (line 17). The above not only keeps close to the words, the expressed meaning and the sense of the original, but is also 'poetically' reinforced in the same way. The translation is, as a result, entirely suitable for communal worship.

### Translating words or writing a 'battle cry'?

There is little doubt that Luther intended the hymn as a rallying call as well as an expression of resolute faith. Hedge sees this as paramount. Although keeping in the main closely to word-meanings and sense, he finds this difficult in verse 3 and fails to give his hymn its right character. He has no problems with '*Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär*' (line 19), if we discount the slight difference between 'though this world, with devils filled,' (in 'H') and '[even] if the world were filled with devils, and it ...', but he misses the full force of '*Und wollt uns gar verschlingen*' (line 20) in his 'should threaten' (complementary to hypothetical 'though') only to fade completely in 'to undo us' for '*uns gar verschlingen*'. Intent on giving his words the right ring, 'H' imposes a sense on the words rather than translate meaning. We see this clearly in the next line. Hindered by his own difficult rhyme, he nevertheless contrives a mid-line break to put in an overworked 'We will not fear, for God hath willed' to lead into a circumlocutory 'His Truth to triumph through us' for '*Es soll uns doch gelingen*' (line 22).

There is no doubt that Hedge's lines do have a rhythmic, alliterative quality

to support the stirring message but, apart from near translations, little of the actual meaning is covered. The trouble stems from a paucity of English rhymes for key words such as 'devour(?)', 'consume(?)', 'engulf(?)', etc.. 'H' prefers to indulge in an inspiring rhetoric as a way round this and other problems. '*Der Fürst dieser Welt*' (line 23), as an alternative title for the Devil, is best translated directly (there are many allusions in the Bible to the Devil as 'Prince of this World'); the association of 'Darkness' with 'the [sinful] World' and 'Light' with 'Heaven' is, however, a valid one. 'H' resorts to this for the sake of rhythm and then adds a strong syllable to provide a rhyme in 'The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him', thereby avoiding an awkward '*wie* ' (= however) in '*Wie saur er sich stellt* ' (line 24) simply by substituting for it a call for defiant courage. This he takes up in the next line with 'His rage we can endure' in the sense rather than meaning of 'but he can do nothing to us' for '*Tut er uns doch nicht* ' (line 25). His main concern is to use rhyme and rhythm to enhance a 'rallying call'.

This reaches a climax in an exclamatory 'For lo!' (perhaps to equate with '*Das macht*') as 'that is / in this' in the conviction that 'His (the Devil's) doom is sure'. The confusion of 'doom' (Anglo-Saxon 'dōm', trial, judgement; in Middle English, final fate and now 'unhappy consequence') shows a desire to expand the simple, stark reality of '*Das macht, er ist gericht* ' (line 26) beyond the basic meaning of 'brought to account and sentenced'. Dealing with the actual words, '*Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen* ' (line 27), presents few problems, though expressing clearly what lies behind them may not be so easy. 'H' takes '*ein Wörtlein* ' to be a certain [unspecified] little word ('one' being an oblique reference to 'no'). Luther may have intended '*Wort* ' figuratively and '*-lein* ' in a sense of 'mere, only a' and not just as a diminutive; he is on record as referring to '*Wörtlein* ' as '*Teufel, du lügst* ', that is, 'get thee hence, Satan' (see Coupe: "A Sixteenth Century German Reader" <Oxford University Press, 1972> page 341). 'H' extracts the most from this in 'One little word can fell him'.

Would it be possible to achieve the same inspiring effect in words which lie closer to the original in rhythm, rhyme and meaning with the minimum of adjustment?

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | "*Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär* | (A - 8) | 'Yet were the world with devils filled |
| 20 | *Und wollt uns gar verschlingen,* | (B - 7) | And would indeed devour us, |
| 21 | *So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,* | (A - 8) | We'd let our anxious fears be stilled, |
| 22 | *Es soll uns doch gelingen.* | (B - 7) | No threat can overpower us. |
| 23 | *Der Fürst dieser Welt,* | (C - 5) | The Prince of this World, |
| 24 | *Wie saur er sich stellt,* | (C - 5) | Though fearsome to behold, |
| 25 | *Tut er uns doch nicht;* | (D - 5) | Him aside we cast; |
| 26 | *Das macht: er ist gericht';* | (D - 6) | His sentence has been passed, |
| 27 | *Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen*" | ( - 7) | A mere word can destroy him.' |

Here, adaptation and not interpretation has been employed; some archaisms have been retained to show that it is intended as an old hymn cast in the same mould but tuned

to modern ears. Words have been chosen (by calculated intuition) to fit stress-pattern, metre and rhyme in an attempt to express the message in the way that Luther did.

### From theology through language to a final effect in chosen words

Of the three translator / hymn writers, Perry strays furthest from the original words — he only claims to use these as a base for a 're-written hymn'. He does indeed set out its theology (faith - love - man's incapacity - Christ as intermediary - salvation) in a language (descriptive, patterned, compelling) to achieve a similar effect (a blend of message and movement). Sometimes, however, the source of his creative inspiration is not clear. His 'The word of God will not be slow / while demon hordes surround us' does not in any way translate 'Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn / Und kein'n Dank dazu haben' (lines 28 - 29); nor has it any of its sense or meaning ('the Word shall not be violated, whether they like it or not'). It simply follows a compulsive rhythm much in the same way that early Salvation Army hymns capitalized on popular Victorian Music Hall melodies. 'P' tries to instil into the next two lines some kind of dramatic effect. His words themselves, however, assume an air of 'poetic sermonizing' in 'Though evil strike its cruellest blow / and death and hell confound us' and bear no relation at all to Luther's 'Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan / Mit seinem Geist und Gaben' (lines 30 - 31). Here, a direct approach would have been far more effective in — 'He's with us on the battle-field / He gives His gifts and Spirit' (where the reference to 'spiritual gifts' has 1. Corinthians ch. XII as its Biblical base).

In taking the entire verse as a complete sentence, 'P' lapses into interpreting wordiness to give it an 'elevating effect'. As a result, the impact of 'Nehmen sie den Leib / Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib, / Laß fahren dahin!' (lines 32 - 33 - 34), marked as it is by unshaken resolve, is essentially reduced to a mere statement of probability, 'for even if distress / should take all we possess / and those who mean us ill ... '. There is not a mention here of 'let them all go' ('Laß fahren dahin!') to show that spiritual values are more important than material ones. In listing 'life, goods, honour, child[ren], wife', not only does Luther point to the extent of the resolve, but he also converts the words into a crescendo of power culminating in 'Leib — Weib' to press the point home. 'P' misses all this and also takes liberties with metre and line-length, adapting these to his own needs. The message in Luther's final lines is reassuring and clear — 'Sie haben's kein' Gewinn; / Das Reich muß uns doch bleiben' (lines 26 - 27) — yet 'P' ends in an entirely superfluous 'should ravage, wreck, or kill' (elaborating upon a previous line), although he does redeem himself somewhat with 'God's kingdom is immortal'. Here 'immortal' could well capture the sense of 'bleiben', but it stresses indestructibility; much more effective, and certainly in keeping with the tone of the message in the hymn, would be here — 'His Kingdom's ours for ever'.

In an attempt to deal faithfully with the underlying theology, keep as close to Luther's words as possible and expose the qualities of the original to the appreciation

of a modern audience, the following is suggested:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | *Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn* | (A - 8) | 'To move that Word they should not yield, |
| 29 | *Und kein'n Dank dazu haben!* | (B - 7) | Though like or not they hear it! |
| 30 | *Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan* | (A - 8) | He's with us on the battle-field, |
| 31 | *Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.* | (B - 7) | He gives His gifts and Spirit. |
| 32 | *Nehmen sie den Leib,* | (C - 5) | Should they seize our life, |
| 33 | *Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib, —* | (C - 5) | Goods, name, child and wife, |
| 34 | *Laß fahren dahin!* | (D - 5) | These, just let them take, |
| 35 | *Sie haben's kein' Gewinn;* | (D - 6) | No gain from that they'll make; |
| 36 | *Das Reich muß uns doch bleiben.*" | ( - 7) | His Kingdom's ours for ever.' |

In order to work within the constrictions choices may have to be made. These should neither appear to be cosmetic nor unduly resourceful. In covering the difficult translation of '*lassen stahn*' (line 28) by '[not] move', some of the effect of the next line is anticipated to reinforce the meaning of 'let it be'. By preferring 'He gives His gifts' (supported by Biblical reference) to a word-accurate 'with His gifts' (line 31) we can give the line a greater relevance. The conditional '*nehmen sie*' (line 32) can only be translated by 'should [they]' but this might be felt to come out stronger in 'seize' rather than in 'take'. Although the choice of 'name' for the more accurate 'honour' is influenced by the need to duplicate the heavily stressed monosyllables (line 33), it does have sufficient meaning. All the resolute faith of Luther's last line is found in words of similar force and tone.

The complete translation of the hymn as suggested here illustrates what may be achieved by combining an intuitive response to the author's intentions (and also to the worshipper's needs) with a calculated accuracy, of word and meaning, of rhyme and rhythm, shape and form, to fulfil the the original purpose. In this way it may well be possible to bring together the 'bare meaning' of the Penguin Book of German Verse, the 'poetic fervour' of Carlyle, the 'inspiration' of Hedge, and the 'new look' of Perry.

Chapter III *(Language in a combination of deeper significance and artistic form)*

# Adjusting the level of 'literary' input in translation

*Why are some texts more readily translated than others? — are they widely adaptable with little loss of appeal? do they offer larger scope for artistic imitation? do their underlying features exploit the language rather than depend upon it? do they have an æsthetic content which could survive the change of language? do they offer a chance of 'complete' success while not demanding it as an absolute necessity? or is it simply because the author's creativity represents far more of a challenge than a deterrent to any artistic initiative on the part of the translator? Dealing with works of literary merit will inevitably demand of the translator a high degree of intuitive fine judgement — he is working at the level of an* aria *rather than of* recitative. *In doing so he must not only deal successfully with material / meaning content, but also account faithfully for the intended artistic effect. The problem here is that, while he is expected to be sensitively receptive to this effect, he is obliged (by the very words of the text) to convey this clinically and objectively. Although the author's intention may be sound, the means by which it is defined (the artistic exploitation of language) are basically subjective, and it will as a consequence of this be variously understood, and only perfectly so by the* ideal reader. *The translator is, therefore, in the invidious position of the 'proxy ideal reader' who must understand, appreciate and technically define what he is about to translate. Furthermore, he cannot assume that any ascribable æsthetic quality will be carried over by the sheer 'accuracy' of of words. For him there will always be the dilemma of* 'brute fidèle, belle infidèle'..

## Technical simplicity — less restriction or more vulnerability?

Where simplicity is itself a crucial element in the charm of a work, as may well be the case in a poem, for example, an imitated translation of the original could prove to be too exposed and vulnerable to the commonplace. A meritorious translation here would be one that manages the simplicity and not merely 'satirizes' it; this would almost certainly bring with it the danger that the translator simply substitutes his own individuality for that of the author. The key factor is the original appeal of the work. This may be easy to identify but difficult to transfer and in attempting to do so one should not confuse an artistic quality with skilful artistry — the former is that which survives in spite of being translated, the latter is that which can only survive by being translated. It could follow from this that, in the case of simple poetry or literary prose where beauty of form and arrangement is often an integral part of overall appeal, the translator runs every risk of destroying the very heart of the work while having only a limited chance of preserving its shell. This could explain why many apparently simple works are neglected in translation — it is not that they lack substance but because they demand too much be achieved with the little at the translator's disposal.

Every literary text, however plain and simple it chooses to be, is charged with

a 'message', a *raison d'être* . How can this 'spirit' of the original be breathed into the translation? In the opinion of Horst Rüdiger the solution is clear —

> " Entweder der Übersetzer läßt den Schriftsteller möglichst in Ruhe und bewegt den Leser ihm entgegen; oder er läßt den Leser möglichst in Ruhe und bewegt den Schriftsteller ihm entgegen."

("Epochen der Deutschen Lyrik - Band 10" <Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, München 1977> page 14)

— but this suggests that any room for movement depends on the strictures imposed by the actual text. It is more likely, however, to be influenced by pressure placed on the translator to be similarly individually creative with the limited material at his disposal. While an involved text may not of necessity obscure any inadequacies of translation, it does offset any emphasis on æsthetic appeal. Faced with an 'empty' text and seeking to reconcile his own impressions as a reader with his limitations as a creative writer, the translator may well feel a sense of betrayal.

It is noticeable that a poet such as Thomas Hardy, so dedicated to direct, straightforward language and poetry full of trivial incidents and simple observations, has either been badly translated or not at all. Could it be because he offers neither the refuge of *'literacy'* for the (poetic) translator nor the imitable *'visionary phrase'* for the (translator-) poet? What he does offer is a challenge — for the first, in his home-made diction, for the second, in his solid realism and insight, and for both of them, a wrenched vocabulary and syntax with odd, disruptive rhythms. Against this background, how could the challenge be taken up with only the translator's <u>intuitive</u> <u>expertise</u> as a guide? The following extract from "*The Ghost of the Past*" (D.Wright: "Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy" <Penguin Books, 1986> page 61) requires not only imagination and adjustment of language but also a considerable amount of literary input:

1     "*We two kept house, the Past and I,*

2         *The Past and I;*

3     *Through all my tasks it hovered nigh,*

4         *Leaving me never alone.*

5     *It was a spectral housekeeping*

6         *Where fell no jarring tone,*

7     *As strange, as still a housekeeping*

8         *As ever has been known.*

9     *As daily I went up the stair*

10        *And down the stair,*

11     *I did not mind the Bygone there —*

12        *The Present once to me;*

13     *Its moving meek companionship*

14        *I wished might ever be,*

15     *There was in that companionship*

16        *Something of ecstasy.*"

Although the words are straightforward enough, certain idiosyncrasies such as *'housekeeping'* and *'hovered nigh'* need attention, not by interpretation or conversion, but by careful assimilation based largely on intuitive sense of the most appropriate — 'sich in der Nähe herumtreiben' or 'bewachten' or 'dabei sein'? (line 3); 'Haushalt' or 'Zusammenleben'? (line 5). Any attempt to circumscribe can only be justified if it is based on some facet of the expression it replaces, conveys the intention and is <u>in the mode</u> of Hardy, for example, 'Auf jedes Tun stellte es sich' (for *'Through all my tasks it hovered nigh'*) (line 3). Similarly the *ghostliness* of 'geisterhaft' (for *'spectral'*) may be softened by inversion and a change of emphasis — 'geisterhaft war der Haushalt, in dem ...' (line 5) — but this will only work if it appears as part of a Hardy-like verbal environment. The strength of Hardy's words lies in their ability to be exactly and fully understood as in everyday speech and the responsive translator will therefore feel, for instance, that *'companionship'* (line 15) should not be vocabularized as 'Kameradschaft', explained as 'Geselligkeit', defined as 'geselliger Umgang', but used as it is <u>meant,</u> as 'Beisammenleben'. He will also realize that *'something'* (line 16) must remain 'etwas' and not elaborated to 'Gefühl' etc.; while 'Ekstase' is so complete in itself to do full justice to *'ecstasy'*.

Hardy's personification of the concepts of 'the Past' and 'the Present' cannot be simply grammaticized as 'die Vergangenheit' and 'die Gegenwart' or conveniently labelled 'das Vergangene' / 'das Gegenwärtige' but they might be treated familiarly as 'Vorbei' and 'Jetzt' to bring out the sensitive character of the poem. A problem of a different kind exists in the concentration of meaning in '⟨where⟩ fell ⟨no⟩ ...' (line 6) as a sense of 'burst in / disturbed / erupted' is not only extreme but may prove to be difficult to accommodate in both word and rhyme — the literal 'in den [= Haushalt] kein Mißklang fiel' or, with a change of emphasis, 'in dem gar nichts mißtönte', may seem a little overworked and could be given a homely touch in 'in dem kein Mißklang störte'. There is, above all, a directness and spoken quality in Hardy's words which should not be taken as a thinness of vocabulary. His *'moving meek companionship'* (line 13) is far better experienced than understood and so poses a variety of options in (monosyllabic) 'mild', 'sanft', 'still' and possibly, 'fromm'. It is therefore clear that *where* and *how* a word is used is as much to be considered as its close approximation to strict meaning.

Although the unit of translation here is, as in most expressive texts, the word, there is also the important matter of accurately conveying the actual shape, style and character. Within the limits of the work, the translator must intuitively avoid being too *ingenious* in shaping, too *cosmetic* in styling and too *artificial* in characterizing. A certain number of Hardy <u>constants</u> should, however, be included — a polished use of a refrain (*'Past and I, Past and I'*); effectively timed repetition (*'housekeeping'*, *'stair'*, *'companionship'*) and a pleasing inaccuracy of rhyme and rhythm (*'ever bē'*, *'ecstasȳ'*). All of these features may be imitated to advantage, for example, by ending line 4 with a non-rhyming 'alleine' to preserve its powerful simplicity (rhyming alternatives might

destroy this) but not exploited as convenient markers of style. In this the translator is best guided by instinctive judgement rather than the application of linguistic rules. He may feel, for instance, that the disturbed rhythm of *housekeeping* (lines 5 + 7) cannot be cited as a basis for introducing 'Haushaltsführung', although this would have both the closeness of meaning and the ring of the Hardy word.

Along these narrow guidelines provided by the poet, how can the unpretentious quality of the words, the homespun nature and the emotive depth of feeling be coaxed into German? The following is suggested:

> "Wir lebten zu zweit, 'Vorbei' und Ich,
>> 'Vorbei' und Ich;
> zu jedem Tun stellte es sich,
>> mir nie den Rücken kehrte.
> Und geisterhaft war der Haushalt,
>> in dem kein Mißklang störte.
> So seltsam, so still ein Haushalt
>> Als je man davon hörte.
>
> Wo täglich ich auf Treppe ging,
>> Trepp' unter ging,
> war mir 'Vorbei' kein lästig Ding —
>> das 'Jetzt' einmal zu mir.
> Sein rührend mildes Beimirsein
>> wünscht' ich auf immer wär;
> Was steckte in dem Beimirsein,
>> rührt von Ekstase her."

This serves to show that, where textual substance is deceptively simple, its philosophy profound and its art concealed, the translator may find linguistic accuracy inadequate for the purpose of re-creating individuality. How far can he deviate? In looking behind the language, would he be improving? (outside his terms of reference!) or interfering? (unethical!). He himself is the best judge as to how far he goes, or avoids going, and as his own critical reader, the best judge as to how well he does it.

### Being true to 'charm and character' by being faithful to words

On the other hand, there are occasions when the appeal of a work depends on its individual language and the author's mastery of it to create something of literary merit. Here the translator is told what to say but denied the means of saying it in the same way. This is especially true when the work 'belongs', that is, it depends for its effect on its (literary) environment. The undoubted charm of the following extract, also by Hardy, owes much to its home-spun style steeped in country character — a typical 'Wessex poem', not in dialect but echoing a country idiom and the 'commonplace'. Its treatment of the theme of love and marriage is all the more effective because of its

down-to-earth realism and light-hearted approach so typical of the poet. The opening verse of *"The Bride-Night Fire"* (D.Wrght: "Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy" ‹Penguin Books, 1986› page 102) must clearly be translated in such a way as to bring out these qualities:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *"They had long met o' Zundays — her true love and she —* | A | 12 |
| 2 | *And at junketings, maypoles, and flings;* | B | 9 |
| 3 | *But she bode wi' a thirtover uncle, and he* | A | 12 |
| 4 | *Swore by noon and by night that her goodman should be* | A | 12 |
| 5 | *Naibour Sweatly — a wight often weak at the knee* | A | 12 |
| 6 | *From taking o' summat more cheerful than tea —* | A | 11 |
| 7 | *Who tranted, and moved people's things."* | B | 8 |

The first problem to overcome is the 'manner of speech'; this is a mixture of regional idiom and archaic terms: *'she bode wi'* .. ' conveys more than just 'she lived with' (she stayed with / looked after? was beholden to?); *'thirtover'* describes a crusty old cross-patch; *'goodman'*, an outdated (except in the country) term for husband; the word *'wight'* ( = 'Wicht') is also deliberately resurrected; on the other hand, *'tranted'* ('tranter', local carrier, huckster, pedlar) is used as a verb to give both local character and forceful expression. Even where the terms are standard (if old fashioned!) they are given extra dimensions — *'junketings'* are not just picnics, parties, feasts, but 'do's', occasions for revelling; the transferred meaning of 'a [maypole] dance' in *'maypoles'* is in the same vein, as is *'flings'* for (village) dances. The country usage of 'o' Sundays' (covering 'on [a] Sunday, of [a] Sunday, Sundays') is particularly expressive and *'taking o' summat'* has the subtle implication of habitual action (not felt in 'taking summat') managed so well by the 'manner of speaking' which Hardy adopts. All of these factors contribute to the overall character of the poem and must come through in German.

A full translation must therefore (a) be in the same mould, (b) use the same 'material', (c) have the same external shape (rhythm, rhyme, etc.), (d) adhere to the same type of presentation, (e) effectively *read* as the same. If we examine each line for a possible 'match', the following points may be noted —

Line 1 : the past tense is mainly descriptive and both 'sie treffen / trafen sich' seem to be equally effective when qualified by eg. 'seit wann'. 'o' *Zundays'* may be imitated in 'sonntags' (= 'des Sonntags' ‹of a Sunday›). For *'her true love'* 'der Liebste' may be far more expressive than 'ihr Geliebter'.

Line 2 : the need to provide a 'meaningful' (not cosmetic) rhyme for the powerful last line could well dictate the use of available words — 'Schmaus[erei], Picknick, Fest; Maibaum, Reigen, Tänzchen, etc.' may not be forceful enough on their own and need to be supported in some way, for example, by 'wenn's freut'.

Line 3 : *'she bode'* might come out better in 'sie haust' (more expressive than 'wohnte') beim (= '*wi'* a') kratzbürst'gen (bitterbösen) Onkel' which could flow into 'und wie ..' with the sense of 'and how (he did swear that)' carried over to the next line.

Line 4 : 'der' (= this man) fits the spoken style better than 'er'. The term *'goodman'*

might invite such colloquialisms as 'Begatterich' ([Be]Gatte × Enterich) but extremes are unnecessary, although 'Ehegatt(e) might be preferred to 'Ehemann'.

Line 5 : to include all aspects of '*should*' in the previous line, 'sei Nachbar Sweatly .. ' has the proper meaning, emphasis and balance. There is no real alternative to 'Wicht' for '*wight*', as 'Kerl', 'Knülch', or even an unjustified 'Knauser', seem to represent too strong a personal opinion. The translator may feel that the colourful description '*often weak at the knee*' could be rendered literally if given extra force, for example, in 'ein Wicht, oft schwankend am Knie'. This is far more in the spirit than would be 'schlotterig' or 'wackelig', which are purely descriptive.

Line 6 : '*from taking o' summat*' will be seen as 'das kommt vom Nippen an was ..' or expressively, 'freilich vom Nippen ..'. The comparative '(an etwas) Heitererem als / Muntererem als' could respond to trimming in 'an was Munt'rerem als' (although the adjective 'stark - stärker' would avoid this, it lacks the right *nuance* ). For the sake of a more convenient rhyme, but mainly to preserve the 'Englishness', 'Tea' could be preferred to 'Tee'.

Line 7 : ', der trödelt' is most expressive as it includes 'to loiter' as well as 'to hawk wares'. The concluding phrase could be separated by 'und' to imply some doubt about the actual occupation — 'trödelt' und schleppt' für die Leute' (für die Nachbarschaft schleppt er im Auftrag die Sachen ab / herum / weg); we need not be concerned about the more dubious aspects of '(re)moving people's things'.

It must be assumed that the translator comprehends the language of the text and the thought behind it. He should also feel the personality of the writer. How is he to relate this to the creation (largely his own) of a uniquely personal work in another language? In the case of Hardy, the mere 'trimming of idiom' to fit rhyme and rhythm, or even the finding of naturally familiar alternatives, would not be enough — each turn of phrase, each wrenching of speech, must be part of his singular manner of *poetically* speaking. In this the translator may not be as good a poet as Hardy; he may be aware of, but not practised in a similar manner of speaking. If he can prevent these failings leading to a 'redecoration' of the original instead of its re-creation, it will be due in no small measure to an instinctive good judgement. Suggested here would be —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "Sie treff'n sich sonntags seit wann — der Liebste und sie — | A | 12 |
| 2 | auch bei Schmaus, Maibaum und Tanz, wenn's freut. | B | 9 |
| 3 | Aber sie haust' beim kratzbürst'gen Onkel, und wie | A | 12 |
| 4 | der es Tag und Nacht schwor, der Ehegatt' für sie | A | 12 |
| 5 | sei Nachbar Sweatly — ein Wicht, oft schwankend am Knie, | A | 12 |
| 6 | freilich vom Nippen an was Munt'rerem als 'Tea' —, | A | 11 |
| 7 | der trödelt' und schleppt' für die Leut'." | B | 8 |

## Translating what the writer (poet) sees through what he says

To convey the essence of a work a translator may have to decide which of its

aspects are vital and how they can be expansively dealt with at the minimum cost to the others. With artistically creative works it is most unlikely that any aspect would be entirely expendable, while the full treatment of some of them could prove imperative to a successful transfer of the work, not only for what it is, but for *the whole point of its being created* . Problems arise, however, when the mere 'management' of one aspect impinges upon the exhaustive and sensitive treatment of another. An item which serves well as a textual equivalent may lack an ability to convey the idea behind the meaning, while one which does so must of necessity be discarded. The conflict is greater when all these ideas are also bound up in the 'art' of the work. In the matter of form and design, for instance, it is generally accepted that repetition (whether it is for effect or artistic shaping) would require a similar repetition in translation — but what happens if two identical lines (of poetry) stand in some sort of relationship to each other? — perhaps a similar / different connection with similar / different circumstances? If allowed to change just one small (but significant) item, a translation might quite often <u>nearly</u> meet the demands of formal correspondence while <u>largely</u> fulfilling those of preserving the essential character of the original. In the matter of the 'hidden substance' itself, the problem is much more intractable. The neglect or indifference which some works suffer in translation could simply be the result of being <u>only</u> 'profoundly' translatable.

The following short poem by William Butler Yeats illustrates how apparently unsubstantial material can serve, in the right hands, as a vehicle for profound thought. It combines actual 'observing' with a visionary 'observation' — *"The old men admiring themselves in the water"* ("Yeats - Collected Poems" <MacMillan, London 1963> page 91) :

1    *"I heard the old, old men say,*

2          *"Everything alters,*

3    *And one by one we drop away."*

4    *They had hands like claws, and their knees*

5    *Were twisted like old thorn trees*

6          *By the waters.*

7    *I heard the old, old men say,*

8    *"All that's beautiful drifts away*

9          *Like the waters. ""*

The poem itself can be 'translated' at any level from that of vacuous, slavish word replacement to that of unfettered explication of the underlying ideas, but it will only be <u>set</u> in German at the level which is most compatible, that is, where differences of language interfere least with what the translator feels he must say. One might, for example, attempt to deal with the (rhyming) link between *'say - drop away'* (lines 1+3) and *'say - drifts away'* (lines 7+8) by reducing the prescriptive 'sagen' to an alternative which would allow a (meaningful) connection such as 'zuzeiten' (line 3) - 'weg gleiten' (line 8). The danger is that the alternative itself could undermine what was intended by drawing undue attention to other aspects of 'sagen' ('meinen', 'behaupten', 'erklären',

'äußern'); this would certainly detract from the merits of a possible (here) 'verbreiten'. The translator will also question whether it would be ethical to change the meaning of 'had [hands like claws]' (line 4) into that of 'looked like / reflected as' to make way for '[verzerrten sich zu] Klauen, — beim Schauen, [ins Wasser]' to avoid an otherwise impractical rhyme; this would also cover 'twisted ... by the waters' (lines 5+6). At a higher level, would not 'verschwimmen (verschwommen)' capture the idea of becoming indistinct, blurred, distorted as well as fading away, far better than 'weg/ent-gleiten' for '... drifts away' (line 8) ? At the highest level, what could be sacrificed to make way for a near perfect 'verfließen (verflossen)' for this?

Obviously, there is more to the poem than can be taken at face value. Can the translator suggest this by applying his own insight to the formula set by Yeats? This would impose the following preconditions:

| Substance | Language | Shape | Message | Effect |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| four statements | narrative style | effectively patterned | extracted by reader | thought provoking |

While the factors which influence the higher levels of appreciative reading are sensed (and hopefully, passed on) by the translator, those at the language level will be clearly visible. Here the subject matter cannot be expounded except by the right choice and placing of the words as indicated by the poet. The language, itself uninvolved, is set out to have maximum impact and effect. Shape, pattern, metric and rhyming scheme, as well as the positioning of highly charged words, are not for the beautification of the work, but to relay the thoughts behind it in the most convincing way. A translation of a poem will inevitably involve some 'verbal acrobatics' but the result of this should be seen here as the work of the author and not the dexterity of the translator.

Both the message and its effect depend upon the right word and where it is placed (usually at the end of a line). Although lines 1 and 7 look the same, what they say and how they each say it, may differ. The first 'sagen' introduces a statement of resentful recognition and would have to equate with 'klagen' / 'beweinen' / 'jammern' / 'schwätzen' / 'verbreiten' / 'erzählen'; the second 'sagen' introduces one of enlightened resignation as seen in 'vernehmen' / 'erklären' / 'versetzen' / 'behaupten' / 'einstimmen'. All of these could provide an opportunity for a rhyme, but, although the right word may be promoted by necessity, it can only be fully effective if it truly replaces the spirit and letter of the original. With a work so seriously imaginative as this it may well be difficult to decide the 'truth' of any replacement and the translator must avoid the twin dangers of undue empathy with the author and overweening regard for the reader. He can do this by transferring all that is possible, imitating wherever it is practical, and uncovering only what he must.

The question then arises : can the translator (as opposed to the imitating poet) justify his 'exploiting' of hidden meanings? Lying behind '[they] had [hands like claws]'

(line 4), for example, is the idea that (only?) the reflections were contorted and rippled like those in a 'crazy' mirror. This is reinforced in *'twisted ... by the waters'* (lines 5+6) to leave open the question: did still waters (genuinely) reflect contorted limbs or did rippling waters distort (exaggerate) the image? Could the translator really then extend a neutral 'spiegelten' through 'aussahen' to 'flatterten [zu]' — perhaps even as far as 'verschmolzen [zu Klauen]' — to give more meaning? Far more problematic is to deal effectively with the abstract reasoning (of the men) that their beauty is 'flowing away like water / drifting gracefully away / washed away (faded) by the waters'. Ideally, the teasing ambiguity should be transferred as it is as even the defining of it could destroy the magic ('verfließen ↔ entgleiten ↔ verziehen'). Not even 'ziehen', with its double meaning of 'drawing, drifting' and 'distorting', can translate the reality of 'drift away' as used in the poem. In the eyes of the men, '[wird] fortgetragen' could well provide an answer (and for the translator, a rhyme for an unavoidable 'sagen' (line 7) !).

By giving priority to keeping the character of the poem and its way of seeing a deeper significance in simple actions, it could be sensitively translated as —

" Ich hörte die alten, alten Männer erzählen,
     "Es ändert sich alles,
Und nacheinander werden wir fehlen."
Ihre Hände verzerrten sich zu Klauen,
Die Knie wie Dornbuschknorren beim Schauen
     Ins Wasser.
Ich hörte die alten, alten Männer dann sagen,
     "Alles, was schön ist, wird fortgetragen,
     Wie Wasser." "

Remaining as faithful as possible to the simple words this not only allows, but invites, the reader to work out for himself the profound thoughts that lie behind them.

### The translator's part in fulfilling the purpose of a work

Apart from an outward form, communicative content and 'stylish' assembly, a literary work often has strong features marking the idea behind its conception which it hopes to achieve. T.S.Eliot's *"Murder in the Cathedral"*, for example, is characterized by its purposeful use of poetry for the stage. The work bears a distinct and calculated relationship to a medieval morality play, although its dramatic style is far more subtle. The following extract will show how close it lies to the norm of blank verse by relying on a poetry which is more structural than verbal, that is; the words owe their dramatic effect to what they are and where they are rather than to how 'nicely' they fit in. The example highlights above all the difference between a purely literary translation and one intended to be performed. The result should therefore not only aim to make the work fully accessible, but also to be that work, truly alive in its German form and not merely a clever compromise with the original.

1   *"What sign of the spring of the year?*

2   *Only the death of the old: not a stir, not a shoot, not a breath.*

3   *Do the days begin to lengthen?*

4   *Longer and darker the day, shorter and colder the night.*

5   *Still and stifling the air: but a wind is stored up in the East.*

6   *The starved crow sits in the field, attentive; and in the wood the owl*

7   *rehearses the hollow note of death."*

(T.S.Eliot: "Murder in the Cathedral" &lt;Faber & Faber, London 1965&gt; 'Educational Edition' page 61)

The extract shows the dramatic effect of the chorus to underline the stark imagery — impending death, the year's gloomy cycle, the heavy air before the event (murder of Beckett), the wind (wrath of the King) carrying the murderers, the omens of death — and the extreme bareness of the language. This requires that every word, every phrase, should have a clear, chilling impact. The translator will also sense the deep significance of the meagre words themselves and the need to convey this. He will know, for example, that *'the spring of the year'* (line 1) is not just the season, but the 'coming to life' of the year, and see this expressed in 'Jahres Geburt', only to realize that this implies hope and joy whereas 'Jahres Einzug' would carry some portent of the tragic events to come. The effect of line 2 can only be brought out in monosyllables, 'der Tod' preferred to 'das Sterben'. Although *'the old'* refers to 'the old year', it has undertones of 'old' generally (times, things, men, etc.) and here 'des alten' could add a prophetic note. This could be reinforced in 'ein Wind liegt im Osten bereit' for *'a wind is stored up in the East'* (line 5).

The spoken (in chorus) delivery of the words will be constantly in the mind of the translator. The separation of *'attentive'* (line 6) attracts both a pregnant pause and a stress — this might be achieved by treating it as 'and + verb' in such as 'die magere Krähe sitzt/hockt/kauert im Feld und wartet/lauert/äugt'. The bare, stark reality of Eliot's words prevents interpretation and yet their significance cannot be overlooked; the aim must be to convey a similar stark reality, for example, in 'kauert im Feld und äugt'. A further opportunity presents itself in *'[in the wood] the owl'* (line 6) where it is clear that a 'screech owl' (Totenvogel — 'Steinkauz/Waldkauz') is intended and not 'Eule'. Similarly, the translator's own feeling for the right word could see *'hollow note of death'* (line 7) as 'hohler Totenruf' rather than 'hohles Totengeläut' (death-knell). It is not so much the semantic accuracy of the words alone which dictates the choice, especially in this case (a dramatic poem intended to be performed), but their ability to convey the spoken (recited) quality of a German as envisaged by the author himself.

The suggested translation attempts to do this, not by a resourceful imitation of the text, but by applying its original features, the 'harsh' bareness of the words, the prophetic imagery, the spectral intoning of the chorus, to the translation itself. This is not to say that it aspires to be no more than 'a German version' (the closeness of the

translation testifies to this) but that it simply seeks to transport the German audience to an imaginary first performance in the setting of Canterbury Cathedral.

> "Was deutet auf Jahres Einzug?
> Bloß der Tod des alten; kein Ruck, kein Sproß, kein Hauch.
> Fangen die Tage an zu längen?
> Länger und dunkler der Tag, kürzer und kälter die Nacht.
> Dumpf und stickig die Luft; doch ein Wind lauert im Osten, bereits.
> Die magere Krähe kauert im Feld und äugt, und drinnen im Holz
> probt der Waldkauz den hohlen Totenruf."

If successful, this could be seen as both the product of the author and of his art.

### The translator as the appointed 'master' of the author's craft

Provided that a translation is not damaging in its inaccuracy, reveals no undue interference and is in a like manner, will the hand of the original master shine through? In the opinion of Wolfram Wilss it does not appear to matter very much:

> "Allerdings haben mißlungene Übersetzungen nur selten den internationalen Ruf eines Autors schmälern können. Ursache hierfür ist die relative Gleichgültigkeit eines vorwiegend an der Erzählhandlung interessierten Lesepublikums gegenüber der sprachlichen Integretät der Übersetzung."

(Wilss: "Übersetzungswissenschaft – Probleme und Methoden" <Klett Verlag, Stuttgart 1977> page 280)

This may well be true of certain kinds of reading matter, but if a successful translation is to be based, not merely on the popular acclaim of an author but also on the literary quality of his work, then the hand of the translator is not so much free as silent. There should be a near perfect correspondence of those features identified with this quality. It is not just a matter of imitating style, unless we mean by this 'a manner of writing'. In the case of Charles Dickens, for example, the strength of his writing owes much to his use of long, convoluted and multiple-phrased sentences, designed in some instances to be rendered in public by professional actor-readers. Clearly, the actual writing and the subject matter are together part and parcel of the overall appeal, as is seen here:

1    *" Serjeant Buzzfuzz began by saying, that never, in the whole course of his*

2    *professional experience — never, from the very first moment of his applying*

3    *himself to the study and practice of law — had he approached a case with*

4    *feelings of such deep emotion, or with such a heavy sense of responsibility, he*

5    *would say, which he could never have supported, .were he not buoyed up and*

6    *sustained by a conviction so strong, that it amounted to a positive certainty*

7    *that the cause of truth and justice, or, in other words, the cause of his much-*

8    *injured and oppressed client, must prevail with the high-minded and intelligent*

9    *dozen of men whom he now saw in that box before him."*

The extract is from Dickens: "*Pickwick Papers*" (<Penguin Classics 1986> page 557)

Keeping to the original in word and order presents little linguistic difficulty and the problem of transposing the subject matter is not insurmountable; the translator is therefore free to provoke in the same <u>readable</u> way the effect Dickens had in mind. He can do this by a convincing (and faithful) representation of the 'style', a pompous verbiage of little substance consisting of a succession of phrases (repetition, reiteration, reinforcement, interpolation), either complete in themselves or part of the whole. The translator will feel the need to make these most effective in German and respond (by intuition) whenever, for example, a *shift in grammatical category* could be used to this end. Certainly, '— *had he approached*' (line 3) seems to benefit from a subjunctive in 'sei er ... herangetreten' to make the most of German word order. In the same way, 'so wage er zu behaupten' brings out the full effect of '*he would say*' (line 5) despite the fact that this is thinly disguised as reported speech. In fact, this *stylish* use of the subjunctive could be extended wherever possible to impart a flavour of comic ridicule, for example, with 'eine Überzeugung, die so stark sei, daß sie auf absolute Gewißheit hinauskomme, daß ..' to play on '*a conviction so strong that it amounted to a positive certainty*' (line 6)

The text exaggerates by doubling up on words, a further feature which can be exploited — 'aufrechterhalten und unterstützt' for '*buoyed up and sustained*' (lines 5+6); 'tiefgeschädigt und schwer verfolgt' for '*much-injured and oppressed [client]*' (lines 7+8); 'hochgebildet und intelligent' for '*high-minded and intelligent*' (line 8) (- here we may note that 'supercilious' is inferred by the author but not consciously by Buzzfuzz). The opportunity to play on '*prevail*' (line 8) in such as 'das Übergewicht gewinnen müsse', makes up somewhat for the loss of impact in the enforced explanation of '*box*' (line 9) as 'Geschworenenbank' although here the reader can be made fully appreciative of the significance of the 'twelve good men and true (jury)' by preferring 'bei d(ies)em Dutzend von (hochgebildeten) Männern' to 'bei den zwölf Männern' for '*dozen of men*' (line 9).

Avoiding unnecessary expansion of the text, the following is suggested —

"<u>Serjeant Buzzfuzz begann, indem er sagte, niemals in dem gesamten Lauf seiner beruflichen Erfahrung, niemals von dem allerersten Augenblick an, wo er sich dem Studium und der Praxis der Jurisprudenz gewidmet habe, sei er mit einem so tiefen Gefühl von Gemütsbewegung und mit so einem drückenden Bewußtsein der auf ihm aufgebürdeten Verantwortung an einen Prozeß herangetreten, einer Verantwortung, so wage er zu behaupten, die er nie hätte tragen können, wäre er nicht unterstützt und aufrechterhalten durch eine Überzeugung, die so stark sei, daß sie auf absolute Gewißheit hinauskomme, daß die Sache der Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit, oder, mit anderen Worten, die Sache seiner tief geschädigten und schwer verfolgten Klientin*, bei dem Dutzend von hochgebildeten und intelligenten Männern, das er nun auf der Geschworenenbank vor sich sehe, das Übergewicht gewinnen müsse.</u>"

(*German must specify that the client is female)

## Literary translation — imitated art or artful imitation?

*Repeating a work of undoubted literary merit in another language will demand some artistic contribution on the part of the translator — it is unlikely that the naked language alone, however skilfully matched, would do justice to the author's original creation. The question is: how far should this, possibly invited, certainly inspired, creative involvement on the part of the translator go? It is accepted that there is something of the artist in every (literary) translator, albeit rarely of an individually creative one; would this be enough, if combined with linguistic skills, to ensure a true copy of a writer's art? The principle that a poem is best translated by a poet, drama by a dramatist, and so on, may well produce some good results, but does it not also suggest a parallel re-creation to order as a vehicle for the talents of the surrogate writer? Unavoidably he will leave his own stamp on the finished work, in some cases, even in the form of a polished interpretation of his model. If well executed, would this detract from, dilute, or even replace the appealing qualities of the original to the extent that the author would be better served by a 'good' translation? Could a sensitive translator, supported by the intuitive knowledge of the 'right' word or turn of phrase, approach the genius of an original, or must it be left to others to merely imitate it? This section looks at the way some writers have been variously treated by fellow (translating) authors and poets and suggests alternatives based on what is revealed by the very language of the work.*

Defining the qualities required by the translator of a literary work, Douglas Knight writes:

" First, he should be an artist himself — at least enough of one to yearn for a living expression of the work to which he has committed his energy.... Second he should be a scholar and a linguist. This does not mean that he should be a world authority on the work he is translating, but it certainly does mean that he should be alert to a consistent and coherent version of its major statements, attitudes, insights, and artistic means. "

(article in Reuben Brower: "On Translation" <Oxford University Press - New York 1966> page 196)

This suggests that the translator himself should be a practising artist, preferably in the same medium, but does it follow that a truly great work can only be translated in this way? Certainly, a large number of such translations are by literary artists, inspired or simply 'working in the same vein' — "Epochen der Deutschen Lyrik - 10", for example, contains no less than seven translations of the Shakespeare sonnet beginning —

"*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*

*Thou art more lovely and more temperate:* "

— in each of them the translator-poet is seeking to 'put it as well' as Shakespeare:

Karl Ludwig Kannegiesser (1803)

(page 269)

- "Soll ich dich gleichen einem Sommer Tag?

Doch muß ich dich ja lieber finden: "

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>Dorothea Tieck</u> (1826)<br>(page 331) | - "Vergleich' ich Dich dem Tag im holden Lenze?<br>Du bist weit süßer, bist Dir immer gleich: " |
| <u>Friedrich Bodenstedt</u> (1862)<br>(page 457) | - "Soll ich Dich einem Sommertag vergleichen?<br>Nein, Du bist lieblicher und frischer weit — " |
| <u>Karl Simrock</u> (1867)<br>(page 497) | - "Soll ich dich einem Frühlingstag vergleichen,<br>Der du weit lieblicher und milder bist, " |
| <u>Stefan George</u> (1909)<br>(page 581) | - "Soll ich vergleichen einem Sommertage<br>Dich der du lieblicher und milder bist? " |
| <u>Karl Kraus</u> (1933)<br>(page 679) | - "Soll ich denn einen Sommertag dich nennen,<br>dich, der an Herrlichkeit ihn überglänzt? " |
| <u>Rudolf Alexander Schröder</u> (1949)<br>(page 733) | - "Vergleich ich dich mit einem Sommertag?<br>So lind wie du, so lieblich dünkt er kaum: " |

(Horst Rüdiger: "Epochen der Deutschen Lyrik - Band 10" <Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, München 1977>)

There is no doubt that each of the above is poetically motivated and concerned above all with preserving, or even attempting to improve, the lyrical effect. Each has taken the germ of an idea and seen in it the 'prospect of artistic creation'. Considering that a <u>translator</u> may also be required to transfer the 'art and artistry' of a work, could he restrict himself to being a master of his craft rather than a (literary) artist by proxy?

### An intuitive approach to allow the literary qualities to rematerialize

Longer works of poetry or prose verse may be appreciated for overall effect rather than sectional detail. In translation, artistic equivalence is therefore considered at a broader level but the genuine translator gains no greater freedom to exercise his creative ability — he is simply more exposed. This is especially true when the intensity of the work demands much more than just producing a 'fine, credible version'. He must be capable of reproducing within his own language yet within the crafted design of the original those features which mark the work as something special. He has to provide a *full and accurate* translation in every sense of the word. Here, there is a basic conflict to be resolved — sensitive to the 'high hopes' of the original author, he may be aware of possible weaknesses exposed by his own language; given the nature of the task, can he curb a natural desire to correct and improve? if so, can he find the tasteful means of remaining faithful to his model?

A good example of the problems he could face is the following short extract from Schiller's "*Maria Stuart*", where the visible form, verse drama, is not seen as a restriction by the author, but an opportune medium for poetic expression. The third act opens in a particularly lyrical style. Here, a translation must work within the content (highly dramatic), form (verse, rhymed in part), effect (theatrical) and impression (very emotive) if it purports to be 'by Schiller'. We can see this clearly in the following few lines from the third act —

(Gegend in einem Park, vorn mit Bäumen besetzt, hinten eine weite Aussicht.)

*Erster Auftritt*

Maria tritt in schnellem Lauf hinter Bäumen hervor. Hannah Kennedy folgt langsam.

1 *Kennedy: Ihr eilet ja, als wenn Ihr Flügel hättet,*

2 *So kann ich Euch nicht folgen, wartet doch!*

3 *Maria:. Laß mich der neuen Freiheit genießen,*

4 *Laß mich ein Kind sein, sei es mit!*

5 *Und auf dem grünen Teppich der Wiesen*

6 *Prüfen den leichten, geflügelten Schritt.*

7 *Bin ich dem finstern Gefängnis entstiegen,*

8 *Hält sie nicht mehr, die traurige Gruft?*

9 *Laß mich in vollen, in durstigen Zügen*

10 *Trinken die freie, himmlische Luft.*

11 *Kennedy: O meine teure Lady! Euer Kerker*

12 *Ist nur um klein weniges erweitert.*

13 *Ihr seht nur nicht die Mauer, die uns einschließt,*

14 *Weil sie der Bäume dicht Gesträuch versteckt.*

(Schiller: "Maria Stuart" <Philipp Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart 1968> page 68)

The imitating poet will notice that the dramatic effect is heightened by the contrast of the lyrical poetry of Mary's lines with the sobering blank verse of Kennedy. The conceptual ideas of liberty, a happy and care-free childhood, the heavenly free air and the stark contrast in 'green meadows — prison, tomb' would also be very inviting for him to exercise his art. Not surprisingly, such features are frequently taken over by the literary artist rather than reproduced by the translator. Both assume, however, that the incoming language is capable of bringing out the qualities of the original, the one in a shapely reincarnation and the other in a clear copy. In making this copy, can the translator by an appreciative as well as skilful use of language preserve the art form of Schiller's "*Maria Stuart*"? He will certainly have to be skilful in working to rhyme and rhythm and appreciative of the opportunities for displaying the right qualities and, more importantly, in the right measure. The extract above provides a number of such opportunities; to take just one — how is the lyrical quality to be translated?

'*Flügel hättet*' (line 1) - [as though] on wingéd feet (poetic use of extra syllable)

'*wartet doch!*' (line 2) - pray wait (employment of literary formula 'pray --' = 'do --')

'*sei es mit*' (line 4) - be young with me (expressive exhortation)

'*auf dem grünen Teppich der Wiesen*' (line 5) - over the lea (a rolling lyricism)

'*prüfen den ... Schritt*' (line 6) - come trip like [a child] (rhythmic appeal)

'*hält ... die Gruft*' (line 8) - entombéd there (extra syllable for dramatic effect)

'*in durstigen Zügen*' (line 9) - stilling my thirst [with heavenly air] (poetic depth)

'*weil sie der Bäume dicht Gesträuch versteckt*' (line 14) - [would see] .. save the trees' thick branches it not hidden keep (special use of 'save' and inversion)

All the concessions which need to be made to rhyme and metre can be <u>used</u> by the translator and not merely implemented. In the matter of keeping to the style and flavour of the original, good judgement will prevent excesses, to give perhaps —

*Kennedy:* <u>Oh so fast you haste as though on wingéd feet,</u>
<u>This pace I cannot hold. Pray wait for me.</u>

*Mary:* <u>O Liberty! Let me now taste thee so sweet;</u>
<u>A child am I. Be young with me,</u>
<u>Come trip like a child oh so light and fleet</u>
<u>Over green meadows and over the lea;</u>
<u>Am I free of the prison that me bound</u>
<u>And truly no longer entombéd there?</u>
<u>Let me drink deeply of the freedom around,</u>
<u>Stilling my thirst with the heavenly air.</u>

*Kennedy:* <u>O dear Lady! Now is the prison that holds,</u>
<u>Yet but by the smallest margin wider grown.</u>
<u>You would now see the wall that surrounds us still,</u>
<u>Save the trees' thick branches it not hidden keep.</u>

## <u>Is a poet the best judge of a poem? — another look at Rainer Maria Rilke</u>

An analysis of a single work (especially if confined to a limited extract) can be dangerously conjectural and it would be of greater value to give wider consideration to the <u>translating</u> of one poet. One who has attracted the attention of translator/poets over many years is *Rainer Maria Rilke*. Not only has he been extensively and expertly treated with discriminating admiration by J.B.Leishman in translated poems (*"Rilke — New Poems"* <Hogarth Press, London 1964> and *"Rilke — Poems 1906-1926"* <Hogarth Press, London 1966>), but he has also been the subject of critical studies making use of poetic translations (such as R.C.F.Hull: *"Selected Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke"* <MacMillan, London 1946>). The difference between the two approaches may be identified thus: while the first attempts to fit a poem into a (new) language, the second tries to fit the (new) language to the poem. What they have in common is that the result should be as much admired as judged for its faithfulness.

It may be perfectly possible to transpose the essential substance, both actual and æsthetic, of a poem to form the basis for a creation in another language, indeed, Rilke himself composed poems in French and, according to Peters —

"They are not merely translations of his German poems, although they treat similar themes. They have been called 'transubstantiations'."

(F.Peters: "Rilke - Masks and the Man" <University of Washington Press, 1960> page 13)

This presupposes the existence of an 'embryonic poem' (in a natural language) awaiting the hand of a poet. The translator-poet, then, may well be in danger of providing just

another 'fine alternative' for the same ideas in the Rilkean manner, while the poetic translator, for his part, simply explores any suitable means of attracting the original into his own language.

A good example of the need to combine 'inner feeling' with 'poetic craft'· is Rilke's *"Der Panther"*. We can see this if we compare several published translations in parallel and then offer further variations.

| | | (Rhyme) | | (Syllables) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *"Sein Blick ist vom Vorübergehen der Stäbe* | | A | | 11 |
| 2 | *so müd' geworden, daß er nichts mehr hält.* | | B | | 10 |
| 3 | *Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe* | · | A | | 11 |
| 4 | *und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt.* | | B | | 10 |
| 5 | *Der weiche Gang geschmeidig starker Schritte,* | | C | | 11 |
| 6 | *der sich im allerkleinsten Kreise dreht,* | | D | | 10 |
| 7 | *ist wie ein Tanz von Kraft um eine Mitte,* | | C | | 11 |
| 8 | *in der betäubt ein großer Wille steht.* | | D | | 10 |
| 9 | *Nur manchmal schiebt der Vorhang der Pupille* | | E | | 11 |
| 10 | *sich lautlos auf —, Dann geht ein Bild hinein,* | | F | | 10 |
| 11 | *geht durch die Glieder angespannte Stille —* | | E | | 11 |
| 12 | *und hört im Herzen auf zu sein."* | | F | | 8 |

("Rilke – Gedichte : Auswahl" <Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart 1959> page 17)

Very few poems are just empty words, however beautifully assembled, but this one demands considerable subjective involvement and empathy with what it expresses. In translation this subjectivity must not distort or overplay the actual text; there is, on the other hand, a clear obligation to see a deeper meaning in the words. To clothe this equally effectively in rhyme, rhythm and shape, is a challenge to a translator and poet alike. Looking at what should be conveyed we would find:

<u>Overall feelings.</u> — The claustrophobic situation of the cage in *'keine Welt'* (4); *'allerkleinsten'* (6); *'betäubt'* (8); *'angespannt'* (11): The boredom in the repetition of *'tausend Stäbe'* (3 + 4): The monotony in the alternating of *'ei'* and *'a'* (7): Frustration in *'der sich ... im Kreise dreht'* (6): Pent up energy suggested by *'um eine Mitte'* (7) as a concentration of energy as well as a centre of turning (as in a fully wound spring): The hopeless resistance in *'nur manchmal'* (9): Resignation - drawing a curtain on the outside world, *'der Vorhang der Pupille'* (9), is the only 'freedom' left to the panther: Utter helplessness in *'hört im Herzen auf zu sein'* (12). These impressions, essential to a full appreciation of the poem, reach beyond a conventional interpretation of symbols to find subtle expression in an undercurrent of language.

<u>Images.</u> — *'Blick (ist) vom Vorübergehen der Stäbe'* (1) conjures up a picture of an outside world in the flickering, jerky, shadowy movement of early motion pictures, with the bars separating each frame in passing. The repetition of *'tausend'* (3 + 4) completes

the illusion if one sees the bars massing in their thousands like film extras. The silent, soft, padding tread of *'der weiche Gang'* (5) is painted in by the 'firm, supple strides' of the *hushing* alliteration of *'geschmeidig starker Schritte'*. As *'weich'* includes both softness and quietness, what emerges is a whispering (barely audible) pacing (measured) movement of supple (flexible, flowing) power. The very tightest of circles in which the perplexed animal is spinning (on its own axis?) is a measure of its bewilderment mixed with the desperation behind *'Tanz von Kraft'* (7) as a hopping from paw to paw, ready to spring (in image of a Whirling Dervish or Cossack dancer!). A stressed *'betäubt'* (8) lends a feeling of being 'bemused and puzzled' to the basic idea, 'stupified, paralysed'. The image of latent, smouldering will derives from *'steht'* (8), suggesting that the will is there but held in check. The *'Pupille'* (9) is both the animal's window on the world and the way into its soul — *'dann geht ein Bild hinein'* (10) — in a double image!

Meanings. — In poetry the unit of meaning is usually a word or an enclosed phrase and, despite the need to convey the 'whole', a translator must first seek these out and then re-state each in a fashion recognizably 'that of the author'. In translating Rilke's meanings in *"Der Panther"*, the translator is doubly penalized: [a] he may find his own language not only inadequate, but inaccessible owing to rhyme, metre etc. [b] he may find that the 'right' word is not poetic enough. He may see, as does J.B.Leishman, for example, '[*um eine Mitte, in der*] *betäubt ein großer Wille steht*' as 'stands stupified' or even 'paralyticly' *(sic !)* yet shy at using either; he may accept that 'shutter' has an entirely appropriate meaning for *'Vorhang'* yet reject it; he would certainly question whether any translator would honestly prefer 'indart' for *'geht .. hinein'* (10), were he not desperately seeking a rhyme (the cited words are from Leishman: "Rilke - New Poems"). The problems arise because a poem is by nature an art form, not a bundle of meanings.

In a poem translation of *"Der Panther"*, the choice seems to lie between one of word meanings artfully contrived and an artistically rewarding one loosely expressing the ideas. We can see this clearly if we compare a few lines of 'parallel translations' and note the different approaches which result in anything from a completely English poem written to order to a close translation with a veneer of poetic form.

(a) *'The padding of his strong and supple stride*
    *that in the very smallest circle turns,*
    *is like a dance of strength around a hub*
    *in which a mighty will stands stupified.'*

        (J.B.Leishman: "Rilke - Requiem and Other Poems" <Hogarth Press, London 1935> page 82)

(b) *'The padded walk whose strong and supple pace*
    *turns in the smallest circle round and round,*
    *is like a dance of power about a place*
    *in which a mighty will stands stunned and bound.'*

        (R.F.C.Hull: "Selected Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke" <MacMillan, London 1946> page 11)

(c) *'Those supply-powerful paddings, turning there*

*in tiniest of circles, well might be*

*the dance of forces round a centre where*

*some mighty will stands paralyticly.'*

(d) *'Soft padding steps of supple strength,*

*turning and turning in so small a space,*

*are like a dance of power round a centre*

*where a strong will lies benumbed.'*

Each of the above tries to identify what Rilke actually means (in verse 2) and then seeks to express this in the closest possible way within its own objectives — this is evident in that: (a) strives for a word-accuracy that does not relate to the poem, in 'hub', for example; (b) is conscious of the need to write a poem — 'padded walk' and 'supple pace' are chosen for their rhythmic quality and the inappropriate 'place' for a rhyme; (c) overplays the cadence, rhyme and poetic shaping — this can be seen in the artfully contrived 'supply-powerful', the incongruous 'paralyticly' (- paralytically?) and even in additions such as 'turning there'; (d) attempts to follow accurately and in a poetic manner — 'turning and turning', for example, has its model in '*allerkleinst*' while 'benumbed' has the ring of '*betäubt*'. Success, however, cannot be judged solely on the attainment of certain objectives but on the merits of the whole as a translated poem.

Under what conditions is a translation likely to succeed? It should include but not augment textual meanings (not slavishly, but in the sense intended), do full justice to the thematic content, employ the same artistic form and, above all, aim at the same level of appeal to the reader. In the knowledge that English can only be bent so far, the following is suggested and compared with the versions quoted —

1  His gazing has of the bars in their passing    (A - 11)

'Blick' seems to mean 'anstarrender, fester Blick' - 'gazing' stresses the continuity (and preserves the rhythm). 'their passing' for 'Vorübergehen' combines the action of actually passing the bars with their fleeting past.

2  become so tired, he no longer knows.    (B - 10)

The textual meaning of 'hält' (he cannot take any more in) is covered at a different level by 'not knowing of'. The natural pause after 'tired' is to imitate the subordinate clause in German.

3  He sees the bars as if in thousands massing    (A - 11)

Figuratively, 'tausend Stäbe' is seen as 'Tausende von Stäben' (= zahllos) and so justifies the plural. The endless amount hinted at in 'es gäbe' is shadowed in 'massing'. The repetition of 'bars' follows that of 'Stäbe' in the original. The force of 'as if' is also that of 'als ob'.

4    and empty worlds behind a thousand rows.    (B - 10)

Although the plural 'worlds' is not in the text, 'keine' (= not any) could reflect this and find expression in 'empty worlds' to justify the imitated metric stress. The plural also gives greater depth to the words.

(For a rhythm and rhyming comparison, R.F.C.Hull has:

'So weary from the passing bars his eyes

that nothing more can crowd into his mind.

He feels as though a thousand bars give rise

to other thousands with no world behind.')

5    The lithesome tread of firm and supple pacing,    (C - 11)

Word-meanings are adequately covered ('Gang' = gait = striding → pacing); the measured rhythm underlines the 'graceful power' in the words.

6    that in the tightest circle now gyrates,    (D - 10)

'gyrates' may be an extension of 'turns' but it captures the force of 'sich drehen' (= 'kreisen', 'wirbeln') to strengthen the image of a spiral dance accelerating towards its centre, a feature of the next line.

7    is a dance of strength round a centre racing,    (C - 11)

'racing' is not in the text but it reduces the difficulty of translating all that is felt in 'Kraft' (might? power? force? will? spirit? or strength?).

8    to where, bemused, that mighty will abates.    (D - 10)

It is open to interpretation as to whether 'Mitte' is the concentration of will (defiance?) or the place where the impetus comes to a halt; the latter is more likely if we consider the rôle of 'betäubt'.

(The meanings are covered; the metre is maintained and the rhymes, masculine and feminine, are strictly followed. The quoted versions provide comparisons)

9    Just rarely when the pupil's velvet shutter    (E - 11)

The surface meaning of 'nur manchmal' (only occasionally, from time to time) is supported here by the sensed meaning of 'when / whenever'. The inclusion of 'velvet (shutter)' imitates the metaphorically-descriptive line of the original by combining (velvet) curtain and shutter.

10    in silence lifts — the scene invades the eye,    (F - 10)

Here 'scene' is a combination of picture, image, and sight in the sense of 'to catch sight of' brought out in 'invades the eye' (the panther does not like what it sees!). The break in the middle of the line marks a beginning of a new clause, as in the German, but with a pause to replace 'dann'.

11    creeps through, the limbs' still straining calm to flutter,    (E - 11)

'creeps' for 'geht durch' is somewhat interpretative — it implies that the image 'sends shivers' through the animal; it also suggests that the image took a little while to penetrate and register in the mind.

12  <u>to reach at last the heart and die.</u>   (F - 8)

As well as keeping to the iambic metre the short line captures the force of 'hort auf, zu sein', the final stress of 'sein' being on an emphatic 'die'. (For a comparison of meaning Donald Prater has:

'But now and then the curtain of the eyelid

lifts soundlessly ── . An image enters then,

runs through the quiet tension of the limbs,

reaches the heart ── and ceases to exist.' )

## Translating Rilke ──is there a choice between depth of thought and artistic form?

The translator may feel that what he senses in a Rilke poem would be far too profound for him to express in the same way. This is not altogether due to any lack of real understanding on his part; to some extent it results from the poet's own wrestling with the ideal. The size of the problem can be judged from Rilke's own words:

"Was ich künstlerisch schreibe, wird wohl bis zuletzt irgendwo die Spuren des Wider-

spruchs, mittels dessen ich mich angetreten habe."

(Peter Speyer in "Modern Language Quarterly - vol.7" <University of Washington, 1974> page 89)

This poses two questions ── [a] are the contents of value in their own right (ie. when shorn of artistic wrappings)? [b] can the wrappings themselves be appreciated once the burden of understanding is removed? The answer to both may well lie in the fact that a true poet rarely creates anything of little consequence and that beauty of form is an integral part of what he has to say.

To test the validity of this observation, the opening lines of a poem of deep emotional intensity are given below, first as a 'plain table of contents', then Rilke's own 'poetic version', and finally as a possible 'poem-translation' in an attempt to give Rilke access to English:

"How shall I hold my soul so that it does not touch yours? How shall I raise it up over thee to other things? How gladly would I store it away with some other lost thing in the dark in a quiet, unknown place which does not vibrate when your depths vibrate."

Although these words are perfectly understandable, they only take on real meaning in Rilke's poem "*Liebeslied*" ("Rilke: "Gedichte - Auswahl" <Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart 1959> page 29) where their straightforward message is elevated by an arrangement of the language medium, both artistic and resourceful. It is significant here that Rilke does not devise the pattern merely as a poetic exercise or seek to artificially enhance the quality of the words but to give the ideas a greater depth in poetic form:

| (break) | | (rhyme) | (syllables) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "*Wie soll ich meine Seele halten, daß* | A | 10 |
| 2 | *sie nicht an deine rührt? Wie soll ich sie* | B | 10 |
| 3 | *hinheben über dich zu andern Dingen?* | C | 11 |

4  ⌐⌐→    *Ach gerne möcht ich sie bei irgendwas*          A      10

5  ⌐⌐→    *Verlorenem im Dunkel unterbringen*          C      11

6  ⌐⌐→    *an einer fremden stillen Stelle, die*          B      10

7      *nicht weiterschwingt, wenn deine Tiefen schwingen.''*      C      11

The only real alternative to a 'prose translation + Rilke poem' is an English verse of the same pattern and expressive quality as the original. Certain features must be identified and then sensitively worked into the translation. Rilke's way of rhyming on words mid-phrase is intentionally obvious but in no way intrusive; he uses inversion both for its effect, as in ' ←— hinheben —→ ' (line 3), and to incorporate a rhyme, as in 'irgendwas' (line 4); he delicately applies a poetic nuance to the layout of proposition and conjecture in '(nicht) weiterschwingt, (wenn .... ) schwingen' (line 7). The choice of words and their effective placing would be of greater value here than mere slavish imitation. Before assembling material to be moulded into shape, the translator must try to draw inspiration from the way Rilke sets out his ideas. Here a fruitful collaboration of reasoning and intuition could expose —

Line 1 : in '*halten*' position as well as restraint is implied = 'hold it so as not to bring it to touch' (rhyme must be mid-phrase, possibly on 'bring' which then runs into the next line)

Line 2-3 : '(not to bring) it thine to touch' has an inversion softened by poetic balance. The rhyme on the pronoun ('*sie*') could be imitated by rearranging word-order to end in '... (over) thee' (to emphasize a key-word; 'hinheben' can now be covered first in next line)

Line 3 : 'things' for '*Dinge*' seems a little too material — '(to what other) thought(s)' could convey the abstract idea ('things' are clearly intended as 'matters → thoughts')

Line 4-5 : '*Ach gerne möcht ich*' stresses the conditional to suggest both compliance and unlikely fulfilment = 'Oh **how** gladly would I'. The splitting of '*irgendwas / Verlorenem*' might work with 'some lost thing / hidden' ( not 'something', which lacks an end-stress)

Line 5 : 'hidden in the darkness lie' introduces a pause to equate with the double rôle of '*unterbringen*' in referring to two clauses. The poetic style could extend to 'there by me brought' (and provide a possible rhyme, assuming a previous 'thought' for 'Dingen')

Line 6 : '*fremde stille Stelle*' = quiet, secluded, unknown (secret) place, offers so many possibilities that the closest meaning can only be sensed. The end-rhyme occurs mid-sentence and is on a significant '*die*' followed by a natural pause —this pattern may be imitated in 'not to be (stressed end-rhyme)' followed by a natural pause leading into an inversion in the next line (stress is now on 'to <u>be</u>' and not on relative '*die*' )

Line 7 : '*schwingen*' — vibrate or tremble? This is compounded by '*weiterschwingt*' in that this indicates 'oscillating in tune with' to point to 'vibrate' rather than to the more sensitive 'tremble' (the later analogy of instrument strings also favours 'vibrate' and the idea of 'in unison' could be covered by 'in thy vibrating depths caught')

This illustrates the difficulty of capturing the overall sense while respecting the enclosed meanings of the words. Here, alternatives are to be evaluated, not only for

the accuracy but also for suitability within the framework of a poem to be crafted in the same way as the original. This could result in —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "How shall I keep my soul so not to bring | A | 10 |
| 2 | it thine to touch? How shall I above thee | B | 10 |
| 3 | lift up this soul of mine to what other thought? | C | 11 |
| 4 | Gladly would I let it, like some lost thing, | A | 10 |
| 5 | hidden in the darkness lie, there by me brought | C | 11 |
| 6 | to that still, secluded place not to be | B | 10 |
| 7 | by thy vibrating depths in vibrations caught." | C | 11 |

This not only conveys the meaning in words, expresses the ideas in their arrangement, but also follows the same pattern to attain the depth of thought behind the poem.

### Translating the poet's perception

Rilke's language is rich in words and idioms which are personal and only truly meaningful to the author himself (J.B.Leishman, a respected translator of Rilke, states that in his opinion, the poem "*Das Bett*" completely defies comprehension). Rarely can the translator be sure that the apparent interpretation would be the right one and so he is often tempted into far too literal a translation, thereby hoping to disguise the loss of deeper significance. Translating a poet so sensitive to the power of words as Rilke allows little scope, however, for straightforward treatment and even a literal approach brings some pressure to introduce one's own brand of symbolism. Even when this appears to be saying the same thing and fits nicely into the replacement poem, it may not be possible to achieve a parallel effect. The translator's only answer is to confine himself to 'observables', that is, to convey intention without invention and capture the poet's thoughts in the way they are set out.

The following two short verses are taken together as they seem to express a similar philosophy. Rilke's empathy with the nature of things can clearly be seen as the inspiration for their creation and this is translated by the poet into a series of motifs, both linguistic and poetic. Putting the whole into English involves much more than the shapely assembling of correctly labelled words. The examples are of the "*Dinggedichte*" in which the poet seeks to identify the essence of things:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "*Ich lebe grad, da das Jahrhundert geht.* | A | 10 |
| 2 | *Man fühlt den Wind von einem großen Blatt,* | B | 10 |
| 3 | *das Gott und du und ich beschrieben hat* | B | 10 |
| 4 | *und das sich noch in fremden Händen dreht.* | A | 10 |
| 5 | *Man fühlt den Glanz von einer neuen Seite,* | C | 11 |
| 6 | *auf der noch alles werden kann.* | D | 8 |
| 7 | *Die stillen Kräfte prüfen ihre Breite* | C | 11 |
| 8 | *und sehen einander dunkel an.*" | D | 8 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | *"Ich lebe mein Leben in wachsenden Ringen,* | E | 12 |
| 10 | *die sich über die Dinge ziehn.* | F | 8 |
| 11 | *Ich werde den letzten vielleicht nicht vollbringen,* | E | 12 |
| 12 | *aber versuchen will ich ihn.* | F | 8 |
| | | | |
| 13 | *Ich kreise um Gott, um den uralten Turm,* | G | 11 |
| 14 | *und ich kreise jahrtausendlang;* | H | 8 |
| 15 | *und ich weiß nicht: bin ich ein Falke, ein Sturm* | G | 11 |
| 16 | *oder ein großer Gesang."* | H | 7 |

(Rilke: "Gedichte - Auswahl" ‹Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart 1959› pages 4 + 5)

Just as understanding a poem can occur at many different levels, so can the translation of it — does '*das Jahrhundert geht*' (line 1) really mean 'the century ends (actually) / is ending (effectively) / draws to a close (figuratively)' or all of these? does '*da*' transform this into 'now at the century's end (am Ende des Jahrhunderts)' or 'now at the turn of the century (an der Jahrhundertwende)'? There is clearly some symbolic reference in '*Jahrhundert*' itself, just as there is in *Blatt*' (line 2). The problem is to include but not necessarily reveal what for the translator lies behind Rilke's words. He might overcome this by imaginative (not fanciful) use of language inspired by his model. Keeping to the substance of the original and appealing to the emotions in the same way, the translator could first compose a 'shadow poem' of the same visible / audible shape and then justify its profound qualities by comparison with that of Rilke. Adopting this line of approach could suggest the following for each of the sections:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "I sense it now at the century's end. | A | 10 |
| 2 | I feel the parting breath of one great page | B | 10 |
| 3 | that God and thou and I together penned, | A | 10 |
| 4 | now turned in other hands, another age. | B | 10 |

*Supported by* : '*ich lebe grad*' has the ring of '*erleben*' in 'I feel / sense it (now that the century is at an end)'; there is little loss of meaning here and none of impact. The '*Wind*' may be the (after)effect of the page's turning or its 'parting breath' (spirit); an allusion to 'wind of change' is difficult to ignore. A stressed 'one', and not 'a' [great page], reinforces the symbol 'page = era'. Taking '*beschrieben*' as 'written on / filled with writing' suggests 'penned' as both accurate and poetically effective. The rhythmic balance of 'together' collects 'God-thou-I' and allows '-and-and-' to add emphasis. ' *in fremden Händen*' suggests that the page is turned by others taking up the story with the metaphor of the book, written, being written, and yet to be written, representing ages past, present and future. ......

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | We see the gleam of a new page clean and white, | C | 11 |
| 6 | on which all will be written down. | D | 8 |
| 7 | The secret forces quietly test their might | C | 11 |
| 8 | and at each other darkly frown. | D | 8 |

*Supported by* : Although 'gleam' is more of a '[schwacher] Schein' than '*Glanz*' (lustre, brightness, glow), it does imply *a gleam of hope* (Hoffnungsschimmer), which lies behind the first two lines. The unsullied shine of a new page is enhanced by 'clean and white'. 'alles kann werden' = everything is possible, but here '*werden*' points to the future (will happen); the analogy 'will be written down' is valid if 'all' retains a vague significance. '*die stillen Kräfte*' seems to refer to secret, dormant, unknown forces (of destiny or fate?) rather than to physical powers, but '*prüfen ihre Breite*', as a colourful way of saying 'test their strength in readiness — *flex their muscles*', allows 'might' for '*Breite*'. The idea that the forces are in competition with each other is only hinted at in '*sehen einander dunkel an*' and it could also mean that they are mutual in their grim intent, so here 'darkly frown' is preferred to 'glare'. ......

| 9 | I live my whole life in ever widening rings | E | 12 |
| 10 | which spread and over all things flow; | F | 8 |
| 11 | I may not see what the last one finally brings, | E | 12 |
| 12 | yet onward, hoping, I will go. | F | 8 |

*Supported by* : 'I live my whole life' combines the idea of living life to the full with that of not knowing any other life — both can be felt in '*ich lebe mein Leben*' — and has some of the emphasis felt in the German. The image of annular growth rings (in a tree trunk) lends support to 'ever widening [rings]' as a way of covering '*wachsenden*' in both the sense of '(living) growth' and '(growing) larger'. The meaning of '*sich ziehn über*' is to extend over (influence) and draw over (cover up?); this is behind the double translation in 'spread and over all things flow'. Underlying the meaning in '*vollbringen*' of 'to complete (the year's cycle)' is the idea of 'to accomplish (a year's work)', which draws on '*vielleicht*' to give rise to 'may not see what the last one brings'. The strong feeling of resolute faith is brought out in 'yet onward, hoping,' for '*aber versuchen*', which also captures some of its light-hearted optimism. ......

| 13 | I revolve around God, tower never aging; | G | 12 |
| 14 | I'll circle a millennium long, | H | 9 |
| 15 | knowing not: am I a falcon, a storm's raging, | G | 12 |
| 16 | or even a swelling song." | H | 7 |

*Supported by* : '*kreise*' (continuing the idea of circles and circular motion = years of life) takes on the meaning of being centred on, in 'I revolve around (God)', while '*Turm*' (as a tower of strength) reflects Luther's "*Ein feste Burg*". '*uralt-*' seems to contrast time immemorial with a continuous circling and this is resolved in 'never aging'. There is, however, a problem in the interpretation of '*ich kreise*' — I revolve, am revolving, (have been revolving), will (= determined to) revolve, shall (continue to) revolve — and this is avoided in 'I'll circle [a millennium long]' to link the past to the future. As the symbols '*Falke*', '*Sturm*' are unclear, they can only be translated as they are (storm's raging, is purely descriptive). The same descriptive line is extended to 'swelling song'

for 'großer Gesang'. Rilke leaves the final two lines for the reader to make of them what he will, as the absence of the question mark will testify; the translation does not inhibit this process in any way.

*(It will be noted that the translation, while closely following the rhyme and metre, does not hesitate to deviate slightly where this would present the contents in better light, as, for example, the change of rhyme scheme in verse one, the dropping elsewhere of a final weak syllable and an occasional change in metre. It is considered here that the contents are paramount and should be put over in a similar, not clinically identical way.)*

### Turning poetic sensitivity into poetic creativity

There are many instances where Rilke expresses his sentiments in such a way as to invite 'versions of the theme' in other languages. Although the translator's first commitment is to be the voice of the author, he may feel that more is required of him than simply being told what to say and how to say it. He will constantly seek his own way of expressing what he sees in a work and then try to justify the outcome as the declared intention of the author. It would be foolish to suggest that all the feeling, thought, emotion, artistry and character of a poem could be conveyed dispassionately by the 'science' of translating alone — there will always be something of the translator 'trying to get out'. This does not mean that he cannot remain true to the art of the author. Claude Held, writing on translating poetry, sums this up neatly :

"It has often been said — too often in my opinion — that poetry cannot be translated. It can, if we admit several conditions and 'restrictions': a translation (let it be prose or poetry) is never perfect — but is the original perfect? — and what do we mean by that word? It requires an extraordinary amount of time and energy to get as close as possible to the original. I should like to substitute the concept of *truth* for the concept of *perfection*: meaning by that a form of empathic approach, the translator not only appreciating the text for its beauty, poignancy, etc. but feeling and sharing the emotions involved, which does not exclude the rigour of an exact comprehension."

(article in Faucett: "Translation in Performance" <Bradford University papers, 1990>)

The following example will illustrate both the difficulties and opportunities of combining accuracy and art in re-creative translation to keep the unique character of the original, first in an invocation almost, followed by a philosphical summing up —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "*Herr : es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr groß.* | A (m) | 10 |
| 2 | *Leg deinen Schatten auf die Sonnenuhren,* | B (f) | 11 |
| 3 | *und auf den Fluren laß die Winde los.* | A (m) | 10 |
| 4 | *Befiehl den letzten Früchten voll zu sein;* | C (m) | 10 |
| 5 | *gib ihnen noch zwei südlichere Tage,* | D (f) | 11 |
| 6 | *dränge sie zur Vollendung hin und jage* | D (f) | 11 |
| 7 | *die letzte Süße in den schweren Wein.* | C (m) | 10 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | *Wer jetzt kein Haus hat, baut sich keines mehr.* | E (m) | 10 |
| 9 | *Wer jetzt allein ist, wird es lange bleiben,* | F (f) | 11 |
| 10 | *wird wachen,· lesen, lange Briefe schreiben* | F (f) | 11 |
| 11 | *und wird in den Alleen hin und her* | E (m) | 10 |
| 12 | *unruhig wandern, wenn die Blätter treiben."* | F (f) | 11 |

('Herbsttag' in Rilke: "Gedichte - Auswahl" <Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart 1959> page 15)

Keeping the character affects not only the treatment of the thematic content, but also the way in which the individual items of translation are approached. In line 1, for instance, it is important not only to show that the summer was full *(groß)* in every respect, but finally over; given a poetic ring, this could lead to 'past is the summer's glow'. The force of the meaning in *'Leg deine Schatten'* of line 2 is 'let the summer pass', but underlying the plea is the recognition that the season is passing by the will of God. To bring this out in close translation requires care — 'cast thy shadow over/on' suggests a bad influence, 'lay thy [shadowy] finger on' (picturing a sundial) has several meanings — and the idea of God's ordering of time may be best brought out, effectively and poetically, in 'on the sundials lay thy shadows longer'. Although *'laß ... los'* has a suggestion of 'unleash the [strong] winds [of autumn]' in line 3, it could be tempered to 'let thy breezes blow' if the final rhyming word carried the stress. This gives —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "Lord, the time has come. Past is summer's glow. | A (m) | 10 |
| 2 | On the sundials lay thy shadows longer | B (f) | 11 |
| 3 | and over meadows let thy breezes blow." | A (m) | 10 |

A strong emotive force is the feature of the second verse. In line 4 *'Befiehl'* has a double imperative strength of 'ordering someone to order [that -]'. In an initial position, 'Command (Lord) the last fruits to be -' works well if the weight of *'zu sein'* could be reproduced, and here a doubling up in '[to be] full and fine' may do this and also add a sense of squeezing out the last drops of summer fulness. In line 5 *'gib'* is not so much a command as a plea — 'grant them', covering both aspects, would also run poetically into 'two days more of sunshine's filling' (feminine rhyme) with 'more' doubling up as a comparative for *'südlichere [Tage]'* (= warmer). Cast in the mould of *'dränge sie zur Vollendung hin'* of line 6 is 'make them to ripen', where the archaic use 'to ripen' would give an air of invoking ethereal authority. Although *'und [jage]'* does not really represent a mid-line break, English could benefit from a pause to balance the line with a very effective into them instilling'. The final powerful line could indulge in the same lyrical, almost mellifluous style (cf. John Keats: "*Ode to Autumn*" ("A Book of English Poetry" <Penguin 1953> page 331) which may have been Rilke's model) to give —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Command the last fruits to be full and fine; | C (m) | 10 |
| 5 | grant them two days more of sunshine's filling, | D (f) | 11 |
| 6 | make them to ripen, into them instilling | D (f) | 11 |
| 7 | the final sweetness of a heavy wine. | C (m) | 10 |

The final verse imposes a greater strain on the translator in that he has now to include the words, convey their most likely meaning, and closely follow (as a poet) in the footsteps of Rilke. Assuming '*Haus* = Heim', he may well have to decide, for '*baut sich keines*' (line 8), whether the homeless are likely to be happy or destined to remain so, if he seeks to replace an awkward 'build' by a more meaningful 'own' or 'know', that is, establish roots. The real problem for the translator-poet, however, is to convey the prospect of loneliness of '*wird es lange bleiben*' (line 9) in an appealingly sad manner — with an eye to both the feminine rhyme and the mid-line pause (as in the original), instinct may suggest here 'Who alone is, lonely the life he's facing'. A substantial part of the next two lines must be directly translated; the active pursuits, 'he reads, writes, wanders ...', present little difficulty, but '*wachen*' in the sense of 'to stay awake, to spend sleepless hours, to be watching and waiting' resists a one-word solution. A feeling for the deeper meaning of the word and the mood of the poem may direct the translator intuitively towards 'wakeful hours tracing'. The problem with '*treiben*' (line 12) is far more acute. Not only is its *real meaning* difficult to condense into one single English word (drive, drift, chase, etc.), it is almost impossible to achieve in that one word all that Rilke does — the sad, harsh reality of being utterly forsaken and the exhilarating comfort of a windswept, leaf-strewn path. This image must be maintained, even at the expense of a little descriptive expansion in such as 'scudding leaves' - 'drifting, driving flurries' - 'swirling, racing, chasing'. This is vital to the success of the translation as all the aimless wandering, desolate solitude, and the consolation in the scudding leaves eddying and drifting in the wind, lies in that one final word, '*treiben*'. Clothing all of these considerations in the shape and quality of the Rilke poem could produce —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | He who has no house, will one never know. | E (m) | 10 |
| 9 | Who alone is, lonely the life he's facing; | F (f) | 11 |
| 10 | he reads, writes long letters, wakeful hours tracing, | F (f) | 11 |
| 11 | wanders, restless, on by-ways to and fro | E (m) | 10 |
| 12 | when scudding leaves drift by, the flurries chasing." | F (f) | 11 |

— in an attempt to reconcile the art of the poet and the keen eye of the translator in the spirit of the original.

Chapter IV *(Language exploited for effect)*

## To translate words or the author's way with words?

*In this chapter we consider the special difficulties for a translator dealing with an author who uses language, not simply as a means of narration or description, but as the very fabric of self-expression. Often actual material is so enmeshed by the text in verbal evocation that the reader can rarely take words at their face value. The translator, however, is expected to do so even though he may be dealing with a text which is tantalizingly vague, overdemanding or suggestively deficient. The example of Kafka (as an exercise in translation) is most interesting. One is often much too preoccupied with an all-pervading imagery and symbolic meaning to realize that the shape, form and sound of the language itself are part of the illusion. To what extent the language is contrived for the purpose, and to what extent it is just a 'natural' outcome of an author responding in a very sensitive way, may not be clear; the fact remains, however, that many features need to be carefully and properly represented in translation. It is probably only the would-be translator of Kafka who, because he is compelled to consider the text in depth, is in a position to appreciate what Kafka does with language. The writing itself contains many elusive features (elusive, in the sense that they may defy imitation) such as words infected by symbolism, blatant or not, metaphor, subtle or patently obvious, and alliteration, sometimes as a designed effect, sometimes simply in instinctive response to the 'inner ear'. Altogether, the language is a slave to the same wild imagination that inspires the subject matter, to be bent, moulded, even grammatically abused. The translator, therefore, can only do justice to Kafka if he does justice to his language.*

### What, for the translator, are the distinguishing features of Kafka's writing?

The nature of the material seems to dictate the style. In Kafka, one sentence elbows out another, one phrase elbows out another, and even one word can elbow out another. This leads to a peculiar kind of continuity where the theme in one phrase is very rarely allowed to go unexpanded in the next. Often it is not joined up in a literary polished way, but simply allowed to pile up. This singular lack of verbal ornament does not make translation easier for there are always implications in those words which are used. This means that the translator is particularly exposed — he may have too many answers and nowhere to put them all! To this extent a translator is challenged rather than assisted by Kafka's manner of writing, of which Wilhelm Emrich comments:

"... Das hervorragende Charakteristikum des Kafkaschen Stiles ist aber gerade die äußerste, kaum sonst in der Weltliteratur erreichte Klarheit und Prägnanz der Diktion, frei von jeder unbewältigt strömenden oder krankhaft gestauten Affekt-sprache."

(Nachwort zu Kafka: "Brief an den Vater" <Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt / Main 1987> page 77)

For a translator engaged in a complete work (or a continuous section of it) directness

of word and phrasing is certain to be lost in an overall complexity of hidden substance.

As the translator himself must work against a background of the same literary style, he should first identify its significant features. He can only do this by looking at the words and their arrangement. The difficulty is that Kafka's words seem to flit about assuming special aspects or evoking new ideas without appearing to do so in an entirely conscious manner. Although from a purely linguistic point of view, Kafka's style is to a great extent free of grammatical embellishment, there is in this directness itself an enigmatic quality that may not be easy to emulate. The aim, therefore, must be to let the author's words speak for themselves and at the same time be fully accountable for the result. The principle that the material shapes the style, which in turn dictates the language, is probably more true of Kafka than of most writers. In this case it appears to be quite ordinary with little in the way of involute sentences or a finely structured grammatical hierarchy, but a closer inspection reveals a mass of indeterminacies and ambiguities. The writing intentionally gives a 'dream-like' quality to the text and this dictates the language; however enigmatically they are expressed, Kafka's intentions can only be expressed in this way. Although it may not be the translator's brief to subject the themes to a psychoanalytical review, he must fully understand what he is working on. For Kafka there can be no 'neutral' translator, since he is subjectively involved by the very language used.

Looking first at the manner of writing on which to pattern the translation we may identify a number of positive features —

[a] a lack of conventional narrative style

[b] involvement of the reader through a 'first person standpoint' *(Einführung)*

[c] detachment of the reader by a 'third person recounting' of events *(Verfremdung)*
Becoming aware that these forces are in operation is an essential first step; their full incorporation in a replacement text might not be easy, an important factor, as these characteristics run through Kafka's work. A typical example will show how they might be sensitively introduced into a straightforward translation —

1 *"Diejenigen, ich gehöre zu ihnen, die schon einen kleinen gewöhnlichen Maulwurf*

2 *widerlich finden, wären wahrscheinlich vom Widerwillen getötet worden, wenn sie*

3 *den Riesenmaulwurf gesehen hätten, der vor einigen Jahren in der Nähe eines*

4 *kleinen Dorfes beobachtet worden ist, das dadurch eine gewisse vorübergehende*

5 *Berühmtheit erlangt hat."*

(["Der Dorfschullehrer"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" <Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/Main 1970> page 252)
This indicates that a factual account of events is to follow, that the reader is to take the author's word for it, that it is, after all, only a story. Can the translator create the same impression just by a careful choice of words and presentation?

The keynote here is the 'sensitive' approach — the translator might easily be tempted to add to items in order to stress those qualities he seeks to convey. He may, for example, see reader involvement in 'I, amongst them' or 'including myself' for *"ich*

*gehöre zu ihnen"* (line 1) where the original reads like an inserted remark 'and I'm one of them'; he may see reader detachment in such extraneous comments as "[*sie*] *wären ..... getötet worden"* (line 2) and build it into, for example: 'it would have been too much for them' etc. where Kafka's real intention seems to be, not that certain people would have succumbed, but to stress the utter repugnance of the creature. This would be felt more in '(they) would have died (if)'. It will be clear from this that the manner in which the material is presented is likely to prove the best way of accounting for the features outlined above, perhaps in:

"Those who find even a normal little mole loathsome, and I am one of them, would in all probability have been killed by sheer revulsion, had they but seen the giant mole observed a few years ago in the vicinity of a small village, which attained for a while a certain notoriety through it."

(although 'killed by' is not good English for 'died of revulsion', it does equate with the 'untranslatability' of the German)

This, as an opening sentence, finds the right mode by imposing a factual presentation on what is patently abstract material. Like Kafka it employs a mixture of alienation and involvement to let the reader experience both the writer's understanding of the subject matter and his own non-comprehension of it.

Moving on to the actual way of 'telling a story', one finds further features of Kafka's method. Amongst them are:

[d] the use of language as the only 'rational' means of comprehending irrationality; the actual words used to depict unbelievable(?) characters and events have quite normal and acceptable meanings

[e] reduction of the subject matter to abstraction and allegory by giving the factual language a 'non-real' character

[f] a way of endowing the preterite with a sense of uncertainty

Although the features pervade much of Kafka's writing, they are most effectively and characteristically employed when the subject matter itself is given a parable- or even dream-like quality. Here the language is at once both elusive and yet strangely precise, so much so that the translator is compelled to explain the material even though he may not understand it. He has to accept that —

"Das Werk Kafkas hat alle Moden und Interpretationsversuche siegreich überstanden... Im allgemeinen pflegt sich der Interpret jetzt an den Text zu halten und die Konsistenz seiner Werkdeutung aus genauer Betrachtung des niedergeschriebenen Wortes zu gewinnen."

(Hans Meyer: "Deutsche Literatur seit Thomas Mann" <Rowohlt Verlag, Hamburg 1967> page 18)

— and if he can carry over into translation the manner of this setting down, he will at least make his text meaningful to the same degree.

The following example shows how Kafka uses expressive, but normal, language in such a way as to make an abstract situation meaningful:

1    *"Ich war steif und kalt, ich war eine Brücke, über einem Abgrund lag ich. Diesseits*

2    *waren die Fußspitzen, jenseits die Hände eingebohrt, in brockelndem Lehm habe*

3    *ich mich festgebissen. Die Schöße meines Rockes wehten zu meinen Seiten. In*

4    *der Tiefe lärmte der eisige Forellenbach. Kein Tourist verirrte sich zu dieser*

5    *unwegsamen Höhe, die Brücke war in den Karten noch nicht eingezeichnet. —*

6    *So lag ich und wartete; ich mußte warten. Ohne einzustürzen kann keine einmal*

7    *errichtete Brücke aufhören, Brücke zu sein."*

([ "Die Brücke"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 284)

The effect is immediate — despite the abstract, allegorical nature of the passage the words are descriptively real (devoid of personification they could imaginatively describe a real bridge) and yet they are given a timeless, unreal quality. One gets the strange feeling of a detached past becoming a 'positive non-existence in the present'. The past tenses 'war, waren' etc. imply that the situation no longer pertains and yet they are used in a present context — '*ich war steif und kalt*' = 'I <u>am</u> stiff and cold at <u>that</u> time'; 'the bridge was as yet unmarked on the maps' = 'was later / is now marked'. The past is even projected into the future 'no tourist strayed / would stray / will ever stray to this impassable height' (the possibility ceases only when realized). Altogether it is the language used when re-living a dream.

The problems of finding direct replacements for the words are few indeed; using them factually in the way Kafka does yet giving the text an ethereal quality may prove to be more difficult. It is tempting, for instance, to suggest this by inversion in '..., a bridge was I, ...' for ", *ich war eine Brücke,*" (line 1) but this merely assigns to 'bridge' a metaphorical or symbolic rôle. There is no doubt that word arrangement could be used to advantage if sensitively applied — 'Stiff and cold I was, I was a bridge, over a chasm I lay' seems to combine the factual with the unreal. Similarly, the plain description of the bridge keyed into the crumbling clay must be given life — 'my hold I bit in the crumbling clay' for ".. *habe ich mich festgebissen*" (line 2). Perhaps more difficult to deal with is the fusion of first and third person, "*die Brücke war*" (line 5) and "*ich mußte warten*" (line 6) to run into the abstract, "*Brücke zu sein*" (line 7). A word-translation is perfectly possible but the whole should have the detached quality of the Kafka — 'unless it collapses' refers to one specific situation, 'without collapsing' lends a hypothetical tone to "*ohne einzustürzen*" (line 6). The enigmatic nature of the final sentence makes even a philosophical interpretation tentative; here the translation must suggest much by what it does not say — 'no bridge, once erected, ceases to be a bridge without collapse'.

The words of the translation must be both precise and effective yet set out in a way that reduces the factual description to an unreality as suggested here:

<u>"Stiff and cold I was, I was a bridge, over a chasm I lay. This side the tips of my</u> <u>feet, the other my hands were sunk in, my hold bitten into the crumbling clay. My</u> <u>coat-flaps fluttered at my sides. Down in the depths broiled the icy trout-beck. No</u>

tourist would stray to this impassable height. — So I lay and waited; I had to wait. No bridge, once erected, can stop being a bridge without collapsing."

This attempts to achieve in some measure the same level of a 'visual' representation of concepts, emotions and relationships.

If we look at the way in which Kafka actually exposes his ideas to the reader we could find the following features in his writing which need to be properly accounted for in any worthwhile translation —

[g] a use of a styled pattern to add a greater meaning to informative content

[h] an expounding of the text by a mere accumulation of detail in order to introduce further aspects

[i] a play on words, for example, a tendency to cancel out a statement almost before it is made as if to present both sides of an argument at once

To what extent these features derive from a highly refined system of writing or from a very individual expressive urge, is not certain; their effect, however, is clear, for as Walter Sokel is at pains to point out:

"Kafkas Ideal war es, das »Wort ganz mit sich zu erfüllen«.. Er wünschte sich die Fähigkeit zu einer Darstellung, »die von Wort zu Wort mit (seinem) Leben verbunden wäre«, einer Darstellung, die er an seine Brust ziehen und die ihn von seinem Platz hinreißen sollte."

(Walter Sokel: "Zur Sprachauffassung und Poetik Franz Kafkas", article in "Franz Kafka — Themen und Probleme" <Kleine Vandenhoeck-Reihe 1451, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen 1980> page 28)

One practical problem for the translator in dealing with this 'style' is that of how to reconcile a linguistic balance (literary effect) with informative balance (item priority). This is made more acute when the parts of the sentence operate in isolation yet serve to qualify or enlarge upon others.

The following example will show that, even where it is not difficult to put a meaning to individual phrases, it may not always be easy to do so in a way that does not detract from the combined effect. In this case the purpose of the writing style is to imply mental anguish —

1 "Einerseits wollte er nicht, daß sie komme, denn er hatte noch vieles zu fragen
2 und wollte auch nicht von Leni in diesem vertraulichen Gespräch mit dem Kauf-
3 mann angetroffen werden, anderseits aber ärgerte er sich darüber, daß sie trotz
4 seiner Anwesenheit, so lange beim Advokaten blieb, viel länger als zum Reichen
5 der Suppe nötig war."

(Kafka: "Der Prozeß" <Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt / Main 1971> page 129)

The actual dilemma can be fully brought home by a careful choice of words. In this a translator may intuitively ask himself these questions before making that choice:

line 1 — does not "wollte nicht (,daß sie komme)" contain an element of 'not really want' because of the reasons set out?

line 2 — does "wollte nicht" here imply that 'he had no wish to (be caught -)'? Could

'nor <u>indeed</u>' (= auch nicht) bring this out?

line 4 — is there not in "*Anwesenheit*" a little more than a mere presence? Gaining something from "*trotz*", would not 'in spite of his <u>being there</u>' emphasize a feeling of hurt?

line 5 — is there not in "*nötig*" something more than simple necessity? Does it imply 'ought to [stay]'? Could this be conveyed by '<u>just</u> to (take him his soup)'?

Although a translation may work quite well without these 'improvements', it cannot be denied that they do serve to good purpose if properly incorporated. Here the translator must consider the calculated effect each phrase has on the others; there is little doubt that it is the interaction with each additional piece of information which is responsible for the feeling of anguish induced by just reading the sentence. Making the phrases run in the same disturbed, indecisive, almost apprehensive way while letting the key words cited above provide a logical continuity could result in —

"<u>On the one hand, he didn't really want Leni to come in as he still had a lot to ask, nor indeed did he want to be caught by her in this intimate conversation with the salesman, on the other hand he was annoyed that, in spite of his being there, she was staying so long with the advocate, much longer than she needed just to take him his soup.</u>"

In this just minor adaptations have been made to individual phrases and even then only in such a way that the sum total of intended effect is not misrepresented.

Coming to the way in which Kafka actually writes down his thoughts, that is, his characteristic use of literary language, perhaps the most striking features are —

[ j ] <u>a proliferation of phrases, some little more than self-contained word pictures</u>

[ k ] <u>little reliance on grammatical unity</u>

[ l ] <u>a constant change of direction</u>

Although Kafka invites his readers to a kind of inward experience, his way of writing seems to deny any real subjective involvement. Not only do his words flit around in a most elusive way, but he also leaves the reader to conjure up a sort of continuity from the grammatically isolated items that make up a substantial part of his literary style. The translator may be lured into doing this for him by a refining of grammaticality in the language. This must be avoided and translation adapted to present the substance in the manner of the original. This can be all too deceptively easy when one is aware of the constant need to give 'meaning' to the whole, as the following example shows —

1  "*Hunde werden krank und Hundekrankheiten versteht doch eigentlich niemand.*

2  *Dann hockt dieses Tier in einem Winkel oder hinkt herum, winselt, hüstelt, würgt*

3  *an irgendeinem Schmerz, man umwickelt es mit einer Decke, pfeift ihm etwas*

4  *vor, schiebt ihm Milch hin, kurz, pflegt es in der Hoffnung, daß es sich, wie es ja*

5  *auch möglich ist, um ein vorübergehendes Leiden handelt, indessen aber kann es*

6  *eine ernsthafte, widerliche und ansteckende Krankheit sein.,,*

(["Blumfeld, ein Älterer Junggeselle"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 265)

The problem is to include all the words without suggesting a specific way of interpreting them. It is indeed tempting to round off the opening sentence, for example, in — 'Dogs become sick and yet no one really understands dog ailments' (= most do, but none perfectly) or to tidy up "... *in der Hoffnung, daß es sich, wie es ja auch möglich ist, um ... handelt"* (line 4) to make it flow in '... in the hope that, as may well be the case, it is a matter of -'. It would also be easy to overcome an awkward occurrence of "..., *indessen aber ...* " (line 5) by ', though it could after all be ...' to provide a logical flow of ideas. This, however, not only allows for a possible misinterpretation but also introduces an alien style — the object of the translation should not be to expound the mysteries of canine illness as lucidly as possible but to express Kafka's observations on the subject in his own way.

The sentence really consists of a sequence of little statements or remarks put together in a halting fashion that suggests a mixture of the factual and philosophical. This must also be the pattern of the translation. The reader himself must be allowed to form an overall impression from the way the bare, accurate information is provided by the translator. This could be done in the manner suggested here:

"Dogs go sick yet no one actually understands dog ailments. Then the animal mopes in a corner or limps around, whines, coughs a little, retches in one pain or another, you wrap him up in a blanket, whistle some call to him, put down milk for him, in short, nurse him in the hope that it is, after all, likely to be a matter of a passing affliction, but meanwhile it could be a serious, nasty, infectious illness."

This attempts to follow the layout and style of presentation. It deals with the material in much the same way that Kafka does, that is, in a series of detached observations.

### The language of Kafka in shape, sound and linguistic device

On reading any Kafka text it becomes immediately apparent that the words themselves are the very material of a full range of linguistic devices. It is not easy to determine whether these result from unconscious expression (natural element), sensitive response to language (artistic element) or the deliberate manipulation of language (skill element). In any case, the devices themselves, or at least, fully operating equivalents, should find their way into a translation if it is to be more than just an empty transcript. True, Katharina Reiß could well be right when she declares that the most important factors in conveying effect are likely to be found in the right choice of word and the use of a suitable style —

"Affektabhängige Determinanten wirken sich vorwiegend auf der lexikalischen und stilistischen, aber auch auf der grammatikalischen (sowohl morphologischen) Ebene der ausgangssprachlichen Version aus ... ob die sprachlichen Mittel, die im Original etwa Humor oder Ironie, Verachtung oder Sarkasmus, Erregtheit oder Emphase zum Ausdruck brachten, vom Übersetzer richtig erkannt, interpretiert und mit den Mitteln der Zielsprache äquivalent nachgestaltet wurden."

- notwithstanding that -

"Die innersprachlichen Instruktionen des Originals allein geben oft nicht genügend

Hinweise auf die Art der Affektivität."

(Reiß: "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik" <Hueber Verlag, München 1971> page 85)

With Kafka it may be necessary for the translator to deal with the very substance of the language in the text itself.

It is therefore proposed to look at Kafka's language in greater detail — in the first place, to discover what part this plays in the 'telling of the story', in the second place, to find ways of reproducing it in translation for what it is. Although there may be on many occasions an overlap in the grammatical devices employed by Kafka, most will be dealt with according to type. Within these types, however, there may be some special characteristic, the way the device features in the text, which could have some bearing on the quality of the translation. While it is recognized that it could prove to be difficult to transfer Kafka's actual words into a language not so readily receptive of a particular device (whether used consciously or otherwise), it may often be possible to bring about the same effect. Required in addition to language expertise is a blend of instinctive use and intuitive judgement and, of course, the real opportunity for proper application. The main areas covered will be those of syntax, pattern, alliteration and symbol / metaphor.

### Syntax

1. *Illogicality.*    Kafka's prose often features a switching from one tense to another, a lack of narrative continuity and sentences consisting solely of an 'onrush' of phrases. A typical example is the following sentence marked by a proliferation of grammatical subjects dispersed over the whole, a frequent disregard of conjunctions and culmination in an extended adjective. Here the translator's problem is not so much to alleviate the syntactic confusion as to incorporate it —

1    "*»Munter! « sagte er; klatscht in die Hände; der Wagen wird fortgerissen, wie*

2    *Holz in die Strömung; noch höre ich, wie die Tür meines Hauses unter dem An-*

3    *sturm des Knechtes birst und splittert, dann sind mir Augen und Ohren von einem*

4    *zu allen Sinnen gleichmäßig dringenden Sausen erfüllt.*"

([ "Ein Landarzt"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 125)

The fact that Kafka allows each phrase to 'tumble together' vividly without the need for conjunctions together with a constant switching of grammatical subject — 'er', 'der Wagen', 'ich', 'die Tür', 'meine Augen und Ohren' — renders narrative sequence quite unnecessary but introduces further complexities, especially in tense and the abstacted first person recounting of events.

Can we take "*klatscht*" (line 1) as a present for a descriptive past ('then he claps')? — although 'clapping [his hands] ' resolves the tense problem, would it destroy the effect of the disjunctive phrases by implying a concurrent action (eg. 'clapping his

hands [he sent them on their way]')? We may understand the sentence as ' »Munter!« sagte er und klaschte in die Hände; dann wurde der Wagen ...' yet respond to the way in which this is actually written down. The translator, therefore, has to include all the grammatical inconsistencies in a readable way. More problematic is the illogicality of "noch höre ich, wie die Tür ... birst und splittert" (line 2). Does the person still hear how the door [once] burst and splintered? – still hear [the sound of] the door bursting and splintering? We may try to solve the problem by using an infinitive 'still hear the door burst and splinter' ('still' refers to a present hearing but infers a past bursting and splintering) but the omission of 'wie' reduces the impact felt in the illogical – 'how it [at that time] bursts and splinters'.

While the adjectival phrase "zu allen Sinnen gleichmäßig dringenden (Sausen)" (line 4) can be accommodated in German in an attributive position, English is reluctant to do so. A change in position might enforce an explanation of "gleichmäßig dringend" (especially if 'Sausen' as 'roar' would assail the ears rather than the eyes). In German, the whole adjective has the quality of referring first to the sensation (as overpowering, numbing, piercing) and then to the source of it (a roaring). In this it avoids the logical implications of a 'roar which penetrates both eyes and ears'; it does, however, put a greater emphasis on 'gleichmäßig' leaving a translation to clarify that this is 'equally' rather than 'evenly'. In this case, the translator may have little option but to divorce 'Sausen' from any direct aural / visual meaning and make it refer to the 'mad, helter-skelter, whirlwind dash' itself. Moreover, this could allow 'sind ... erfüllt' to become 'assailed by' and take on some of the meaning of 'dringend'.

The effect of Kafka's syntax on the meaning in translation may be overcome, but obstacles it places in the way of successfully negotiating his mastery of an 'eternal present' are considerable. He often introduces a sort of syntactic illogicality to achieve an effect described by Hartmut Binder as:

"Der Erzähler ist —— das ist das Geheimnis der Wirkung —— nirgends dem Erzählten voraus, auch wenn er im Präteritum erzählt. Das Geschehen erzählt sich selber im Augeblick, in Paradox präteritaler Form."

(Hartmut Binder: "Kafka-Handbuch" <Alfred Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart 1979> Vol. II page 190)

The practical difficulties to be overcome in doing the same in English can clearly be seen in the following suggested translation of the quoted example —

""Lively now!" he said; claps his hands; the carriage is yanked away like driftwood caught in a current; I hear yet the door of my house burst and splinter under the onslaught of the groom, then my eyes and ears are assailed by a whirling equally penetrating to each of the senses."

A second example illustrates the strange way in which Kafka brings together little bits of information in an apparently haphazard fashion into a kind of collective unity. Here the problem is not one of tense but of resisting the temptation to put the segments into a logical grammatical perspective-——

1  *"Freilich, habe ich den Vorteil, in meinem Haus zu sein, alle Wege und Richtungen*

2  *genau zu kennen. Der Räuber kann sehr leicht mein Opfer werden und ein süß*

3  *schmeckendes."*

It would seem that the advantage is both in <u>being</u> in the house and in <u>knowing</u> all the intricate ways. An accurate rendering — 'to be in my house' / 'to know exactly all the ways' — would invite some sort of syntactic clarification, such as a transposition of the phrases or linking them by a suitable conjunction:

'to be in my house (it is to my advantage) to know all the trails and turnings ...'

'(I have the advantage) [both] to be in my house [and] to know all the trails ...'

Even the second sentence invites a 'rounding off' in, for example, —

'...can easily become my prey, and a tasty one [too / as well / to boot, etc.]'

The effect of this syntactic illogicality is to suggest to the translator ways of rendering the (deduced) contents in 'good English', and there are, indeed, many — using either 'being' or 'knowing' with 'in / of / by / from, etc.' is the most obvious. It would be more honest, however, to feature the ambiguity in translation, for instance in:

"<u>I have the advantage, it is true, to live in my house, to know precisely every run and turning. The predator can very easily become my prey, and a very tasty one.</u>"

Largely by intuition the translator supplies the natural breaks between each phrase to allow the reader himself to provide the missing connectives. By doing so, the meaning as well as the sense is neither grammatically determined nor excluded.

2. *Suggestiveness.*    With most writers it would be true to say that the surface of the text conceals a depth of thought and proposition; the writer is, as it were, seeking to convince the reader by letting him work things out for himself. Kafka is no exception. More than most other writers, however, he sees language both as a means of expression and a barrier for his ideas. The language of his texts will, as a result, frequently take on a kind of suggestiveness. This often manifests itself in the syntax of his sentences. He will habitually cancel out a statement almost before it is made to leave it no more than two right ways of seeing the point. The following example may appear to be full of uncertainty and vacillation, but it is in fact a complete destruction of the opposite viewpoint simply by exhausting all the arguments for it before subtly making a positive assertion. Much depends on the syntactic arrangement in:

1  *"Ich sage ja natürlich nicht, daß ich das, was ich bin, durch Deine Einwirkung*

2  *geworden bin. Das wäre sehr übertrieben (und ich neige sogar zu dieser Über-treibung)."*

Here we notice that 'of course I am not saying *(but he is)*' (line 1) is carried to even further extreme in 'and indeed I am inclined to this exaggeration *(acceptance tempered by dismissal)*' (line 2). Even '*neige*' is not clear, followed as it is by '*zu dieser Übertreibung*' — does he fall prone to exaggeration (ich neige zum Übertreiben)? — or

is he just inclined to accept this particular one? This highlights the major problem of including in translation all the suggestiveness of the original without responding to it. It would be difficult perhaps in a word-for-word translation, and such a one is entirely practical, to avoid English implying what is merely suggested in the German. One has only to look at the placing of 'of course' (for 'natürlich') to realize the danger —

'I do not say, of course, ... (the emphasis on the denial implies that he is doing)'

'Of course, I do not say (agree), ... (implies a strong possibility that this is so)'

'I do not, of course, say ... (implies that this is true but he refrains from saying so)'

The translator feels himself compelled by Kafka's syntax to enlist the help of some additional feature to suggest the right(!) interpretation — 'I'm not saying that ..', 'I won't say that ..', 'I am not going to say that ..', for example. The same situation occurs in the second sentence where 'und ich neige sogar zu ...' may well find a real equivalent in either 'and I am indeed inclined to this sort of exaggeration' or 'and I do indeed tend to exaggerate in this way'. It may be difficult to include any suggestion of 'that would be going much too far (and I am inclined even to this overstatement)'. It may not even be possible to be objectively neutral if one is to cover all that is in the text. Seeking neither to enlarge upon, nor neglect the facets of meaning enmeshed in the deliberately contrived structure of the text, could produce —

"I am not saying of course that, what I am, this I have become through your influence. That would be much overstated (and I am given even to this overstatement)."

— which does at least preserve some of the ambiguity of the original.

Kafka frequently inserts a phrase, sometimes to moderate, qualify, or even to cancel a statement, but more often to draw attention to it. Usually taking the form of an 'aside', such comments may rely on the concentrated effect of a single 'hinge' word. The translator will instinctively feel the pressure, both to give full weight to this and to get it just right. The following example, outwardly straightforward, illustrates this:

1   "Nun mußte die Schwester im Verein mit der Mutter auch kochen; allerdings
2   machte das nicht viel Mühe, denn man aß fast nichts."

(["Die Verwandlung"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 74)

Here 'allerdings' can be taken as 'though', that is, simply accepting and qualifying the initial statement; the explanation 'denn' in "denn man aß fast nichts" (line 2) would, however, seem to suggest other considerations (in contrast to 'indem' or 'weil' which would tend to exclude them). These could come to the surface in —

(a) 'true, (one ate almost nothing)' categorically, factually = 'indeed'

(b) 'it is true (one ate almost nothing)' concessively = 'admittedly'

(c) 'to be sure (one ate almost nothing)' in recognition = 'all the same'

(d) 'certainly (because one ate almost nothing)' agreeing, allowing = 'of course'

(e) 'indeed (as one ate almost nothing)' affirming, conceding, allowing = 'really'

(f) 'however (seeing that one ate almost nothing)' dismissive = 'at any rate'

Although the translator can, quite rightly, seek safety in the simple solution

of '(al)though that didn't amount to much, <u>for</u> we (one) ate almost nothing', he would intuitively recognize that the force of *'allerdings'*, introducing as it does a 'remark' by the author, is not fully brought out. To achieve this without building in doubtful leads, is problematic. A slight syntactic re-arrangement may suggest the proper meaning —

<u>"Now his sister also had to cook together with her mother; however, this didn't</u>

<u>really amount to much bother, as they ate next to nothing."</u>

The demands in terms of meaning and effect are thus met to a sufficient degree. Any liberties taken should meet with the approval of the text, that is, the intended sense may be suggested but only explicitly defined when it is clear in the text itself.

### Language patterns

1. *Balance* Many of Kafka's sentences have a kind of unity which they owe, not to 'readability', but to effective patterning. This is at its most intriguing when it appears as a blend of skilfully calculated design and sensitive response to language. There is no doubt that the shape of sentences can prove invaluable in giving the right impact and also in relating the actual words to the idea behind them. The following example has a balanced arrangement that takes every advantage of German word order in an effort to not only describe, but fit the image involved. It does so, moreover, by perfect balance. The sentence is set out almost like a mathematical equation —

1    *"Die Hände in den Hosentaschen, die Weinflasche auf dem Tisch, liege ich halb,*

2    *halb sitze ich im Schaukelstuhl und schaue aus dem Fenster."*

(["Ein Bericht für eine Akademie"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 154)

The mirror effect of '... *halb, halb* ...' produces a perfect symmetry in which even internal patterns are repeated in balance — '*Hände* ... *Hosentaschen* ◄|► *Schaukelstuhl* ... *schaue*'. The shape of the sentence can only serve here to give extra expression to the basic information contained in the words.

Can the translator achieve the same result? Is English so compliant? It is quite possible to hang English words onto the existing pattern, but somehow the English word order inhibits, rather than enhances, the effect. Bringing together 'I half lie, half sit' would not be seen as a mirror-line but only as a halting description of a particular posture. Even the separation provided by '<u>I</u> half lie, <u>I</u> half sit' seems unnatural, while 'half lying, half sitting' would suit the beginning of the sentence, thereby transferring the weight to '*schaue*'. Alternatives which could bring '(half), (half)' together, both as a mirror and a division, are awkward, weak or open to misinterpretation, for example, 'I lie almost, almost sit', which sees the position as an incomplete action and not as a halfway stage. Any solution on the lines of the German word order would require the conversion of 'half' to a true adverb (eg. 'partly') and, possibly, an inversion of subject ('I') in the concluding phrase. In these circumstances, the translator would intuitively compare the undoubted advantages of '... I half lie, half sit ...' against any benefit derived from the pattern in such as:

<u>"Hands in trouserpockets, winebottle on table, I lie partly, partly sit in the rocking-</u>

chair and gaze right out of the window."

In this second example balance is represented mainly by a 'juggling of parts' in order to play on one word and, by a balanced repetition, achieve a desired effect —

1  *"Aber Gregor fiel es gar nicht ein, irgend jemandem, und gar seiner Schwester*

2  *Angst machen zu wollen."*

([ "Die Verwandlung" ] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 95)

The repetition of 'gar' in the qualifying phrase "*und gar seiner Schwester*" serves to link it with the main phrase and also to both define and intensify it. The effect seems to be reciprocal in spite of the fact that the first 'gar' is absolute (= not at all), while the second implies some sort of comparison (least of all / far less).

Given that 'gar' is not available in English in the same way, can we preserve both the features of meaning and balance? Possibilities might include:

'would not dream of' = 'not least' - (gains from repetition of emphatic 'not' but the overall sense is diminished and meaning of the second 'not' could be ambiguous)

'in no way occurred to' = 'certainly not' - ('no' is strengthened by 'not')

'hadn't any idea of hurting anyone' = 'least of all' - (echoes 'any' only in a general and indefinite way; all the force is reserved for the second phrase)

All of these give an acceptable transfer of the sense and include only interpretations which can be detected in the German. Concentrating on the rôle of a repeated 'gar' in both comparison and intensification could suggest —

'not the least' = 'far less' - (which brings out another aspect of the second 'gar'- by allowing 'far [less]' = 'especially not')

It may be possible to keep to the balanced pattern and bring out the features referred to in the following way:

"Gregor, however, hadn't the least intention of frightening anyone at all, far less did he want to scare his sister."

2. *Fragmentation.*    Analysis reveals some of Kafka's sentences to be balanced, well rounded off and grammatically sound while others consist of a string of verbal images, often with totally unpredictable endings. It may be quite possible to follow the pattern (and words) closely; the danger is that in doing so the translation may not achieve the same degree of 'unity' as that managed by Kafka in German. Obviously a fragmented pattern of a sentence would have to be preserved but by a sensitive approach to each section the translator may yet instil something of the 'Kafka continuity' into it. The following example is made more difficult by having no fixed grammatical subject —

1  *"Es ist eine kleine Frau; von Nature aus recht schlank, ist sie doch stark*

2  *geschnürt; ich sehe sie immer im gleichen Kleid, es ist aus gelblich-grauem,*

3  *gewissermaßen holzfarbigem Stoff und ein wenig mit Troddeln oder knopfartigen*

4  *Behangen von gleicher Farbe versehen; sie ist immer ohne Hut, ihr stumpfblondes*

5  *Haar ist glatt und nicht unordentlich, aber sehr locker gehalten."*

([ "Eine kleine Frau" ] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 157)

Here the translator has to provide equivalents for each of the segments which are not only internally complete, but form part of a continuous description. Most of the effect comes indeed from a breaking up into separate word-pictures. In order to relate the grammatically isolated sections without inducing a flow not in the original, it may be necessary to make a few subtle changes to a translation made at first sight —

", *ist sie doch stark geschnürt;*" (line 1) as 'she is, for all that, tightly corseted'

"*gewissermaßen holzfarbigen Stoff*" (line 2) as 'of, as it were, beige-coloured material'

".. *glatt und nicht unordentlich;*" (line 4) as 'lank, not untidy, but loosely held'

To the basic task of relaying the meaning of the words is added that of giving them a quality of attracting the reader's interest purely by their particular arrangement —

"<u>A little woman she is; by nature quite slim, for all that, tightly corseted; I always</u> <u>picture her in the same frock, it is of yellowish grey, as it were, beige-coloured</u> <u>material, and lightly trimmed with tassels and matching stud-like adornments; she</u> <u>is always without a hat, her dullblond hair is lank, not untidy, but very loosely held.</u>"

A second example, with its string of phrases almost like afterthoughts, will show how the interrupted rhythm of the writing not only enhances description but also has the effect of imitating the tortuous imaginations of a troubled mind (important to the proper appreciation of the story). The curious blend of smoothness and jerkiness is quite deliberate and the translator will instinctively see the need to respond to this :

1 "*Einmal hatte die Mutter Gregors Zimmer einer großen Reinigung unterzogen,*
2 *die ihr nur nach Verbrauch einiger Kübel Wasser gelungen war ── die viele*
3 *Feuchtigkeit kränkte allerdings Gregor auch und er lag breit, verbittert und un-*
4 *beweglich auf dem Kanapee ── aber die Strafe blieb für die Mutter nicht aus.*"

(["Die Verwandlung"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 88)

The problem of relating the whole both grammatically and logically comes to a head in the last phrase which is almost like a comment inserted by the author — whether the mother was 'punished for her pains'? - 'only to be chastised for it'? - or 'duly got her deserts'? can only be subsequently cleared up; the translator, however, by imitating the fragmented language, can not only leave these questions open but also preserve the three points of view, Gregor's, the mother's and the author's in, for example —

"<u>Once Gregor's mother had subjected his room to a thorough cleaning, which she</u> <u>accomplished only after using several buckets of water ── this much dampness of</u> <u>course upset Gregor as well and he lay stretched out, resentful and motionless on</u> <u>the sofa — however, punishment for the mother was at hand.</u>"

3. *Imposed Patterns.* There are many instances in Kafka where the actual words and constructions adapt to the theme of the work — words are arranged to 'put things into context'. In translating such there is a danger, for, as Peter Newmark points out:

"... any passage that stresses the SL form can be perfectly explained and therefore

over-translated into the TL, though it will not have the naked impact of the original.

‘ ... and the effort to make word, sentence and text cohere requires continuous compromise and readjustment.”

To this may be added the simple truth that the translator can be so carried away by his own personal reaction to the original as to ignore the limitations on conveying this. If an original pattern is obvious and deliberate it must feature in translation, ideally by a sensitive as well as skilful adaptation. One cannot help but feel in the language pattern of the following example a sense of cringing, whining, self-pitying, indeed, an almost ‘Shylock-like’ mock humility:

1      *"Mein Geld haben fremde Leute; ihre Verhältnisse können mir nicht deutlich sein;*

2      *das Unglück, das sie treffen könnte, ahne ich nicht; wie könnte ich es abwehren!"*

All the effect comes from a well-recognized (Jewish) speech pattern imposed on the language of the text (which, although it has an abstracted first person form, is not in ‘direct speech’). To impose the same pattern on the English while keeping to the strict meanings of the words may not be straightforward, as the following will show —

*"Mein Geld haben fremde Leute"* (line 1)

‘Strangers have got my money’ – (meaning accurate, effect very weak)

‘What money I have is with strangers’ – (meaning slightly elaborated, effect improved)

‘My money, it’s in other people’s hands’ – (pattern emerging, effect further improved)

‘My money — others have it’ – (here the precise wording is both highly effective and
    has the the right blend of compliant resignation and affected long-suffering)

The callous indifference hinted at is far more difficult to put over in the same way —

*"das Unglück, das sie treffen könnte, ahne ich nicht"* (line 2)

‘what misfortune could strike them, I do not know’ – (reads like a statement of fact)

‘the misfortune they could meet with, I’ve no idea’ – (moaning and indifference run
    into an incredulity that hints perhaps at the excuses made for non-payment)

This, followed by ‘as if I could help it’ (for *"wie könnte ich es abwehren"*), gives —

“My money — others have it; their circumstances can’t be revealed to me; what misfortune they could meet with, I’ve no idea; as if I could help it!”

## Alliteration

Alliteration, deliberate or accidental, profound or superficial, obvious or subtle, is always difficult to reproduce in another language. Except where it forms an essential element, in poetry, for example, it may not be absolutely necessary to do so if other equally effective ways of achieving the same ends can be found. Kafka, however, uses the device as part of his ‘language’ and it may not always be possible or even advisable to avoid it (the criterion must be whether the purpose is better achieved by effective

*equivalent* means or ineffective *same* ones). Where it is obvious, the translator has no choice, where it is subtle, he is under pressure, where it is contrived, he is challenged, where it is unintentional, he is invited. Owing to the more pressing needs of meaning, alliteration is often denied the translator, and where it can be achieved, it is usually at some cost to the whole. The one consoling factor is that, if the device was contrived, the author probably had to make concessions (and so can the translator), if it was quite accidental, it may not be important. What is important, especially in the translation of literature, is that quality should not suffer and so alliteration must be looked at both for what it is and the chances of its (possibly similar) imitation.

1. *obvious or deliberate.* Both should be accounted for in a positive way even when imitation is difficult. The following example may not have been deliberate but it is at least obvious and, though not significant, its inclusion in translation could be an asset:

*"Kann nicht auch bei diesen vielen Verteilungen vieles verloren gehen?"*

(["Der Bau"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 363)

Here alliteration would seem to serve no other purpose than to be 'eye-catching'. The problem is that the device is ready made in German. Should a translator be reconciled to the fact that such tricks of language are virtually impossible to imitate and simply ignore them or do what he can? He might attempt to draw attention to the 'oddity' of the text only to realize that his own effort carries a degree of contrivance not felt in the original. He has to produce, therefore, something deliberate but not artificial. He might do so by modifying the text or even by milder alliterative combinations, such as 'allow a lot to get lost'. Modification of the text, however slight, must be sensitively carried out for the benefit from it is indeed small and the risk great. The translator's approach will be one of imitating what he safely can and indicating what he cannot —

"Couldn't this many mass-dispersals also mean that much might get missed?"

The following example has a certain quality which is unlikely to be conveyed in any other way but alliteration must not be allowed to inhibit proper understanding:

*" Von Zeit zu Zeit packte er mit den ganzen Kraft seines Körpers seinen Schädel*
*und schmetterte ihn seufzend in seine Handflächen, die auf den Steinen auflagen. "*

(["Gespräch mit dem Beter"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 186)

In this instance English offers quite a number of close matches. The danger is that the choice of words could be seen as second, or even third best, and there simply to supply alliteration — while 'sighing' works just as well as *'seufzend'* would 'slammed' really be preferred to 'thrust', or even 'dashed', for *'schmetterte'*? We may feel that 'skull', though accurate, may be excessive (in English usage) for *'Schädel'*, or that the action implied in *'schmettern'* does not reach here as far as 'smash', only to realize that the alliteration factor itself adds a different perspective. Kafka interweaves very effective items, such as *'Zeit - Zeit'* and *'Kraft - Körpers'*, into a string of 's' sounds and here the translator may be persuaded to make up any deficiency by overplaying in a brutal

fashion whatever opportunities he has, for example, 'seized' for *'packte'.* The answer could be to grasp opportunities rather than make them, possibly in —

"From time to time he seized his skull with the full force of his frame and slammed it, sighing, into the palms of his hands spread out on the stones."

Here alliteration is clearly marked but not intrusive and meaning not unduly distorted.

2. *subtle and suggestive.* Actual sounds of a language can be used to underline what the words simply say. There is no doubt that repetition, if patterned, will enhance the effect. The following example is noticeable for the subtle way it uses certain sounds to support the text and perhaps even more so for the way alliteration is both positively and naturally assumed by the reader even when it finally runs over into internal rhyme:

1  *" » Es sind schöne Strümpfe, sehen Sie « — sie streckte die Beine, zog die*

2  *Röcke bis zum Knie hinauf und sah sich selbst die Strümpfe an — » es sind*

3  *schöne Strümpfe, aber doch eigentlich zu fein und für mich nicht geeignet «"*

(Kafka: "Der Prozeß" ‹Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt / Main 1971› page 44)

The pronounced repetition of 's - sch' sounds is persuasive and seems to imitate the rustle of silk (silk exemplifies by its 'sheerness' the fine quality of the stockings and also the smoothing action in examining them). Sound and sequence are both important.

Although the alliteration is both concentrated — it runs to seven consecutive words in line i. — and finely tuned in such as *'und sah sich selbst die Strümpfe an '* (line 2), it does not attract attention simply as a trick of language. This could be due to the fact that the emphasized sounds are themselves suggestively suitable (even the repeated 'ei' in *'eigentlich - fein - geeignet'* of the final phrase creates an impression of 'ultra-fine, sheer'). It may also be due to the way in which each phrase fits naturally into the scheme; even repetition of a whole phrase, *'es sind schöne Strümpfe',* is not seen as overplaying, but as playing first on the pleasure of acceptance and then on the common sense of refusal. The translator is under a double stress — he has to get this just right (lovely? beautiful?) and preserve alliterative effect (super? smashing? smart?).

The translator will intuitively feel the pressure in that —

(a)  he has far fewer 'sh' sounds at his disposal and may feel compelled to redress the balance with inappropriate 'sm, st, sc, sk,' etc. and so create the impression of an overworked, artificially contrived alliteration in, for example, 'smart stockings'

(b)  in order to make up the quantity, he may have to spread the exercise over a much greater distance and thus reduce the effect or possibly exhaust it, for example, in 'simply so sheer and surely not strictly suitable for me' for *'eigentlich zu fein und für mich nicht geeignet'* (line 3)

(c)  he has to justify even the slightest deviations such as 'she slipped up her skirts' for *'sie zog ihre Röcke'* (line 1) or 'scrutinized' for *'sah auch selbst die Strümpfe an '* (line 2) in terms of both sense and subtle effect

Responding positively to the submerged purpose in the words and instinctively keeping to a commitment to translate and not explain or expound could result in:

" "They're lovely stockings, look" — she stretched out her legs, slid up her skirts as far as the knee and scrutinized the stockings herself — "they're lovely stockings, but too fine though and not really right for me"."

A real problem exists, however, when the device is so subtly used as to pass unnoticed by the general reader although he may well unconsciously respond to it. In a short story, "*Der Heizer*", Kafka uses alliteration suggestively to breathe life into the words. In a series of aspirates, sometimes bridging sentences, he creates the mental image of a stoker, hot and gasping for breath in:

"*, die Entscheidung in der Hand zu haben. Und trotzdem schien der Heizer nichts mehr für sich zu hoffen. Die Hände hielt er halb in dem Hosengürtel ...*"

([ "Der Heizer"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 52)

The same may prove to be difficult in English where the rôle of the key-word '*Heizer*' is usurped by 'stoker'. It is not a matter of pressing other possibilities into service (no doubt a little ingenuity could provide a number) for the effect is intended to be sensed rather than to surface simply as alliteration.

To this end a translation might concentrate on a run of short 'gasping' words featuring an aspirate or back vowel (a - o - u), but only if this can be introduced into the sentence(s) almost unnoticed and certainly not in conflict with textual meaning. In this way, 'appeared to' for '*schien*' could be considered, 'outcome' for '*Entscheidung*' may (possibly) be allowed by context, while 'however' for '*trotzdem*' could be excluded by language. It is true that the information contained in the text would function quite well without any sort of refining, but the translator is also dealing with the language in which it is conveyed. Making available what he intuitively feels from this within limits of word-accuracy requires calculated ingenuity tempered by a sensitive judgement. The very language employed demands that some initiative is taken; the risk of destroying Kafka's text by doing so must be minimized, perhaps in such as:

", to hold the outcome in his own hands. For all that, the stoker appeared to hope for nothing more for himself. His hands he held half hitched into the belt of his trousers ........"

where 'own' (line 1) and 'hitched' (line 2) merely add to the flow of the English text.

3. *unconscious* There is evidence to suggest that a substantial part of Kafka's writing is built around a strong response to the sound of words. He seems to have a preference for certain (initial) sounds and, perhaps unconsciously, he will bring them together to give the text further expression. In his short story, '*Der Bau*', for instance, we notice a disproportionate number of words beginning with, or featuring, the letter 'g'. These are not arranged in any eye-catching sequence, but fall together in small groups almost

as if by accident. More significantly, they follow, when extended over some distance, a natural, strangely compelling stress vaguely reminiscent of early alliterative verse. A translator may face practical problems in dealing with such as '*mit gelösten Gliedern*' or '*..ganz genau das gleiche Geräusch*', but at least he has the option of ignoring the alliteration with little or no loss; he may feel, however, that the overall effect, even if apparently unconscious, needs some sort of recognition.

To feature the same letter is almost certainly impossible; the sustained effort of using a single substitute is likely to be counter-productive. The translator may have to seek a way round the problem, not by futile efforts to copy the alliteration, but by concentrating on effect. The following will show how similar initial sounds might be arranged to this purpose when translating, for example:

1  "*, ich mache zwar einige Grabungen, aber nur aufs Geratewohl; natürlich ergibt*

2  *sich so nichts und die große Arbeit des Grabens und die noch größere des Zu-*

3  *schüttens und Ausgleichens ist vergeblich.*"

([ "Der Bau"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 375)

Here one may take only those liberties allowed by the text (and the context, but only where a fine decision must be made); these could extend as far as:

'I do indeed dig several ditches ...' for '*ich mache zwar einige Grabungen*' (line 1)

'next to nothing' for '*so nichts*' (line 2)

'enormous effort of excavating and even more of ...' for '*große Arbeit des Grabens und die noch größere*' (line 2)

'...of filling in and flattening out is fruitless' for '*des Zuschüttens und Ausgleichens ist vergeblich*' (line 3)

There are, of course, other possibilities — 'at random ... result in', etc. but it is important to combine each alliterative element in a pattern close to that of the original. A translator may not be able to reproduce a specific alliteration, but he can draw attention to it and perhaps match its effect. Suggested here would be —

" I do, indeed, dig several ditches, though only at random; naturally, next to nothing ensues and the enormous effort of excavating and even more so of filling in and flattening out is fruitless."

The fact that the alliteration covers different sounds helps to reduce an appearance of overstretched artificiality and allows each section to have a full impact. Overall, the level is about the same and the rhythm and layout of the German is clearly visible.

There are many occasions when Kafka may be just responding to a fortunate coincidence of language and, although a coming together of certain words affects the way a text is read, it may have little significance. Such items (taken from "Sämtliche Erzählungen") as '*wie er sofort den Stuhl beiseite schiebt*' (page 113), '*spannte schnell sein Schirmtuch auf*' (page 235), '*Zuerst dachte er, es sei die Trauer über den Zustand*

*seines Zimmers'* (page 89), would respond to a similar, almost casual, treatment in, for example, 'straightaway shoved his chair aside', 'hastily unfolded his umbrella' and 'at first he supposed it to be sadness about the state of his room'. It is essential in such cases that alliteration should be seen, if at all, as completely unconscious.

4. *impossible*.    A translator of Kafka will encounter a number of occasions where the device is *noticeable* but *not significant* and virtually *impossible* to repeat. He may take some comfort in the remarks of Wolfram Wilss:

> "Allerdings haben mißlungene Übersetzungen nur selten den internationalen Ruf eines Autors schmälern können. Ursache hierfür ist u.a. die relative Gleichgültigkeit eines vorwiegend an der Erzählhandlung interessierten Lesepublikums gegenüber der sprachlichen Integrität."

(Wilss: "Übersetzungswissenschaft - Probleme und Methoden" <Klett Verlag, Stuttgart 1977> page 280)

Sometimes the alliteration is so insistent that it cannot be completely ignored and the translator may feel that he must at least introduce a certain quality into his text.

The following example is typical of a section of text dominated by 'w' words:

1    *" Wer sich nur ein wenig Unbefangenheit gegenüber der Wissenschaft bewahrt hat*
2    *— und deren sind freilich wenige, denn die Kreise, welche die Wissenschaft zieht,*
3    *werden immer größer — wird, auch wann ......"*

([ "Forschungen eines Hundes"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 343)

Apart from exploiting the style of presentation there is little that can be done without disturbing the meaning of the words; even 'and these are few and far between' (line 2) or 'wider and wider' (line 3) are open to question. Having only the ready made items (eg. '— will, even when ...' (line 3) ) at his disposal, a translator can do no more than hint at any special quality there may be in Kafka's language in such as —

> "He who has hung on to only a little impartiality towards science — and these are few and far between, for the circles that science describes grow wider and wider — will, even when ......"

There are other occasions where Kafka's use of alliteration is *recognized* and *accepted* yet even more *impossible* to reproduce. His well-known attraction to the 'k' words — the 'Kafka, Käfer, Kaufmann, Käfig, Kette, Kirche, Kragen' syndrome — is a particular problem, as the following examples (taken from "Sämtliche Erzählungen") serve to show. While one can deal superficially with 'von der Katze Kopf und Krallen' (page 302) in 'from the cat (?) and claws', this only partially imitates sound and has no special significance (as would, for example, 'tooth and claw'). This is a considerable disadvantage where Kafka's words hold some deeper meaning. We can detect in such as ', die volle Kraft der Kinderfreude haben kann' (page 179), 'Kampf mit neuen Kräften' (page 182), 'Krummbeinig ... einen Kropf hat ... doch ein Kind, in diesem unförmigen Kopf sind doch Kindergedanken' (page 274), an underlying significance not conveyed by

a word-for-word translation. Here, there would be no purpose in introducing alliteration for its own sake (even where this is marginally possible – 'enormous energy of childish enjoyment'; 'fight with fresh forces'; 'bandy-legged, bulging neck and badly misshapen head') only to miss the point, namely, 'k' is a symbolic reference to Kafka himself.

### Symbol and metaphor

The problems of translating the hidden implications of a Kafka text are by no means confined to dealing with conventional symbolism and what may be called 'literal metaphor' (ie. where an outward form holds the key). The difficulties in coming to terms with Kafka's way of charging his words with an extra and often illusory meaning can be summed up in the words of Walter Sokel:

"Der Allegoriker bringt seinen konventionellen (theologischen, mythologischen oder dgl.) Übersetzungsmechanismus dadurch in Betrieb, daß er Begriffe durch Bilder ersetzt. Der echte Symbolist nimmt partem pro toto, d.h. er läßt einen Gegenstand durch einen anderen vertreten, weil dieser mit dem anderen kosubstantiell ist. Kafka tut weder das Eine noch das Andere. Was er in Bilder übersetzt, sind nicht Begriffe sondern Situationen."

(Walter Sokel "Über eine alltägliche Verwirrung" quoted in a footnote to page 77 of Günther Heinz: "Interpretationen zu Franz Kafka" <Klett Verlag, Stuttgart 1983)

Even if a translator can by <u>instinct</u> grasp and fully appreciate any hidden reference in Kafka's text, he is not allowed to pass it on by simple exposition. Any information that he acquires, he must carefully re-package in his own language and <u>intuitively</u> presage its eventual effect on the reader. Moreover, the choice of wrappings (words) may be severely restricted. This seems to leave no way out other than to exploit the incoming language in the same fashion. Given the protracted nature of the commitment (symbol for symbol, metaphor for metaphor), can this always be done?

In "*Ein Landarzt*" there is only one character mentioned by name, Rosa, the doctor's maid-servant, and she can be seen as a symbol of his repressed desires. In the following extract Kafka deliberately begins a sentence with 'Rosa' (ostensibly to mean the colour) in order to employ a capital letter in a cross reference to the name:

1  "*In seiner rechten Seite, in der Hüftengegend hat sich eine handtellergroße Wunde*
2  *aufgetan. Rosa, in vielen Schattierungen, dunkel in der Tiefe, hellwerdend zu den*
3  *Rändern, zartkörnig, mit ungleichmäßig sich aufsammelndem Blut, offen wie ein*
4  *Bergwerk obertags.*"

(["Ein Landarzt"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 127)

The need to give at least a hint of the symbolic connection and not simply translate 'Rosa' as 'pink' is clear from the way Kafka links a description of the wound (in many shades, dark in the depths, becoming lighter at the edges, ie. like a rose) to both the conventional symbol of love (rose) and to the personal one (Rosa). That Kafka is able to capitalize(!) on a fortunate coincidence of 'Rosa / rosa', while we are not, may prove

impossible to reconcile simply in terms of a one-to-one correspondence.

Even if we assume some licence in replacing, not transferring the name, the English 'Rose' would associate itself with the flower rather than the colour (which must be translated at all costs). '(R)rose-red / (R)rose-pink', as a noun + adjective, especially with an initial capital, would provide a link 'name-symbol-colour'; its natural successor in '(R)rosy' would be ideal were it not for the fact that the name variant is 'Rosie'. Casting further afield may suggest 'Rosied' (like Rosie/Rosa, blushing pink, resembling a rose and also red like an inflamed wound). Although some of the subtle effect is now replaced by a starker variety, this may be the best alternative to '(P)pink' where the translator is not only hindered by a vagary of language but also confounded by Kafka's 'underhanded' use of it. Something may be salvaged in —

"On his right side, in the region of the hip, a wound the size of a man's palm has opened up. Rosied, of many hues, dark at the centre, becoming lighter towards the edges, delicately grained with blood congealing in uneven patches, exposed like an outcrop mine to the light of day."

A second example will show how language may make the exact translation of a symbol word impossible while Kafka's use of it makes this absolutely essential. The opening sentence of "*Die Verwandlung*" is abrupt and unexpectedly shocking, ending as it does with the word 'Ungeziefer'. The creature itself is as yet unspecified but clearly intended as a symbol for something verminous, vile and repulsive (the word 'Ungeziefer' derives from MHG 'ungezivere' unclean, unacceptable for sacrifice) —

"*Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unnruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheueren Ungeziefer verwandelt.*"

([ "Die Verwandlung"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 56)

English uses the word 'vermin' either collectively or in the concept of an infestation. Defining a single creature, therefore, would require something along the lines of a giant beetle — but Kafka does not write 'Riesenkäfer'; nor does he indeed write 'Mistkäfer', a possible epithet for Gregor, 'Hirschkäfer', which fits a later description, 'Maikäfer', to refer to Gregor's tendency to hibernate, 'Wanze', alluding to his abhorrence of water, nor even 'Zecke', to scorn him as an infectious giant tick, parasite.

Somehow 'Ungeziefer' (singular / plural / collective in form and sense) does not transfer readily to 'vermin', although this is clearly the symbolic meaning intended. A further problem is that Kafka's repetitive use of the 'un-' words (both as negation and for emphasis) encourages not only an enormity of disbelief but also an utmost revulsion in a way not open to an English writer. Indeed, as a symbol for the (self?) detestation felt for Gregor, the word 'Ungeziefer' can only be treated as singularly concrete while the qualities it symbolizes — verminous, parasitic, repulsive — are abstact. Kurt Wolff, interestingly enough, refers to the story as "*die Wanzengeschichte*" (Nachwort "Sämtliche

Erzählungen" 397), while Hans Meyer prefers "*Riesenkäfer*" ("Literature seit Thomas Mann" page 19). Over and above this matter of correct interpretation, the incompatibility of two languages may prevent a perfect word-match for 'Ungeziefer'. Mainly by intuition, the translator could see a solution to the overriding problem of implied singularity in - 'a → some [kind of]' (*vermin*). Identifying the creature as such would also deal with the concealed metaphor of a Gregor who is spineless (literally invertebrate) and parasitic (as are all salesmen). This could give —

"As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreaming, he found himself transformed in his bed into some enormous vermin."

It may be no easier to deal with Kafka's literal metaphors. We may appreciate the term '*Luftmensch*' for a man who is not only living on air, ie. starving, but who is also a lofty artist with his head in the clouds in "*Hungerkünstler*" ("Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 163 ff.), and yet be unable to deal with it adequately. There can be little comfort in double-meaning for a translator who has to relate this both to language and to some point in reality, as, for example, the word '*Aufseher*' used in "*Der Prozeß*" to include the function 'to see' whereas the English 'Inspector / Supervisor' only have this aspect by derivation ('overlooker' belongs to a different register as the lower tier of factory management). This kind of concealed double-meaning rarely translates succinctly into English. Even a straightforward word replacement may bring its problems. The title of the short story "*Der Kübelreiter*" refers to a man whose coal-bucket is so empty that he uses it to sledge over the frozen ground to the coal-merchants. While the verb 'to bucket', skim along fast, exists in English (as does 'to scuttle' with the same meaning), it would not extend here to ' The Buckete(e)r' (nor, indeed, to 'The Scuttler') where it simply introduces ambiguity; it may give depth, however, to "The Bucket-rider".

Kafka frequently resorts to metaphor and simile to bridge the gap between the actual and the imagined. The word 'Bau' in "*Der Bau*" ("Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 359) has a double meaning both in German and in the context of the story (burrow - building / construction - layout), but it also has a more subtle allusion to the fact that 'ein Bau' can be the burrow of some timid creature or the earth, lair of a beast of prey. There seems to be little alternative to 'burrow' as 'sett; den; lair; etc.' are too definitive and 'earthwork' too vague. Descriptively, 'dug-out' comes close but lacks the sense of the well-constructed layout inherent in 'Bau', although the general feeling of security and defence is evident. In the story, Kafka deliberately plays on the idea of 'possessing a house' both as having a home (somewhere to live) and home ownership (concept related to human social structure). The effect can be seen in the following extract where it is extremely difficult to find the right word for 'Hausbesitz' —

1    "*Dort schlafe ich den süßen Schlaf des Friedens, des beruhigten Verlangens, des*

2    *erreichten Zieles des Hausbesitzes.*"

([" Der Bau"] "Sämtliche Erzählungen" page 361)

The lack of a single word to cover all aspects of 'Hausbesitz' could result in such as:

"There I sleep the sweet sleep of peace, of no longer yearning, of the fulfilled aim of having a place of my own."

　　　　Translation becomes even more problematic when there is a confusion of the metaphoric and the hidden symbolic reference; as Hartmut Binder remarks:

"Kafkas Metaphern lassen sich nicht eindeutig auslegen: »Alle Gleichnisse wollen eigentlich nur sagen, daß das Unfaßbare unfaßbar ist.« So heißt es in einem kurzen Text Kafkas."

　　　　　(Hartmut Binder: "Kafka-Handbuch, Band II" <Alfred Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart 1979> page 195)

The following example exploits a double meaning of 'Schrift' as a document / written notes / petition and as a Holy Scripture, but it does so in a very subtle way. Although the word 'Amtsgeheimnisse' relates directly to the situation described in the text, it works with 'Schrift' to suggest the highly secret nature of Holy Scriptures (the Talmud points to various levels of meaning which must be descernible in the written word; the Hebrew script is also difficult for the uninitiated without vowel signs. Kafka was well aware of this). Legal notes and case details are thus raised to the level of Scriptures and servants of the law to 'practitioners religiously guarding secret documents' in —

1　　*"Ein Verzeichnis dieser Prozesse habe ich hier in der Schublade — hierbei klopfte*

2　　*er an irgendeine Lade des Tisches — , die Schriften könne er leider nicht zeigen,*

3　　*da es sich um Amtsgeheimnisse handle."*

　　　　　("Der Prozeß" <Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt / Main 1971> page 84)

　　　　This is very difficult to bring out, even if we take 'Schrift' as 'testimony' — theologians sometimes refer to scriptures as 'inscripturated records' (ordinances, laws, statutes, commandments, all are words used in Psalm 119 in the sense of 'God's laws'). We could, of course, as in all cases, leave the 'finer points' to the wealth of literary criticism available about Kafka (explained or interpreted unhindered by the problems of language) and simply translate what is before our eyes —

" I have a list of these litigations here in the drawer — whereupon he tapped some compartment or other in the desk —, the writings, unfortunately, he couldn't show as this was a question of official secrets."

— only to realize that, with an author such as Kafka, one has to look beyond the words even to see what lies on the surface.

Chapter V *(Treats language 'despoiled' for effect)*

# The spoken language — dialect and non-standard

*Culture and a way of life manifests itself above all in a local language. One feature of this is that the wider use of language as a means of disseminating information is compressed into the narrower rôle of dynamic communication. This expressiveness is evident, not only in accumulated word-stock, but also in a word-manipulation relying on the grammaticality of the 'spoken word' — it means what it says and not what the rules define. There is little doubt that the users of a dialect (peculiar idiom) 'know' exactly what is intended, albeit intuitively, rather than by applying the 'established logic' of the national language. One can therefore broadly define a dialect as that which comprises an informal mutual intelligibility within the language, and language as that which allows a formal intelligibility between related languages. If we compare, for example, the degree of understanding between 'What fettle?' (Northumbrian), 'Hoo is thou?' (Yorkshire) or 'Hoe be 'ee gwine?' (Wiltshire), with that between, say, 'How are you?' and German 'Wie geht es Ihnen?' or Russian 'Как Вы поживаете?', we would find that understanding takes place primarily at language level, in the first case, based on a known (standard) language, and in the second case, on an acquired (national) one. If this is true, then there seems to be little purpose in translating a dialect into anything but standard language (making concessions to indicate that a 'dialect' is being treated) whenever a factual understanding of content is paramount. Literary translating, however, is not only charged with the optimum transfer of the substance, but also with ensuring a full and proper appreciation of it for what it is. The question here is not so much whether to render 'non-standard' by a similar form, but how to make it ring true for both what is written and what is read. Compelled to apply so much subjective judgement based on a familiarity combined with a linguistic knowledge, and with only guide lines for rules, the translator must rely for the most part on intuition to follow the author's directions.*

## The nature of dialect and its relevance in translation

Accepting that dialect is basically a colourful form of communication using a highly individual pattern of sounds, vocabulary and syntax loosely welded into a speech idiom, we must be careful to differentiate between its written and spoken forms. The latter, when occurring in literature as elaborate attempts at phonetic transcription, is of limited relevance for the translator. It is unlikely that his reader could appreciate, or indeed benefit from, the actual 'sound and shape' (even accurately represented) of a dialect other than his own — he would be far more interested in the functional rôle of non-standard items. In literature this is often simply to transpose the reader, to credit him with background and a little local knowledge or just to supply flavour. Discounting works expressly written to exploit the oddity of local idiom for the enjoyment of fellow users, dialect in literature depends for its credibility on the alien environment of the

target language. Translation of dialect can be at very best little more than an adaptation of it, transferred piecemeal or marked by convenient symbols in the target language.

No translator, however, can ignore the fact that a 'special piece of foreign language' must be treated in a special way, if only to preserve its identity. Dialect (in common with other 'deviations') should always be rendered in some form of dialect, be it actual, imitated or even constructed to be meaningful to the reader. The issue is one of 'how it is done' rather than 'why it is done'. It is important here to identify the three types likely to occur: [a] phonetic transcription to record the actual speech and idiom; [b] ingenious concoction of idiom and non-standard items to impart authenticity(!) and character; [c] regional variety of language, often native to the author, used as a highly suitable medium for the literary undertaking. All these require that the translator grasp the workings of the form as expressive communication and not merely as evidence of deviant language. He must be competent enough to be capable of, or able to find the means of, repeating the process in a similar 'dialect'. For this reason alone, translation of dialect is less likely to succeed into rather than from a foreign tongue, although in those cases where a high level of literary adaptability is demanded, a translator need only be receptive to the features of the dialect, not a 'tradesman' in it.

In general, this positive response to non-standard language may be part of a commitment to 'put oneself (and the reader) in context' — as Katharina Reiß has it:

"Der qualifizierte und landeskundlich beschlagene Übersetzer kann jedoch einen größtmöglichen Annäherungswert bei der Übersetzung erreichen, wenn er den Orts-bezug im Auge hält, d.h. wenn er nicht das Wort, sondern die Wirklichkeit dessen, was mit ihm bezeichnet wird, übersetzt."

(Reiß: "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik" <Hueber Verlag, München 1971> page 77)

In particular, it requires more than an adequate knowledge of the form in question; it involves the linguistic ability to give it a 'legitimacy' and sound judgement to give it a 'credibility'. This assumes, however, that dialect is no more than a normalized version of the standard language unique to a particular area and that the process of translating dialect by dialect simply requires a change of area. This would certainly apply where a literary dialect is used as a means of identification (it would be quite proper to replace the *identifying* features of Cockney in Shaw's "Pygmalion" with those of Berlinerisch) but not so much where dialect is a part of the actual telling of the tale. Furthermore, if carried to extreme, dialect into dialect is only completely intelligible to users of the target dialect and only marginally so to those peripherally exposed.

This could suggest that the translator's recourse to dialect is more of a means than a medium of achieving better understanding. Most certainly this is so in the case of the general reader. The translator's 'dialect' must then fulfil the same function as that of the original. In this way the loss of meaning only to be expected in translating

dialect (especially true of poetry) is minimized. One effective way of achieving this aim is to capitalize on a suitable dialect (or its image) in the target language. One needs to contrive a relationship to make the forms equate. The *modus operandi* seems to be:

| translator's understanding of original dialect | → | suitability of matching dialect | → | translator's familiarity with the dialect chosen | → | reader's grasp of the dialect of the translation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

The success of the operation depends ultimately on the reader's attitude towards the substitution, that is, whether it is seen as 'real' dialect or just some piece of a unified variety of language used to single out a special feature in the original.

## Translating dialect for its own sake as a literary form

The problems posed by each type of dialect occurrence referred to (phonetic transcription; enclosed idiom; literary medium) will vary, as indeed will their respective solutions. Predominantly of academic interest, the precisely recorded sounds of phonetic transcription may prove restrictive; enclosed idiom merely demonstrates the extent of deviation from a parent language and its use as a 'marker' may demand fine judgement; translating in dialect requires the exact replacement of one eccentric form by another. The first may involve linguistic expertise, the second, artistic (literary) skill, and the third, both of these. No type is exclusive, however, in its demands and all will respond only to informed judgement and, within loosely established guide lines, to an *intuitive* knowledge of 'what is best'. It may, indeed, serve the purpose of a work better if its dialect element is only selectively translated — Peter Newmark is more than practical when he advises against the linguistic replacement of one dialect by another:

"In my opinion there is no need to replace a coalminer's dialect in Zola with, say, a Welsh coalminer's dialect, and this would only be appropriate, if you yourself were completely at home in Welsh dialect. As a translator, your main job is to decide on the functions of the dialect. Usually, this will be: (a) to show a slang use of language; (b) to stress social class contrasts; and rarely (c) to indicate local cultural features."

(Newmark: "A Textbook of Translation" <Prentice Hall, London 1988> page 195)

This may well hold good for translation methodology but an equally strong case could also be made out for a 'real' dialect and not merely convenient markers.

So far the considerations have been: the reason for a dialect being used; the fact that it is there. A translator may well have to account for both. This could require evidence of a *credible dialect* and not merely a *literary version* of an extant one.

[a] Phonetic renderings

The following example, in which the author uses the conventional German alphabet to reproduce phonetically the sounds of a (genuine) dialect, would pose little difficulty in

its translation into standard English once the characters are correctly deciphered:

1    "*nua ka schmoez e xogt!*

2    *nua ka schmoez ned ....*

3    *reis s ausse dei hearz dei bluadex*

4    *und hau s owe iwa r a brucknglanda*"

⟶    "but no sentimentality, I said!

      just no sentimentality, then ....

      tear out that bleeding heart of yours

      and throw it away over the bridge parapet"

Here there is an immediate transfer of the intention behind the non-standard items into conventional English (schmoez [Schmalz = übertriebenes Gefühl] → *sentimentality*; hau [werf weg] → *throw away*; iwa [irgendwo über] → *over*). Accepting that this rendering, by employing a 'known language', is completely meaningful (perhaps more so than the original is to the general German reader!) and that the simple thoughts of the original could have been expressed in Hochdeutsch, the fact remains that the (genuine) dialect serves as an appropriate vehicle for the sentiments included. The question, therefore, is not only whether a dialect version could be more imitatively accurate but whether it could carry with it a better appreciation of the contents.

This makes a strong case for basing such an attempt on an actual dialect but without positively identifying it. Here the translator would have to proceed mainly by intuition but without losing sight of a linguistic substantiation for his findings. He will be aware that, (a) although the actual sounds of the German are difficult to imitate, the method of their marking is open to him, for example, 'sumweer ovver' (line 4); the precise dialect may be impossible to reproduce, but it does make use of idiom in a way that could be followed, for example, 'sentimentality → soppiness → *soft* [-soap]' (line 1) to equate with 'schmoez (Empfindsamkeit → Gefühlsduselei → Schmalz → schmoez)'; (b) although there is a dialectal preference for colloquialisms, these are used in the main for expressive effect — 'hau' (line 4) is not just 'werf[en]' in a different register, but has a meaning of its own (wegwerfen + loswerden, darauf verzichten, entbehren) which could come out equally well in '*chuck* (hurl + cast [away], throw [off], give up, be rid [of])'; (c)  apocopation indicates a manner of speech rather than a specific dialect and can be imitated here in such as '... *'n' chuck it ovver 't bridge*'.

This leaves the actual sound of the words in the ear of the reader. This is no major problem — '*Ah sed*' (I said) and perhaps '*norr'any*' (not any) would be accepted providing there is no great overlay of regional accent or usage. It is more problematic to point to a dialect and yet make it widely understood ('schmoez' is taken as dialect for 'Schmalz', widely understood as an expression for sentimentality). This may detract

from otherwise close idiomatic dialect renderings, such as 'Na, dunna tekk on so, Ah sed!'. To render the work in dialect involves linguistics; but only intuition determines how far one <u>must</u> go, and how far one <u>ought</u> to go. The exercise could result in:

> "<u>bu' no soft, Ah sed!</u>
> <u>just norr'any soft then ...</u>
> <u>rip out that bleedin' heart o' thine</u>
> <u>'n' chuck it summweer ovver 't bridge</u>"

This indicates sounds, hints at a certain dialect, is colloquial and yet intelligible.

### Preserving the flavour of a dialect

In some cases the actual spelling merely indicates that the work is in dialect and should be appreciated in this light; it is not intended as a phonetic guide (only an accomplished reader could make it sound genuine). The 'Mundart' which is at the very heart of this next example, is used to identify in the mind of the reader the provenance of the work and so give greater depth to the feelings expressed. It is clearly meant to be read 'in a certain way' as regional pronunciation is an integral part of the poem, but not necessarily by a 'local' speaker — the actual substance and sentiment could apply to any region. The poem itself is written 'in oberösterreichischer Mundart', but its wider application can be seen if we set it alongside *Hochdeutsch* —

| | "*Hoamat* | (Heimat |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *O, Hoamat, Hoamat,* | O Heimat, Heimat, |
| 2 | *Voll Frucht und Bloamat* | Voll Frucht und Blumen[blühte]' |
| 3 | *Voll Bründl und Bacherl,* | Voll Brunnen und Bächlein, |
| 4 | *Voll Hölzer und Schacherl,* | Voll große und kleine Wälder, |
| 5 | *sei mein, sei mein* | sei mein, sei mein |
| 6 | *in Load und Freud* | in Leid und Freud' |
| 7 | *wia i bin dein* | wie ich bin dein |
| 8 | *in Ewigkeit*" | in Ewigkeit) |

Franz Stelzhamer

("Aus dem Reich der Dichtung" <Österreichischer Bundesverlag, Wien 1960> page 11)

Of vital importance here would be to *create* a 'Mundart' to carry the poem. Two identifying features of the original could help here: the frequent use of regional terms (mostly typified in diminutives — '*Schacherl*', '*Bacherl*', '*Bründl*') and the strong tendency in (indicated) pronunciation towards diphthongization — 'o-a', 'i-a', (in 'Lo-ad' for 'Leid', 'wi-a' for 'wie'). A pseudo-Northumbrian accent could suggest itself here, especially if allied to such regional terms as 'beck', 'rill', 'burn' and a hint of the local *burr* (eg. 'burrn'). The dialect need not be positively located in a clearly defined area — specific markers like 'ye', 'yon' etc. should be avoided, although 'thine' (associated more with Yorkshire, Derbyshire, but generally Northern) would fit. The new language

must be identified not only with the concept of 'homeland', but also with the image of a particular (unspecified) one, perhaps to be brought out in 'where ...' and a dynamic rather than factual account of its nature, for example, 'full berry and bloom' (line 2).

It is assumed that the poem presents no problems of comprehension. Similarly, its replacement should be comprehensible in a 'dialect' which is convincingly familiar. It must not be degraded, however, by colloquialisms; *'in Load und Freud'* (line 7) may be seen as 'for good or ill' but it does not mean here 'through thick and thin' and the added flavour of 'in tears and laughter' can only detract from the serious nature of an intended 'in sorrow and joy'. If flavour is required, it should be found in the character of the substituted dialect as evidenced by a distinctive (non-standard) pronunciation and a highly selective use of 'local terms'. The following is suggested as a model:

"Hooamland

| | |
|---|---|
| O hooamland, my hooam, | |
| Full berry and blooam, | ('berry', 'bloom' as collective symbols) |
| Whorr burrn 'n babbling rill | ('burn', 'rill' as well-known regional terms) |
| In copse and thicket spill; | ('copse', 'thicket' to specify the woodland) |
| Be mine, be mine | 'be' stressed against a later 'bi') |
| in sorrow and joy | (adds poignant dramatic depth) |
| as I bi thine | |
| for evermore" | |

This indicates how it should be read, has a base in regional terms, and brings together the poet's description of his native region and the reader's concept of 'homeland'.

[b] Local idiom and non-standard items inserted for authentication

This comprises mainly an *imitated* local vernacular *diluted* with non-standard items recognizable as belonging to a particular area (and often to a social class within that area). This exposes a major contradiction: the insertions calculated to substantiate a work are, by their very nature, based on speech, but fashioned as literature. They are purposefully designed to highlight selected distinguishing features under the guise of 'verbatim' reportage. The author, who probably has already established a background, is frequently just adding local colour. Such texts do not use phonetic, but non-standard spelling and perverted grammar for what the reader recognizes, or willingly accepts, as local markers. The items themselves are often inconsistent and phonetically inaccurate. Nevertheless, they do fulfil the purpose of letting the character speak for himself.

As it is unlikely that inserted dialect speech would pose the same problems for the reader as an actual encounter with a genuine dialect speaker, a degree of literary artificiality will no doubt help in translation. This may be true even where the work is (geographically) specifically located in the original. Here a translator could mark the dialect by a carefully chosen similar non-standard language and play on associations in

the mind of the reader. An English reader with no prior contact with Friesland or the Friesian dialect, for example, would soon 'pick it up' in his reading, much in the same way as a Bavarian reader of the original might, the only difference being that the latter identifies the 'speech image' for what it is, the former accepts it for what it represents. This does not imply licence on the part of the translator. In the following extract, for example, he has to decide whether to imitate the dialect '*Meerswien*' as 'gunnipig' or to mark it by an incorrectly spelt but comprehensible 'guinneypig' —

1    "  *» Nä,« sagte der dicke Schlachtersohn, der nie etwas ausgeben mochte,  » ich*
2    *hev nix, hev mi güstern erst 'n Meerswienbock köft. «* "

(Theodor Storm: "Bötjer Basch" <Herman Laatzen Verlag, Hamburg 1947> page 20)

Moreover, a 'manner of speech' may not be sufficient to locate the area; this might be done by fixing significant sounds to suggest to the reader a matching dialect, as in:

"  "Naw," said the fat butcher's son, who never liked to spend a thing,  "Ah hevvn't got nowt, ah've jus' bowt misel' yisterdi a buck guinnipig". "

By nature a dialect is exclusive to one language and to some extent limited to one area (although dispersals and borrowings rule out strict delineation) and no dialect in another language can completely translate it. It may to some extent replace it if it functions in like ways. The limitations can be seen if we try to translate the Friesian of:

"  *» Smiet man keen Lüd dot!« sagte er und ging seiner Wege.* "

(from Theodor Storm: "Bötjer Basch")

— by the distinct Yorkshire of ' "Tha'll be killin' folk yet," he said and went on his way.' Although it would be perfectly reasonable to equate, for instance, Berlinerisch with London Cockney, could the actual characteristics of each (such as the former's well-known transposition of 'g - j' and the latter's frequent use of the glottal stop) be made to work as language if directly transferred? The opportunity rarely exists in reality for repeating in the other language '*Jestern hab' ik eine jute Jans jejessen, sagt der Gunge*' or 'I'm firsty muvver, put ke$^{\iota}$l on an' I'll just have a li$^{\iota}$l bit o' bread 'n bu$^{\iota}$er'; neither does the necessity to do so often emerge in literature — Shaw's "*Pygmalion*" would be just as effective in German featuring the functions, not the actual words, of Cockney.

Much depends on the depth of dialect penetration in a work and problems are reduced if sounds and idiom can be used to mark the text in a similar way, especially where  idiosyncrasies — such as the loss of 'h' ['ome, 'appy, 'e] or German 'ischt' for 'ist' — could be pressed into service. If a specific dialect (already referred to) is to be accurately indicated in direct speech, the best course may be to convert a significant amount of it consistently into a (matching) genuine dialect of the target language. The process will undoubtedly require a knowledge of dialectology, the manipulative skill of a wordsmith and the intuition of a literary translator. Going beyond a host of common factors such as German 'frug' for 'fragte' or English 'seed' for 'saw' etc. one would

have to deal in depth with, for example, *Kölnisch*: 'Zick [Zeit], Kruck [Kraut], Lück [Leute], Honk [Hund], Kenk [Kind]'; *Schwäbisch*: 'secht [sagt], isch [ist]', and even more confusing, 'därsch [du darfst], ka'sch [du kannst], semmer [sind wir], du woisch [du weißt]'; *Schlesisch*: 'mīr zain dǫu [wir sind da]'; and conversely, with a *Southern English*: 'cawst [cost], brarss [brass], awff [off]'; a *South Yorkshire*: 'coil oil [coal hole]', and in extreme cases, a dropping of an initial letter: ''es [yes], 'oman [woman], 'ear [year], 'esterday [yesterday]'. (Reference to such as Schwarz: "Die Deutschen Mundarten" <Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen 1950> and to Wakelin: "Discovering English Dialects" <Shire Publications, Aylesbury 1978> or other works will illustrate the enormity of the problem.)

Both the author and his translator must appeal to their readers, the one for verification, the other for acceptance; recognition might follow thus:

Source language                                        Target language

```
        DIALECT                                           Dialect
  genuine - selected      → → → → → → → →           real - exploited
        └─────────┐    ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐   ┌─────────┘
                  └────│ standard  │───────→│ standard  │───┘
                       └──────────┘        └──────────┘
     Material            comprehensible transfer           Material
  known to translator                                 meaningful to reader
```
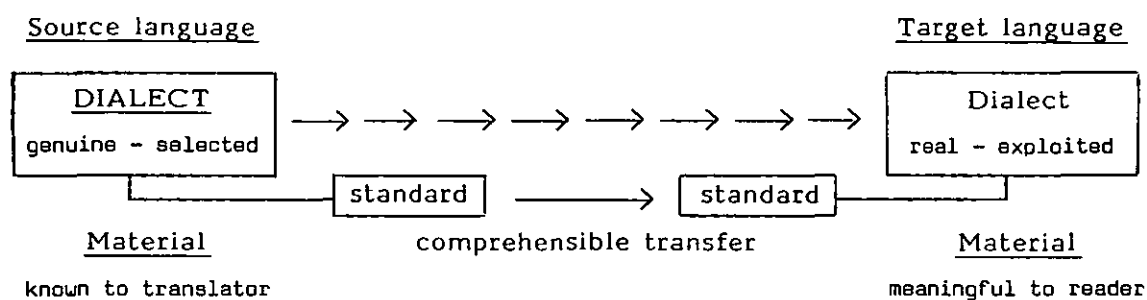
In this way it would be entirely practical for the translator (who may not be an expert dialectician) to pick out *well-known features* of an appropriate regional dialect and use these, not just as literary 'markers', but to corroborate the translated material. This further example from Theodor Storm: *"Bötjer Basch"* requires much more than simply marking as non-standard speech as the actual dialect adds to its literary effect —

1    " *» Vatter, « rief er: er zwang sich, daß er es nicht laut herausschrie — » du*

2    *hest de Breef nicht krägen! «. Endlich sprach der Alte langsam; » Da du mich*

3    *fragst, min Sön — ick heff din Breef nicht krägen «.*

(Theodor Storm: "Bötjer Basch" page 71)

The substituted dialect cannot be, nor need be, technically accurate (the original might indeed not be so, as it is intended as a 'family language' within a dialect), but it must be seen by the reader as situationally real. This could be achieved in a heavy overlay to identify the social level, and a simplified grammar marked by regional peculiarities —

" "Fayther," he called; he restrained himself from crying out, — "Thi hezzn't ivver got t' letter!" At last the old man said slowly, "Sin' thi asks mi, lad, Ah nivver got thi letter"."

This 'specific' dialect is not used just to imitate the text but as a suitable vehicle for it.

[c] Dialect used as the literary medium

The key points here are 1. *'within a language'*, which suggests that a general reader of a native dialect may also suffer a little loss in his proper understanding of it

2. *effective'*, which implies that the end result does not depend entirely upon complete correspondence. The translator may find consolation in the remarks of Eugene Nida:

"One must, of course, recognise the incommensurability of languages .... This means that absolute communication is impossible, but that is true not only between languages but also within a language.... (but concedes) that effective interlingual communication is always possible, despite seemingly enormous differences in linguistic structures and cultural features."

<div align="right">(Nida: "Science of Translation" &lt;in <em>'Language 45'</em> 1969&gt; page 483)</div>

Thus assured, a translator of a sample of dialect (it is unlikely that a long work would ever require to be translated in the same form) could concentrate on utilizing the best literary medium to enhance appreciation and enjoyment, much in the way the author did. In this way, eccentricity of language may itself prove to be a positive advantage, especially in the case of a 'true' dialect poem, sketch or cryptic observation.

Here a translation into a specific dialect could provide the best vehicle for the material. Working both out of, and into, a distorted(!) language will allow room for movement but only if the result is offered by the translator as real, considered by the reader as reliable, and accepted by a dialect speaker as proper, that is, what he would <u>naturally</u> use in the circumstances. In the light of this, the decision to employ dialect for dialect must be based on a desire to come closer to the original by bringing out all those aspects not covered so well by standard language (a wry sense of humour, etc.). Although the translator is likely to be influenced by an intuitive awareness of his own native dialect(s), it is essential that he is also conversant with the original one (he must know what he is dealing with) to ensure that the 'spirit' of the work, its *raison d'être*, remains intact. To achieve these ends, the incoming dialect must stand up in its own right and be as expressive, colourful or amusing as the writer's own.

If we look at the following poem, which uses 'heavy dialect', not just for local amusement, but also for a wider (German) appreciation, it may be possible to identify problem areas in translation and formulate means of resolution:

"*<u>Määnzer Deitsch</u>*

1    *Wannsde in de Schul' kimmst*
2    *Lernsde, wiesde sprichst,*
3    *Was du klääner Määnzer,*
4    *All for Fehler michst.*
5    *Übste dich im Hochdeitsch*
6    *Dann von acht bis ääns,*
7    *"wannsde", "wosde", "wiesde"*
8    *Secht mer nor in Määnz!*"

<div align="right">("Määnzer Deitsch" by Erna Klein-Lehman from a collection of dialect poems in "Gelacht, Gebabbelt und Gestrunzt" &lt;Verlag der Rheinhessischen Druckwerkstätte Alzay, 1976&gt; page 36)</div>

To translate the poem into standard English would be self-defeating as far more than word meaning is involved. The language medium used should be seen as <u>reminiscent of</u> and <u>type-identifiable</u> but <u>not strictly assignable to</u> an English dialect area best serving to characterize the poem's typified 'German'. A Birmingham 'Brummy' or a Liverpool 'scouse', for example, could be moulded for the purpose, but whatever model is chosen, it must be able to carry the humour and be itself a marked example of eccentricity.

This *dialect* should reveal imitated 'local' peculiarities based on features in the original. These would have to cover [a] an enclitic second person familiar pronoun '-de' [b] 'mer' for 'wir' [c] an exaggerated shift of vowel sounds [d] a racy colloquial style. The extent to which these features can be targeted in translation depends mainly on finding (or providing) a dialect with a natural capacity to absorb them —

[a] 'whentha' fits well for '*wannsde*' (line 1) but '*übste*' (line 5) is a problem; it may respond better to 'them'll larn thi' and covering the feature in a different way.

[b] the use of 'us' for 'we' is not uncommon in dialect and suggests 'sez us' for '*secht mer*' (line 8), especially as this combines an ungrammatical 'says' for 'say'.

[c] the model used must be 'notoriously' marked by this phenomenon, as evident, for example, in Midlands 'weer' [where], Yorkshire 'mayt' [meat], Geordie 'booat' [boat], Lancashire 'reet' [right], or Scottish 'hoos' [house].

[d] the translator must have a substantial (practical) knowledge of the models used and be *convincingly* fluent in his own artificial creation.

It is important that the constructed dialect is not a 'mish-mash' of oddities but a <u>compound of features</u> such as those, for example, which mark the speech of the Midlands (epecially Staffordshire / Derbyshire). This gives a base to take on supportive elements, perhaps Northern or even a type of urban speech (the poem is offered as a 'true' sample of a town's dialect!), where these could point to distinctive items such as a phonetically marked 'skewl' as an alternative to 'skool' [school] (line 6). Here a translator may intuitively feel that rhyming in (a correct dialect) 'rewl' ['- as a rule'] might point to a technical correctness rather than to a skittish and colloquial style. A further consideration might be that 'skool - rool' could themselves be seen as a subtle pointer to an attempt at 'proper English' by a conscious dialect speaker! Therefore —

| "**Määnzer Deitsch** (Mainzer Deutsch) | *(better untranslated)* |
|---|---|
| <u>Whentha goes t' skewl lad</u> | *('skewl' in parent's normal speech)* |
| <u>Them'll larn thi how tha spakes;</u> | *('them' is more expressive than 'they' for* |
| <u>What sez a little Mainz chap</u> | *those people = teachers)* |
| <u>Is full of all mistakes.</u> | *('all' = every kind of mistake)* |
| <u>Tha'll try t' say it proper, then,</u> | *('tha'll try' = you will just have to try)* |
| <u>From eight till one int' skool,</u> | *('skool' is affected pronunciation to show* |
| <u>But "whentha", "weertha", "howtha"</u> | *awareness of dialect in the usual 'skewl')* |
| <u>Sez us as a rool.</u>" | *('sez us' is emphatic for 'so we say')* |

Like the original, this exploits an *exaggerated authenticity* of the dialect medium, the general reader's reaction to it, and the way it is cleverly held in (comic) ridicule.

### Dialect in story telling — an extra dimension or enhancement?

It is far more problematic to translate the dialect and idiom of a passage if these are inextricably bound up in the subject matter. Fortunately, most dialect works are in fact literary pieces exploiting a special communicative penetration rather than transcriptions of local speech (they just use a standard language, normalized as it were, for special speakers). Idiosyncratic usage, local terminology and deviant pronunciation are added, often with innate judgement, to give the material much more 'bite' and the language further dimension. The writer, counting on an instinctive response in his reader, either assumes a knowledge of the dialect used or makes his version of it 'interestingly familiar'. In both cases he lets the language speak for itself. The translator is compelled to do the same. Unlike the author, who knows that his writing will be seen as typical of a carefully defined, well attested dialect area, the translator must manufacture his own base, perhaps in a literary version of a genuine (substitute) dialect. As a result, he is exposed to the expert criticism of a dialect reader. He has a much better chance of success, however, if the original dialect material has an element of self-mockery.

The following short extracts from a collection of amusing 'observations of life' written in Mecklenburger speech will show this. They are in the manner of light, witty conversation pieces aimed at a supposed fellow user of the dialect and so a translator is compelled, not only to replace a dialect by a dialect, but also to use this to imitate the manner of telling. They are literary works to the extent that they are not merely samples of verbatim dialect reportage. They would have an estimated readership within the Plattdeutsch area in general (and would be understood, if not fully appreciated, far more widely). They concentrate on discursive wit and use phonetics to this end; they are consistently faithful to the medium once the reader 'tunes in' to the heavily marked dialect. *"Zuckerkauken un Kœm"* (Hinstdorf Verlag, Rostock 1982> has this example:

1 *"Ick set mit einen Ollen an'n Disch, de villicht bet tau de Rente noch so an vier,*
2 *fiew Johr nah hard. He wier mit de Fähr röwerkamen un hard nu all dat tweite*
3 *Bier bi'n Wickel. Twüschen seine Fäut stünn 'ne Aktentasch ut Ledder. So lang*
4 *he tau Arbeit gahn wier, is se well bi em west. Se wier in ehr Ledder genauso*
5 *runzelig wie he in't Gesicht. Wat anners as 'n poor Schieben Brot, manchmal 'n*
6 *Appel un 'n Buddel mit Kaffee is dor nie in west."*

(Klaus Meyer: "Zuckerkauken un Kœm" page 61)

—— a perfect marriage of conversational medium and professionally distorted language.

The dialect itself could find a ready equivalent in that of Greater London; the use of Cockney would certainly tie up with the pronounced 'Berlinerisch' of the original. Much, however, would depend on the translator's practical experience of the chosen

dialect for the full potential of the translation can only be realized if this is aimed, as is the original, at a 'specialist' reader. This could mean the overlooking of no irrefutable idiomatic or dialect device while seeking every opportunity, however vulnerable, for a characteristic expressiveness. The fact that this is exhaustively applied and extreme in the original does not mean that its writer is one such as Ernst Schwarz had in mind —

"Die wenigsten Mundartdichter verstehen es, wirklich in der Mundart zu denken und aus ihr heraus zu dichten. Sie denken gewöhnlich hochdeutsch und setzen dann in die Mundart um, gebrauchen dabei oft unbewußt Wendungen, die das Volk nicht kennt, unmundartlichen Satzbau, mundartfremde Wörter."

(Schwarz: "Die Deutschen Mundarten" <Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1950> page 15)

It does mean that the translator must <u>define</u> his chosen dialect (perhaps by a judicious use of the *shibboleth*, a test word or distinguishing trait), much in the same way that the writer does, and <u>use</u> it for the benefit of other speakers.

<u>Linguistic features</u>: to note here is that '*Ick set an'n Disch*' (line 1) is not 'I sit down' but an imitated irregular past used expressively (as a Midlands dialect speaker might say 'I sut at ...' for 'I sat / was sitting at') and a confusion of accusative-dative common to Berlin ('I sat down' would be '*Ick sett mi* ...', as recorded later). This can be indicated in, for example, a descriptive present 'I sits at' (= I sat / was sitting) or by an ungrammatical 'I'm sat at' (= was seated at). Similarly, the strange past participle in '*He wier ... röwerkamen*' (line 2) seems to be an attempt to add to the simple 'he had come over' by saying that 'he was (there) and prior to that, he came over', where '*röwerkamen*' would imply 1. that he reported this fact; 2. that others came too; 3. an awareness of the standard form 'war gekommen' (this curious mixture of compound and simple past appears later in '*dat ick so dorvon afkamen wier*') while '*wier*' could well be an unconscious use of the subjunctive (rare in dialect) for an expected 'worr'. It may be possible to mark all this by a similar misuse — 'he woz come over', 'he 'ad bin come over', or even 'he were come over on 't ferry'.

The words '*so lang er tau Arbeit gahn wier*' (line 4) strictly mean 'had gone' but effectively 'had been going'; the speaker (author) is far more open-ended in that he stresses a concurrency rather than a present or past conclusion of a time span. This can be brought out in 's' long as he's gone to work' (completed act in a continuous present context) where 'gone' is used colloquially to mean 'engaged/occupied in'. '.. *is dor nie in west*' (line 6) is to be noted for its idiomatic separation of 'dar-in' and attraction of the preposition 'in' to the past participle 'west' [gewesen] (shortened form of Low German 'gewest') to give a typical spoken dialect character. This could be hinted at in 'not nuffin' 'cept ... is ivver bin in there' (ungrammatical 'is' for 'has' adds to effect).

<u>Idiomatic pointers</u>: The translator will have to rely on mannerisms and usage associated with the 'stand-in' dialect but these should not be used simply as stylistic improvements. Such items as 'nah, this 'ere ..', 'I'm dahn t' pub, see, 'n in comes this

geezer', 'straight up, I tells ya', 'cor blimey', may well occur in Cockney conversation, but they will be instantly recognized elsewhere as <u>only</u> typifying that dialect (and not a 'substitute' Berlinerisch). There is an obvious conflict, then, between the genuine use of such to mark a real dialect and an equally genuine <u>literary</u> use for the benefit of the reader. This latter requires that such idiomatic extremes serve as 'labels' for similar significant features in the original. One such feature is the contraction of preposition and article, for example, in '*an'n Disch*', '*bi'n Wickel*' and '*in't Gesicht*', with similar shortenings elsewhere, '*as 'n poor Schieben*', '*un 'n Buddel*', etc. Here the translator may be denied the use of a like feature in Northern English dialects (he must preserve uniformity at all costs) but he can point to a Cockney equivalent, that of 'swallowing words' together in fluent speech — ''arf pin' bi⌐er' [half a pint of bitter]. This comes out to a great extent in ' 'e'd be p'raps abaht four'five year t' go ... ' for '*de villicht bet tau ... noch so an vier, fiew Johr nah hard*' (lines 1-2). A frequent dropping of an initial 'h' could be made even more effective by the Cockney habit of hypercorrection — 'sometimes a happle' for '*manchmal 'n Appel*' (lines 5-6).

The choice is: whether to render the 'German' fluently and convincingly in a clearly defined dialect (in which case it simply parades the translator's ability to do so before a native audience), or whether to use a matching dialect selectively to bring out those salient features of it which contribute to the telling of the story. Whereas the first option is based on practical knowledge, the second relies on intuitive skill, as in:

"I woz sat wiv this owd geezer at a table; 'e'd be p'raps abaht four'five year t' go to 'is pension. 'E is come over on the ferry an' woz givvin 'is second beer wot for. Atween 'is feet stan's a briefcase orl ov levver. Mebbe f'r as long as 'e 'as gone to work it 'ad bin wiv 'im. In its levver it woz just as wrinkled as 'e woz in 'is face. Not nuffin 'cept a couple o' slices o' bread, sometimes a happle, an' a bo' le o' corffee is ivver bin in there, like as not."

Although this picks out and exaggerates characteristic features by heavily marking them in the text, it does represent a genuine manner of speaking by adopting a 'dialect logic' by saying, for instance, ' 'e is come over' to give the idea of reported speech, and ' 'e woz givvin' as expressive description. In this respect dialect can be far more analytical than the standard language.

### The rôle of dialect in a 'character study'

The next extract adapts a wittily descriptive narrative style to the needs of the dialect. While the previous passage was intended as reportage, here one feels that the writer himself is speaking through the medium of dialect (although the passage is in the first person, it is really a character study by story telling). The language used is more subtle, and after a fashion somewhat contrived (although the dialect is genuine) to bring out the comic aspects of the narrative. The author 'invites' a native Berliner to tell us about a journey with his two young boys on a packed 'U'Bahn:

1    *"Obtwors nu nich miehr Lüüd rinnerkamen wiern, würd de Druck von de Körpers*

2    *düller. Up dat anner Enn harden sick woll noch 'n poor rinnerwörgt.*

3        *Sullten de Lüüd vör mien Kinner würklich nich seihn hebben? Argerlich*

4    *versöchten se, miene Händ aftauschütteln, de den Mann in 'n Rücken un 'ne*

5    *Fru pienlich in den Buuk drückten. Äwer ick dacht nich doran, de Händ dor*

6    *wegtaunähmen. Dat Woll von de Kinner wier mi wichtiger.*

7        *As de Druck düller würd, bet dorhen hard de Fru mien Hand woll noch gor*

8    *nich spürt, bölkte se los: "Nu is aba jenuch! Nehmse endlich Ihre Hand da weg!""*

Dialect is used here mainly to underline the comic situation. The very pattern of speech sounds adds character to the narrative by playing heavily on the local idiom. An English reader may not apply any phonetic criteria but would respond to a manner of speaking.

It is probably true that the above could be translated into a standard English artfully disfigured to retain the comic effect (thus solving the problem of a transfer of location), but by doing so the translator would destroy any real base for imaginative humour, for, as is generally recognized:

" Das Hauptkennzeichen der Mundart gegenüber der Schriftsprache ist ihre unbeschwerte Schöpferkraft."
                                                                    .

It is not so important, then, to isolate every feature of the dialect simply in order to match it linguistically, as it is to know and appreciate each turn of phrase, each quirk of language, so that something similar can be extracted in replacement. This could require that the pairing dialect be clearly defined and exclusive, but above all, have an obvious homogenous entity. To fulfil these conditions —

[1]   it will have to be urban in character, that is, reflect the fast life-style and ready wit of the inner-city dweller  (eg. *'harden sick noch 'poor rinnerwörgt'*)

[2]   it will have to carry an 'accent' capable of being shown simply and clearly within the text  (eg. *'nich miehr Lüüd'; 'äwer ick dacht gor nich doran'*)

[3]   it will have to allow comic exploitation such as a play on dialect and an affected (sarcastic) formality  (eg. *'Nu ist aba jenuch! Nehmse endlich Ihre Hand da weg!'*)

[4]   it will have to show a leaning towards expressive terms  (eg. *'bölkte se los'*)

The question here is not just one of item correspondence, but of ensuring that the result really belongs to the projected dialect idiom, for example, *'Dat Woll von de Kinner'* (line 6) is a natural part of the speaker's dialect, whereas 'health, safety and well-being' is not. The translation must 'grow' out of its language. It should give the reader a *feeling* that the events are being related by a (possibly Cockney) expatriate living in Berlin. In this, an intuitive judgement of what the reader would both expect and accept, is far more helpful than an expert knowledge of the dialect to be employed, albeit in a literary fashion. This is partly behind Eugene Nida's assertion:

"[that] it may seem inconceivable that too much knowledge can be a deterrent to effective translation. In fact, it is actually not the excess of knowledge but the incapacity for imagination which hampers translators at this point."

(E.A.Nida: "Theory and Practice of Translation" &lt;E.V.Brill, Leiden 1974&gt; page 99)

This leads to meeting the needs of the dialect in an imaginatively convincing way —

[1] 'the odd bod 'ad crammed 'isself in' (or, 'one or two 'd squeezed th'selves in' ?)

[2] 'I din' fink attorl abaht takin' me 'ands away' (or, 'it didn't enter mi 'ead ...' ?)

[3] 'Eh! Wotchit! Take ya mitt orff, IF YOU PLEASE!' (or, ' 'nuff o' that, now!' ?)

[4] 'she bawls aht' (or, 'she hollahs' ?)

— while still keeping to the framework of the 'dialect' in vocabulary, idiom and sound.

The conversational style is a key factor — it makes the contents amusing and is funny in itself. For the translator to achieve both only through a credible dialect is a problem. The following is offered as one solution:

"Tho' no more folks woz comin' in, the crush from the bodies woz gettin' madder. Up ' uvver end the odd bod 'ad prob'ly crammed 'isself in.

Wot if th' crahd ain't wotchin' aht for me nippers? In a bovver, they tries to shake orff me 'ands wot woz diggin' one ov the blokes in 'is back 'n a woman 'ard in the belly. But I din' fink attorl abaht takin' me 'ands away. The state ov the nippers woz more impor'ant to me.

As the crush got madder — 'til nah the woman 'as likely not even noticed me 'and — she bawls aht, "Eh! 'nuff o' that! Take ya mitt orff, IF - YOU - PLEASE!" "

The dialect is a fair copy in a literary sense yet misses no opportunity for exaggeration.

### The problem of an essential feature lacking in the incoming dialect

A literally accurate translation is impossible if there is a complete lack of a similar feature in any 'matching dialect', or indeed, in its parent language. The next example highlights the problem of fully covering an essential feature where no direct equivalent is at hand. Of particular note here is the effect of the diminutive :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | "Ach, Mudder, geb merr e Penning | |
| 2 | Watt willsde mit em Penning? | |
| 3 | Nääreische kaafe | (= Nädelchen &lt;singular&gt;) |
| 4 | Watt willsde mit em Nääreische? | |
| 5 | Seggelsche nähe | (= Säckchen &lt;singular&gt;) |
| 6 | Watt willsde mirrem Seggelsche? | |
| 7 | Stääncher reffe | (= Steinchen &lt;plural&gt;) |
| 8 | Watt willsde mit de Stääncher? | |
| 9 | Väälcher wäreffe | (= Vögelchen &lt;plural&gt;) |
| | ... " | |

(W.Diener: "Hunsrücker Wörterbuch" &lt;Dr. Martin Sändig, Niederwalluf 1971&gt; page 182)

If we discount an occasional '-y' and a rare '-ling', standard English has lost its taste for the attached diminutive. The situation in its dialects is little better; even when these are terms of endearment (laddie, lassie, etc.) they are seldom applied to non-persons. In contrast German readily makes use of this facility in many contexts and its dialects, in common with Dutch, positively thrive on them. While it is true that the English 'little' can be built into most situations in such a way as to invoke a certain response, for instance, in such as 'she broke her little heart (cried profusely)' to invite compassion, apart from occasional dialect or poetic use (eg. 'bothy', a cottage; 'a wee hoosie', a nice little house) and a few standardized forms like 'kiddy, pussy, walkies', a similar usage is not freely available. As this feature is such an important factor in the appeal of the poem, its proper treatment is crucial to the success of its translation. Artificially adding '-y, -ies' clearly will not work — 'penny' already has a like ending, 'needle' will not admit one, 'baggy' takes on a new meaning, and 'stonies' is used in some areas (Midlands) for a kind of marbles (taws), while 'birdies' strays out of context. A German use of the diminutive, either in a general form (-chen, -lein) or in dialect variations (-tje, -sche, -chin, -skin, -ixin, -erl, -l, -li, -la, etc.) is thus denied.

A translator might in this case seek a way round the problem linguistically by a significant placing of a word such as 'lil' ' or 'li'l ' [little] to embrace the idea of endearment, or intuitively by sensing the effectiveness of a word 'tacked on' to bring out some (positive) characteristic of the noun to which it refers, for example, a 'little needle bright'. Although this latter may not qualify as strict translation, it could prove to be much closer to the purpose of the original — the poem is a "Kinderreim" based on the principle of an ever-recurring sequence of lines; the theme is not the destruction of birds but the earning and spending of a penny to scare them away from the fields. Here one would have to consider the rhythmic balance if the added word is to be at all effective and with it the danger of stressing a word not in the original, for example, 'needle (so) bright', 'sack (so) fine'.

The actual words of the poem are used more to indicate regional pronunciation than to demonstrate idiom — 'wäreffe' (line 9) is a variant of 'werfen' (throw) and not a colloquial 'schmeißen' for 'schleudern' (chuck) — so a specific dialect match is not vital (the provenance of the original could be stated in a footnote). The only condition is that the translation should be noticeably marked as having a 'broad, country dialect'. This could be achieved simply by supplying such as 'gether' for 'gather' in the same way that 'reffe' (line 7) stands in for 'raffe'. To be effective a translation might have to be further overlaid with a clear indication of off-standard pronunciation, especially where this fits the nature of the work; excesses such as 'throo' for 'throw' or 'seck' for 'sack' might confuse where 'li'l buurds' does not, simply because it fits the mood (an expression such as 'little birdies' is entirely predictable). Although the non-standard forms must be seen as belonging to the poem, re-writing the material along the same lines in a convenient dialect, is an easy option to be avoided.

Two alternative suggestions are given here, each supported by a measure of dialect idiom, the one relying on a language solution, that is, a correct choice of words, while the other is based on an intuition for what would be most effective:

| | |
|---|---|
| "Oh Moother, gi' us a penny | "Oh, Muther, gimme a penny, do |
| What'll tha do wi' the penny? | What'll tha do wi' the penny? |
| Ah'd buy a li'l naydle | Buy a li'l bodkin bright |
| What'll tha do wi' the naydle? | What'll tha do wi' a bodkin bright? |
| Ah'd sew a li'l bag | Sew a li'l sack so fine |
| What'll tha do wi' the bag? | What'll tha do wi' a sack so fine? |
| Gether li'l staans | Pack it wi' pebbles so sma' |
| What'll tha do wi' t' staans? | What'll tha do wi' the pebbles so sma'? |
| Ah'd thraw 'm at buurds " | Chuck 'em at li'l birdies so puurdy " |

Both reflect the substance and character of the original, yet neither translates into a specific dialect despite the considerable pressure to do so.

### The practical problems posed when dialect must be closely translated as dialect

The following example of 'homespun philosophy' is so rooted in the language in which it is expressed, that it would be entirely inappropriate to translate it into any form but dialect. This itself must look convincingly genuine (to a general reader), be of the same type (here, a very expressive, heavily accented, broad country type) and able to withstand any loss of meaning in translation. The extract is given here, first, as it is, then converted to standard German, and finally in standard English:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "*Dees, was mr sen,* | Dies, was wir sind, | *(That, which we are,* |
| *dees paßt ons net,* | dies paßt uns nicht, | *this doesn't suit us,* |
| *Dees, was mr hen,* | Dies, was wir haben, | *That, which we have,* |
| *dees langt ons net,* | dies langt uns nicht, | *this doesn't satisfy us,* |
| *Dees, was mr tean,* | Dies, was wir tun, | *That, which we do,* |
| *dees liegt ons net.*" | dies liegt uns nicht. | *this is not in our line.)* |

(Friedrich Vogt: "En sich nei' horcha" [Schwäbisch] <Verlag Karl Knödler, Reutlingen 1975> page 18)

Although he is under obligation to replace 'like with like', a translator can very rarely approach the task as an expert and practised purveyor of the dialect he is offering. In the above instance he will have to aim, therefore, at a non-specialist readership and place some of the onus of determining a precise origin on the reader himself.

The aim is then to give the 'dialect' an identity. Sure in the knowledge that, whatever the result, it will not be taken for 'Swabian', the translator must 'tune in' to an English dialect offering scope for both sound effect and a quaint usage to carry the country wisdom. This will only appear credible in the 'real thing' and the translator will have to vouch for his offering in terms of dialect evidence in the shape of actual features. It is not, however, just a matter of mechanically applying information gleaned

from English dialects. Seeking an equivalent for '*mr sen*' (line 1), a translator may well be assured that the dialect form of the verb 'to be' is commonly —

| Devon | South West | East Yorkshire |
|---|---|---|
| we'm; you'm; they'm; | we be; you be; they be; | we is; you is; they is; |

(F.C.Stork: "Learning about Linguistics" \<Hutchinson Educational Ltd., London 1974\> page 160)

— but he will also realize that '*mr*' is a variant of '*wir*' and that '*sen*' merely shows the effect of the spoken (dialect) 'accent', and therefore excluding a match on purely linguistic grounds. He will also be well aware that 'we'm', the most promising, would normally only take this form if followed by a predicate — 'what we'm be' is altogether much too unconvincing. As '*mr*' for '*wir*' (in various forms common to many German dialects) plays such a key rôle, it must be represented by an equally strong feature. The widespread (English) dialect misuse of 'us' for 'we' may provide the best answer. This could even be reinforced by an ungrammatical '[whatever] us is; us has; us does;', a fairly common practice with this type of construction.

The task now is to give the translation an identity, something that the reader can equate with an unfamiliar, yet very real way of speaking. The following suggestion is based on the West-Country dialect though it claims nothing more than a convenient exploitation of it:

| | |
|---|---|
| "Whatsomdever us be. | *(dialect seeking to express 'what-so-ever at all')* |
| us doan' suits; | |
| Whatsomdever us has, | *(object → subject pronoun is common before verb)* |
| us wants more; | *(third person form of verb after 'us' for 'we')* |
| Whatsomdever us does, | |
| 'tis not f'r we." | *(the inversion of subject → object pronoun is especially common in an emphatic position)* |

This is sufficiently non-commital in that it shows the features in a way that they can be understood for what they are, maintains a balance of idiom and 'accent', has the same level of dialect penetration and, above all, conveys the philosophical content.

### Can a loss of 'native understanding' be avoided in dialect translation?

Dialect provides facets of meaning not always available in standard language. It is widely accepted that translation from is the only realistic approach when dealing with dialect. Even here the translator faces the obstacle of having an impaired 'native understanding' of the original; in addition there is the very real danger that the 'from' translator becomes so intent on expertly(!) exploiting every opportunity in the dialect he knows (perhaps too well!), his own , that some aspects of the original become lost, insufficiently represented or distorted. This could suggest that the 'into' translator is not automatically at a disadvantage, seeing that he knows the source material well and will instinctively eschew excesses in his translation of it for fear of 'saying the wrong

thing'. This collaboration of <u>native</u> understanding and <u>intuitively reasoned</u> re-telling could work, even under the stringent conditions of a dialect → → dialect translation. A short example of Yorkshire-Lancashire colloquial speech will illustrate this:

1    "*Tuthri young chaps i' th' neighbourhood o' Yelley had tried hard t' get thick*

2    *wi' Rachel but hoo'd ne'er nowt t' say to 'em.*"

<div align="center">(J.T.Clegg: "Sketches and Rhymes in Rochdale Dialect" &lt;Aldine Press, 1895&gt; page 6)</div>

The translator would realize that '*tuthri*' (two or three) is vaguely 'ein paar' and that '*hoo*' is a regional form of 'she' not fully brought out in a German 'se' for 'sie'. He would also know that in '*to get thick wi*' ... ' there was a little more than 'sich mit ihr anfreunden / ihr nachlaufen / ihr den Hof machen / an sie schmiegen / dicke Freunde werden / sich mit ihr anknüpfen'. Fully conscious that some sort of colloquial expression is required, he might look at such as 'mit ihr verknallen' (roughly equivalent to the Northern 'click with [her]') only to find that even this may not convey what he himself feels in '*t' get thick wi'*'. He would certainly know that '*hoo'd ne'er nowt t' say to 'em*' implies much more than a lack of conversation (as a negative response to the advances). In trying to convey fully and accurately what he senses and detects in the <u>native</u> original, the translator is more likely to make a critical judgement of the translation possibilities available. He may well decide (a) that ' 'n poor' could work better than 'twee, drie' for '*tuthri*'; (b) that 'se' is sufficiently distanced from 'sie' to mark it for the rare '*hoo*'; (c) that 'verknüppt z' wer'n' (sich verknüpfen) covers 'Annäherungen machen + sich befreundet sein + für sie schwärmen + sich gut mit ihr vertragen + verknallt zu werden'; (d) that, although Westphalian 'küren', Rippuarian 'kallen', Saxon 'snacken', Hessian 'schwätzen' etc. refer to 'say, talk' as an activity, each of them implies 'to have time for [friendly, lighthearted banter]'.

Secure in a proper understanding of the material, the translator can now <u>find</u> and not <u>make</u> a way of putting this into dialect form, perhaps aided by some guiding example. Although the translation suggested here is based broadly on North Western dialects, some attempt has been made to give it a more locally defined character —

<u>" 'n poor Bue ut Gemään Yelley harre versöcht mit Rachel verknüppt z' wer'n,</u> <u>awwer se hett nemme mit hunn nix zu schnacke'.</u> "

<div align="center">('Bue' – Buben; 'Gemään' – Gemeinde, Nachbarschaft: 'schnacken' – Schmus[*] schwätzen)</div>

As a working equivalent this might give a German reader some idea of the character and expressiveness of the Rochdale dialect — more than that, it cannot do.

<div align="right">([*] Schmus = leeres Gerede)</div>

## Translating 'oddities' linguistically and intuitively

*According to Benjamin Whorf* "... each man is his own authority on the process by which he formulates and communicates." (Whorf: "Language, Thought and Reality" <Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1966> page 207). *No writer, however, will fashion an item unless he is reasonably confident that it would 'mean' something to someone somewhere somehow. By this we are implying that people choose words and use them differently for different purposes in different contexts but rely on a cohesive bond of language. In literature, this 'personalized' language often emerges as an inverted image or a refraction of the normal to achieve the desired effect. It may even be based on distortion or mockery of convention. There is, in spite of this, a positive side and literature would be sadly lacking if denied all invention and innovation. The translation of 'idiosyncratic' language (quite distinct from 'idiolect', a particular manner or quirk of style) is problematic in that few attested equivalents exist or it may have to operate under different 'rules' from the ones shaping the original. The translator is compelled to explore the plasticity of his own language. He must always account for any particular item and not simply 'opt out' by offering straightforward renderings. Although he may be there primarily to 'say what the text says', he can rarely confine himself to the task of legitimizing the unusual or the extreme, rather, he is expected to explain by example. This is no easy commission, as we shall see by looking at some samples of 'oddly' expressive language.*

The previous section concentrated on individual language (dialect) as a means of dynamic expression, the present one will examine the effect of 'individualizing' the standard language. This inquiry is founded on the principle that true meaning, that is, a meaning embodied in any unique appearance of a word or term, is only <u>fully</u> realized by some degree of manipulation. The fact that some writers are both imaginative and adept in this art of manipulation, poses problems for the translator if he aspires to a little more than just a 'functional replica'. It is often stated that one must 'replace like with like' (though this usually refers to form — poem, prose, tract, etc. — and style) but, in the case of 'eccentric' language, this would mean not only hanging on closely to an actual item as it appears and the intention behind it, but also imitating the very way it 'spells it out'. This would certainly focus attention on that inherent quality of a language which allows it to be used imaginatively in the hands of a skilled wordsmith, be that a chance occurrence, an accident of design in its structure, or even an inspiring appeal of the language itself. The brutal fact remains, however, — the result of this opportunism can only come to light in <u>words</u>, words that we can 'hear', words that we can 'feel'. This holds true for the translator as much as for the original author.

### 'Colourful speech' — both language bound and unbound

Considerable constrictions are placed upon a translator when an original owes its own existence to a peculiarity of language. These are even greater when the same

effect and purpose should be achieved in the same way. It is recognized that English has a more 'lax', even haphazard, system of marking the syntactic rôle of its words than most other languages — what <u>appears to be</u> the same word may well be used in quite different functions. This, and a bewildering array of homonyms and synonyms, make it a fertile ground for the pun. The one in the following example would prove difficult, if not impossible, to translate in the same way and in the same context:

"**Duck not Grouse** " (notice over a low doorway leading to hotel dining room)

Here two items not only operate at different levels (noun ⤳ verb), they also maintain a meaningful relationship both to each other and to the context.

It could be argued that the contents of the message and, to a degree, some of its sense[s], may be equally well expressed in some other device <u>rooted</u> in German. If it requires a change of items, then the result could only be seen as inspired by, and not a translation of the original. The merits (and limitations) of such are exposed in —

'jingle' effect

"*Kopf runter, bleib munter*" (transfer of intention is reinforced by rhyme)

"*Ducken nicht fluchen*" (verbal equivalents provide a close, forceful meaning of just <u>one</u> of the two interpretations of the message)

play on words

"*Kopf beugen nicht verbeulen*" (attempt at the sense only)

"*Mit Ach und Krach sonst Krach und Ach!*" (play on the standard expression 'mit Ach und Krach' [barely, with great difficulty] introduces a warning of calamitous consequences only; it comes close to a pun in that the inverted 'Krach und Ach' could be seen as both the result of ignoring the warning and reinforcement of it)

word-connections and double meanings

"*Schädel vorbeugen, Schaden vorbeugen*" (the double meaning of 'vorbeugen' has a 'pun-like' quality underlined by a subtle linking of 'Schädel - schädlich - Schaden')

"*Kein Gesicht verzerren, ein Gericht verzehren*" (shows limitations of homonyms)

use of rhyme to 'collect and connect' meanings

"*Erst Kopf ducken, dann in Topf gucken*" (half translates one element and misses the other completely but it does convey the gist of the message in a novel way)

A glance at the meanings in the original will show that a 'working relationship' is denied even the most inspired German 'fabricator' —

'**duck**' - Ente (discounting 'Schätzchen', 'grobe Leinwand', 'Null' etc.)

'**duck**' - ducken, untertauchen, beugen, vorbeugen, vordrücken, ausweichen, etc.

'**grouse**' - Moorhuhn (Wachtel, etc.)

'**grouse**' - meckern, nörgeln, klagen, quengeln, querulieren, etc.

It is patently obvious that the <u>force</u> of the English pun cannot be brought out in the same way in German (simply because it lacks a fortunate occurrence of two homonyms as both verb and noun), and certainly not if word meanings are to be retained. While

the pun is under these conditions practically impossible, attempts to inject a colourful use of language in such as 'nicht mit dem Kopf anprallen, wird widerschallen' should be avoided as they only cover part of the sense and even this much in a loosely parallel invention. The translator might try instead to link up the verbal meanings (by avoiding obstruction one avoids complaint) and to keep the nouns within the same 'word field'. A little imagination could provide something like:

"Glücklich unter Sturz, glücklich unter Stürze"

— which makes a play on 'der Sturz' ([Türoberschwelle] pl. 'Sturze' = lintel) and 'die Stürze' ([Topfdeckel] pl. 'Stürzen' = pot-lid). This does at least command some notice where legitimate translations may not — 'Heute nur Ente - Moorhuhn fällt aus, Kopf ducken - kein Klagen' is to no better purpose than would be 'Vorsicht beim Eingang!'

The difficulty in translating a pun does not mean that German presents fewer opportunities for an imaginative use to exploit a special feature of the language. The substance of the message contained in the following succinct notice (in a German hotel)

"*Bei Ankunft keine Unterkunft ohne Auskunft über Herkunft*"

goes readily into English, but the absence of a similar word-formation (where a basic root takes on a variety of meanings through a prefix) would prevent the effect, impact and extra-lingual meaning from reaching the guest. Purely as a language problem, this requires that the informative content is not to be disturbed in any way simply for the sake of novelty. The process of providing a similar 'concoction' in English would be —



— which indicates that the imitating material must be in a form that includes the same degree of linguistic exploitation. The danger is that an attempt to be equally inventive in an uncompromising language (lacking the same feature) may lead merely to a 'novel artificiality' and/or loss of meaning. Applying the principle of 'different device for the same effect', the translator could, for instance, play on word-endings to give —

"A consequence of your presence for residence is our insistence on evidence showing from whence" (or ' — of provenance')

— but he would be intuitively aware that this is much less clear than the German (how many English speakers would use 'whence', or even know the meaning of 'provenance'?) and he would also realize that there is no equivalent impact because, while the German is *amusing*, the English is merely *irritating*.

## Dealing with the 'unusual' both as a quirk of language and author-originality

In literature the problem is compounded in that the author's extreme use of his own language can rarely be alleviated by the translator's 'licence' to bend his. The *personal* supply of words used by one writer is never the same as that used normally by another — only a flair for bold shocking imagery could explain, for instance, the use of "*der zaubrische Flug giftfarbner Kolibris*" (Hermelin's poem "*Die Ebene*" <"Dichtungen" East Berlin, 1961>). It achieves its purpose only by appealing to that particular stratum of underlying logic which a writer supposes everybody to possess (magical = enchanting? bewitching? captivating? fascinating? bewildering? — virulent [giftgrün] = intoxicating? stunning?). Whether or not this example represents an opportunist misuse (in a poem) or a resourceful use of words, it does show that the writer's avoidance of convention (giftfarbig!) can sometimes be countered by an unconventional imitation (virulent-hued).

Frequently a writer seems to dictate how his work ought to be translated. An example of what could be called, for want of a better name, 'designer language', by Bertolt Brecht will illustrate this. Castigating the trend towards 'artificial folksongs' (the so-called 'tractor poems') in East Germany during the fifties, he writes:

" .... *volkstümlich und funktionärstümlich. Außerdem wünscht das Volk nicht tümlich zu sein.*"

(quoted in Flores: "Poetry in East Germany" <Yale University Press, 1971> page 27)

Here a translator must not only extract the real meaning of the terms '*volkstümlich, funktionärstümlich*' and the expression '*tümlich*' as Brecht intended, but also account for these linguistically as they appear. In line with Brecht's wishes, they must be seen in translation as purposely invented and not needfully contrived — a pattern of '-ism [and] -ism, ... [no wish to be] ism'ish' might well be a linguistic solution, but not be in line with the motivating idea of being 'classified and categorized'. Clearly, a cohesion in the endings is important. The difficulty is that, while '-*tum*' (applied to some kind of institution) and '-*lich*' combine sufficiently well in German as to allow a legitimate coinage of a non-standard '*tümlich*', their English counterparts do not.

Fully conscious of the opportunities (and restrictions) in the English language a translator will instinctively follow Brecht and try to find:

[1] a standard word (as is 'volkstümlich')

[2] a 'logical' coinage (as suggested by a parallel form in 'funktionärstümlich')

[3] a word segment to represent a concept (as does 'tümlich')

Linking the first two, as indeed he must, the translator will have to weigh the gains of a 'lexical likeness' against a possible loss in Brecht's intended meaning. This is seen in:

"*popular and bureaucular*" (avoiding the regular 'bureaucratic' as Brecht does)

"*nationalistic and rationalistic*" (emphasizing a similarity of the words; difference in meaning is borne by a single letter, which may not be sufficient to contrast 'the

dreams of the people' with the 'schemes of the officials')

*"democratic and bureaucratic"* (too narrowly defined with little originality, it may leave no room for manœuvre in the isolated '[cr]atic' which must follow)

The translator will know that the words have hidden implications of 'classification and indoctrination'; he will also sense that the point of the remark is 'conformity and the loss of identity' — even *'volkstümlich'* may have oblique reference to 'Volkseigentum'. Without straying too far from the words, he could bring this out in —

"... populist and officialist. Besides, people have no desire to be 'list'ed." or

"... country-like and workmanlike. Besides, people have no wish to be 'like'ned."

— where some measure of the original sarcasm in the remark is treated linguistically.

### Dealing with the 'unusual' in literature

There is a well-known maxim: 'words are untranslatable, texts can always be translated', and certainly Harald Weinreich was right when he declared that —

"Wörter gehören also in Sätze, Texte und Situationen"

(Weinreich: "Linguistik der Lüge" <Heidelberg, 1966> page 19)

There are many instances, however, where unusual words are possibly much easier to translate in isolation. The following short list of words compiled from just one author (Wolfgang Borchert) will show how words can owe their effectiveness to an imaginative and logical(!) creation which may be identified and imitated linguistically. The fact that the words cover a variety of grammatical functions indicates the scope of opportunity for the translator, provided that he keeps the projected context in mind:

*'Backfischlübend'* - flapperdoting (equally outdated; '-doting' = '-lübend' for 'liebend')

*'Kleingartnergeruch'* - potatopatchpong (colloquial 'pong' strengthened by 'p-p-p')

*'frostrein'* - iceclear (this conveys in English the same quality of crystal clarity)

*'vögeldurchjubelt'* - flutterchuffed (colloquial 'chuffed' [overjoyed] builds on 'a-flutter')

*'schlickschwarz'* - treacleblack (retains the idea of 'shiny-black' better than 'slimy-black'; alliterative effect of 'brilliant-black' is counter-productive)

*'windüberheult'* - windshrillswept (distinguishes 'overswept' from 'howled down')

*'tintenkleksig'* - inkblotched (combines 'inkblot' and 'blotchy' for visual effect)

*'schaummäulig'* - latherlipped (imitates sound quality and is descriptively accurate)

*'kaiklatschend'* - teatittletattling (an alliterative effect in 'tea-table-tittle-tattle' is shortened to match the German '[Fisch]kai-[Kaffee]klatsch + end')

*'sandsabbelnd'* - sandslobbering ('dribbling' is more accurate but excludes alliteration with 'sand', which is essential here)

(the examples are taken from Wolfgang Borchert: "Das Gesamtwerk" <Rowohlt Verlag, Hamburg 1972>)

Such coinings are necessarily based on elements already rooted in the language and so a word-for-word solution is the only real possibility. Here the translator could be lured into fanciful interpretation; this he must leave to the reader under his helpful guidance.

Poets especially may be excused a conjuring with words, but often the oddities they 'bring out of the hat' elude the translator's sleight of hand. As Otto Knörrich says:

"Reduktion des Gedichts zum Ausdruck des radikalen und totalen 'Nichtmehrein-verstandenseins' muß notwendig auf die Weise seiner poetischen »Kodierung« durchschlagen. Die Sprache wird zum Medium des Sich-Entziehens, der Text zum Versteckspiel, in dem allein das Subjekt sich noch glaubt kundtun zu können."

(Walter Hinderer: "Geschichte der Deutschen Lyrik" <Philipp Reclam, Stuttgart 1983> page 560)

Where the work is intentionally 'far from the norm', perfect <u>understanding</u> may well demand an *attuned* artistic appreciation; <u>translation</u> would demand *factual* assessment as well. In the following example (verse) quite simple words are linked in a confusing, sometimes non-existent syntax, and moreover, in such hazy metaphorical contexts as to make interpretation intriguing and translation conjectural:

| "*Schwermut* | | '<u>Melancholy</u> |
|---|---|---|
| *Schreiten Streben* | (are both verbal nouns?) | <u>Striding striving</u> |
| *Leben sehnt* | | <u>life longs</u> |
| *Schauern Stehen* | (subject/object [verbal] nouns?) | <u>shuddering standing</u> |
| *Blicke suchen* | | <u>looks seek</u> |
| *Sterben wächst* | (grows [closer] = looms larger?) | <u>dying grows</u> |
| *Das Kommen* | (approach or arrival?) | <u>the coming</u> |
| *Schreit!* | (imperative? or stressed?) | <u>screams!</u> |
| *Tief* | (inverted word order?) | <u>deeply</u> |
| *Stummen* | (be silent? or silenced?) | <u>silent</u> |
| *Wir*" | | <u>we</u>' |

August Stramm (in Bridgewater: "20ᵗʰ Century German Verse" <Penguin, 1962> page 25)

Peculiarities, such as the absence of the reflexive with '*sehnt*' (line 2) and a marked ambiguity in the use of capital letters, not to mention the highly provocative syntax, pose problems which must be addressed in a positive, yet 'inconclusive', way.

## Accounting linguistically for 'author vagaries' in translation

In many ways literary originality in the form of unusual coinings can be less of a problem as they are often devised for the single purpose. In a World War I poem (from "New German Studies" 1980) August Stamm contrives the word "*chloreich*". Although its origins may be obscure to some, most of his readers would link '<u>Chlor</u> + Glo<u>rreich</u>' and see the point — that the way to the latter was all too often through the former. To be effective in English, a similar coining has to be credible and the translator must not be forced onto the defensive in such euphemisms as 'breath of heaven' (ie. of the poison gas, chlorine, used to deadly effect in trench warfare) even though these may carry similar sarcastic overtones. He should work on available parts — 'Glory through <u>chlor</u>ine' ⟶ '*chlorified / chlorious*'. The endings '-fied, -ous' adequately account for

'-reich' without destroying the subtle meaning of 'full of, bathed in [glory / chlorine]' or even 'clouded in both' *(nimbus + aureola)* hinted at in 'Reich = Himmel[reich]'.

What the imaginative writer is able to do with his own language suggests that the unusual belongs both <u>to</u> and <u>in</u> that language. This may be true, even though the theory of the *'totalword'* *(sic)* declares that everything is embodied in the "word" and does not depend on any grammatical arrangement. Taking this to extreme allows any word to be allocated not only a change of category, but multiple functions as well. This is seen in operation in the poetry of Erich Arendt, for instance, with such aberrations as:

[1] '<u>Glimmen Schiele</u>' ('Glimmen' - noun / verb?; 'Schiele' - noun from verb?)

[2] '<u>Staunen augt</u>' (noun 'Auge' is verbalized in place of 'äugen')

[3] '<u>Locken üppen</u>' (verb is contrived from adjective 'üppig')

[4] '<u>Schweigen mondeinsamt</u>' (concocted from noun + adjective, is 'mondeinsamt' a finite verb or past participle?)

(examples gleaned from Gregor Laschan: "Lyrik in der DDR" <Athenäum Verlag, Frankfurt / Main 1971>)

The translator cannot assume licence, however, and he would realize that he may only be inventive, as is the author, by intuitively exposing unknown facets of the 'word'.

Replacing each of the above examples will therefore require not only isolating similar possibilities in the language, but also applying them with <u>reasoned</u> imagination:

[1] '<u>Glimmer squints</u>' ('Glimmer' is a noun / verb - 'Glowing' could include possibility of adjective; 'squints' is italicized to mark it [as an equally possible noun])

[2] '<u>Marvel eyes</u>' ('marvel', noun or verb, has undertones of 'marvelling, marvellous'; by excluding 'marvelling' as an adjective [and the inference of 'marvel-eyes'], we fix 'eyes' as a verb but leave it with the 'noun quality' that the author aims at)

[3] '<u>Locks exube</u>' (the ambiguity of 'Locken' is partially maintained; 'exube' is made more credible by a closeness to 'exude' and fashioned, like 'üppen', on adjective → verb. The alternative, 'Locks a-flourishing', is far more descriptive than vibrant.

[4] '<u>Silence moonylorn</u>' ('moony-' means 'like the moon', which is in the German, and '-lorn' treats '-einsamt' as an adjectival past participle. A degree of imagination is required - 'silence becomes as lonely as the moon' [vereinsamt]. The connection in 'Schweigen - Mund - Mond - einsam' is not felt so strongly in English, where the moon tends to refer to other than the idea of loneliness, for example, in such as 'moonshining', 'moonraking'. This exposes the danger in 'moonylorn', although the expression 'mooning [about]' (languid) does include some element of loneliness. A safe solution could be 'Silence [makes] moonforlorn', but safety is not paramount!

While it may be true to some extent that the word holds the 'sum total' of meanings, each language conceals them differently — and each author exposes them individually.

### Translating the 'unconventional'

Translation is rendered more difficult when words appear in abstract patterns

linked by a startling syntax. In pure 'concrete' poetry (so called because the power of single words and short phrases serves not to condense, but to intensify, the images and ideas expressed) the translator may lack the assurance provided by accepted language rules, although the words themselves may be basically standard in form. He will know that lexical accuracy is crucial owing to the compact nature of the items, but he will also sense a need to account in some way for their function, including the part played by their unconventional use. To cajole a like word (one with semantic equivalence and similar syntactic flexibility) to work in the same way could demand both a precise and a selective judgement. This is evident in the following example:

1    "*Schollenmürbe schläfert ein das Eisen*

2    *Blute filzen Sickerflecke*

3    *Roste krumen*

4    *Fleische schleimen*

5    *Saugen brunstet um Zerfallen*

6    *Mordesmorde*

7    *Blinzen*

8    *Kinderblicke*

(from the poem "Schlachtfeld" by August Stramm in —
Michael Hamburger: "Poetry in Germany 1910-1975" <Carcanet Press, 1977> page 10)

The text, with a stark, shocking imagery inspired by such as '*filzen - krumen - schleimen*' and its striking genitive constructions like '*Sickerflecke - Mordesmorde - Kinderblicke*' further compounded by the enigmatic plurals '*Blute - Roste - Fleische*', poses seemingly intractable problems for the 'word-conscious' translator. It is usually true that a word derives most of its significant meaning, either by expressly fitting the context, or by a grammatical (often syntactic) inducement. Here, there is a calculated absence of grammatical structure and a reliance on purpose-built words themselves —

[a] <u>Coined compounds</u> — '*Schollenmürbe*' (line 1) describes the soft yielding state of the pounded earth in which all is muffled and eventually swallowed up (best described by the North Country dialect word 'clarty' [related to the German 'Klater, klaterig' - Schmutz, Unrat, zerlumpt] or by the German 'Klietsch' ['feuchtklebrige Masse', as in 'Klietschbrot', unausgebackenes Brot]. Both '*Scholle*' (clod) and '*mürb*' (friable) have normal meanings, but they take on a further dimension when brought together — both have a military connotation - 'verschollen', posted missing, 'mürb', softened up. Most effective, however, is the artificial noun form '*-mürbe*' (in line with 'Feuchte, Kälte, Nässe' etc.) in suggesting a lumpy, yielding quagmire. The word '*Sickerflecke*' (line 2) paints a picture of drying out puddles and damp patches where the moisture has drained away leaving a residue of matted blood. It encompasses 'seep through, drain away, ooze out' and 'ooze' (mud) in a way that English 'mud-holes, sludge-pits' do not. Referring as it does to both the innocent appearance and the nervous glances of the child-soldiers, '*Kinderblicke*' (line 8) can best be summed up in one word, 'Infanteyes' (infant-eyes).

[b] <u>Compounded genitives</u> — while both '*Schollenmürbe*' and '*Kinderblicke*' include some aspect of the genitive, it is only in '*Mordesmord*' (Line 6) that the real problem emerges. Do we see it as an 'unending murder of the most murderous kind ['Mord' as in 'mordsmäßig']'? - 'murder upon murder'? - or 'murder as means of ending murder'? The one word leaves all these meanings possible and at the same time conveys any one with remarkable intensity. Confined to a single (compound) word, the translator cannot employ a genitive, but he can explore an adjective approach ('Mords-' = terrible, as in 'Mordskerl' etc.). This might lead to '**mortalmurders**' as a way of reflecting the many facets of 'mortal' (deadly, final, of human beings).

[c] <u>Unconventional plurals</u> — for the plural '*Blute*' (line 2), 'bloods' would be quite inappropriate. A plural might be achieved in 'pools of blood → bloodpatches', but the translator could feel that '**bloodsheds**', by referring to both the battles and the actual patches, would be better. Compressed into one word '*Roste*', the meaning of 'rusting remains' may be difficult to negotiate. The closeness of 'Roste ⇄ Reste' works against a solution in 'rust patches / flakes' and 'scrap-iron' lacks a plural. As '*Roste*' covers decay in general and rusting items of wreckage in particular, '**rustings**' could account for an <u>odd</u> plural. An imaginative solution in '**rustshells**' (to combine skeleton shapes, rust flakes with an allusion to spent ammunition), attractive though it is, may not be really justified as translation. '*Fleische*' (line 4) reduces human beings to mere lumps of flesh in a way that 'corpses, bodies' cannot. To some extent '**carcases**' (horses may be included) will do so while imitating the revulsion expressed in '*Fleische*'.

[d] <u>Motivated words</u> — '*einschläfert*' (line 1) could mean the dulling effect on the exploding shells (= *Eisen* ?), an enforced lull in the firing (*Eisen* = guns?) or a putting to bed / sleep (covering up, submerging) of '*Eisen*' (= scrap?). Even 'lulls to sleep' can leave unresolved the question of '*Eisen*', but it does offer one correct understanding of it (in modern usage a solution could easily be found in 'hardware' = guns, shells, lost equipment or, indeed, 'any old iron'!). The use of '*krumen*' (line 3) ['Krume', crumb] to describe the breaking down of the rust has a direct link with the term for top-soil and compares the rust to leaf-mould. The word '*schleimen*' (line 4) is either transitive (to remove slime or, in the case of snails, to lay trails of slime) or intransitive (to grow slimy). The picture of dying soldiers crawling through the mud to leave slimy trails, is a powerful one not easily brought out in the English verb 'slime [over]'. The effect of '*brunstet*' (line 5) is to turn '*Saugen*', the sucking action of the mud, into a 'lusting for' ('*brunstet*' is a highly charged word to show that the mud is 'on heat'), an effect which may be difficult to reproduce in English.

The unusual constructions exist in the poet's language, waiting to be brought to light by invention; in the translator's language, they may exist and yet be unusable. Working almost exclusively by analogy, a translator is forced to search for the missing elements in his own language to create a new vocabulary. Intuition will therefore play a key rôle in an attempt to make up for a loss of supportive information (the writer's

own thoughts) by the material at hand. His offerings must be plausible and above all, purposeful. Trying to *artificially* bring about word-accuracy is not the answer, for, as Anne Born is keen to point out in her paper "*The Undefinitive Translation of Poetry*":

"The danger of the scrupulously faithful version is a lack of natural expression in the translation which at worst becomes translatese, and in a freer one, a departure from the original which may make it unrecognisable. But to achieve an approximately satisfactory translation of a short poem with profound layers and nuances of meaning requires the translator to live deeply in the poem."

("Bradford Occasional Papers № 10 - 'Translation in Performance'" <University of Bradford, 1990>)

The operative word here is 'short [poem]' which implies on the one hand, a paucity of contextual information, and on the other, a lack of room for manœuvre. Whether this also applies to 'unusual' poetry, is not clear, as the following suggested version shows —

"Battlefield

| | |
|---|---|
| Clodmire softly lulls to sleep the scrap | ('scrap' - metal, perhaps even 'fight') |
| Bloodsheds mat clotted soakaways | ('soakaways', drains - wasting of blood) |
| Rustings crumble | |
| Carcases slime | ('slime', turning to mud; corpses seem to |
| Sucking lusts for decaying | wriggle out of the mud leaving trails) |
| Mortalmurders | (fatal, also perpetrated by man on man) |
| glisten | (not only glinting in youthful fervour but |
| in infanteyes" | glazing over in bewilderment) |

### The challenge of the 'private picture' in a well-turned phrase

Occasionally a writer will exploit his own special language by using some sort of linguistic device — Dylan Thomas, for example, derives much pleasure from using, amongst other things, puns which are embedded in personal language, word-plays which owe their validity to cultural - regional background, and metaphoric symbolism that is to a great extent a secret shared only with the most privileged of his readers. For the translator it would prove difficult, for example, to deal effectively with —

"*My wine you drink, my bread you snap*"    (in parallel to the Eucharist)

— where the pun on 'snap' is entirely dependent on a close familiarity with the dialect word for a worker's meal-time sandwiches, and how it is extended in some areas to any (staple) food as well as doubling as a verb (the line is quoted from "*This bread I break* " in Walford Davies: "*Dylan Thomas — Selected Poems*" <J.M.Dent, London 1964> page 38) Here the German 'teilen', although it covers both to 'split' (separate) and to 'divide' (share out), lacks the *breaking* action as well as the dialect reference, while words like 'schnappen' (snatch) or 'schnorren' (cadge) only partially translate. The translator is compelled to summon up all his resources and to evaluate, largely by intuition, the merits of each — the colloquial 'knapsen' (to stint, pinch and scrape) for example, hints

at 'knaps!' (Ausruf beim Abknipsen) but misses out on 'snap in two'; on the other hand, it has the advantage that 'Knap' is a Low German / Dutch word for food (Kost, Imbiß).

It is essential to include as many aspects as possible by using 'devious means' to work in a way inspired by, and restricted to, the original. In his descriptive —

"*water lammed scythe-sided thorn*" (from "*A Grief ago*" ‹*ibid* page 54›)

— Thomas fuses the (chiefly) Welsh colloquial term 'lamm' (to hit, beat, thrash, as in boxing) into a personal image of something not only having sharp edges but a scything motion (as it is whipped and lapped by the water). While the German 'hauen' has many colloquial meanings and even a boxing application, it goes far beyond 'lamm' in covering such as 'to carve out' or 'go beyond bounds'. It does, nevertheless, admit to a hacking, cutting, lashing action which a translator might imaginatively fuse into '[um]riss[en]' (both as outlined and slashed) in the manner of the author. The question as to whether '*scythe-sided*' refers to sharp edges or to a sweeping movement, could safely be left to speculation; the pressing need is to deal with '-sided' ('Sensenschneidig'? or 'scharf umrissen'?) with regard to '*lammed*'. An answer could well be found in 'dreschen', implying a flailing, beating action going into 'verdroschen', familiarly 'lashed, beaten, ragged', to take in the image of the sharp cutting edges. The danger is that, whatever imaginative solution is found, it could be seen only as a 'way out'. A translator, then, must very carefully feel his way from a timid 'vom Wasser gehauter Sensenschneidiger Busch' towards an enterprising, but not unduly ambitious, 'vom Wasser gedroschen[er] und Sensenschneiden umrissener [Dorn]busch'.

## Word-play with a personal imput — can linguistic rules aid its translation ?

Often the most figuratively charged words in Thomas coalesce in a flurry of imaginative activity inspired by some personal reflection. This can be extended over a longer expanse of words, as the opening line of "*After the Funeral*" will show —

"*After the funeral, mule praises, brays. Windshake of sailshaped ears, muffle-toed tap. Tap ....*" (from "*After the Funeral*" ‹*ibid* page 49›)

Can the highly emotive picture which is conjured up in the mind of a receptive English (or more especially, Welsh) reader be made to work so effectively in German words? Problems could arise from the pattern of apposition-within-apposition, that is, all the individual actions relate to a total behaviour of the mourners — '*mule praises*' (empty nods of grudging agreement) → 'maulfaules Kopfnicken'? '*brays*' → 'Eselschreien'? and '*windshake*' → 'Geflatter'? It is with '*muffle-toed tap*' that Thomas really comes into his own; not only does this refer to the round-capped (miner's) boots, but also to the nervous, embarrassed, stifled toe-tapping of the mourners moved by their thoughts. The dilemma is whether to translate 'Thomas of the words' or 'the words of Thomas', that is, to convey both the 'how' and the 'what' of the very words he uses. Do we go for (a visual) 'rundgekappt' or (a more expressive) 'stumpfzehig'? With no room whatever for compromise, a closesness to the actual words must be the base for a translation,

but within certain limits it may be possible yet to give the right feel of Thomas in:

"Nach der Bestattung, gemaulte Lobworte, Eselschreie. Windgeflatter segelförmiger Ohren, stumpfzehiges Stepp - Steppen .... ''

Here intuition could avoid the natural tendency (in all translators) to make explicit what is implicit (for some readers) in the original.

A far greater challenge lies in the longer descriptive assemblages favoured by Thomas where he takes a well-known image and looks at it from a personal viewpoint, dispensing as he does so the odd cynical comment and subtle remark neatly wrapped up in language. The picture presented in the next extract is quite clear, the impressions evoked by the undercurrent of language, less so:

" *When my pinned-around-the-spirit, cut to measure flesh bit, suit for a serial sum, the flashing needle rock of squatters, the criers of Shabby and Shorten.* "

(*ibid* page 23 )

It would not be unduly difficult to paraphrase this and yet keep close to the words —

"Mein Mutumfassend – umgesteckter, nach Maß angefertigter, hautenger, in Raten gekaufter Anzug, aufblitzende Nähnadel, Schaukeln der Hockenden, Ausrufer von Shabby and Shorten."

The exercise may not, however, make the best use of the underlying allusions made in the original, such as — '*pinned around*', not just tacked for measurement but slipshod; '*flesh bit*', not just skin-tight but full of holes and threadbare; '*serial sum*', not just a regular (weekly) payment but a 'never-never' instalment ('abstottern'). A wealth of suggestion also lies behind '*flashing*' as a facing, turn-up, revers ('Aufschlag') and in '*squatter*' in the sense of one who squats (as dialect for 'crushes, presses [creases]'). These are not puns in the accepted sense of the word but rather infiltrations of other meanings. Even the name 'SHABBY & SHORTEN' is reminiscent of cheap High Street tailors and the word '*criers*' brings to mind purveyors, hawkers ('packies', pedlars) as well as the exploited needle-workers. How much could be included in a word-accurate 'legitimate' translation, relies on a sensitive and sensible approach.

Chapter VI *(Language subjected to skilful manipulation)*

## Translation — taking the author 'at his word'

*The intuitive aspect of translating — the feeling that the words fit — is not only dangerously exposed when applied to works which are individually 'hand-crafted', but also subjected to considerable restraints. These may be summed up as the need to replace like with like. The difficulty here is that the unique shaping of language which unlocks the author's own imagination serves but to throw up a restraining wall around that of the translator. Carried to extreme, the author's fertile imagination becomes almost a law unto itself and then a translator's intuition is held to ransom. In dealing with a writer such as James Joyce, for example, often the (compulsory!) decipherment of obscurities eludes the intuitive confidence of the translator simply because his last resource, that of translating the sense and not the word, is denied him. Joyce's words, abstracted as it were, from any language on which an informed reasoning could be based, mean only what Joyce would want them to mean. The fact remains: cryptic, enigmatic, or even downright pernicious, Joyce's language combines a freedom of expression with calculated effect. One cannot, therefore, dismiss the whole gamut of inventive device and verbal dexterity simply as literary aberration worthy, not of 'translation', but of 'camouflage'. This would mean at the very best, an accommodation within the (translated) text and, at worst, a shoddy imitation. The language of Joyce can neither be glossed over nor ignored. Furthermore, it places any aspiring translator under a dual threat — he must deal with the words for what they are (as in the text) and also as they 'occur' to Joyce. If he is to emulate the idiosyncrasies of Joyce's text with any degree of success, he will no doubt be forced to purloin the language of translation (probably, but not necessarily, his own). Only intuition can advise him as to how much he can 'get away with'.*

From a purely linguistic point of view the 'inventiveness' displayed in Joyce's texts could be considered as comprising mainly arbitrary application of existing rules, establishment of new ones, and a calculated ignorance of the 'done thing'. In this light it may be seen for the most part simply as expedience in another guise. Seen from the standpoint of literary originality, Joyce's inventiveness can be creatively imaginative. A translator is patently aware that he is required to deliver up much more than just a cold explanation — his own reaction to the text fragment will tell him so — and in a Joycean imitation he will have little recourse other than to appeal to some mysterious logic he may share in common with his reader. There can be little doubt that any text by Joyce is highly charged and intended to convey 'something' and the translator must make his reader fully aware of this. Most important, however, is the way in which this is achieved. He can do so, as Joyce does, by pressurising words into new functions and contriving evocative literary permutations of the language. To what extent he is able to follow Joyce's 'instructions' within his own language, or indeed, respond to enforced

inventiveness, will almost certainly determine the eventual success of the exercise.

### Finding a plausible base for 'mandatory' inventiveness

To however limited an extent, imaginative, or even fanciful, expression in any language must acquire a degree of plausibility. Peter Newmark suggests (speaking of neologisms and acquired meanings generally) that:

"A translator should be able to surmise the new sense of many existing words by taking into account the force of analogy, which is both social (conforming) and psychological (association of images)."

(Newmark: "A Textbook of Translation" <Prentice Hall International, London 1988> page 179)

This may also be partially true of Joyce's coinings and verbal concoctions as these are invariably seen to contain more than just 'a ring of truth' in their make-up. It is not a lack of understanding which is the problem but the highly imaginative exploitation of language(s) and cultural backgrounds which may prove impossible to 'reduce to words'. The fact that Joyce invites plausibility for his 'inventions' either from the conventions of language or culture (usually by mocking them), may be of somewhat doubtful help to the translator. It is a line that might be pursued only if the target language allows a similarly evocative rendering to be seen as linguistically justified and not as blindly imitative. The extent of the problem is clear when we look at specific examples. The following extracts are from **James Joyce: "Ulysses"** (Penguin Modern Classics, 1986).

'Playing on language and culture' may <u>allow</u> Joyce, for example, to insinuate 'fasting', 'meagreness', 'affected piety', not a little 'contempt' and a certain moulded "Jewishness" into his perfectly correct "... *the jejune Jesuit*" (page 4) but it <u>compels</u> a translation into German to search for legitimacy in a like expression. Here, both the imagination and the ingenuity of an expression such as 'juchjecke Jesuit' would have to be justified — 'juch-' hinting at 'jauchzen (exult), jucken (itch), die Jauche (a foul liquid [manure] or pus)' to flow alliteratively into '-jeck' with its transposition 'g ↔ j' mocking a characteristic 'Jewishness' to underline the contempt in 'geck' (foolish and conceited). The loss of a word-accuracy (eg. 'geistlos, nüchtern') is more than made up for by an impact and 'Joyce-like' inventiveness. The burden of plausibility is therefore transferred, as in the original, to contextual awareness and a resourceful competence in language on the part of the reader. It also recognizes that, owing to the extravagant nature of Joyce's writing, his *sensed* thoughts and *oddly defined* meanings rarely come together in another language as to permit anything but a 'remotely perfect' transfer.

The acceptability of Joyce's imaginatively fanciful creations is, furthermore, often reliant upon associations which may not be fully appreciated by a foreign reader (even if they are by the translator!), for instance, in —

"... *Erin. The harp that once or twice.*" (page 223)

he exploits the connections — (a) 'harp' as the symbol of Erin (Ireland), (b) 'harp' in

the popular Victorian aria '*The harp that once through Tara's halls*' (in [Tara's] music-halls?) which often featured as an encore [bis! = twice] (Joyce is describing one such performance), (c) 'harp [on]' with '*once or twice*' to refer to the sporadic upsurge in Erin's glory and the persistent allusion to it. Clearly 'ab und zu' would be too defining for '*once or twice*' and 'ein- oder zweimal' far too numerical or 'einige Male' far too vague for the purpose. Could the translator be as inventive here as Joyce? — perhaps in 'einst [formerly] oder zweitens mal [for the second time]' to cover both reference to the past and the call for an encore. Even so, the relevance may not be appreciated by a reader with no access to the cultural / historical background.

To give a translation a firm base by capitalizing on available (and compliant) corresponding linguistic features may make good sense, especially when dealing with a text so dependent upon these for its effect. The danger lies in that a translator's rôle may be reduced to that of 'searching through stock'. All too often the 'unusual' in the original becomes 'artificial' in translation. Inventiveness in translation should take the form of creative resource and not resourceful opportunism, even where it is tied to the actual words of a text. To writers such as Joyce words are 'things' that have a visible substance (to be appealingly presented) and an audible outline (to be finely tuned). The use of alliteration in Joyce, for example, is not simply to reinforce an otherwise bland statement or add to the effect of an image, but to 'spice' the reading. Often patently subtle, it must be imitated in the same way and with no loss of textual meaning if at all possible. It may well be right and proper for Joyce to come up with —

"*He puffed a pungent plumy blast*" (on lighting his pipe) (page 221)

— but is the translator allowed 'Er paffte vor sich einen prickelnden plusigen Puff'? - when 'beißend' ~ 'fedrig' ~ '[Rauch]stoß' would be more accurate. Would the author's licence to be imaginatively original extend to the translator in, for example, 'Er blies vor sich einen beißenden bauschigen Rauchpuff', which has all the essential elements re-created in the Joyce manner but not entirely word-for-word?

### Treating both the device and the point behind it

Fortunately, there are a few occasions where the imaginative (and purposeful) Joyce creation will respond to treatment. Here a translator may be intuitively guided as much by what he feels the author to see as the 'point' for its inclusion as by his own skilled appreciation of 'language'. His ability to convey this may be more important to the effectiveness of the translation than his 'knowing the nearest word'. The following example shows how Joyce deliberately 'extends' the well-known tongue-twister:

"*Peter Piper picked a peck of pick of peck of pickled pepper*" (page 157)

Of the words themselves, it is of little consequence whether '*peck*' is taken to mean ' Viertelscheffel (→Päckchen)' or 'Pick [mit dem Schnabel]' as 'p' could be covered in either case, although '*pickled [pepper]*' might respond to 'pikant' rather than to any compound of 'Pökel-'. What is important is the way it is set out. At first sight it may

look as if Joyce intended simply to reflect a stumbling hesitancy or mock a stuttering in the extra 'pick of peck', but one cannot avoid a clear indication of 'pick = the best'. This can be shown in a superlative ('pikantest' in conjunction with 'Pökel-') and by the order of the words; this could lead to a balanced arrangement of the tongue-twister in:

"Peter Piper packte Päckchen Pökelpfeffer Päckchen pikantester Pfeffer pickte Peter Piper"

This preserves the unbroken sequence of 'p' words (an important consideration) while the arrangement allows the play on 'packen - picken' to revolve around 'Päckchen' in a typical Joyce manner.

The problem is far more complex when Joyce 'sets his own seal' on the work. In his mimicry and mockery of the well-known *'She sells sea-shells by the sea-shore '* he not only exploits the 's - sh' sound and rhythm but also adds a further dimension in:

"*Hesouls, shesouls, shoals of souls* " (page 157)

Leaving aside the hermaphrodite nature of many molluscs and the 'faceless' quality of crowds (possible sources of inspiration!), Joyce derives much from 'unconscious linking' not available to German readers. A translator cannot reckon with associations such as 's/shoals [= Schwarm]' of 'sh/souls [= Mensch]', each one 'sole [= alleinig, einzig]'. He must show that something is there apart from a confusion of 's - sh' sounds and a hint of 'facelessness' (reflected in 'shoals of soles [Plattfisch, Seezungen]'). Here he may be tempted to allow 'Seele' to acquire, by analogy with *'hesouls '* and *'shesouls '*, dual pseudo-masculine/feminine forms or be coerced into 'eine See von ...' for *'shoals of '*. But would the result (possibly 'Seelen, Seelinnen, eine See von Seelen') have the same quality as the original? Even though 'Er-seelen, Sie-seelen, Schwärme von Seelen' is a lot closer to the sound, rhythm and sense of the English, it still lacks the backing of a well-known tongue-twister manipulated by a German 'Joyce'.

Even where German may provide 'ready made material' support, there is very often much more involved than mere 'copy-cat' imitation. The hand of Joyce can be clearly seen in the following wildly imaginative concoction:

" *her wavyavyheavyeavyevyevyhair un comb:'d* " *(sic)* (page 228)

Translation could obviously benefit from the convenient occurrence of such as 'wellig - wallen [flowing/unruly] - wuchtig [heavy (style) ] - wogig - bogig - wuschlig - buschig, etc.'. It is extremely unlikely, however, that these words could convey in the same way all that may be extracted from the original — *'wavy-avy'* to wave a welcome (ave!)? *'eavy'* overlapping as eaves? *'evy'* as a painting of a long-haired Eve? *'un comb:'d '* unkempt or not pinned up by a neck-comb? To what extent can the suitable material be shaped to complete the illusion? The choice appears to be: 'doubtful exposition' or 'efficient imitation'? Clearly, Joyce intended that his fabrication should be seen as a verbal imitation of the undulations of the coiffure, and perhaps the latter would be the

best line of approach provided the 'segmented' meanings are included —

    "<u>ihr welligwalligwogigwobigwobogighaar ent kämm</u>:'t "

This uses an extra meaning '...<u>wobogig</u>...' [where it twisted] for a 'Joyce effect' but adheres to the set pattern in separating 'ent' and following the strange punctuation.

    Few of Joyce's devices are as easy to deal with as is this parody on Church Latin, "*muchibus thankibus*" (page 115) [→ 'vielius Dankibus'], and certainly not where he presses words into assuming designs which have little relationship to normal usage. As such word manipulation is irrevocably enmeshed in <u>one</u> language, a translator must search for a <u>legitimate</u> excuse for 'leaving well alone'. The following artfully tailored palindromic design leaves him, indeed, no other choice:

    " *Madam, I'm Adam. And Able was I ere I saw Elba* "   (page 113)

    ←———— x ————→ | | ←———————— x·————————→

Although there is little sense in the words, there is sufficient meaningful relationship between them to prevent them being 'mumbo-jumbo'. The danger is that they may be seen as such by a German reader if left untranslated, especially as they serve only to illustrate a trick of language. Conversely, even if a similar pattern could be contrived, it might be taken for a translation of the words. Intuition will inform a translator that the solution here is to imply that the sentence is 'quoted' and convey its purpose.

### <u>Playing on the word</u>

    Discussing translation methodology, Peter Newmark sees the pun mainly as a linguistic obstacle of minor literary importance to be <u>effectively</u> dealt with rather than as 'author originality' to be <u>shown as such</u> in translation:

" .... If the purpose of the pun is merely to raise laughter, it can sometimes be 'compensated' by another pun on a word with a different but associated meaning ..
However, when the two senses of the pun are more important than the medium, they can sometimes be translated by reproducing the two senses in an incongruous way ..
Finally, where the pun is used in a SL text to illustrate a language *(sic)*, or slip of the tongue, or the sense is more important than the witticism, it has to be trans-ferred, translated (in both senses) and usually explained."

(Newmark: "A Textbook of Translation" <Prentice Hall International, London 1988> page 217)

Along these lines it may not be too difficult to render in 'good' German quite a few samples of 'tricky' texts, but rather more so if we are to put in as much as Joyce does.

    The nature of Joyce's text demands in many instances a close correspondence and in others, a wide ranging equivalence over a number of aspects. A profound depth of ideas behind the words seems to prevent either of these. The author delights in the extension of words, either in meaning or arrangement, on which to 'hang his thoughts'. <u>Informed interpretation</u> is often invited but rarely is it freely permitted. Often native-

language understanding of the text is a prerequisite (as is a background knowledge) in that so much is evoked by the words over and above that expressed by a conventional, even legitimate, use. In the following example one can detect the 'pun' effect (itself a formidable task in translation), but here it involves more than 'playing on words':

"*Quavering the notes strayed from the air, found it again, lost chord, and lost and found it, faltering.*" (page 219)

Here Joyce does more than just play on the double meaning of 'quavering' as represented in German by 'zittern' (erschüttern) and 'trillern' (schneller Wechsel des Haupttons mit seiner kleinen/großen oberen Sekunde) — he sets off uncertainty against a musical skill(!) in negotiating the notes [quavers]. German not only has to find the means of combining 'zittern' [shaking] with 'Achtelnote' [quavers], but this with the idea of 'einstimmen' [chiming in / tuning in], possibly by pressing into service such as ' tremolieren' (fehlerhaftes Beben + schnelle Wiederholung beim Halten des Tons) to give a sense of 'Ein- Ausklang'. Further problems arise in that '*air* ' is both literally, 'Luft' and figuratively, 'Melodie'. Although 'das Air' is used for both 'Haltung' and 'Tonfolge eines Musikstuckes', it may not come together here, even in the sense of 'Stimmung' = pitch, key and atmosphere. The oblique reference to Sullivan's "*Lost Chord*" must also be considered, thus making '*chord* ' = 'Akkord', rather than just 'Zusammenklang'. All in all, the translation is not only about finding opportunities, for example, 'fehl' [out of place, false, wrong] with 'fehlen' [missing], but about covering all of the ground.

Even where Joyce uses a pun as a 'straightforward play on words' (to exploit some aspect of their synonomy or homonymy), he will almost certainly include hidden facets of significance. The 'visible' effect of the words "**mity cheese**" (page 141) may be immediately apparent as a quirk of language, but only a familiarity with colloquial or expressive usage will 'plumb the depths' —

| presented | suggested |
|---|---|
| '*mity*' (maggoty) | - crumbly → small portions [in mites] → little [piece] |
| '*mighty*' (strong) | - good (idiomatic) → mighty [fine] taste → big [piece] |

This is achieved by exploiting the fact that '*mity*' can be replaced by 'mighty' without offending the language. In German 'madig' [maggoty] would bear little relationship to 'mächtig' [mighty] ('schmächtig', which does have an affinity of sound, suggests 'lean [mager], thin'). Even a play on '[wurm]stich[halt]ig' ('stichig' [sharp, biting] to equal '*mighty*', while an implied 'wurmstichig' [worm-eaten] effectively covers '*mity* ', with overtones of 'stichhaltig' [hold good]) fails to include any idea whatever of 'something tasty' [schmackhaft] or of 'generous portions' [große Happen]. The author makes it virtually impossible for the translator to provide his reader with the same 'scope' for decipherment — in fact, he barely leaves room for imitative gymnastics with language.

The translator's task is to make the whole of the text available as the author intended. This could be seen as 'translating the function while imitating the word'. As

the process itself must operate in a veritable minefield of persuasive imagination and yet, guided only by informed speculation, sound judgement will be at times reduced to little more than intuition. This could lead the translator to concentrate on key areas where the chances of success might be greater; it would certainly help him to control overreaction. He would sense, for example, whether he is safe in exposing an obvious double meaning of 'bellows' in *"child bit by bellows"* [an intended newspaper headline] (page 120) in a different way by using the colloquial 'Balg' (unartiges Kind) in —

    "Kind von einem Blasebalg bebissen — Balg brüllt"

— he would also feel the justification for covering the significant (homonymic) placing of 'symmetry — cemetery' in *"Symmetry under a cemetery wall"* (page 228) by adding an extra feature ('cement-') to provide the necessary repetition of sound in —

    "Symmetrie hinter der zementierten Mauer eines Friedhofs"

— and he would certainly be aware that Joyce fuses 'critic' and 'cretin' to convey an impression of the 'clever fool' in *"A perfect cretic, said the professor"* (page 263) and that German could do the same with 'Kritiker + Kretin → Kretiker', but he would also sense that the manufactured term, 'Kretikus', might reinforce the biting sarcasm and reflect the 'Irishism' of Joyce's *'cretic'* as well.

### Disentangling the words and re-assembling them in the same meaning

English readers experience no difficulty in divining what lies behind the words:

    *"Me? says Alf. Don't cast your nasturtiums on my character"* (page 263)

— 'nasturtiums' is immediately recognized as a substitute for a similar sounding word (which, though understood, may not necessarily be taken as being in the register of the speaker). The rest of the sentence hints at the meaning and the sense becomes clear even if the expression is not known. The device of a similar sounding replacement is not a *common* feature of German and this leaves no other choice than to work on the actual words. This implies that the word *'nasturtiums'* must be extricated and given a new significant rôle. In German, neither 'Kapuzinerkresse' [nasturtium] nor 'Brunnen-kresse' would have any relevance to 'Verleumdung' [aspersion] and could, therefore, be seen only for what they are — plant names. Avoiding a figurative (colloquial) use of such as 'begiessen [to pour cold water on], verschuften, anschmitzen', an attempt at an *actual text* translation to retain something of the idea of plants, may well find an answer in 'Brennesseln' [stinging nettles], which carries with it connotative meanings of 'hurt, pain, offence' and a hint of 'Besudlung, Beschmutzung [besmirching]', to give:

    "Laß doch bitte meinen Charakter nicht mit Brennesseln bewerfen"

In other instances the 'sound connection' exploits a well-known occurrence in the language. *"Poached eyes of ghost"* [previous sentence — *"he had just eaten a bad egg"*] (page 135) leans heavily on 'poached eggs on toast' whereas 'verlorene Eier auf Toast', lacking common currency, does not provide the same level of support in German.

While 'poached eggs' themselves might suggest 'clouded over, ghostly eyes', the full impact is only felt in word-association. That of 'ghost – toast' (as a type of Cockney rhyming slang) would be hard to match in German, though it may be possible to work on other facets of the original. One could certainly use 'pochiert' for *poached* and a reference to "*Schimmelreiter*" (the well-known story) could provide in 'Schimmel' a link with *ghost*. This not only avoids an unproductive word-translation in 'Gespenst', but also profits from the fact that 'Schimmel' is also mildew on food, therefore —

"Pochierte Augen eines Schimmels" (or even, "Pochierte Schimmelaugen")

There is a special problem for the translator in that Joyce's metaphors are, as a rule, not only wrapped up in his own unique use of language, but also revolve around background awareness. His contrived name "*Christfox*" (page 159 ff) has in an English reader's context a thinly disguised allusion to George Fox, the Quaker. Translated as 'Quäkerfox', the name could be meaningful to a German reader, but it might be ruled out as 'explanation'. This leaves the second element of the only practical alternative, 'Christfuchs', to be construed in various ways – from an obvious 'crafty one' to a more fanciful 'butterfly [Fuchs as Tagfalter]' or even, 'damp squib [Fuchs as wirkungsloser Sprengschuß]'. Although it may be transferred as it is, it is more important to convey the implication of '-fox' than its form as a name. In a similar way "*croppy – croppies – croppy boys*" (page 233 ff), as terms for the 'crop-haired' Irish of the South, would be meaningless to a German reader while such wildly fanciful creations as 'Bürstenbuben, Struppklötze, Borstenköpfe, Stoppelköpfe', although highly descriptive, cannot serve in the way intended without being elevated to an identifiable name — 'Schrupp-paddies', for example, which combines 'schruppen' [grob hobeln], 'Schrubber / Schrupper' [raue Bürste], with 'Paddy' as the generic name for Irishmen.

### Unearthing the 'buried treasure'

Even where Joyce's narrative appears to be straightforward, it is as well to examine closely every word in the text. The first sentence of "*Ulysses*", for instance, opens in such a way as to *mimic* Homeric metre —

"*Stately plump Mulligan // came from the stairhead bearing ......* "

This feature may not be essential to 'saying what the text says' but its inclusion in a translation leads to a better appreciation of the original in the way the author intended. This will not prove too difficult in the above example, but at other times the demand is more specific. In "*Agenbite of inwit. Inwit's agenbite*" (page 200) Joyce is playing on *real* words – Middle English "*Agenbite of inwit*" is the title of a 14ᵗʰ century work by Dan Michel; coming from the Anglo-Saxon 'āgen [own] bītan [bite] inwita [inner counsellor]', it can be taken as '(pangs of) remorse'. Here a translation would have to show (visibly by the use of archaic words) that the expression is in medieval language (Middle High German orthography helps here) but it must leave the words as 'clouded' as does the author. Can we do this in 'Gewissenbisse. Gewissens Bisse' by personifying

'*inwit*' [conscience] as Joyce does? Would we be justified in omitting 'des' (Gewissens Bisse)? — if so, the result could be (imitating MHG orthography):

"Eigenbiȝe des gewiȝȝens. Gewiȝȝens biȝe"

Anglo-Saxon alliterative literature can clearly be seen as the motivating force behind "*Before born babe bliss had*" (page 313) and yet the words do not lose contact with modern speech in that they benefit from idiom ('born babe', for example). Three elements — an archaic flavour to the words, Anglo-Saxon word order, alliteration — are essential to a *perfect* translation. Collectively, they may prove difficult to 'tease into German'. A translator may have little option other than to bring out one point to some advantage and reinforce this by giving a Joycean flavour to the whole. The temptation here is to concentrate on alliteration (the most difficult aspect when confined to words with a suitable archaic 'ring') and to exploit medieval literary word order by a *stylish* exaggeration as Joyce does. It is important in achieving all this not to lose sight of the meaning concealed in the original — 'only the unborn child is happy' (typically, Joyce compounds this in 'before born [pre-natal]' X 'before, a born(-)babe [living individual]'). This meaning should not be obscured, but 'cunningly' presented with a subtle blend of available alliteration and suggestively marked word order. This could result in:

"Bevor geborene das Baby Freud' erfuhr"      (b-(f)- / -b---- / - / b-b- // f̄- / -f̄-)

A medieval inversion of 'das Baby, bevor es geboren ist' → 'bevor geboren das Baby' is used to good effect with a substantivised adjective ('geborene') to avoid a committed. interpretation such as would be obvious in 'vor der Geburt weilte das Baby in Wonne'.

This leads to the question: if it is strange in English, should it remain equally so in German? One finds in "*Ulysses*" a whole range of languages, dialect and patois. Often they serve as foils for tricks of language, assuming some knowledge on the part of the reader to invite an appreciative response. Sometimes, however, they arise from Joyce's own wide contact with languages and prove far less accessible. The following extract contains Gypsy cant words not commonly known in English. Would a translator be expected to ascertain their meanings* and deal with them as such? (no explanation is given in "*Ulysses*"!) - or to *intuitively* fashion his translation to incorporate them? :

"*White thy fambles, red thy gan*            "Weiß deine *fambles*, rot dein *gan*
*And thy quarrains dainty is*                 Und dein *quarrains* fein umrissen
*Couch a hogshead with me then*               *Couch a hogshead* mit mir denn
*In the darkmans clip and kiss*"              Des *darkmans* knuddeln und küssen"

(page 34)

(* Meanings of the Gypsy words are given in Stuart Gilbert: "James Joyce's 'Ulysses'" <Faber and Faber, London 1930> as: *fambles* - hands, *gan* - mouth, *quarrains* - body, limbs, *couch a hogshead* - lie down, *darkmans* - night.) Thus informed, the translator may be gulled into giving the (cant) words an idiomatic expressiveness in — 'Pfötchen (Hände); Gusche, Schnütchen (Mund); Stelzen, Stemmen, Stenge (Beine); schlummern, schunkeln

(sich wiegen); knutschen (umarmen)' or whatever could be bent to rhyme and rhythm. This could constitute overtranslation as these words are more accessible to a German reader than the 'Gypsy' of the original is to an English one. Would it not be better to fit the strange items into the context of the whole poem in the way suggested above? The fact that *couch a hogshead* remains teasingly enigmatic and *darkmans* (night) has a pseudo-genitive form (= des Nachts), would further support this line. Significant words such as 'weiß, rot, fein umrissen' assure understanding (as do their counterparts) while the *culture words* are treated as such to fire the imagination.

The extracts so far have featured peculiarities of language and the way they are exploited by Joyce. Although the translator may seize on particular fragments in order to wring out to the full qualities he perceives in the original, he is nevertheless required to deal with the whole as a literary work. This could mean not only 'seeing the point and explaining it away to the reader' but also trying to 'come to grips' with the hidden mind of Joyce through the actual text over a sustained period. Looking now at longer sections from "*Ulysses*", we will see that 'language' rules and formulations may supply a base, but not a complete answer to the task of putting Joyce into his own words. In the end much will be sensed rather than clinically extracted. A saving grace, however, is that this sensing will almost certainly be backed up by an intuitive logic.

## Applying intuitive rationale and linguistic logic to "Ulysses"

Translation, as a science, revolves around the idea of linguistic accountability; in dealing with a writer such as Joyce, however, the norms are often based on a single experience of a work, the translator's perception of it, and ultimately on his point of view. A 'literary quality' may also prove an unreliable guide, for, whereas this might tolerate the occasional infelicitous sentence, the kind of 'spoken' story-telling running through *"Ulysses"* makes this the norm. Usually it is much easier to understand strange language in larger units, but with Joyce the translator is constantly compelled to look at details and see for himself what the words contain. Some situations may respond to a propositional approach (much as the Cloze Technique relies on 'stored data' to fill in the blanks) but others will demand much more than just the ability to appreciate a probability — they will call for a positive involvement. The following extract is full of expressive description and requires reasoned thought more than methodical expertise —

1  *"Oot: a dullgarbed old man from the curbstone tendered his wares, his mouth*
2  *opening: oot.*
3  *— Four laces for a penny.*
4  *Wonder why he was struck off the rolls. Had his office in Hume street. Same*
5  *house as Molly's namesake, Tweedy, crown solicitor for Waterford. Has that*
6  *silk hat ever since. Relics of old decency. Mourning too. Terrible comedown,*
7  *poor wretch! Kicked around like snuff at a wake. O'Callaghan on his last legs."*

(page 77)

Dealing with what the words imply might give rise to these considerations —

Lines 1-2: 'oot' is intended as the only audible part of the man's cry, '[b]oot [laces]', and could be imitated in 'Schnüüü' (Schnü[rsenkel]) to sound like a newsboy's cry. The actual colour (grey, favoured by lawyers) could lie behind 'dull' in 'dullgarbed' [graugekleidet], but the tone of the passage suggests 'dull → sombre → miserable' and therefore 'trübgekleidet'. One could associate 'his mouth opening (and producing no sound' with 'his mouth-opening (shaped in 'oo-ing')' and reflect this in 'Mundwerk' for the expected 'Mund' and reinforce this by 'klaffte'.

Line 4: 'wonder why ...' is not marked as a question and so could be taken as '[one could] just wonder why' with the air of incredulity felt in such as 'ich möchte wohl wissen'; this comes out even stronger in 'das möcht' wohl wissen'.

Line 6: 'silk (hat)' implies not only worn out but the same one; the silk hat is both a left-over and a symbol of former times (eg. Zylinder), therefore '[den Zylinder] von damals [hat er immer noch auf]'; 'relics' here are evidence rather than remains, so 'Zeugen [von Anstand]' would fit better than 'Überbleibsel'. The association of the top hat with funerals underlines 'mourning too' (the hat is in mourning for a former position of respect); 'mourning' suggests 'Trauerkleidung' (the hat) yet it could refer to the man's state of mind (traurig) — 'aus Trauer' would leave the question open.

For 'comedown', 'Niedergang' would translate its meaning as 'decline', but here the sense is a 'let down (shame tinged with disappointment)' to be found in 'Reinfall'.

Line 7: the same approach applies to 'poor wretch' — 'armer Schelm' has a nuance of ambiguity, 'armer Kerl' emphasizes the person, 'armes Wesen' stresses the situation, but 'armer Teufel!' includes reference to character, regret for the position and pity for the man's condition. A problem with 'kicked about like snuff at a wake' is that it may be difficult to do justice to its Irish connotation in translation. If it refers to the liberal and indiscriminate passing around of some (insignificant?) commodity at a special function, then 'Schnupftabak' would not fit the context; even the colloquial 'Schnuppe' for something of little consequence offers no help. Joyce may have used 'snuff' euphemistically for 'a pinch (a drop of the hard stuff!)' to work with 'sniff', in which case 'Schnäpschen' might fit. Low German 'der Nipp' (nose) does not really invade 'nippen' (take a sip) but it might suggest 'Nippchen' as a glass of Schnaps to be handed around at a wake. The important thing, however, is to convey the sense of 'kicked around'. Keeping the context of 'Totenwache' (wake) might allow something like 'wie ein Rippchen beim Leichenschmaus', especially if used with the colloquial 'rumgeschubst', to translate the sense if not the word. The temptation otherwise is to add a touch of Joyce by using 'Nipp-sachen' (in a usual meaning of 'knick-knacks' but with the subtle suggestion of 'hard liquors') as things likely to be passed around at a wake. Although 'on his last legs' refers idiomatically to the old man's state, it could also mean that he is disposing of his final stock; this may not come out in 'er pfeift aus dem letzten Loch' but the expression is acceptable as equally idiomatic.

An attempt to colour accuracy with an intuitive feeling for what Joyce puts both into and behind his words could suggest the following translation:

"Schnüüü: ein trübgekleideter alter Mann bot am Bordstein seine Waren an, wobei sein Mundwerk klaffte: Schnüüü.
—Vier Schnürsenkel einen Penny.
Das möcht' wohl wissen, warum er denn nur von der Liste gestrichen wurde. Sein Büro hatte er in der Hume Street. In demselben Haus wie Mollys Namensvetter, Tweedy, der Kronanwalt für Waterford. Den Zylinder von damals hat er immer noch auf. Zeugen von Anstand. Aus Trauer auch. Schrecklicher Reinfall, armer Teufel! Rumgeschubst wie Nipp-sachen bei einer Totenwache. O'Callaghan pfeift nun auf dem letzten Loch."

### Making sense of ordered nonsense

The 'pieces of language' serving in the following extract as *narrative* appear to be little more than idiotic ramblings. Seen as colourful descriptions of the setting — a newspaper editor's office and the frantic search for 'copy' — they become in reality, remarkably coherent. By overcoming the practical problems of tailoring the translation to fit a pattern (in this case, a Limerick), making such expressions as 'Joe Miller' for

'joke' understandable, and dealing effectively with the 'Irishism' of the oxymoron, 'I feel a strong weakness', a translator can avoid the indignity of explanatory footnotes to:

*"LENEHAN'S LIMERICK*

1    — '*There's a ponderous pundit MacHugh*

2    *Who wears goggles of ebony hue.*

3    *As mostly he sees double*

4    *to wear them why trouble?*

5    *I can't see the Joe Miller.** Can you?'*    (17ᵀᴴ cent. comedian; here, old joke, 'chestnut')

6         *In mourning for Sallust, Mulligan says. Whose mother is beastly dead.*

7         *Miles Crawford crammed the sheets into a sidepocket.*

8    — *That'll be all right, he said. I'll read the rest after. That'll be all right.*

9         *Lenehan extended his hands in protest.*

10   — *But my riddle! he said. What opera is like a railwayline?*

11   — *Opera? Mr O'Madden Burke's sphinx face reriddled.*

12        *Lenehan announced gladly:*

13   — *The Rose of Castile. See the wheeze? Rows of cast steel. Gee!*

14        *He poked Mr O'Madden Burke mildly in the spleen. Mr O'Madden Burke*

15   *fell back with grace on his umbrella, feigning a gasp.*

16   — *Help! he sighed. I feel a strong weakness.*"

(page 110)

The first task is to deal with the limerick, in substance, form and meaning — both this and the following riddle are intended as 'stopgaps' for a local newspaper — not by substituting a similar one, but by *translating* it, even though its contents have little bearing on the situation. The 'nonsense' factor allows some degree of movement and the interpretation of 'Joe Miller' as 'joke' (Joe [Miller] = short form of 'jo[ke]') would be justified as the name has a restricted relevance and is meaningless to German readers. A little ingenuity could come up with:

"Der Gelehrte MacHugh voller Gewicht
Trägt pechschwarze Brille vorm Gesicht.
Er gibt sich die Mühe, wozu?
denn er sieht meistens doppelt, nu!
Wo steckt der Witz? Weißt du? Ich nicht!"

This neither adds to, nor detracts from the (non)sense in that it follows the meanings in the words, for example, 'pechschwarze Brille' for the intended 'Sonnenbrille'. Shape is also preserved and the impact is concentrated in the last line as in the original.

Dealing with the solution to the riddle '*Rose of Castile*' = '*rows of cast steel*' (line 13) presents a different problem. The accuracy of '*rows of cast steel* [Gußstahl]' is important only in that it must demonstrate an equivalent sound to the opera's title. As 'Gußstahl' has only a marginal resemblance to 'Castile (Kastilien)' and 'Schienen',

'Gleis' and the operative word 'Reihen' [rows] have none to 'Rose', the best answer may be to include both English and German, providing this is done *surreptitiously* and as a *natural* part of the reply. This could be done by adding something like 'kapiert?' and reinforcing this by 'trifft der Witz?' for *'see the wheeze?'* to lead into the self-acclaim in 'Gee!', emphasized in 'na, so was!' or similar, giving — 'Rose of Castile. Kapiert? *Rows of cast steel.* Trifft der Witz? Reihen von Gußstahl. Na, so was!'.

Overall translation is probably more influenced by the way the words are to be read than by clinical meanings and only *intuitive logic* can bring this out fully —

Line 6 : by *'in mourning'* Joyce is trying to be devious — there could well be a hidden reference to the black lines which enclose obituary notices (im Trauerrand?) — in combining 'lamentation over' and 'respect for' (the rôle of Sallust, a Roman writer, is only of interest to historians). Translation must opt for 'grämen' or 'trauern', but here one could be as devious as Joyce with 'aus Trauer um'. Almost any number of interpretations can be found for *'beastly dead'* — 'dead as mutton' (as a carcase), 'very dead(!)', 'horribly dead' etc. In 'viehisch [tot]', both the manner and the result of dying are expressly touched upon. In the same way, colloquial expression ranges from a mild 'draufgegangen' to 'verröchelt, verreckt, abgekratzt' and so on. When applied to persons, 'krepieren' implies 'to die wretchedly (as an animal)' and if this could be qualified in the Joyce manner by 'tödlich' (= beastly), it would come very close to *'beastly dead'* in 'tödlich krepiert'.

Line 8 : *'that'll be all right'* requires a little more than 'das wird in Ordnung sein'; we can only guess whether the remark is intended to be abrupt or condescending — 'in Ordnung', 'geht in Ordnung' or 'schon gut'. It may be possible to cover both these eventualities (and keep the sense) by echoing 'schon gut' later in 'geht in Ordnung'. Without reference to a specific occasion *'after'* must be understood as 'afterwards', that is, 'after this' [nachher]. On the other hand, 'später' could be qualified in some way (eg. 'dann später') and here 'erst später' would fit the mood of the remark.

Line 9 : in translating *'in protest'* by the adverb 'protestierend' and not 'zum Protest', the act of extending the hands (in protest) is also covered.

Line 10 : the riddle can be set out in German (where it makes as much sense!) so that the reader is not only invited to expect a ludicrous answer, but also prepared to see the point (play on [English] words). It must be made clear that *'railwayline'* refers to the parallel rails [Schienen] in rows, 'Geleise' being preferred to 'Gleis' [track].

Line 11 : Joyce fully exploits expressive description in *'sphinx face'* in that the words themselves are enigmatic — was the face normally like that of a sphinx, inscrutable [unerforschlich]? - or did it just take on this appearance when its owner *'reriddled'* (ie. repeated the question both to himself and to the questioner)? - whether in utter contempt, disbelief or bewilderment, is left open. The author seems to indicate (by the genitive) that Mr O'Madden Burke had a 'sphinx-like' face and then clouds this

by letting the face, and not its owner, 'reriddle' the question. The translator could adopt similar tactics by drawing attention to *'reriddled'*. The issue is compounded, however, by the word itself — is the man returning the question, re-phrasing it, or sifting through it (- by passing it through a 'riddle' [sieve]!) to find the answer? In the last case, North German 'Rätter' [= Sieb] might be of service in such fanciful versions as 'Oper? rätselrätterte das Sphinxgesicht ... ' (durchrätterte das Rätsel); the key factor, however, is the part played by 're- ' — does this signify 'repeated' (wieder-)? 'rebuffed' (wider-)? 're-stated' (um-)? or 'returned' ([zu]rück-)? It may be possible to cover most of these and also imitate the sound in 'rückrätselte'.

<u>Line 15</u>: *'fell back with grace'* provides an opportunity to 'flesh out' the meanings of a single word, 'graziös' [gracefully, elegantly], in a Joyce manner — 'sackte graziös auf seinen Regenschirm' (collapsed onto ... and not just fell back). As *'feigning'* is another way of saying 'imitating', 'simulierend' could fit better than 'vortäuschen, vorgeben', while the *'gasp'* [Keuchen] itself is best described as a 'deep intake of breath' — 'einen tiefen Atemzug simulierend'.

<u>Line 16</u>: clearly the 'Irishness' of the words *'I feel a strong weakness'* must figure in translation. The device itself (oxymoron) serves to draw attention to the way that language can trip over itself in trying to be too correct — by setting 'strong' (in the sense of 'pronounced, considerable') against the nonsense of 'strength of weakness', Joyce is playing on the fact that 'a <u>great</u> weakness' is quite acceptable. In German, 'eine starke Schwäche' will, if anything, enhance the 'Irish' effect.

A model translation of the remaining lines might therefore run:

"Aus Trauer um Sallust, sagt Mulligan. Dessen Mutter tödlich krepiert ist.
Myles Crawford stopfte sich die Blätter in eine der Seitentaschen.
— Schon gut, sagte er. Die übrigen lese ich erst später. Geht in Ordnung.
Lenehan streckte protestierend die Hände aus.
— Aber mein Rätsel! sagte er. Welche Oper gleicht einem Eisenbahngeleise?
— Oper? rückrätselte das Sphinxgesicht des Herrn O'Madden Burke.
Mit Freuden verkündigte Lenehan:
— *The Rose of Castile*. Kapiert? *Rows of cast steel*. Trifft der Witz? Reihen von Gußstahl. Na, so was!
Er puffte Mr O'Madden Burke leise in die Milze. Mr O'Madden Burke sackte, einen tiefen Atemzug simulierend, graziös auf seinen Regenschirm.
— Hilfe! seufzte er. Ich fühle eine starke Schwäche."

### Capturing the images locked in Joyce's words

Joyce is particularly aware of the power of words to create images, not only in what they describe, but in what they suggest. Examples abound in *"Ulysses"* where the reader, through the medium of 'conversational observations', is at once invited and persuaded to '*miterleben*'. In these situations, setting, flavour, mood and response to

idiom are of extreme importance. In the following extract Joyce is not just describing a scene, he is 'talking us into it'. The sudden change from painting a picture to a very thought provoking 'writer ↔ reader' involvement is a feature to be handled carefully in translation. The matter is complicated by a number of fascinating word-pictures. The ability to shape and blend the resources of the target language is necessary, of course, but first must come the full and sensitive appreciation of the text, perhaps requiring a native speaker familiarity in order to be moved by such confections as 'housed awnings', 'hoofthuds lowringing' and 'countrybred chawbacon'. Joyce, moreover, discards normal syntax as well as interspersing descriptive narrative with personal remarks —

1  *"Grafton street gay with housed awnings lured his senses. Muslin prints, silkdames*

2  *and dowagers, jingle of harnesses, hoofthuds lowringing in the baking causeway.*

3  *Thick feet that woman has in the white stockings. Hope the rain mucks them up*

4  *on her. Countrybred chawbacon. All the beef up to the heels were in. Always gives*

5  *a woman clumsy feet. Molly looks out of plumb."*

<div style="text-align: right">(page 137)</div>

The meanings of the words are not specifically defined but set out in a series of vivid images. The onus is thus on the translator to establish the accuracy of his own impressions. This accuracy is not determined by any *preciseness* in the words (although they are straightforward enough) but by Joyce's ability to both activate and cultivate the imagination, gaining from the fact that language is, as Leonard Palmer suggests:

" a series of hints from which the hearer has to piece together the sense intended. These hints, however, may vary in plainness. It is wearisome to hear a spade always called a spade, and often the hearer is more stimulated by an allusiveness which requires a greater effort of imagination or thought on his part."

(Palmer: "Descriptive and Comparative Linguistics" <Faber & Faber, London 1972> page 315)

This leads to a critical examination of the text based on both informed and deductive intuition. Some questions raised are — does *'housed awnings'* (line 1) mean that awnings used for privacy or shade are now tied back (by sashes or, in the case of shops, in 'housings')? - or is Joyce hinting that each awning/blind/curtain 'belongs' to one house as a part of its character? ... in *'hoofthuds lowringing'* (line 2) does Joyce intend the rhythm and sound of the words (thud, ring) simply to enhance a visual image of the horses stamping their hoofs or to supersede it? ... does *'the baking causeway'* (line 2) cover all the meanings of excessive heat (as in an oven), being unbearably hot (reflected in a shimmering heat), - or only drying out (in the sun)? ... is the inserted phrase *'Hope the rain mucks them up on her'* (line 3) offered as a wish? - a prophetic observation (in that the rain is likely to do so)? - a spiteful remark (uttered on behalf of the reader)? - a prejudged expression of contempt for the woman? or, indeed, all of these? ... can *'all the beef up to the heels were in'* (line 4) be taken to mean that her legs were swollen as far down as her (tight) shoes? - or does 'beef' hold a submerged reference to a coarse country upbringing with 'up to the heels' to mean 'completely'?

Even a native reader is limited in his understanding by his ability to reconcile Joyce's phantasised language with the real world. The translator, groping amongst all aspects of language entwined in the text, must make the most of the words that Joyce has selected for him by trying to convey the right amount of 'allusiveness' yet keeping himself fully in tune with what Joyce actually means by the words he uses —

'*gay*' (line 1) : visually bright, colourful, also suggests a cheerful, lively character. Here 'beleben' (to enrich [colours]) / (to bustle, liven up) points to 'belebt von'

'*housed awnings*' (line 1) : drawn to, tied up in sashes, having fittings, or could 'housed' mean 'occupied' [besetzt] in the sense that each awning (or curtain) concealed one or more 'onlookers'? If the curtains are lashed secure (like ships moored at a quay) by colourful trappings, then 'fest gezurrt' would be appropriate

'*silkdames and dowagers*' (line 1-2) : points to appearances, attitudes and lifestyles, not to 'widows of social standing', therefore — 'Seidendamen und Matronen'

'*hoofthuds lowringing*' (line2) : hoofbeats producing a ringing sound on the cobblestones of the causeway (paved, metalled road) and echoing like a blacksmith's hammer on a ringing anvil, rhythmically and in a duller, lower register, as the hoofbeats of a shod horse. Both the ringing and its dull echo are found in 'Hufschläge dumpfklingend'

'*baking*' (line 2) : as dried up, scorching, unbearably hot in the sun, can be summed up by 'bratend' (sich in der Sonne braten lassen)

'*thick feet*' (line 3) : big, clumsy, clodhopping (as a country yokel), puffed up, ungainly, can all be inferred by 'plumpe Füße'

'*in the white stockings*' (line 3) : can be seen as a means of identifying the woman and also to specify where the feet are — 'in ihren weißen Strümpfen' could do this and single out a special feature of the woman for attention

'*hope the rain*' (line 3) : is a blend of wish, malevolence, hopeful forecast (which would also be felt in 'I hope the rain doesn't --') and disparaging remark about her white stockings. Here 'hoffentlich' only brings out one aspect (hopefully, -) but all could be covered without reducing the force of the remark in 'Laß nur den Regen ...'

'*mucks them up on her*' (line 3-4) : associations with the country or farm would favour 'versauen' rather than 'beschmutzen, bespritzen, mit Schmutz patschen, beflecken' 'on her' not only implies that she is wearing the stockings but 'for her' (that is, to cause her some inconvenience or embarrassment on the way)

'*countrybred chawbacon*' (line 4) : the idea of a stupid, lolloping [watschelig], uncouth yokel is not fully brought out in 'vom Lande', while 'Bauern-' lacks a disrepect. Is 'chawbacon' a hunk of old hard bacon (the woman!) or a name for those addicted to it? If it does indeed represent a name, then a contemptuous 'Fresse' for 'face, mug, mouth, → [slobber]chops' could give rise to such as 'Speckfresse' or 'Speckfresser[in]'; as an epithet, then 'Knorrspeck' (tough, gristly) or 'Knabberspeck' would fit

'*all the beef were in*' (line 4) : is Joyce insinuating that all the 'beef' (= calves) on her legs was crammed into the stockings — 'all das dickhachsige Fleisch kam ganz und

gar rein' — or that it showed through holes in the heels ('up to'=apart from)?

'_clumsy feet_' (line 5) : ungainly, plodding, but may also apply to shape (eg. feet like a camel) and both senses could be indicated by 'Trampelfüße'

'_out of plumb_' (line 5) : could refer to a lop-sided shape but probably means not upright due to being drunk — 'aus dem Lot'

By using his own reactions as a guide and a well-founded deductive assessment as a moderating factor, the translator may yet be able to be 'faithful' to Joyce in:

"Die Grafton Street, belebt von den festgezurrten Markisen, lockte seine Sinne. Muslinfarbabdrücke, Seidendamen und Matronen, Klimpern von Pferdegeschirren, Hufschläge auf dem bratenden Fahrdamm dumpfklingelnd. Plumpe Füße hat das Weib da in ihren weißen Strümpfen. Laß sie nur den Regen ihr versauen. Knabberspeck vom Lande. All das dickhachsige Fleisch kam ganz und gar drein. Macht immer einer Frau Trampelfüße. Molly scheint aus dem Lot zu sein."

## Meeting the demands of a conversational style

The story in "_Ulysses_" is unfolded through the eyes and in the words of the characters, and Joyce, even where he 'intervenes', adopts the style of a conversation with his reader. In these circumstances the translator may discover that he is not just required to critically examine the text and supply corresponding words but also to take on the rôle of each character in turn, using such language as might be at the disposal of that 'personality'. Working within the target language, he is expected to exploit all the idiom and colour he can prevail upon. For better or worse, the words will be his own — the subject matter, however, will be the thoughts of Joyce whispering playfully in his ear. The contents of the following extract are easy to grasp; can the translator re-tell them as well as Joyce? _(the conversation begins outside a 'bookie's')_ —

1  " — _Even money, said Lenehan returning. I knocked against Bantam Lyons in_
2  _there going to back a bloody horse someone gave him that hasn't an earthly._
3  _Through here._
4  _They went up the steps and under Merchants' Arch. A darkbacked figure scanned_
5  _the books on the hawker's cart._
6  — _There he is Lenehan said._
7  — _Wonder what he's buying, M'Coy said, glancing behind._
8  — '_Leopoldo or the Bloom is on the Rye_', _Lenehan said._

(page 192)

Since the passage is colloquial in style there will be a number of alternatives for the different expressions. Technical accuracy is less important however than being properly understood. For '_even money_' (line 1), technically correct 'gleicher Einsatz' has far less meaning for the _punter_ for example, than 'volle Summe'. The unexpected chance encounter in '_I knocked against ..._' (line 1), although adequately translated by 'ich bin mit ... begegnet', would enter the conversation as 'da drinnen bin ich auf ...

gestoßen'. For 'a bloody horse' (line 2) many equivalents can be imagined or devised. The idea of contempt rules out 'Pferd', even if qualified as 'dummes, verschrottenes, wackeliges' etc. Uncomplimentary metaphors like 'Schinderfleisch', 'Klamottenkiste', 'Misthaufen', 'Aas', 'Knochenbeutel', 'Klepper' might apply if the creature had already been mentioned. Although not extreme, 'so 'n blöden Gaul' [accusative], would be most probable here. The mixture of curiosity and perplexity in 'I wonder what he's buying' (line 7) does not come through in 'ich bin gespannt' or 'ich frage mich nur' in spite of their colloquial style — 'Na, was der wohl kauft' (no question mark) has just the right tone. Joyce makes a stipulation, however, that the title 'Bloom is on the Rye' (line 8) is treated in a conversational way as both a witty remark and a naive play on words. Fortunately, word associations (Leopold Bloom is the central character in "Ulysses") can be carried over into German — 'Blume': bloom, flower, blossoming aroma [wine], froth [beer], haze, glow; 'Korn': rye (Brotgetreide, Roggen) / strong drink; 'blühen' (in the sense of 'blooming'): to thrive on.

Of great importance here is that the translator should always appear to be saying 'na, hör mal, nicht wahr, na ja!, seht mal, doch, zwar' etc. although he cannot actually include any of these. With this in mind, a translation could run:

"Volle Summe, sagte Lenehan zurückkehrend. Da drinnen bin ich auf Bantam Lyons gestoßen; der wollte auf so 'n blöden Gaul setzen, den ihm irgendjemand als Tip gegeben hatte, mit nicht einmal die bißchen Chance drin.

Sie gingen den Steig hinauf und dann weiter unter den Merchants' Arch. Eine dunkelrückige Gestalt wühlte prüfend in einem Bücherhaufen auf dem Trödelkarren eines Straßenhändlers.
— Da ist er, sagte Lenehan.
— Na, was der wohl kauft, sagte M'Coy, sich umsehend.
— "Leopoldo oder es blüht d' Bloom auf dem Korn", sagte Lenehan.

In this the author's words have not simply been given new labels, but transplanted into the fruitful soil of another language.

### Translating 'nonsense' by ordering disorder

All too often in "Ulysses", as the following example will show, a translator is faced with the task of trying to make 'sensible nonsense out of nonsense that makes sense'. In doing so he must not only avoid becoming entangled in the web of semantic and syntactic confusion that Joyce weaves for him, but he must leave that web intact. He cannot use words for words' sake (even though Joyce appears to do so) but handle them with extreme precision. The problem is whether all the unusual words (especially those created for the purpose) can be re-assembled in the manner of the author. The translator must be exact in his copy and, no less important, he must pass on the right feel of hidden substance, the right taste of the text material and the right ring to the language. German might well supply a stock of malleable word-parts with a sufficient

plasticity to allow even the most fanciful of creations, but translating the text in the way demanded by a Joycean 'literary language' requires something more than juggling with words. A number of strange forms in the passage seem at first sight to suggest an easy, direct imitation in German; closer inspection, however, reveals hidden difficulties even here — *(two ladies are peeping through their curtained window)*:

1  *"In a giggling peel young goldbronze voices blended, Douce with Kennedy your*

2  *other eye. They threw young heads back, bronze gigglegold, to let freefly their*

3  *laughter, screaming, your other, signals to each other, high piercing notes.*

4  *Ah, panting, sighing, sighing, ah, fordone, their mirth died down.*

5  *Miss Kennedy lipped her cup again, raised, drank a sip and gigglegiggled.*

6  *Miss Douce, bending over the teatray, ruffled again her nose and rolled droll*

7  *fattened eyes. Again Kennygiggles, stooping, her fair pinnacles of hair, stooping,*

8  *her tortoise napecomb showed, spluttered out of her mouth her tea, choking in*

9  *tea and laughter, coughing with choking, crying:*

10  *— O greasy eyes! Imagine being married to a man like that! she cried. With his*

11  *bit of beard!*

12  *Douce gave full vent to a splendid yell, a full yell of full woman, delight,*

13  *joy, indignation.*

14  *— Married to the greasy nose! she yelled.*

(page 213)

The living sound picture of the two ladies 'gigglechoking' over (and into) their tea derives from the shape of the words and the impression they have on the inner ear rather than from any wide range of meaning they might possess. In order to bring this out fully, a translator may be required to show 'a nice turn of phrase' or, on occasion, to produce a word 'out of the hat'. Joyce compresses all possible effect into *unusually usual* words (none in the above is in any way complex) just by exploiting them for what they are. Would German allow a translator to do likewise? An attempt could comprise:

<u>Line 1</u>: Both the onomatopoeic (giggling) and the visual (goldbronze) blend in a hint of alliteration. This could feature in 'Schall' [peal] with '(ver)schmelzen' [blend (into)] to give '<u>in einem kichernden Schall verschmolzen die Jugendstimmen</u>', thus leaving 'kichern' to supply the onomatopoeic quality of 'giggle'.

<u>Line 2</u>: The idea of a reciprocal 'head throwing back' could be given with '<u>sie warfen sich</u> (= gegenseitig) <u>die jungen Köpfe zurück</u>', while '<u>bronzenes Kichergold</u>' would do service for 'bronze gigglegold'. Rhythmic quality and repetition of 'l' sounds would recommend '<u>sie ließen ihr Lachen los</u>' for 'let freely their laughter'.

<u>Line 4</u>: The Inversion, 'fordone — done for' (exhausted by / finished with, laughing), provides an opportunity for similar inventiveness, although in a different form, with '<u>Kicherschöpft</u>' [Kicher/erschöpft]. Apart from being a close translation, '<u>starb ihr Spaß hin</u>' has the right sound and cadence for 'their mirth died down'.

<u>Line 5</u>: Translation should imitate the marked sequence of actions in 'lipped - raised -

drank - gigglegiggled' and with the same economy of words — 'lippte an ihrer Tasse wieder, hob sie, schluckte ein Nippchen, und kicherkicherte'.

**Line 6:** Although 'droll fattened eyes' really means 'funnily swollen eyes', not 'funny, swollen eyes', it does allow both interpretations. A liberty might be taken here to enhance the sound in, for example, 'schwankhaft (scherzhaft) schwammige Augen', while stressing 'funnily'. Just as Joyce deliberately 'fogs' the issue by omitting the comma (droll, fattened), the translator could leave 'drollig[e]' to take on the rôle of either an adverb (rollte drollig [geschwollene Augen]) or an adjective (rollte drollige, geschwollene Augen) and a little of both in 'sie rollte drollig aufgeschwollene Augen'.

**Line 7:** 'again Kennygiggles' = 'again [there are] giggles from Kenn[ed]y'? - or does it mean 'repeated (= again) giggles'? In 'wieder ein Kennykichkichkicherchen', which imitates the sound of choking back a giggle, both are covered. In 'fair pinnacles of hair', the first impression is one of 'gespitzte Türme → Getürm', but Joyce is being devious here by suggesting 'pinned up' [hochgestecked mit Haarnadeln], as well as 'piled up'. The association 'Haarkamm' (comb) with 'Bergkamm' (crest) and a 'Haar — Berg' relationship (for example, 'die Haare stehen [jemandem] zu Berge' - stands on end) could be exploited in 'die blonden Bergkämme ihre Haare'.

**Line 8:** 'showed' simply means 'came into view', but it may admit a little interweaving of alliterative effect in 'ihr Schildpatt-Nackenkamm kam zum Schein'.

**Lines 8-9:** A careful placing of the words is important in 'choking in tea and laughter, coughing with choking', but the part played by the right choice of preposition is not to be undervalued — 'würgend an Gelächter, hustend vor Würgen'.

**Line 10:** 'O greasy eyes!' marks a distinguishing feature — eyes, bloated and fat with a glossy-greasy look. 'Schmalzaugen' would stress sloppy sentimentality, 'ölig', shifty or affected fervour, and 'fettig' a greasiness suggestive of luxury, but 'schmierig', includes in its greasiness the idea of smuttiness, dirtiness, sordidness, shallowness and even being mean and 'smarmy', all of which lie behind the remark.

**Line 12:** 'gave full vent to a splendid yell' — 'machte dem herrlichen Schrei volle Luft' is too unimaginatively correct, 'stieß mit einem gellenden Schrei aus' exaggerates the spontaneity of the act. The reader's imagination might be fired while keeping to the meaning with 'ließ einem herrlich gellenden Schrei vollen Schall'.

**Line 14:** The focus of attention must be on the 'greasy nose' which is a part of the 'package deal'. Expressions such as 'schmierige / fettige Nase' lack any real impact. The idea of a greasy (shiny) film could be implied by 'Schweiß-' (as 'Schweißwolle' for unscoured fleece) and given a 'cutting edge' in '-Schnauze' (or even a colloquial 'Schnute'). This is yet more pointed in 'Verheiratet mit dieser Schweißschnauze!'.

The translator must not only satisfy himself that he has chosen the right words, but he has to use them to produce the same effect on the reader that Joyce is aiming at. The passage itself is *artificially* contrived, yet *naturally* enjoyed by the reader — can translation work in the same way? The following is a suggested attempt to persuade a

reader to respond intuitively to, rather than to mentally evaluate Joyce's complexities:

"In einem kichernden Schall verschmolzen goldbronzene Jugendstimmen, Douce mit Kennedy Ihr anderes Auge. Sie warfen sich die jungen Köpfe zurück, bronzenes Kichergold, ihr Lachen los zu lassen, schreiend, Ihr anderes, Winke aneinander, hohe durchdringende Töne.

Ah, schnaufend, seufzend, ah, kicherschöpft, starb ihr Spaß hin.

Miss Kennedy lippte wieder an ihrer Tasse, kippte sie, schluckte ein Nippchen davon und kicherkicherte. Miss Douce, sich über das Teebrett beugend, kräuselte die Nase und rollte drollig aufgeschwollene Augen. Wieder ein Kennykichkichkicherchen, sich vornüberbeugend, die blonden Bergkämme ihrer Haare, sich herablassend, bis ihr Schildpatt-Nackenkamm zum Schein kam, prustete aus dem Mund einen Sprudel Tee, würgend an Gelächter, hustend vor Würgen, schreiend:

— O schmierige Augen! Stell dir bloß vor, mit einem seinesgleichen verheiratet zu sein! schrie sie. Mit dem bißchen Bart!

Douce ließ einem herrlich gellenden Schrei vollen Schall, dem vollen Gellschrei des vollen Weibs, Wonne, Freude, Empörung.

— Verheiratet mit dieser Schweißschnauze! gellte sie."

### Translating nonsense 'word for word'

The more specific relationship of 'language$^a$ ← word // word → language$^b$' and its problems for the translator are well illustrated by this piece of reminiscing and mind wandering by one of Joyce's characters. Although it may be the author himself who is playing with words, it is presented as a sort of game, and for the translator, the 'name of the game' is to get the words right in —

1   " *Think you're escaping and run into yourself. Longest way round is the shortest*

2   *way home. And just when he and she. Circus horse walking in a ring. Rip van*

3   *Winkle we played. Rip: tear in Henry Doyle's overcoat. Van: breadvan deliver-*

4   *ing. Winkle: cockles and periwinkles.*"

<div align="right">(page 309)</div>

Here the translator is compelled to 'tag' the three elements of "*Rip van Winkle*" by a similar use of homonyms (the device is specified by the text; the translator is denied the opportunity of substituting something equally effective). The problems involved in such an exercise are immediately apparent and fall into two areas:

(a) *sound of words*. German pronunciation of 'van' would be closer to the Dutch / Low German 'fonn' [fæn] sound, that is, it might admit 'Pfanne' but not 'Wanne'.

(b) *meaning*. One should not assume that, because the name is cited in the Anglicised form, '*Winkle*' will not be seen in a German light as (originally) 'Winkel', corner, and perhaps only tolerating such offshoots as 'abgelegene Stelle', 'Winkelgeschäft'.

The associations, furthermore, are made in an English context. In translation, should the words be given the same associations in German (with different meanings),

the same meanings (with whatever degree of association possible), or simply put into a German context (eg. 'Rippchen von Winkelladen')? The result, however, must be seen as a <u>translation</u>, seen to have significance within its (own) text, and seen to exploit a similar relationship in the German language. The German renderings must at all costs avoid appearing as artificially condescending; on the other hand, they must try to take in the points made by Joyce. In *'Rip'* he is contrasting the scope of English in having a wealth of different meanings (homonyms) with its inability to define them properly; with *'van'* he underlines the temerity of the English language in seeing everything only as English; he uses *'Winkle'* to illustrate the naive chain of thought that can pass for a constructive piece of language. Intuitively reacting to these points could prompt the translator in his search for the right words:

"<u>Rip</u>" - 'Rips' for 'gerippter Stoff' [ribbed cloth] is possible, although the word has a limited use and does not refer to the tear in the coat. Spelling out the letters R.I.P is another possibility. Could the idea of a tattered, threadbare coat be exploited in '<u>R.I.P, was über Henry Doyles abgedroschenen Überzieher eingetragen werden soll</u>' ('Eintrag' is not only an inscribed name, but also 'weft' [Querfäden] in weaving)?

"<u>van</u>" - 'Pfanne' is the only real possibility. Could it be extended as far as '<u>aus der Pfann' auf das Brot</u>'?

"<u>Winkle</u>" - The reference to winkles, cockles, may be preserved by taking 'Winkel' to mean 'Schlupfwinkel', hideouts, or even the multichambered shells. Could 'Winkle' be stretched to '<u>Winkle - Ecken wo Seeschnecken stecken, Uferschnecken auch</u>'?

As it is extremely unlikely that the German reader will compare the versions 'word-for-word' with the original (although a 'translation' is assumed), we are dealing primarily with word-associations along the same lines, but, as pointed out above, the 'rip' in the coat, '[bread] van', and 'Winkle, cockles, periwinkles' have a part to play in translation, perhaps to feature, if at all possible, in the following way —

"<u>Denkt man, man sei entwischt, da läuft man sich selber entgegen. Der längste Umweg wird wohl der kürzeste nach Hause sein. Und genau wie er und sie. Ein Zirkusgaul, der immer im Kreise läuft. Rip van Winkle haben wir gespielt. Rip : R.I.P, was über Henry Doyles abgedroschenen Überzieher eingetragen werden soll. Van: aus der Pfann' auf das Brot, schmeckt, was! Winkle : Ecken wo Seeschnecken stecken, und Uferschnecken auch</u>"

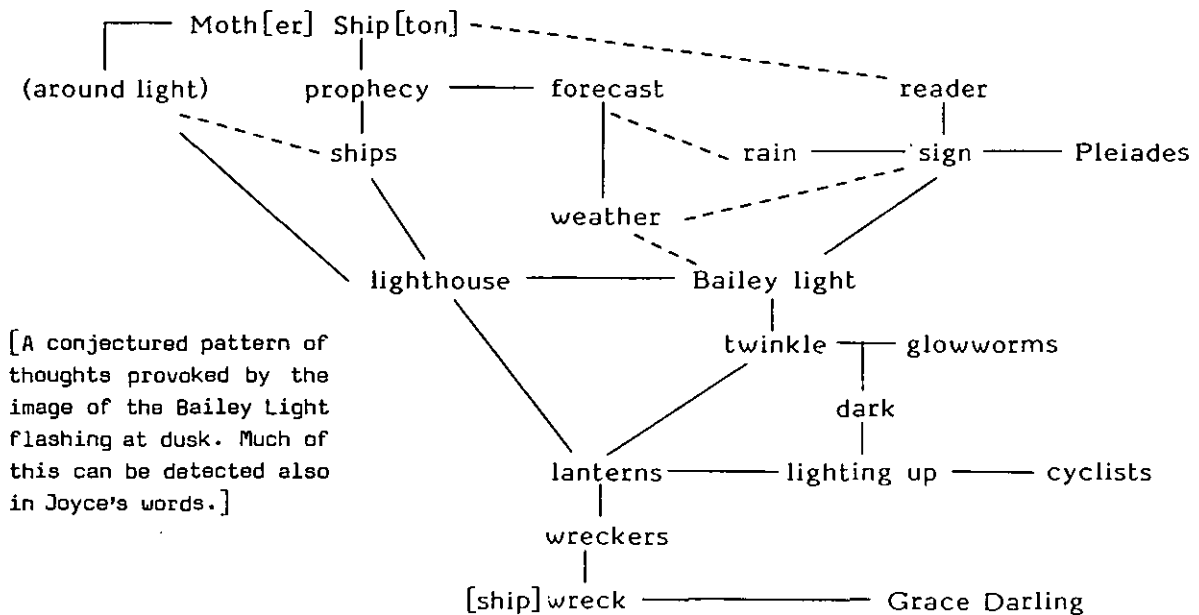### <u>Compensating in the text for a possible lack of background knowledge</u>

The corpus of shared knowledge which the author presumes in his readers, allows him, almost as of right, a freedom of expression for which the translator may have to pay dearly. Native readers are prepared, and to some extent pre-advised, for what they are to encounter. To what extent is the non-native reader disadvantaged? - and what is the translator able to do to alleviate this? Both will depend on the author in question. Joyce, in particular, not only profits from a shared 'working relationship'

within the language but counts on the support of backgound awareness. He is perhaps an extreme example of the kind of writer Katharina Reiß had in mind when she wrote:

"Es geht bei ihnen um eine breite Skala außersprachlicher Faktoren, die den Autor eines Textes dazu veranlassen, eine ganz bestimmte Auswahl unter den Mitteln zu treffen, die ihm seine Muttersprache zur Verfügung stellt, um sich einem Leser verständlich zu machen, die es ihm unter Umständen sogar erlauben, auf gewisse sprachliche Mittel zu verzichten und dabei trotzdem noch von den Angehörigen seiner Sprachgemeinschaft verstanden zu werden."

(Reiß: "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik" ⟨Hueber Verlag, München 1971⟩ page 70)

She is, of course, speaking of actual language (and its cultural conventions). Could the same apply to background? - or in the case of Joyce, to both? Certainly, a number of difficulties for Joyce's German reader arise from an absence of contextual relevance and lack of background knowledge. In the next passage the train of thought Joyce is trying to order in the mind of the reader depends on both a familiarity with the Irish / British background and on what lies behind the thoughts themselves. We may conjecture that the 'skeleton' of ideas could have looked like this —



[A conjectured pattern of thoughts provoked by the image of the Bailey Light flashing at dusk. Much of this can be detected also in Joyce's words.]

Most of the substance in the lacework of impressions is available to the native reader and the actual thread linking the ideas is easily picked up in Joyce's own words, even though they are deliberately economical in number and intentionally sketchy:

"... *Mother Shipton's prophecy that is about ships around they fly in the twinkling. No. Signs of rain it is. The royal reader. And distant hills seem coming nigh.*

*Howth. Bailey light. Two, four, six, eight, nine. See. Has to change or they might think it a house. Wreckers. Grace Darling. People afraid of the dark. Also glowworms, cyclists: lighting up time.*"

(page 308)

The translator is challenged, however, to avoid any manifest explanation and disguised

interpretation while guiding his reader through a maze of partial or non-understanding.

Clearly, the text must be followed closely; where it is designed to ambiguate the writer's intention or where it only adumbrates the projected ideas, a translation of it must do likewise. In view of the non-native reader's limited background resource, a translator cannot build on a common 'calculated guesswork'. Any 'hints' passed on must be put in a context capable of being understood — 'die Prophezeiung Mutter Shiptons' (instead of 'Mutter Shiptons Voraussage') would give some indication of that person's renown. It is far more difficult, however, where Joyce plays on the well-known saying 'ships that pass in the night' without actually quoting it; 'Schiffe huschen um Blinklicht herum' fails to capture this, although it does give a reasonable idea of '*around they fly the twinkling*'. Joyce suggestively confuses, in fact, a number of traditions and sayings in a way not open to the translator. A German reader might justifiably assume some (unknown) relevance in the name, Grace Darling; the links between '(warning / luring) *light, wreckers,* [wreck], *Grace Darling*' may not be evident in the few words allowed.

German may easily imitate the fractured style, although in doing so it should not allow unwanted meanings to infiltrate the vacant spaces provided by 'unawareness of background'. In this respect, translation could be deceptively easy, giving the text its (hidden) real meaning in the circumstances, difficult but not impossible —

"... Nach Prophezeiung Mutter Shiptons über Schiffe, huschen diese um Blinklicht herum. Nein. Anzeichen für Regen ist das. Der Royal Reader. Und ferne Berge scheinen ganz nah heranzurücken.

   Howth. Der Bailey-Leucht. Zwo, vier, sechs, acht, neun. Guck mal an! Muß abwechseln, sonst denke man vielleicht, es wäre ein Haus. Strandräuber. Grace Darling. Leute, sich fürchtend vor der Dunkelheit. Auch Glühwürmchen, Radfahrer: Lichtmacherzeit."

By following the words closely it persuades the reader to 'write in' his own version of the prophecy and to ponder the significance of 'Royal Reader' (in English and marked by capitals). Perhaps unaware who Grace Darling was, he is compelled to attribute a certain relevance to the name without the benefit of unnecessary explanation. Even the placing of 'auch' in front of 'Glühwürmchen, Radfahrer' suggests that they also switch on because they too are afraid of the dark and the subtle comparison of the glowworms and cyclists' headlamps to the wreckers' bobbing lanterns is behind 'Lichtmacherzeit'.

### Dealing with Joyce's use of 'specialized language'

Joyce frequently makes use of specialized forms of language, either actual or imitation. Sometimes openly exploiting some facet of his model, sometimes seeking to gain by subtle suggestion, he regularly employs the device in 'mockery' to add further dimensions to his work. Apart from containing a bountiful harvest of foreign languages and idiom, some sections of "*Ulysses*" are couched in a certain manner; some purport

to be psalms or prayers, some are in the fashion of biblical writings and others employ archaic forms of language. The problems of a genuine (foreign language) insert may be systematically resolved, for example, by treating it as a third, neutral language, but in the case of a cleverly contrived one, the difficulties are greater. The demands on the translator are such that he not only has to convey the right level of meaning, but do so in the same fashion and, most importantly, in the *same sort* of medium. The following extract is constructed in a style immediately recognizable to a reader as one *implying* Middle English — it is deliberately inaccurate philologically but properly employs many well-known markers ('ye', 'spake', 'yclept', etc.) and a 'medieval' sentence structure. The result, although unlikely to be verified for accuracy (by language historians), does appear to the reader as credible, if a little wildly fanciful:

1  "*And whiles they spake the door of the castle was opened and there nighed them*
2  *a mickle noise as of many that sat there at meat. And there came against the*
3  *place as they stood a young learningknight yclept Dixon. And the traveller*
4  *Leopold was couth to him sithen it had happed that they had had ado each with*
5  *other in the house of misericord where this learningknight lay by cause the*
6  *traveller Leopold came there to be healed for he was sore wounded in his breast*
7  *by a spear wherewith a horrible and dreadful dragon was smitten him for which*
8  *he did do make a salve of volatile salt and chrism as much as he might suffice.*"

(page 316)

We note that punctuation has been deliberately omitted (as was often the case in medieval literature) to confuse phrase order but not so as to prevent understanding. Some word-forms are recognizable for what they are — '*spake*', '*nighed*', '*wherewith*', '*at meat*', but others slightly less so — '*yclept*' called (Anglo-Saxon 'cleoppan' to call out, summon, 'calling name'), '*sithen*' since ('siþ'), '*couth*' known ('cuþ' preterite of 'cunnan' to know), '*chrism*' anointing oil (Greek 'χρισμα'). The section is not intended, however, as a medieval tract, but as modern English poking fun at archaic language. Joyce also utilizes the comic language element as a cover for subtle suggestion. Linking '*salve*' and '*chrism*' (healing oil and anointing oil [unguentum / chrisma]), for instance, seems to imply, in the undertones of the Latin words favoured by the Church, that the man was offered ointment for his body and (perhaps) baptism for his soul (Anglo-Saxon 'crism' for a baptismal cloth anointed with 'chrisma' would connect 'salve', 'bandage' with 'anointing'). Although appreciation of much of this depends on the awareness of the individual reader, its availability should be open to all.

German must have regard for these hidden aspects, but only within the limits imposed by the text as a piece of language. Meanings should neither be coloured nor obscured but transferred faithfully into an equivalent piece of pseudo-archaic literary language. Here Middle High German readily suggests itself. A working knowledge, both of the language and its literature (to be assumed on the part of the reader), will help to comply with Joyce's effective use of medieval terms and forms, often genuine and

always based on real ones. As in the English, a number of easily recognizable forms can be used and, wherever possible, visually marked as archaic words. A regular scheme of orthography should be adopted (based on Middle High German samples) so that the less familiar items can be correctly identified, for example, 'nâherte' [näherte], 'hûse' [im (zu) Hause], 'lermen' [Lärm], 'sît' [seit, seitdem]. This could also help to establish the identity of others, such as 'vluhtec' for 'flüchtig', 'vorhtbaerlich' for 'fürchterlich' and 'liut' for 'Leute'. Other forms which may be used could be less obvious but should fall well within the scope of the average German reader to understand them at least to the extent that the English *'yclept'*, *'mickle'*, *'couth'*, *'chrism'* are generally understood. Here, the same level of specialized vocabulary could be conveyed by a selective use of key words with an archaic flavour in prominent positions — 'sîn ambaht [Amt] volgte' (= *'he lay by cause'* <line 5>), 'wunt' [verwundet] (= *'sore wounded'* <line 6>), 'dur ein gêr' [Speer] (= *'by a spear'* <line 7>), 'vram' [sofort] (= *'he did do'* <line 8>).

Just as important as this is the actual structuring of the translated text in a genuine and convincing manner. Care must be exercised to achieve the right balance — not too specialized, not overdone, involved or artificial, and above all, not in any way ludicrous. It should be noted that Joyce's text derives its amusing quality, not from a sense of being basically funny, but from being out of place, a relic of a bygone age; it is in fact a parody in which the 'normal' idiom of the past is likened to the 'abnormal' of the present. Bearing this in mind will help to deal properly with Joyce's ingenuity by producing a translation of imagination, rather than just an imaginative translation:

" Die wîle si noch sprachen wart geoffent des sloȝȝes tor und nâherte in ein gar michel lermen alswie von vîlen liuten dâr bî tavel saȝȝen. Und dâr kâm ûf den ort dô si stunn ein junc lêrekneht mit ruofname Dixon. Und der wandeler Leopold was imu kunt sît eȝ was geschehen daȝ si samet vîl ze schaffene hân gehabet in dem hûse misericordiæ wa diser lerekneht sîn ambahte volgte ze zît dô der wandeler Leopold dâr kâm umbe daȝ er genëse denne er was sêr wunt an sîn brust dur ein gêr damite ein mortsame und vorhtbærlich drache in gestochen und eȝ wart imu vram ein salbung gemeȝȝen von vluhtec salz und chrism sovîl imu des dienen mohte"

So far as possible Middle High German word order (or an apparent lack of it) has been followed and its tense structure (eg. past participle often used as a preterite) imitated. In order to preserve authenticity in the eyes of the reader, amendments to historically correct forms are kept to a minimum and only made to avoid unnecessary confusion — as Middle High German 'in' served as accusative of 'er' and dative of the plural 'sie' (later 'ihnen'), the Old High German 'imu' (dat. masc. sing.) is retained as being closer to modern 'ihm'. The task is to make the whole sufficiently understandable and at the same time, and largely by intuition, impart the right flavour of strangeness.

Chapter VII *(The language of expressive depth and profound thought)*

## <u>Dismantling and rebuilding a 'uniqueness' in poetry</u>

*In this chapter will be discussed the immense problems of faithfully re-creating in a false environment those individual characteristics of a writer which are irrevocably tied up in his own language. Features such as word-imagery and a pseudo-syntax in poetry, for example, may possibly be accommodated linguistically in a new setting, but if the poet's own special 'way with words' is to be faithfully, unmistakably and clearly represented in translation, this has to be sensitively as well as artfully and artistically dealt with. This means that all aspects of the work should be made not only available but accessible to the reader, not least of which would be the depth of thought behind it and the revelation of language as beauty of form. This could prove to be no mean task. A very good case in point would be the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Securely bound up as they are in the English language (or rather, one person's exploitation of it), the constrictions they impose on translation by the sheer density, force and articulated quality of words are virtually insurmountable. When one adds to this the 'hidden elements' of contemplation and revelation lying at the heart of his work, total commitment on the part of the translator is a task hard to fulfil. The dangers of the translator appearing either as a failed would-be Hopkins or, at best, as an over-confident linguistic funambulist, are real indeed. All this may suggest a line of 'survive by avoiding pitfalls' but Hopkins demands a much more positive approach.*

The only justification for the translation (as opposed to a detailed survey) of a poem is that enough of its being remains to preserve a true impression and a proper enjoyment. It is often argued that there is no such thing as a 'translated' poem, only a replacement (as Jackson Mathews quite rightly says: "*to translate a poem whole is to compose another poem*" — Reuben Brower: "On Translation" <Oxford University Press, New York 1966> page 67). A qualification, however, might be that this 'other poem', if it is in the spirit and manner of the original, could well serve as a genuine translation. Can these principles be applied in the case of Hopkins? — or is so much irretrievable as to make the exercise little more than academic? To find out we look now at the various ways of approaching the task and at the application of language resource to a selection of items. This recognises that a translator's mandate is to produce as <u>fully</u> as possible the <u>whole</u> in such a way as to be both understood and appreciated by the reader but it also accepts the eventuality of having to impose some sort of priority according to the nature of the work selected. The extracts are taken from "*The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*" edited by W.H.Gardiner and N.H.McKenzie <Oxford University Press, New York 1988>.

Most significant for the translator is that he feels constantly under duress not only to translate a poem as a poem but to present the Hopkins poem as a Hopkins poem. He is made to exploit the target language, not as he might wish, but in the way that

Hopkins exploits his own, even to the extent of restructuring and redeveloping it by design. In this way the problems peculiar to Hopkins are exposed to be examined with a view to finding working solutions. This exploitation must never reflect the translator's ingenuity alone, albeit in the manner of Hopkins, as the offering then would be little more than a Hopkinsian pastiche in another language. Rather the translator treads the double path towards the ultimate goal of an exact copy in the following manner —

from a poem [unrelated] ⟶ prescriptive poem

                                    imitation ⟶ reproduction

from a translation [formless] ⟶ poetic translation

How far he must labour along these twin paths depends initially on the material and its form and ultimately on the author himself. In the case in question there is perhaps no way of dealing with the material except through the eyes of the author. The approach to the overriding problem of 're-thinking Hopkins' is therefore strongly influenced by the translator's own assessment of him.

### Differing lines of approach — putting things in the 'right' perspective

From the standpoint of the critical translator there are basically three ways of judging Hopkins through the evidence of his works — as an adept dabbler in words; as a sensitive artist; as a profound thinker. Certainly there is much to promote any of these 'points of departure'; and just as much to deter a single-minded translator! This could be illustrated briefly as follows:

[a] *seeing him simply as a very adept dabbler in words for their own sake* — the very strangeness of his adjectives, for example, often confuses their real meaning because it draws the attention rather than aids the visualization for which they were intended. The words themselves are frequently compounded into concoctions of imagery and subtle reference. Could a German reader be made to ponder the etymological connection, for example, in '*as a stallion stalwart*' (stall - stable) in such a translation as 'wie Hengst handfest' or 'wie ein Roß robust'? - or, indeed, really appreciate the associative play of '*very-violet-sweet*' in 'Veilchen-violett-süß' or 'violett-voll-süß' etc? (examples are taken from "*Hurrahing the Harvest*" ‹ibid., page 70›) or would he be able to fathom the intended imagery for what it is? Whether any experimentation is fully justified or not, one cannot deny that, even if Hopkins is merely playing with words, he will most probably do so better than the translator.

[b] *seeing him as a sensitive artist bringing out the hidden potential in his medium* — in working out the intricacies of Hopkins's much vaunted 'sprung rhythm' (basically, the carrying over of an uninterrupted stress into a following line), one tends to forget that this is a feature inherent in English speech; in admiring his predilection for the internal rhyme, little is made of the fact that this had its origins in Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse. We may see Hopkins, not so much as an innovator struggling to establish a new line, but as a responsive craftsman re-discovering a lost art and taking it on to higher levels. This is clear in "*The Wreck of the Deutschland*" where one scarcely notices the

quite conventional end-rhyme for the powerful, finely worked alliterative / consonantal internal rhyme. It is important then, not only to show what is done, but how it is done. Could any imitative literary artist supply in German a substitute of exactly the right quality for an internal rhyme such as '- *lush-kept plush-capped -*' <ibid., page 54> even with semantic licence in 'üppig-gepflegt Plüsch-belegt', 'sanft-betreut Samt-bestreut' or any other fabrication? Could the force of '*Wiry and white-fiery / whirlwind-swivellèd* [*snow*]' <ibid., page 55> really be captured in such as 'drahtig und blitzartig vom Wirbel gewandt[er Schnee]' even with clear evidence of a similar pattern?

[c]    *seeing him as a profound thinker seeking a suitably expressive outlet* — there is a prodigious amount of reason and reference underlying the bewildering art-form of the language. Time and time again he breathes a deeper meaning into a seemingly fanciful non-standard English. In the line '*widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps*' of "**The Wreck of the Deutschland**" <ibid., page 55> one can sense the reference to the unborn future as well as the present bereft in the fate of those about to perish in the disaster. To do justice to the line the translator must somehow endow a similar unusual phrase with the same depth of thought. Could this possibly be detected, for example, in 'zur Witwe, des Kinds, der Vaterschaft beraubende Tiefe' even if the form of the English is not followed? Can we safely ignore the concealed meaning in '*unchilding*' of making a man of someone ('mannhaft, mundig, zum ganzen Mann geworden') and treat it only as rendering childless? To account for the complexity of Hopkins's thought by covering all aspects could entail re-writing rather than translating the textual material, which in itself would be self-defeating.

### Playing the word-game with Hopkins, the adept 'dabbler' in words

Although one is almost sure to find the germ of an idea or a subtle meaning in Hopkins's elaborate, ingenious word-patterns, they often appear as part of a word-game in which the reader himself is invited to participate. As James Milroy remarks:

"Hopkins's 'word-game' has much in common with the old word-game whose object it was to progress from one word to another by changing only one letter of the previous word."

(Milroy: "The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins" <Andre Deutsch, London 1977> page 106)

Hopkins does, however, play by rules; the problem is that he appears to make them up as he goes along. While a translator may be able to devise something after a fashion, he could never, for instance, find his way through a labyrinth of rhymes, half-rhymes, alliteration, assonance and echoes, in lines like '*Tatter-tangled and dingle-a-danglèd / Dandy-hung dainty head*' as in "**The Woodlark**" <"Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins" page 177> where no amount of 'Fetzen-Franse-Flatsche-Fratz; Klingel-Ringel, Kling-klang-Kopf; Zierde-Zotte-Zopfe-zierlich Wuschelkopf' will do. As can be seen, the poet may take grammatical liberties which may not be open to the translator and even if words are found they may not respond in the way they do for Hopkins. Although it is basically a

play on sounds, 'tatter-tangled' does give a reader a clear idea of what is intended. In the same way, the jingle quality of 'dingle-a-dangled' has meaning which stems from its rhythm and the reader's willingness to go along with it. Does the German language allow this 'jingling' quality to be reproduced, and if so, is the translator both capable and free to make good use of this facility?

The room for manœuvre is more restricted when the words are closely tied in some way. Hopkins has a gift for building on the sound potential of each word used in a combined expression of an idea. Sometimes he appears to overplay this. The opening lines of "The Leaden Echo" <ibid., page 91> seem to exhaust an entire stock of relevant words turned up by a far-reaching search for available vocabulary. This could be taken as an open invitation to the translator to do likewise; his efforts, however, may uncover a sufficient stock of connected words to satisfy only the meanings and not the intricate word-play of '... some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep'. As well as keeping to the rules of the game, the monosyllabic nature and the echo pattern of the English should be preserved. It is difficult to imagine how this can be achieved if the overall meaning is to be conveyed (Hopkins is speaking of beauty as something which is physically kept — see notes <ibid., page 382>). It is very doubtful if anything approaching this is likely to issue from a concoction of 'Binde, Brosche, Borte, Band; Schnur, Schnapper, Schnalle, Falle, Klamme, Klinke, Zwinge, Siegel, Riegel'.

The aim of Hopkins is to bring about a successful marriage of sound patterns and logical meaning. He often goes beyond this to give a phrase an extra quality that may be extremely difficult to capture in translation. At first sight this sentence from "Heraclitean Fire" <ibid., page 105> may seem to be little more than a description of restless clouds on a windy day — 'Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth, then chevy on the air-| built thoroughfare:' — but the feeling of elation on reading it comes not so much from a picture of wispy cotton-wool clouds chasing about as from the very way the words are 'strung together'. Each word plays its part while joining in a game with its neighbours. We can see the hand of Hopkins in '-puff... flaunt forth' and 'torn tufts, tossed...'' but he is not just playing around with sounds but using them as part of a fitting design. What could be more natural yet highly descriptive than 'to flaunt forth'? — or more visually meaningful than 'tossed pillows'? Even though the devices are used in a controlled way the words themselves create the impression that Hopkins is almost drunk with nature. Can the translator choose words to do the same? There may be some consolation in the likes of 'Haufen-Wolkenpuff, zerstreute Strähne, geklopfte Kopfkissen, paradieren und hetzen auf ...', although this may not instil into words the feeling of movement and elation so apparent in the original.

### Imitating the sensitive artist by revealing the hidden potential of language

Whatever approach the translator adopts he will have to face up to the very real problem of producing a worthy replacement of Hopkins, not only in shape and form,

but also in the very language — albeit German — of the original writer. Characteristics of style may be often imitated with a considerable degree of success, but with Hopkins there are a number of specific features which must be accounted for in the language of the translation. Some are patently obvious, others more insidious, but all important if the translation is to pass as a work by Hopkins. One such feature, both obvious and insidious, is the poet's *artistic* use of archaic or country speech. He has a compelling preoccupation with what he considers to be 'natural' English. Here we see a fascination for monosyllabic words combined in a variety of highly imaginative ways. His language, innovative as it may be, contains in fact little that cannot be related in some way to ordinary speech, for example, its taking of grammatical liberties, omissions and running together of words. He has a particular penchant for archaic words to bring out some long forgotten meaning that serves his purpose. This could explain the use of *'nursle '* [nurse + nestle] (foster, care) in *"Henry Purcell"* where the words *'all that sweet notes not his might nursle'* <ibid., page 80> take on a special meaning not found, for instance, in such as 'auf Gedeih pflegen'. It would also account for the fact that *'churlsgrace'* (rustic charm, peasant dignity) in *"Harry Ploughman"* <ibid., page 104> can find no real equivalent for the *'ungehobelte Würde '* in the likes of 'Sassensitte', 'Bauernschicke' or whatever else might be contrived. Even if an archaic or outdated form could be found, it would almost certainly acquire in the hands of the translator a degree of artificiality.

In addition to this there is a frequent resort to country usage (including terms used in country occupations) to supply artistic material, not simply to add colour, but to impart a further aspect of meaning. In *"Henry Purcell"*, for example, he speaks of a *'wuthering [of his palmy snow pinions ... ]'* well knowing that the north-country word embraces the sound and the rush of the wind and expresses exactly what he means (at least to those familiar with it). This may not be felt in 'sträuben' or 'aufplustern' (of feathers) and not even in 'brausen'; although this latter gives some idea of the rushing and roaring of the wind (as in an organ peal), it does not readily admit to 'flustering' or 'fluffing', but it lacks above all the expressiveness of *'wuthering'* [Windheul -schrei -stoß] even though this may be incorrectly applied to feathers. The image itself could be found in 'die Wehe' (snowdrift) and the movement in 'das Wehen' (fluttering, waving) while both have a little of the descriptive sound quality. It is more difficult to reproduce the poet's artistry in his use of pure dialect terms. The poem *"Inversnaid "* <ibid., page 89> contains the word *'deg'*, to sprinkle ('degging carts', to settle the dust on the streets were once a common sight in Lancashire) in *'degged with dew, dappled with dew'*. Here Hopkins extracts all the expressiveness in the word without making it inaccessible, by adding *'dappled'*; a similar strategy could possibly produce the desired effect in 'gekleckert mit Tau, taugefleckt' ('kleckert' = 'fällt tropfenweise').

One would certainly feel the need to retain the allusion to (not so much the illusion of) ordinary speech in *"Felix Randal"* <ibid., page 86> even where it is overlaid by the 'sheer poetry' of the words. It would have to range from the directness of the

first line *'Felix Randal the farrier, O is he dead then?'*, coming out, perhaps, as 'Felix Randal, der Hufschmied, so! gestorben denn?', to the rustic eulogy poetically disguised as '[*thou*] ... *didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and battering sandal'*. This latter could demand not a little ingenuity if it is to fully account for the spoken style of 'did [fettle]', the poetic use of 'sandal' and the measured hint of alliteration. Could 'schaffen' serve for *'fettle'* (to 'forge', colloquially to 'provide')? Could *'did '* be treated in any other way? If so, then the translator may feel that the spirit of the poem and the language in which it is expressed would come over best in something like 'du einst, du schaffst dem großen, grauen Karrengaul die funkelnd' schlagend' Sandale' where the present tense adds a reverence not felt in such as 'du warst's, der wußt', dem großen, grauen Karrengaul den blanken Sandalenbeschlag zu schaffen'.

Ever conscious of the fact that Hopkins should be heard, not simply read, the translator will know that the sound of the words is important (the complicated issue of rhythm can only be dealt with in longer extracts) and should feature strongly where it is an essential part of the original. He will see, for instance, how the vivid imagery of a cornfield in *"The Woodlark"* ‹ibid., page 176› is heightened by reproducing the sound effect of swishing scythe and sickle in *'... lush the sash, And crush-silk poppies aflash; The blood-gush blade-gash ...'* even at the expense of pure descriptive writing. Fully aware that his own attempt must not appear in any way contrived and without depth, the translator might seek to capture the sense while releasing the full potential of the words in something like '... voll Schlinge der Sichel-Biß, sprüht Schappseide-Mohn im Riß, Blut-Guß Schneide-Schmiß ...'. This does not stray far from the meanings in the poem, expressed or hidden, but above all, it conjures up an image of the cornfield in words so emotive that they could only 'belong' to Hopkins himself.

## Coming to grips with Hopkins, the profound thinker

Together with Hopkins's most skilful exploitation of language — manifest in a mastery of the word-compound and speech-rhythms — the translator will have to take into account the profound thoughts underlying the poet's own choice of words. It may be too much to ponder the religious or philosophical significance of the material, but he may well detect the germ of an idea in the words themselves and realize at once that there is 'far more to it than meets the eye'. He will intuitively feel the need to reflect this in his translation. Whatever there is in Hopkins is tied up in words, sounds and thoughts and it must be the translator's commitment to carry these over *unsullied* into another language. Unlike the critic, he cannot unravel, explain or convey at length — he has to get things right the first time, which may not always be practical.

What he can do, however, is to bring to the fore some aspect of the work he senses to be central to its worth. He can then adjust his own aims to this and temper his treatment accordingly, perhaps in a vain hope of matching the original's depth of thought. He might, for instance, try to emulate the wonderful, forceful simplicity of

'*Nothing is so beautiful as Spring —*' ("**Spring**" <ibid., page 67>), not by hanging onto the words but by giving a greater depth to the thought behind them in 'Es gibt nichts der Frühlings Schöne gleich' (note: 'Schöne' is not here an adjectival noun [= beautiful woman] requiring '-en' but an elevated poetic form of 'Schönheit' <see "Sprachbrockhaus" 1978, page 608>). He would almost certainly preserve the little extra in the exclamatory tone of the poem "*The Starlight Night*" <ibid., page 66>; but he must do so, however, without seeking to improve. The opening line then — '*Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!*' — would have to show the benefit, not the intrusion, of a possible 'mal' and 'da' in such as 'Schau mal die Sterne an! schau, schau auf den Himmel da!' where the one adds to the wonderment and the other lends point and immediacy.

It is a far greater problem to carry into the translation some deep conviction behind the words. In "*As Kingfishers Catch Fire*" <ibid., page 90> Hopkins dwells on the created world within man and of 'self-hood', the highest expression of which was to be just, keep grace, and reflect Christ. This lies behind the lines '*Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is ... Lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes not his*' but would it indeed be possible to capture this in, for example, 'Wie ihn Gott sieht, soll er vor Gott taugen ... In Körper schön und schön in anderen Augen'? Even if we could instil some deep meaning into the words (and follow the rhyme etc.) it may not be as Hopkins intended. Frequently the imagery of Christ takes on a chivalric form and here Hopkins introduces into the soldierly image an idea of mercy — '*[But be the war within], the brand we wield / Unseen, the heroic breast not outward steeled*' (in "*St. Alphonsus Rodriguez*" <ibid., page 106>); this would not be easy to convey in such as '[Sei der Streit in uns], greifen wir zum Schwerte / Birgt drin ein Heldenherz, außen keine Härte' even though this follows closely the lines of the original in sense and meaning.

The symbolism in Hopkins is not just a recourse to a convenient metaphor or empty word-picture but the unleashing of his pent-up spiritual and poetic energies. It would be too demanding of the translator to match his theological insight although he cannot completely ignore it. The central theme in "*Wreck of the Deutschland*" is one of sacrifice and this comes out strongly in stanza 22 <ibid., page 58> where 'five' (the number of the nuns drowned in the wreck) is surely a reference to Christ's wounds — '*Five! the finding and sake / And cipher of suffering Christ / Mark, the mark is of man's make / And the word of it Sacrificed*'. By keeping closely to the words ('finding' as a device as well as a discovering [Erfindung] and 'sake' as something distinctive and not just a purpose <see notes, ibid., page 274>) the translator may yet uncover their hidden significance in, for example, 'Fünf! Erfindung und Schein / Das Zeichen des leidenden Christ / Merk', das macht' der Mensch gemein / Und das Wort denn, 'Geopfert' ist'. Tied as he is by language and form, the translator can rarely explain the symbolism in Hopkins but the intense reflective nature of the poems demands that he does far more than just hint at it.

## Taking up the poet's pen; putting words into words, form into form

*A translator of Hopkins may be lured by his own impressions, encouraged by his own language and tempted by his own ingenuity, but in the final analysis he will be bound by what he actually has before him. Even if he picks out a particular aspect or adopts a certain approach, he still has to replace one Hopkins poem by another using its raw material. To test the feasibility of such an exercise, whole poems, or at least, significant portions of them, need to be considered in respect of the actual words they contain and the poet's moulding of these to his purpose. This can only be done by a detailed critical examination of the language, its quality and intended effect. Its linguistic features must first be* identified *for what they are,* evaluated *in terms of what they achieve, and* considered *with the view to successful imitation. To this may be added the rather less definable element of what lies behind the words, that is, 'to read Hopkins's mind'. The outcome of all this is most likely to depend on an informed intuition. The basis of this information is, of course, use of language. The problem here is that Hopkins gives a new dimension to it; the consolation is that he not so much seeks to throw off the shackles of language as to find greater freedom within them. The translator is therefore left to range amongst the assets of his own language to find fitting replacements. To measure the success of such an operation, four poems (three of them complete, the other as a substantial part) will be looked at with special regard to their individual character* — (1) *for vivid imagery* (2) *for depth of expression* (3) *for profound thought* (4) *for the use of language* — *and then subjected to a 'considered response' in translation.*

[1] *vivid imagery* One of the more accessible of the Hopkins poems is "**Winter in the Gulf Stream**" <ibid., page 12>. It is not, however, simply a detailed observation praising nature, but an attempt to give a picture of it real life. The reader is moved to acquire in his mental image the experience of 'being there', to hear, to feel, and to touch. It is important that the translator is so moved by his own feelings as to turn himself into a Hopkins worthy of dealing with such word-images as '*with bills of rime the brambles shew*' and '*from dank feathers wring the drops*'. The first twelve lines will illustrate the task of putting into Hopkinsian poetic form what is basically a pure description:

| | | rhyme | metre | syllables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "*The boughs, the boughs are bare enough* | A | _/ _/ _/ _/ | 8 |
| 2 | *But earth has never felt the snow.* | B | .. | 8 |
| 3 | *Frost-furred our ivies are and rough* | A | .. | 8 |
| 4 | *With bills of rime the brambles shew.* | B | .. | 8 |
| 5 | *The hoarse leaves crawl on hissing ground* | C | .. | 8 |
| 6 | *Because the sighing wind is low.* | B | .. | 8 |
| 7 | *But if the rain-blasts be unbound* | C | .. | 8 |
| 8 | *And from dank feathers wring the drops* | D | .. | 8 |
| 9 | *The clogged brook runs with a choking sound* | C | .. | 8 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 ⌊→ | *Kneading the mounded mire that stops* | D | (′– ′– ′– ′–) | 8 |
| 11 | *His channel under clammy coats* | E | ·· | 8 |
| 12 | *Of foliage fallen in the copse."* | D | ·· | 8 |

Given that the image is simple enough — frosty bushes, rustling leaves, hard ground, a low wind, dripping foliage, gurgling water, choked brook — the translator could already have in mind his own 'outline poem' in words and phrases both inspired and shaped by the original. This might develop further into a close copy in the following way:

### Finding the right words

1. '*bare*' - 'kahl' invokes an image of winter better than 'nackt, bloß, starr, bar' etc.
   '*enough*' - 'genug' could be both intensified and qualified ('ja' / 'doch')

2. '*never*' - '(doch) ... noch nie'; 'nie zuvor' implies exclusion, and 'bis jetzt' rarity

3. '*frost-furred*' - 'bedeckt'? 'bestrichen'? or 'Frost-belegt'?
   '*ivies*' - (not 'Efeu' but patches of ground ivy 'Gundermann'); both the plural and the idea of patches / stretches could be achieved in 'Günselzug'
   '*rough*'- 'rauh' has a feel of winter not found in a purely descriptive 'grob, schroff, stachlig, borstig, rissig, struppig' etc.

4. '*bills of rime*'-'gereifte Dörner / Stachel' leads to a Hopkins-like 'stachlig[er] Reif'
   '*show*' - the brambles (Dorngesträuch) are no longer covered over - 'enthüllt'

5. '*leaves*' - individually 'Blätter' but here dry leaves, 'Laub' (Abfall) would fit

6. '*the wind is low*' - the sense is that the wind 'dicht am Boden zieht / bläst' though it should include a stirring up of the leaves as in 'wühlen, wirbeln, strudeln'

7. '*unbound*' - is it the rainblast (Regenbö) which is released in a shower / downpour - 'loslassen, erlöst, ausgeschüttert' or the active, 'ausbricht, niederträuft, ersäuft'?

8. '*feathers*' - 'Blättchen' would conjure up an image of 'gefiederte Blätter'
   '*wring*' - (the meaning shades from 'wrest' to 'drip, wringing wet, dripping wet') ranges from 'triefen, träufen, rinnen, herabtriefen' to 'in die Traufe schwemmen'

9. '*runs*' - is strongly influenced by the sound of the running water; this might be felt in 'läuft' or 'fließt' rather than in a more restricted 'rinnt' or 'strömt'
   '*with a choking sound*' - 'gluckernd' would imitate the sound of water bubbling out of a bottle, for example, but is too precise in meaning; 'gurgelnd' applies here

10. '*kneading*' - 'knetet, vermengt, verformt', much depends on the nature of the mire being 'klumpig, schlammig' or even 'schmadderig' (Schmadde = flüssiger Schlamm)
    '*mounded*' - 'gehäuft', 'getürmt' readily suggest themselves but the choice really depends on the sound effect (with 'Schlamm'?) and the rhyme ('klemmt', 'hemmt'?)

11. '*channel*' - 'Lauf, Weg, Fluß (free flow)' lack the imagination of 'Rinne'
    '*clammy coats*' - 'klamm' ('feucht und kalt') but 'klebrig' (clinging) might combine well with 'Schicht, Masse, Lage, Matsch (Schmutzbrei)' for 'coats'

12. '*foliage*' - this means here the leaves fallen in autumn and winter - 'Abfall'

This framework of words could go on to suggest quite a number of imaginative phrases.

## Finding the right ring, a sound-sense-synthesis in imagery

The word-groupings must be in the spirit of the poem and after the fashion of the poet, not mere convenient concoctions lying within a broad band of meaning. They should not only reflect some observable feature of the original, they must also have a motivation for being there. In other words, they must say something, and say this in a way that sounds just right. Further, they must sound right within the poem (unique, if in an image of another). Looking at some of the ideas which may occur to the 'poet' in the translator, we will find a multitude of phrases, designed to carry the feel and sense of the original, having to be justified as 'translations'. The answer will lie in the way they are a part of the work and not just the shine on it. Word-artistry, used in the re-creation of a poem, requires as much sound judgement (in both senses!) as ingenuity. We could consider how the following sound right — if indeed, they do:

'*die Äste sind ja kahl genug*' (line 1) — 'ja' adds emphasis and extra shade of meaning as well as giving a strong rhythmic impetus.

'*Frost-belegt und rauh ist der Günselzug*' (line 3) — 'rauh', bearing the stress, carries over some of its meaning into the next line; '[Günsel]zug' provides an end-stressed rhyming syllable and creates a mental picture of stretches of creeping [ground]ivy.

'*auf zischendem Grund kriecht das Laub gehäuft*' (line 5) — the word-order and rhythm cover the loss of 'hoarse [leaves]'; this is filled by 'zischendem-kriechen-gehäuft'.

'*weil der seufzende Wind danieder wühlt*' (line 6) — this has the right rhythmic sound to form both a counterbalance to, and a completion of the previous line.

'*wenn der Regenbö das all ersäuft*' (line 7) — this is powerful enough to fully bring out the force of 'unbound' ('ersäuft' - drenches everything).

'*wie gurgelnd nun das Bächlein läuft*' (line 9) — 'nun' adds life and immediacy.

'*... Schlamm, der klemmt, und ... die Rinne hemmt*' (lines 10+12) — the rhyming of 'klemmt - hemmt' is further reinforced by association ('schwemmt', 'dämmt').

Many other sound-sense-syntheses could be triggered off by the imagery which lies at the heart of the poem. Not all could be justified as complying with the conditions of a sensitive translation — *meaning* would preclude 'voll stachlig, Reif das Dorngesträuch gestrickt' (knitted), *overplay* would destroy 'Tropfen in die Traufe triefen', and only a *woodenness* would ensue from 'krächzend kriechen die Blätter hin'.

## Fitting the language to the pattern

The most important thing in a translation of this kind is to make every word count. Even without the constrictions of a limited line length it would be pointless to indulge in unnecessary flights of fancy. It would be far better to exploit to the full the collected material including an imaginative and resourceful assembly of it. It might, for instance, be advisable to extend each line to include one extra stress (-´) as in:

'*Die Äst', die Äste sind ja kahl genug*'     (10 syllables)
'The boughs, the boughs are bare enough'     (8 syllables)

This would result in a rhythmic effect closer to the English. It could also prove to be advantageous if any deliberate 'irregularities' were marked by similar ones in German; the *sprung rhythm* of line 10, for instance, could be imitated to impart an even greater effect once the competition between natural and metrical stress is reconciled:

' → und den gehäuften Schlamm vermengt, der klemmt → '

' ... kneading the mounded mire that stops ... '

It is, it seems, not only a matter of which words are used, but of how they are used. It does not mean that the translator is to struggle valiantly to reproduce with academic precision in an alien environment every linguistic feature; this would almost certainly be counter-productive. It means rather that he uses the target language responsibly to charge it with the 'proper feel' of the original composition.

It is to be expected that a <u>translation</u> should take on the form as well as the language of the work it seeks to replace. Working within the rhyme-scheme, exploiting its advantages and avoiding its strictures, could perhaps result in something like —

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | "Die Äst', die Äste sind ja kahl genug | ('die Äst'' imitates 'Geäst'; |
| 2 | Doch hat die Erd' noch nie den Schnee gefühlt. | 'ja' is for emphasis) |
| 3 | Frost-belegt und rauh ist der Günselzug | ('rauh' enhances rhythm) |
| 4 | Voll stachlig' Reif das Dorngesträuch enthüllt. | (revealed, laid bare) |
| 5 | Auf zischendem Grund kriecht das Laub gehäuft, | (a natural pause separates a |
| 6 | Weil der seufzende Wind danieder wühlt. | stressed 'Grund' — 'kriecht') |
| 7 | Doch wenn der Regenbö das all' ersäuft, | |
| 8 | Und ab feuchten Blättchen die Traufe schwemmt, | ('Traufe' is both the flow and |
| 9 | Wie gurgelnd nun das Bächlein läuft | the water channel) |
| 10 | Und den gehäuften Schlamm vermengt, der klemmt | |
| 11 | und, sickernd durch die klebrige Schicht | (second 'und' supplies both a |
| 12 | Von Abfall im Gebüsch, die Rinne hemmt." | continuity and grammaticality) |

The main aim here is to wrest from both words and form a vividness of imagery which is so characteristic of this Hopkins poem.

### A poem or a shadow of one?

[2] *depth of expression*  The short poem, "*The Peacock's Eye*" <ibid., page 128>, owes more to an expressive depth than to any profoundness of thought. It seems to provide a good opportunity for both close imitation and parallel composition, that is, it would favour the emergence of a like poem in another language having its own substance and depth. Certainly the actual shape and rhyme-scheme can be followed with very little significant loss of sense or meaning; the use of a similar word stock with perhaps an inobtrusive change in order would facilitate a close copy. The 'readable' quality of the poem itself, which accounts for much of its expressive element, can be imitated in its basic rhythm of four lines of seven syllables ( ´- ´- ´- ´ ) rounded off by two beginning

on a weak stress. There would appear to be no obstacle in the actual content of —

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "*Mark you how the peacock's eye* | A | |
| 2 | *Winks away its ring of green,* | B | |
| 3 | *Barter'd for an azure dye,* | A | |
| 4 | *And the piece that's like a bean,* | B | |
| 5 | *The pupil, plays its liquid jet* | C | (starting on extra weak syllable) |
| 6 | *To win a look of violet.*" | C | ..    ..   ..    ..    .. |

Can the way it is expressed serve as an inspiration to allow a close translation of it to develop equally well in the fertile ground of German?

In what, then, lies the depth of this expression? Almost certainly in unusually coined phrases and the significant placing of a number of meaningful words. A similar poem would have to match such items as: '*mark you*' (line 1), '*winks away*' (line 2), '*barter'd for*' (line 3), '*plays its liquid jet*' (line 5), '*to win*' (line 6). The words in end positions especially assume considerable importance and care must be taken in the selecting of a like rhyming word — if any change of end word is contemplated for the sake of rhyme, the new word must justify its significant position. Although bound up in the practical problems of accurate replacement of language items, the re-birth of the poem means capturing its essential features, in this instance, the force and colour of expression. Following the original as closely as possible will assume a rhyme-scheme of:

(A) **Pfau** — the fact that 'Pfau' might not refer to a specific bird but a species could allow poetic licence ('Auge des Pfau[-]' as 'Pfauenauge' is a species of butterfly, or 'bei dem Pfau' in reference to the bird in general)

(B) **Ring** — 'grüner Ring' emphasizes both the colour and the shape (ring of green)

(A) **Himmelblau** — the final 'blau' can be seen as the body of the colour (= dye)

(B) **Ding** — there is an emphasis on 'piece' while 'bean' assumes mainly a descriptive rôle. This could suggest 'bohnenförmig Ding'

(C) **Jett** — (Gagat) pronounced as in English

(C) **Violett** — the end-stress captures the intensity of the colour (Veilchenfarbe)

A secure rhyme such as this provides a suitable opportunity for the translator to exercise his feelings for the host language and his intuitive judgement in respect of how far he can properly and successfully extract from it those qualities clearly marked in the original. Unfettered (but exposed!) by the sheer simplicity of the contents he may see himself free to press his poetic skills into attempting a parallel composition; he will, however, feel the pressure of constantly having to justify anything he produces — he is after all under commitment to produce a duplicate copy, not an own version, inspired though that may be. The dual process of *invention and subjection*, in which a literary translator is forever engaged, is well illustrated by an attempt to translate and at the same time re-compose the poem in question. With due regard for the high level of expressive impact demanded, this might result in —

(1) <u>Seht nur wie das Aug' beim Pfau</u> *(Mark you how the peacock's eye)* — imperative aspect of *'mark you'* is taken up by 'nur'. The focus of attention is the eye of the peacock; not only is there a loss of impact in 'das Auge eines Pfau(e)s', this could also prove difficult to rhyme. A solution is found here in 'das Auge bei dem Pfau', where 'Auge' refers to both organ of sight and plumage and 'bei' = 'in the case of'.

(2) <u>Zwinkert weg den grünen Ring</u> *(Winks away its ring of green)* — although there is a difference between 'ein grüner Ring' and 'ein Ring vom/aus Grün', the emphasis is kept on 'Ring'. An element of 'twinkling' is introduced into the winking of the eye by 'zwinkert weg' ('winks away' is probably inspired by the winking effect of the nictitating gland in the eye of a bird).

(3) <u>Ausgetauscht für Himmelblau</u> *(Barter'd for an azure dye)* — here the meaning of a sky-blue colouring (dye) is neatly condensed into '(ein) Himmelblau'. An idea of acquiring can be seen in 'für' rather than in the usual '(austauschen) gegen'.

(4) <u>Das da, bohnenförmig Ding</u> *(And the piece that's like a bean)* — on the surface it seems to refer entirely to the shape where Hopkins may have intended the look of a bean, the yellow-red-brown speckled lustre and its 'beadiness'. Justification for 'bohnenförmig (bohnenartig, bohnenähnlich)' could be found in the poet's earlier short version of the poem —

> *"The peacock's eye*
> *Winks away its azure sheen*
> *Bartered for a ring of green*
> *The <u>bean-shaped</u> pupil of moist jet*
> *Is of silkiest violet"*

<div align="right">(see notes &lt;ibid., page 300&gt;)</div>

By 'the piece (like a bean)' the author seems to mean that part (of the eye [on the plumage]) like a bean, that is, the pupil. This is brought out in 'das da, ...'.

(5) <u>Pupille, spielt sein flüssig' Jett</u> *(The pupil, plays its liquid jet)* — here 'Pupille' is by definition a name, not the grammatical subject, therefore 'sein'. The rhythmic stress of *'The pupil'* is preserved in 'Pupille'. The nature and not the behaviour of *'liquid jet'* is emphasized by dropping the ending in 'flüssig[es]' to coalesce with '[das] Jett' (compare 'flüssiges Jett', flowing jet, with 'flüssig' Jett', liquid jet). In 'spielt' can be detected a sense of playing for (as in a gamble) and also one of playing with (teasing, flaunting) to lead into the next line —

(6) <u>Um den Schein von Violett</u> *(To win a look of violet)* — 'spielt um' of the previous line suggests the possibility of gain (win) and gain (to take on, assume), especially when used with 'Schein' in the sense of 'a look of' — here the *jet* is 'played' so as to catch the light and take on a violet hue.

Hopkins is really describing here the colour-play and markings of a peacock's plumage but he gives the description life and expressive depth by relating it to the eye

itself. Can the translator achieve the same intensity of expression and poetic unity? —

> "Seht nur wie das Aug' beim Pfau
> Zwinkert weg den grünen Ring,
> Ausgetauscht für Himmelblau;
> Das da, bohnenförmig Ding,
> Pupille, spielt sein flüssig' Jett
> Um den Schein von Violett."

## In the words and behind the words

[3] *profound thoughts* Moving on to a far less precise area of poetry translation, that of putting the author's (own) thoughts into words *at least as well as he does*, we may find that we are no longer dealing with pure imagery as such. While the two previous examples owed their effect to playing on the mind's eye, Hopkins frequently combines, as shown by the following poem, the <u>visual</u> with the <u>visionary</u>. Outwardly descriptive and moulded into a beauty of poetic form, it conceals an inner profoundness of thought. This is clear from its title — *"A Fragment of Anything You Like"* ‹ibid., page 116› — which seems to suggest that its 'poetic meaning' (in beauty of form and use of words) relates to something more profound. The 'fragment' is, indeed, a complete poem:

1    *"Fair, but of fairness as a vision dream'd;*

2     *Dry were her sad eyes that would fain have stream'd;*

3     *She stood before a light not hers, and seem'd*

4 └→ *The lorn Moon, pale with piteous dismay,*

5     *Who rising late had miss'd her painful way*

6     *In wandering until broad light of day;*

7 └→ *Then was discover'd in the pathless sky*

8     *White-faced, as one in sad assay to fly*

9     *Who asks not life but only place to die."*

The three line rhyme falls naturally into the verses as part of a continuous theme and the rhythm is subtle without unduly stressing any word. The rhyming words themselves seem to gather up an idea before passing it on to be developed descriptively and philosophically into a very moving final line. The task of bringing out in translation all that runs through the poem, the author's thoughts and those inspired in the reader, will demand [a] effectively dealing with the underlying thought in a word or phrase in the same material form; [b] finding really meaningful, not merely convenient rhymes; [c] covering the whole without drawing on the translator's own 'flights of fancy', that is, in a way that neither diminishes nor enhances the presentation; [d] assembling the poet's contemplative observations of a natural phenomenon in a way that makes them both descriptively real and wistfully prophetic. The poem itself consists entirely of the one sentence with its fulcrum in the verb 'seemed' and in this may lie the key.

## [a] What the words say and what they really mean

'*fair*' (line 1) - is immediately qualified as having an unreal visual clarity (as in a dream). Although not ruling out 'schön', it would suggest that the *ethereal* beauty is better represented by 'hell' (bright, clear, light, pale, luminous yet transparent) as in 'hell, von einer Helle wie im Traum'.

'*fain would have*' (line 2) - dearly wanted to? would have if not restrained? Both aspects may lie behind the subjunctive 'gern hätten'; taking this up could give '[ihre Augen] hätten gern geweint' (in German it might be felt that the tears, rather than the eyes, stream — one can however 'Tränen heftig weinen') and this seems to say that she 'would have been pleased if she had cried', pointing out that her eyes were dry.

'*stood before a light*' (line 3) - a light which is shone onto a surface and seen by reflection. The gender problem of '*not hers*' ('moon' in the next line is masculine in German) could be resolved to some extent in a neutral approach, 'nicht eigenes', but this would incur some loss of feeling, compassion, pity etc. (the feelings engendered by 'he, his' are not those found in 'she, her[s]'). The question as to whether the 'she' of the poem refers to a woman likened to the moon or to the moon personified as a woman, has to be settled or circumnavigated (grammatical gender can be ignored if the noun assumes a personality as in 'der gute Mensch', the good [lady] person).

'*the lorn moon*' (line 4) - the grammatical contradiction of 'sie // der Mond' may be alleviated and the wistful, feminine character preserved in 'sie, als blaßer Mond'.

'*who, rising late*' (line 5) - is a careful observation that the old moon (being close to the sun and, unlike the new moon, trailing it) does rise late in the morning only just before broad daylight as if by oversleeping (aus Verschlafen, aus Übersicht). Overtones of having to struggle to catch up with the sun along a path made unclear by the light of day in '*painful way*' are felt more clearly in 'peinlich' than in a physical 'schmerzhaft'.

'*in wandering ... until*' (line 6) - has a feel of wandering aimlessly and this might be detected in 'durch Wandern so weit bis [Tageslicht]' ('so weit' hints at straying).

'*was discover'd*' (line 7) - is here not just found (erfunden / gefunden) or revealed (entdeckt / enthüllt) but also to be 'come across' (getroffen) and 'caught in the act by surprise' (erwischt), an aspect strongly reinforced in the next line by '*sad assay*'. The real meaning of '*pathless sky*', a sky with no markers now that the stars have all faded, is that of a wide, empty, desolate desert (wüst und leer) and the vast wilderness of the heavens can be best summed up perhaps in 'Himmelswüste'.

'*white-faced*' (line 8) - ostensibly refers to the visibly pale appearance of the moon's face yet it embraces a sense of being 'shame-faced', visibly pale with surprise and embarrassment, and perhaps, not a little fright! (verblaßt → bleich vor Scham → schamblaß); '*sad assay*', as a sorry attempt to be seen as being both pitiful and weak, is by implication, ineffectual and doomed to failure ('fehlen' would combine a sense of lacking with one of being unsuccessful, especially when applied to a thwarted attempt,

as in 'Fehlversuch'). Hopkins is being devious in 'to fly' — to take wing (moonrise)? — to fly away, flee (fade, disappear)? Both senses may be felt in 'Flucht', although the interaction 'Flug ← fliegen ↗ fliehen → Flucht' is less well defined in English.

'a place to die' (line 9) - dramatically conjures up the image of the fading moon desperately looking for a place to set (sink below the horizon) while still having some life (light) left and yet is on the point of dying in the sky (Sterbeplatz — Sterbezeit).

## [b] Meaningful, not merely convenient rhymes

Hopkins uses rhyme to underline the thoughts evoked by the contemplation of a beautifully moving, yet natural occurrence. The rhyming words provide, on the one hand, a continuity, and on the other, they set the seal on the depth of thought behind each line — dreamed, streamed, seemed (around which the poem revolves); dismay, [painful] way, day; sky, fly, die. This can be brought out, by guile perhaps, though not in any wild display of ingenuity, but as a responsible part of thoughtful translation.

(line 1) gemeint - this would pick up on 'as a vision [dreamed]'

(line 2) geweint - this could be taken (in the past) to mean 'Tränen heftig weinen'

(line 3) scheint - could this be made to give full force to 'seems to be a lost moon' and yet retain the idea of 'shines like the [lost] moon'?

(line 4) [armer] Wicht - this fuses a personalized 'lorn moon' with 'piteous dismay'

(line 5) [aus] Übersicht - as this tends to cover the whole line, would 'painful way' be less well represented than 'who [by] rising late'? - if so, is it important?

(line 6) Tageslicht - there is little doubt that this would be most appropriate here

(line 7) [am wüsten Himmel] weit - this plays on the vast expanse and emptiness of the heavens (and also anticipates a very effective last line)

(line 8) [zur Flucht] bereit - this could introduce the idea of a last fleeting glimpse

(line 9) Sterbeplatz an Sterbezeit - repetition of 'Sterbe—, Sterbe—' echoes the great dramatic effect of the last line while '—zeit' forms a counterbalance to line 3

The next step is to put a fitting *poetic utterance* to the thoughts behind the rhymes.

## [c] Covering the profound thoughts in a 'poetic' way

Here the translator will be exposed to a considerable degree of self-searching. Intuitively he will seek an answer to the questions in both linguistic logic and artistic reasoning. While 'hell, von Helle wie im Traum gemeint' might mean the same as in line 1, is it a poetic turn of phrase? Does 'trocken die Augen, die ...' come any closer poetically to 'Dry were her eyes that ...' (line 2) than 'trocken waren ihre Augen, -'? Does 'hätt' gern geweint' have the same literary (spoken) quality as 'fain would have' (line 2)? 'stand sie vorm Licht, nicht eigenem, nun scheint [als ...]' may capture the everchanging face of the moon, but does it flow poetically as well as logically into the next line (line 3 →4)? In line 4 Hopkins is using 'the lorn moon' in a way that invites the reader's sympathy by its very poetic quality ('lorn' also owes its effectiveness to

a connotation with 'forlorn'); could a more usual, but equally evocative expression such as 'der blaße Sichelmond' work in the same way? — it does, after all, invite pity (in 'blaß') and cover loss [lorn] (in 'Sichelmond') in a way reminiscent of poetry. Answers to these questions do not lie in precise rules, nor yet in the facility to exploit them, but in a *feeling* for what the poet has in mind to say, and how a <u>poet</u> would say it.

To some degree this could mean clothing a basic idea in the mantle of poetic nuance; to a somewhat greater extent, it means expressing it better through poetry. In Hopkins's poem this is clear from the way the thoughts of the reader (note the title - "*A Fragment of Anything You Like*"!) are attracted by the lyrical description of the fading moon. In following this, the translator must ask himself if, for example, '[der, ] den Weg im Schlaf verlor, aus Übersicht, und beim Wandern so weit bis Tageslicht' is as compelling as '[moon] *Who rising late had miss'd her painful way / In wandering until broad light of day'* (lines 5+6) though it may have a similar ring. He might also wonder if '*White-faced, as one in sad assay to fly'* (line 8) would not be overplayed and much too contrived in '... erwischt am wüsten Himmel weit / Scham-blaß im Fehlversuch zur Flucht bereit'. These renderings do indeed express the information in a way that *sounds like poetry*. This alone may not be enough; the author uses the medium of poetry not as a means but as an essential part of the idea itself. We can see this in the very moving and philosophically observant last line '*Who asks not life but only place to die'*. The translator may well be moved by this and inspired (perhaps by his own thoughts) to compose something similar in '[sucht] ... / Nicht Leben, nur Sterbeplatz an Sterbezeit'.

[d] <u>Assembling the ideas to fit the design</u>

The original poem is complete in what it conveys and has a unity of artistic form. It may not be the most perfect poem, but it does have the sort of design which may withstand the rigours of being exposed to a <u>poetic</u> translation of both the beauty of its words and the thoughts behind this beauty. Some way must be found, however, to infuse this poetic translation with the shape, sound and expressive capability of another language, each used in their own right — to put it another way, to fashion from similar material another *shadow poem* , equal in appeal, alike in shape and form and expressing the ideas in the same way. This must follow the original closely in spirit but not to the extent of slavish, pointless accuracy for its own sake.

It could be felt, for instance, that the rhythm of the first two lines would run better in German if the syllable count could be reversed; this would be an example of taking a meaningful line artistically shaped to one language and adapting it to similar advantage, not merely using it as a replacement. The inclusion of a relative in line 4, for example, would not only allow the insertion of a descriptive phrase to account for '*pale with piteous dismay'*, it also covers '*who'*, and so neatly introduces 'der Mond' (grammatical subject) as the logical subject for 'sie'. It is most important that these adaptations are not seen as a liberty but as an integral part of the poem. The features

of the original must be repeated, not out of duty to the author, but in appreciation of their contribution in giving the poem (and its shadow) artistic meaning.

While it could well be true that 'poetry can never be translated', the poetic translator owes it above all to himself to get as close as possible to a work, enjoying a comprehension of it, sharing its emotions and appreciating its charm. The following is tendered as an example of how a translator (or the artist within him) may re-work the material, in word and thought, of *"A Fragment of Anything You Like"* to give:

"Hell, von Helle wie im Traum gemeint;
Trocken die Augen, die hätt' gern geweint;
Stand sie vorm Licht, nicht eigenem, nun scheint

Als blaßer Sichelmond, der, armer Wicht,
Den Weg im Schlaf verlor, aus Übersicht,
Dann beim Wandern so weit bis Tageslicht,

Und sucht, erwischt am wüsten Himmel weit,
Scham-blaß im Vehlversuch zur Flucht bereit,
Nicht Leben, nur Sterbeplatz an Sterbezeit."

This deals as effectively as it can with the thought-provoking imagery by attempting to clothe this in sheer poetry in a Hopkins-like manner.

### The considered response to the 'untranslatable'

[4] *the language of Hopkins* Part of the closeness referred to in the previous section will, in the case of Hopkins, lie in the complex area of creative language. Whereas the first three sections were concerned respectively with: (1) vivid imagery, (2) expressive intensity, (3) profound contemplation, and the way each of these aspects might affect translation, the next poem will be discussed principally for its language. This proves to be highly original, very imaginative, extremely resourceful, most skilfully contrived, and largely untranslatable! The English language abounds with words of identical form for noun / adjective / verb (singly and in compounds) allowing for all manner of ambiguous placings and no doubt Hopkins seizes on this with, as far as the translator is concerned, almost malicious intent. Not only the words themselves, but also the part they play in the poet's scheme of things, must be negotiated in controlled alliteration, assonance, orchestration of rhyme and rhythm, and usually in a flush of most ingenious compounds. Unavoidably some meaning, some desired effect, some joy of invention, will be left at the language barrier; the translator's task is to minimize this loss and to exploit what remains in a true Hopkins manner.

It is essential, therefore, that this 'inventiveness' be properly appreciated by the translator, that is, unravelled, consumed and enjoyed, a process made all the more difficult in that the features often interact with alarming alacrity. One such example of Hopkins's 'extreme language', *"Harry Ploughman"* <ibid., page 104>, shows how the

of words'. The phrase, *'by a grey eye's heed steered well'* (line 5), a piece of typical Hopkins construction, weaves into its apparent directness not least a hint of something hidden; *'grey eye's —'* (man's) leans heavily on 'grey-eye's [= grey's eye] (horse's) by being placed close to 'heed' (awareness / obedience), although syntactically it allows but one interpretation. Could a similar effect be designed into a close translation of the actual words? The various possibilities may be set out as —

| *by* | | | *a grey eye's* | *heed* | *(well) steered* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| von [by] | (der) | | eines grauen Auges | Beachtung | gut gelenkt |
| unter [governed by] | (der) | | des grauen Auges | | |
| durch [by means of] | die | | vom grauen Auge | | |

To follow the English as closely and grammatically as possible the normal word-order may have to be changed (for example, from 'unter Achtgeben eines grauen Auges gut gelenkt' to 'unter grauen Auges Acht[geben] gut gelenkt'). Questions still remain: how can *'by'* be properly seen in 'von/unter/durch' (agent or means)? - would not a Saxon genitive (Auges Acht) be nearer the English? - could it combine 'grau[en] Auge[s]' in the same way? - would a strained (German) syntax and a (pseudo-)Saxon genitive work well enough to convey the primary meaning of 'steered by a practised [grey] eye'? The whole composition of the English underlines a subtle difference between *'steered well'* (by eye) and 'well steered' (according to the eye) which is not felt in 'gut gelenkt'; - could this be designed (by word-stress and rhythm) into the translation and yet leave the surface meaning intact? - would this admit 'durch grau' Auges Acht gut gelenkt'?

Design of a different kind is used in *'scooped flank; lank'* (line 2), where the broken rhyme allows *'flank'* to attract some of the meaning of the following word in spite of the fact that it is grammatically unconnected. The matter is compounded in that *'lank'* not only bears a strong end-stress, but is itself part of the following word-group. That both words are stressed, rhyming monosyllables standing in close semantic relationship to each other, adds to the problem. An examination of the available words, suitable, compliant or adaptable, reveals little:

| | | *'flank'* (←) | *'lank'* ⟶ | *(rope-over) thigh* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (+ *meaning*, - *rhyme*) | — | Lende ; | schlank | (refers to thigh, rope?) |
| (+ *meaning*, - *rhyme*) | — | Flanke ; | strähnig | (refers to rope, thigh?) |
| (? *meaning*, - *rhyme*) | — | Seite ; | lang | (marginally applicable) |
| (+ *meaning*, - *rhyme*) | — | Weiche ; | dünn | (refers to both) |

Assuming 'Lende' to be the most appropriate, a little ingenious distortion of meaning might find a rhyming follow-up which covers *'lank'* and brings in both *'rope-over'* and *'thigh'*. We might consider 'Wende' (which has gymnastic overtones and also refers to turning the earth) not just in its meaning as a turning point but as a rope wound around a spindle etc. An association with 'wendig' (pliant, manœuvrable) is an advantage and

would provide a lead into '*rope-over* [*thigh*]'. Leaving to the imagination of the reader the question of whether '*lank*' refers to the (slack) rope or to the (slender) thigh which bears it, a responsive translation might be 'hohle Lende; Wende$^{(-)}$ / Seil-über Schenkel'.

## The contribution of sound-quality to poetic expression

Hopkins is almost obsessed with the relationship between the sound of a word and 'how a word functions / what it is / what it means' and devises all manner of effects, singly and in bewildering combinations — alliteration, internal rhyme, assonance, rhythm, changes in speed and length of syllables, echo effects and so on. One cannot hope to 'translate' these all at once; the only hope is to identify and reproduce (- or imitate) as much as effectively possible within the limitations imposed. Taking the opening words as an example to see how these could be substituted in translation, we would find that the following features have to be reconciled:

| *stress* | '*hard as hurdle arms*' | '*stramm wie Sperrestang*' ' |
|---|---|---|
| *alliteration* | | |
| *assonance* | ≈  ≈  ≈  ≈  ≈ | ≈  ‖  (≈  ≈)  ≈ |
| (*back vowels*) | +  +  (+)  + | +  (+)  + |
| (*front vowels*) | | +  (+) |

This pattern might be achieved by allowing for some variation of meanings — 'hart wie Hürdenarme' ('hart' = surface quality, rigidity, toughness, as applied to hurdle arms; 'Arm' = prop, support [Stützpfahl, Strebe, Seitenlehne], in the context of a limb) would certainly have the right sound, but would this outweigh the loss of expressive meaning? Is a compromise in 'hart wie Hürdenstangen' to be ruled out even if some of the effect were to be carried over into the following phrase — '[Hürden]stangen, goldgelb ...''?

Hopkins has a remarkable facility for bringing out a desired shade of meaning simply by making words work together. Many of his word-groups (and compound words) are not so much neatly rounded off as made to <u>fall together</u> almost unnaturally. How can the translator achieve this? A few examples will illustrate the problem. The poet's '*rack of ribs*' (line 2) immediately conveys an image of the rib-cage as a rack (Gerüst, Gestell) full of ribs but also as one having itself the actual look, size and shape of the 'Gerippe'. The re-duplication of the 'rr-rr' sound attracts figurative meanings in, for example, 'a stretch of' (ein Recken) or a 'stack of' (Regal) or even a 'deeply crevassed outline' (Risse). There are also overtones (in '*rack*') of 'strained might', which could be found possibly in 'Gerüst' (rack, truss, skeleton) by association with 'rüstig' (robust, strong, active). It might be felt, however, that both the visual image and associations are better found in 'Raufe [von Rippen]' (manger, feed-rack, cage) with more than a hint of 'raufen' (tussle, struggle), and the advantage of 'tripping on the tongue'!

Quite often the quality infused into the words comes from the poet's sense of language as well as from his gift for creative originality. Here the translator cannot

work by reasoning alone; he is reduced to an intuitive sense of 'knowing just how to say it'. A case in point would be '[*his thew*] / *That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank* — / *Soared or sank*' (lines 7+8). A similar inventiveness could point out 'womal' ([irgend]wo + [ein]mal) as a natural successor to '*onewhere*' (stellenweise? wo auch? wo denn nur?); it would certainly suggest 'straffte' (referring to sinews) for '*curded*' in a sense of knotted (knotete), bunched together (bauschte); but would it go as far as — '...[sehnig Kraft], / Die womal straffte, saugte, schrumft' zu Ende — / Schwebte, schwang zu Ende'? Does this avoid the danger of becoming a patterned confusion?

Elsewhere, the translator might feel that he is in the right mode. In expressing '*though as a beechbole firm*' (line 9), for example, he has an equally effective phrase at hand in 'standhaft buchesstämmig' (fest wie ein [Buch]baumstamm), which preserves to some extent the syntactic 'grammaticality' of the English. For '*features, in flesh, what deed he each must do*' (line 10) the translator will know that he has to provide a logical connection (features — flesh), imitate the 'running together' of the words (as in a set phrase), and cover the different levels of meaning (looks the part, shows physical evidence of the work in progress). Most of these conditions can be met by re-aligning the words around the key-phrase of 'die feste Form' (in the flesh, accomplish) to give: 'und gibt der Tat die feste Form, denn jedes [Glied] schafft —'. While the translator may be convinced in both cases that language itself would accept the particular piece of translation, he can only sense whether the poet would do so.

A typical Hopkins compound (entirely meaningful) is '*sinew-service*' (line 11); this seems to unite strength, application and readiness in a single concept. Has German a way of coining a word from such as 'sehnig + Stärke, Einsatz, Stellung'? — the need for some agreement of sound (s-s, or similar) must be considered. A further restriction is that the word must fit the reasoning of the line. Substituting internal rhyme (within the line) for alliteration might give 'Sehnen-Kraft, wo geschafft' although 'Kraft' does not entirely represent 'service'. This could come out better in 'Sehnen-Spann' to play on 'spannen', both as a flexing of muscles (strength - application) and as a harnessing up (application - service), where the risk of 'Spann' being taken as 'instep' is reduced by word order (compare 'Spann-Sehnen'). Without doubt extra effect could be found in 'Sehnen-Spann, wo getan' (internal rhyme is not a feature here) and the translator may be tempted in this direction, only to be thwarted by end-rhyme. On balance, the most appeal may lie in 'sein' Sehnig-Kraft wo geschafft' in that 'schaffen' is in the right mode (labouring, accomplishing) and 'wo geschafft' (as part of the compound) leaves open the question: where it is done / where [wherever] it should be done.

## Making sense of poetic expression

Apart from using poetic skills in re-composing the words to make what is, in fact, just a clever counterfeit, the translator has to *justify*, not least to himself, in a logical, reasonable way every choice he makes. The outcome of all his efforts will have

to speak for itself, however; nothing will be considered against or, compared with other possibilities by the eventual reader — for him no other possibility exists! The only way the translator can substantiate his judgement lies in the quality of his treatment of the original features as revealed to the reader (a proper transfer of meaning is presumed). With this in mind no translator can deny the the importance of a critical examination of the merits of various options available to him before a final choice is made. Taking examples from the work in question, this might adopt the following approach:

(line 1) 'a *broth* of *goldish flue*' — 'broth' = mixture; 'goldish' (goldgelb?); 'flue' haze? bloom? fluff? down? —→ 'goldgelb der Flaum [im Hauch / Wind] gerafft' .

(line 3) '*knee-nave*' — '-nave' refers to a boss or hub (of a wheel); the idea of a solid lump of knee-bone is clear; the 'n-n' sound must be imitated in some way; although '[Knie-] Klotz / Klumpen' project both a visual image and have a repetitive sound (kn-kl), the conditions are best met by '-Knauf', which carries with it the actual shape of the knee-cap —→ 'Knie-Knauf'

(line 3) '*barrelled shank*' — bulging, barrel-shaped; this can be imaginatively dealt with in 'Tonnen-'; shank ([Ober]Schenkel) might acquire a sense of 'haunches', or even 'buttocks', in 'Lende' (loin[s]) to give an idea of bulging mass —→ 'Tonnenlende'

(line 4) '*shoulder* and *shank*' — the overriding idea is one of concerted effort; although 'Schulter und Schenkel' is accurate and keeps the 'sh' sound, a sense of straining with all muscle and might could come over better in 'Leist' und Lende', drawing on several associations — 'Leiste' (groin), 'leisten, Leistung' (to put one's back into it - effort); it must, however, relate to the limbs employed (as a team) and if end-rhyme is also to be a factor, then 'Hüfte und Hände' could provide a possible answer, even though it lacks the necessary physical image, —→ 'Hüfte, Hände'

(line 5) '*one crew, fall to*' — as one man, as a team (in 'Mannschaft', not 'Besatzung'); 'fall to' means (especially in this context) not only to be present, line up, but also 'to take action, set about, ''jump to it!'. Even though it may lack coverage of both 'antreten' (form rank) and 'zugreifen' (take hold), some of the reflected meaning as well as an internal rhyme could be found in '[Eine Mannschaft], wahrhaft' (truly, indeed); some of the first meaning and all of the second, together with the rhyme and rhythm, would feature more strongly, however, in 'lebhaft', and even more so if 'one' could be emphasized in 'ein' Mannschaft' —→ 'ein' Mannschaft, lebhaft'

(line 6) '*stand at stress*' — take the strain; in keeping with the theme, this might have a direct relevance in 'anspannen' (strain, but also to harness up) —→ 'spann an'

Most important is to utilize the ties of metre and to anticipate rhyme to advantage.

### The translation as a highly individual poem in its own right

It will be very difficult to put into poetic form an assemblage of the various pieces of language collected so far. Added to this is the fact that, in many instances,

it is impossible to find in words a *true likeness* in another language, and certainly not where many factors other than meaning have to be considered. Hanging too close to the original will either result in a very indifferently rendered comparable poem or a very artistically lack-lustre, but highly reliable, translation. Each may bring some reward if not carried to extreme and a middle course might therefore seem desirable. Would it not be possible somehow to utilize the sharp eye of the translator and the flair of the poet to reassemble the <u>same material</u> in such a way as to give it a life of its own? If so, this would remove much of the artificiality which surrounds many poetic translations.

For *"Harry Ploughman"* it would require the unlikely existence of a German Hopkins; failing such a one, the only hope is for the translator himself to recognizably transform the German language under the influence of the original. He must also give his poem the same external shape and internal design; in a word, he has to say what it says in the way that it says it. The work should then, in theory at least, enjoy a same level of acclaim in its own right. The practical impossibility of achieving all this can be seen in the following attempt which, nevertheless, illustrates the rôles of intuitive judgement and accurate identification in replacing one poem with an identical one:

> "<u>Hart wie Hürdenstangen, goldgelb der Flaum gerafft</u>
> <u>Im Hauch; Raufe Rippen; hohle Lende; zur Wende</u>
> <u>Seil-über Schenkel; Knie-Knauf; Tonnenlende</u> —
> <u>Kopf und Fuß, Hüfte, Hände</u> —
> <u>Durch grau' Auges Acht gelenkt, ein' Mannschaft, lebhaft;</u>
> <u>Spann an. Jedes Glieds massig' Macht, sein' sehnig' Kraft,</u>
> <u>Die womal straffte, saugte, schrumpft' zu Ende</u> —
> <u>Schwebte, schwang zu Ende</u> —
> <u>Weiß, standhaft buchesstämmig, wie beim Appell, wo sie stände</u>
> <u>Und gibt der Tat die feste Form, denn jedes schafft</u> —
> <u>Sein' Sehnig-Kraft wo geschafft.</u>"

Each translator will of course write a different poem. If we take literary translation to be a form of creative writing, then no amount of expertise and theory will correctly identify all the nuances and shades of meaning in the original to pave the way for him; it will, however, provide the necessary support. As a creative artist, the translator has to re-live the poet's thoughts, as a reader, he has to respond positively to them, and as an 'expert', he has to put them into words. To do this well requires a considerable degree of linguistic good management, but in the last resort he will instinctively turn to his fund of *intuitive* knowledge and judgement based on exposure to the language.

## Concluding remarks

The foregoing critical inquiry is based on the premise that the translation of a literary work <u>must</u> enclose meanings as accurately as linguistically possible and in the sense intended, <u>should</u> convey the depth of feeling which prompted it, and <u>ought</u> to maintain its esoteric qualities, even in the bare word. It takes the line, however, that the æsthetic content of a work is to be re-kindled rather than re-defined. It accepts that the primary rôle of a literary translator is to produce a (translated) work, that is, a genuine copy. With this in mind, considerable emphasis is put on the importance of the linguistic accuracy of transfer, but not to the extent where it becomes a cold-blooded choice based solely on clinical assessment. Accuracy in literary translation is shown to be revealed more in the light of 'knowing exactly' what the author intended to say and how well he said it in terms of what his reader understands and duly appreciates.

Translation, by its very nature, looks in two directions at once; the danger is that the translator, privileged as he is to occupy the middle ground, will snatch up the 'correctness' of the original as he sees it only to keep this to himself. The suggested translations, although extensively discussed in theory, practice and result, are intended therefore to stand in isolation, just as the eventual reader would encounter them. This allows the intuitive element of translation, unsupported by any persuasive argument, to be better appreciated. Intuition here does not mean the automatic recourse to a fund of practical knowledge such as acquired by a long exposure to a language — this would only project the level of inherent native competence — but a well-founded confidence that 'it must be right'. The aim throughout is to isolate this intuition and to define it linguistically. For this reason, the extracts have been selected for translation both from and into the other language, that is, as a dual-, not bi-lingual exercise. Thus, intuition is checked against the reversed rôles of understanding and language facility.

The proper treatment of meaning and sense is crucial to translation. It is not seen here as mainly a matter of linguistic rules but rather of language logic. The short section on 'exact' meaning in biblical terms is not cited as a programme of semantic labelling, nor as an exercise in hermeneutics; it is not even an example of conventional translating, since the 'from' language is itself obscure. It does show, however, the part played by informed intuition in relating words to abstract ideas. Relating the thoughts in the mind of a writer to the words is the next logical step forward. This is taken up in the extracts from works by Hardy, Thomas, Rilke and others, to show how intuition may prove to be the most reliable link between the sensitive use of words and what a text conveys. Intuition in this case may surface as the proper management of what can be inferred from the words and an empathy with the writer engendered by the use of language. The thoughts within the work can, indeed, be expressed in no other way.

The underlying theme is the specialized use of language, both the writer's and that of the translation. While the former is usually evaluated in terms of being creative

or æsthetically satisfying, the latter is generally checked against the standards set by linguistic experts in the theory and practice of translation. The present inquiry aims at a middle course, not as a compromise, but as a means of quantifying the effect of informed intuition on a successful collaboration between the two. This approach may be clearly seen in the section on dialects. Many theorists maintain that dialect is both untranslatable and unnecessary in translation, needing only to be 'marked' by equivalent signals of idiom or culture. There is, however, much to support the view (taken here) that dialect may deserve to be translated in its own right; it is undeniably expressive and can be in some circumstances even more linguistically analytical than the standard language — a challenge in itself! Even dialect poems, which are often contrived, may not respond well to a normal approach yet bring reward if treated with imagination in dialect form. As dialect operates by its own rules set in a system of instinctive logic, intuition here would be based largely on familiarity and a good sense of probability.

To filter away in translation the æsthetic contribution to a literary work is to reduce it to little more than a commentary. This applies particularly, but by no means exclusively, to poetry. It is just as true of the simple and charming as it is of the most complex and profound. Reproducing line-length and metre as a means of hanging on to quality is all too often achieved by avoiding the unsuitable, neutralizing the impossible, and replacing the impractical; rhyme schemes, used very effectively by the poet both to add depth and to play on the reader's anticipation, are often reduced in translation to 'punctuation marks' achieved at no little inconvenience. The wide-ranging examples of ways of translating poems of different types would show that it is just as important to work beyond the constrictions as within them. This is especially true of the hymn in chapter II where the constrictions are greatest and the æsthetic element assumes a purpose in supporting the message. It is also true when the thoughts behind a poem are immersed in its artistic appeal and here it is mainly an intuitive feel that gives flesh to the translator's own words.

To the kinds of knowledge and language skills which a translator must have, can be added a less easily defined component of intuition, perhaps falling somewhere between competence and familiarity. This is shown to be so in the case of translating features of language where the writer instinctively 'plays the words' rather than 'plays with them'. Features such as alliteration, metaphor and confused syntax, are then not seen so much as a linguistic challenge as a provocation to bring out a similar inherent expressive capability in the incoming language. This is set out in the section devoted to the language of Kafka and carried to its utter limit in facing up to the language of Joyce. Here, the ingeniously calculated (mis)use of language operates in a minefield of (mis)information. Although intuition may be seen here as some kind of 'inference mechanism' using a strange logic to glean what it can from the text, it is treated in the examples in a far more positive light; it anticipates, just as Joyce does, and in the same way, the effect the words will have. Great stress is laid, therefore, on translating

difficult items 'in the manner of Joyce', even though the items themselves prove to be amost impossible to reproduce semantically and syntactically in another language.

It is generally accepted that translation from a work into a native tongue is likely to provide the best results in that the finished product will fit into the language (even if the product itself is not the same one). There are instances, however, where the complex nature of the original would defy all but a native understanding with full appreciation. When this complexity includes intense beauty of expression, artistry of language and profound thought, even a native reader is stretched to the limit to take in all that there is. In these cases translation often has to choose between covering a part of the whole as well as possible and giving some idea of the whole without doing it justice. An extreme example would be Hopkins whose poems are so steeped in thought and rooted in (English) language that the best course may well be to expose a foreign reader to the original and explain and expound (in his own language) what lies therein. The view taken here, however, is that, if enough of the unique quality of the original can be put over well enough in translation to give the feeling that it could have been written by Hopkins, then the exercise is worthwhile. It could be even more so if some particular aspect was brought out in a way sensitive to the original. The translations suggested in the foregoing pages have been approached in this way.

This last chapter shows how translation, even if well-informed and supported by sound judgement, can be vulnerable and exposed. To the uncertainty of not knowing if one has the right answer is added a commitment to express what emerges in a way 'approved' by the author. Some degree of assurance is vital if a translation is not only to be seen as a good copy but as a finished work in its own right, independent, though enjoying all the features of the original. While linguistic knowledge and competence may provide a good measure of this, it is, in the final analysis, mainly intuition which guarantees that this assurance is not misplaced. To this extent, intuition could be seen as a concept-memory, random search, automatic check and multi-directional sensor, all in one. This study does not seek such a psychological explanation; it attempts instead to establish a linguistic base for the intuitive element in (literary) translation.

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