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SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF
LITERARY TRANSLATION

In the Introduction to this book I affirmed the need for a close relationship between the theory and the practice of translation. The translator who makes no attempt to understand the *how* behind the translation process is like the driver of a Rolls who has no idea what makes the car move. Likewise, the mechanic who spends a lifetime taking engines apart but never goes out for a drive in the country is a fitting image for the dry academician who examines the *how* at the expense of *what* is. In this third section I propose, therefore, to approach the question of the translation of literary works through close analysis of examples, not so much to evaluate the products but rather to show how specific problems of translation can emerge from the individual translators' selection of criteria.

STRUCTURES

Anne Cluysenaar, in her book on literary stylistics, makes some important points about translation. The translator, she believes, should not work with general precepts when determining what to preserve or parallel from the SL text, but should work with an eye 'on each individual structure, whether it be prose or verse', since 'each structure will lay stress on certain linguistic features or levels and not on others'. She goes on to analyse C.Day Lewis' translation of Valéry's poem, *Les pas* and comes to the conclusion that the translation does not work because the translator 'was working without an adequate theory of literary translation'. What Day Lewis has done, she feels, is to have ignored the relation of parts to each other and to the whole and that his translation is, in short, 'a case of

perceptual "bad form"'. The remedy for such inadequacies is also proposed: what is needed, says Cluysenaar, 'is a description of the dominant structure of every individual work to be translated.'[1]

Cluysenaar's assertive statements about literary translation derive plainly from a structuralist approach to literary texts that conceives of a text as a set of related systems, operating within a set of other systems. As Robert Scholes puts it:

> Every literary unit from the individual sentence to the whole order of words can be seen in relation to the concept of system. In particular, we can look at individual works, literary genres, and the whole of literature as related systems, and at literature as a system within the larger system of human culture.[2]

The failure of many translators to understand that a literary text is made up of a complex set of systems existing in a dialectical relationship with other sets outside its boundaries has often led them to focus on particular aspects of a text at the expense of others. Studying the average reader, Lotman determines four essential positions of the addressee:

(1) Where the reader focuses on the content as matter, i.e. picks out the prose argument or poetic paraphrase.
(2) Where the reader grasps the complexity of the structure of a work and the way in which the various levels interact.
(3) Where the reader deliberately extrapolates one level of the work for a specific purpose.
(4) Where the reader discovers elements not basic to the genesis of the text and uses the text for his own purposes.[3]

Clearly, for the purposes of translation, position (1) would be completely inadequate (although many translators of novels in particular have focused on content at the expense of the formal structuring of the text), position (2) would seem an ideal starting point, whilst positions (3) and (4) might be tenable in certain circumstances. The translator is, after all, first a reader and then a writer and in the process of reading he or she must take a position.

So, for example, Ben Belitt's translation of Neruda's *Fulgor y muerte de Joaquín Murieta* contains a statement in the Preface about the rights of the reader to expect 'an American sound not present in the inflection of Neruda', and one of the results of the translation is that the political line of the play is completely changed. By stressing the 'action', the 'cowboys and Indians myth' element, the dialectic of the play is destroyed, and hence Belitt's translation could be described as an extreme example of Lotman's third reader position.[4]

The fourth position, in which the reader discovers elements in the text that have evolved since its genesis, is almost unavoidable when the text belongs to a cultural system distanced in time and space. The twentieth-century reader's dislike of the Patient Griselda motif is an example of just such a shift in perception, whilst the disappearance of the epic poem in western European literatures has inevitably led to a change in reading such works. On the semantic level alone, as the meaning of words alters, so the reader/translator will be unable to avoid finding himself in Lotman's fourth position without detailed etymological research. So when Gloucester, in King Lear, Act III sc.vii, bound, tormented and about to have his eyes gouged out, attacks Regan with the phrase 'Naughty lady', it ought to be clear that there has been considerable shift in the weight of the adjective, now used to admonish children or to describe some slightly comic (often sexual) peccadillo.

Much time and ink has been wasted attempting to differentiate between *translations, versions, adaptations* and the establishment of a hierarchy of 'correctness' between these categories. Yet the differentiation between them derives from a concept of the reader as the passive receiver of the text in which its Truth is enshrined. In other words, if the text is perceived as an object that should only produce a single invariant reading, any 'deviation' on the part of the reader/translator will be judged as a transgression. Such a judgement might be made regarding scientific documents, for example, where facts are set out and presented in unqualifiedly objective terms for the reader of SL and TL text alike, but with literary texts the position is different. One of the greatest advances in twentieth-century literary study has been the reevaluation of the reader. So Barthes sees the place of the literary work as that of making the reader not so

much a consumer as a *producer* of the text,[5] while Julia Kristeva sees the reader as realizing the expansion of the work's process of semiosis.[6] The reader, then, *translates* or *decodes* the text according to a different set of systems and the idea of the one 'correct' reading is dissolved. At the same time, Kristeva's notion of *intertextuality,* that sees all texts linked to all other texts because no text can ever be completely free of those texts that precede and surround it, is also profoundly significant for the student of translation. As Paz suggests all texts are translations of translations of translations and the lines cannot be drawn to separate Reader from Translator.

Quite clearly, the idea of the reader as translator and the enormous freedom this vision bestows must be handled responsibly. The reader/ translator who does not acknowledge the dialectical materialist basis of Brecht's plays or who misses the irony in Shakespeare's sonnets or who ignores the way in which the doctrine of the transubstantiation is used as a masking device for the production of Vittorini's anti-Fascist statement in *Conversazioni in Sicilia* is upsetting the balance of power by treating the original as his own property. And all these elements can be missed if the reading does not take into full account the overall structuring of the work and its relation to the time and place of its production. Maria Corti sums up the role of the reader in terms that could equally be seen as advice to the translator:

Every era produces its own type of signedness, which is made to manifest in social and literary models. As soon as these models are consumed and reality seems to vanish, new signs become needed to recapture reality, and this allows us to assign an information-value to the dynamic structures of literature. So seen, literature is both the condition and the place of artistic communication between senders and addressees, or public. The messages travel along its paths, in time, slowly or rapidly; some of the messages venture into encounters that undo an entire line of communication; but after great effort a new line will be born. This last fact is the most significant; it requires apprenticeship and dedication on the part of those who would understand it, because the hypersign function of great

literary works transforms the grammar of our view of the world.[7]

The translator, then, first reads/translates in the SL and then, through a further process of decoding, translates the text into the TL language. In this he is not doing less than the reader of the SL text alone, he is actually doing more, for the SL text is being approached through more than one set of systems. It is therefore quite foolish to argue that the task of the translator is to translate but not to interpret, as if the two were separate exercises. The interlingual translation is bound to reflect the translator's own creative interpretation of the SL text. Moreover, the degree to which the translator reproduces the form, metre, rhythm, tone, register, etc. of the SL text, will be as much determined by the TL system as by the SL system and will also depend on the function of the translation. If, as in the case of the Loeb Classics Library, the translation is intended as a line by line crib on the facing page to the SL text, then this factor will be a major criterion. If, on the other hand, the SL text is being reproduced for readers with no knowledge either of the language or the socio-literary conventions of the SL system, then the translation will be constructed in terms other than those employed in the bilingual version. It has already been pointed out in Section 2 that criteria governing modes of translation have varied considerably throughout the ages and there is certainly no single proscriptive model for translators to follow.

POETRY AND TRANSLATION

Within the field of literary translation, more time has been devoted to investigating the problems of translating poetry than any other literary mode. Many of the studies purporting to investigate these problems are either evaluations of different translations of a single work or personal statements by individual translators on how they have set about solving problems.[8] Rarely do studies of poetry and translation try to discuss methodological problems from a non-empirical position, and yet it is precisely that type of study that is most valuable and most needed.

In his book on the various methods employed by English translators of Catullus' *Poem* 64,[9] André Lefevere catalogues seven different strategies:

(1) *Phonemic translation,* which attempts to reproduce the SL sound in the TL while at the same time producing an acceptable paraphrase of the sense. Lefevere comes to the conclusion that although this works moderately well in the translation of onomatopoeia, the overall result is clumsy and often devoid of sense altogether.

(2) *Literal translation,* where the emphasis on word-for-word translation distorts the sense and the syntax of the original.

(3) *Metrical translation,* where the dominant criterion is the reproduction of the SL metre. Lefevere concludes that, like literal translation, this method concentrates on one aspect of the SL text at the expense of the text as a whole.

(4) *Poetry into prose.* Here Lefevere concludes that distortion of the sense, communicative value and syntax of the SL text results from this method, although not to the same extent as with the literal or metrical types of translation.

(5) *Rhymed translation,* where the translator 'enters into a double bondage' of metre and rhyme. Lefevere's conclusions here are particularly harsh, since he feels that the end product is merely a 'caricature' of Catullus.

(6) *Blank verse translation.* Again the restrictions imposed on the translator by the choice of structure are emphasized, although the greater accuracy and higher degree of literalness obtained are also noted.

(7) *Interpretation.* Under this heading, Lefevere discusses what he calls *versions* where the substance of the SL text is retained but the form is changed, and *imitations* where the translator produces a poem of his own which has 'only title and point of departure, if those, in common with the source text'.

What emerges from Lefevere's study is a revindication of the points made by Anne Cluysenaar, for the deficiencies of the methods he examines are due to an overemphasis of one or more elements of the poem at the expense of the whole. In other words, in establishing a

set of methodological criteria to follow, the translator has focused on
some elements at the expense of others and from this failure to
consider the poem as an organic structure comes a translation that is
demonstrably unbalanced. However, Lefevere's use of the term
version is rather misleading, for it would seem to imply a distinction
between this and *translation,* taking as the basis for the argument a
split between form and substance. Yet, as Popovič points out,[10] 'the
translator has the right to differ organically, to be independent',
provided that independence is pursued for the sake of the original in
order to reproduce it as a living work.

In his article, 'The Poet as Translator', discussing Pound's
Homage to Sextus Propertius, J.P.Sullivan recalls asking Pound why
he had used the phrase 'Oetian gods' instead of 'Oetian God' (i.e.
Hercules) in Section I of the poem. Pound had replied simply that it
would 'bitch the movement of the verse'. And earlier, in the same
article, Sullivan quotes Pound defending himself against the savage
attacks on his work in the following terms:

> No, I have not done a translation of Propertius. That fool in
> Chicago took the *Homage* for a translation despite the mention
> of Wordsworth and the parodied line from Yeats. (As if, had
> one wanted to pretend to more Latin than one knew, it
> wouldn't have been perfectly easy to correct one's
> divergencies from a Bohn crib. Price 5/-.)[11]

For Pound, the distinction between his translations and his *Homage*
was clear, but for those critics schooled in nineteenth-century
notions of the excellence of literalness, the distinction was irrelevant.
Pound had very precise ideas about the responsibility of the
translator, but his frame of reference would have been far closer to
Popovič's than to Professor W.G.Hale's.[12] Pound defined his
Homage as something other than a translation; his purpose in writing
the poem, he claimed, was to bring a dead man to life. It was, in
short, a kind of literary resurrection.

The greatest problem when translating a text from a period remote
in time is not only that the poet and his contemporaries are dead, but
the significance of the poem in its context is dead too. Sometimes, as
with the pastoral, for example, the genre is dead and no amount of

fidelity to the original form, shape or tone will help the rebirth of a new line of communication, to use Maria Corti's terms, *unless the TL system is taken into account equally*. With the classics, this first means overcoming the problem of translating along a vertical axis, where the SL text is seen as being of a higher status than the TL text. Unless the translation is intended as a crib, it also means accepting Popovič's theory of the inevitability of shifts of expression in the translation process.[13]

As an example of the way in which different concepts of translation can be applied to the translation of a classical author, let us take three versions of Catullus *Poem* 13.

An Invitation to Dinner

Cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me
paucis, si tibi di favent, diebus,
si tecum attuleris bonam atque magnam
cenam, non sine candida puella
et vino et sale et omnibus cachinnis.
haec, si, inquam, attuleris, venuste noster,
cenabis bene; nain tui Catulli
plenus sacculus est aranearum.
sed contra accipies meros amores
seu quid suavius elegantiusve est:
nam unguentum dabo, quod meae puellae
donarunt Veneres Cupidinesque,
quod tu cum olfacies, deos rogabis,
totum ut te faciant, Fabulle, nasum.

(Catullus, 13)

(1) Now, please the gods, Fabullus, you
Shall dine here well in a day or two;
But bring a good big dinner, mind,
Likewise a pretty girl, and wine
And wit and jokes of every kind.
Bring these, I say, good man, and dine
Right well: for your Catullus' purse

Is full—but only cobwebs bears.
But you with love itself I'II dose,
Or what still sweeter, finer is,
An essence to my lady given
By all the Loves and Venuses;
Once sniff it, you'll petition heaven
To make you nose and only nose.

<div align="right">(Sir William Marris, 1924)</div>

(2) say Fabullus

    you'll get a swell dinner at my house
    a couple three days from now (if your luck holds out)
    all you gotta do is bring the dinner
        and make it good and be sure there's plenty
    Oh yes don't forget a girl (I like blondes)
    and a bottle of wine maybe
        and any good jokes and stories you've heard
    just do that like I tell you ol' pal ol' pal
    you'll get a swell dinner
        ?
        what,
        about,
        ME?
    well;
        well here take a look in my wallet,
        yeah those're cobwebs
    but here,
        I'll give you something too
        I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE BABY
    no?
    well here's something nicer and a little more cherce maybe
    I got perfume see
    it was a gift to HER
        straight from VENUS and CUPID LTD.
    when you get a whiff of that you'll pray the gods

to make you (yes you will, Fabullus)
   ALL
   NOSE

<div align="right">(Frank O.Copley, 1957)</div>

(3) Inviting a friend to supper

To night, grave sir, both my poore house, and I
Doe equally desire your companie:
Not that we thinke us worthy such a ghest,
But that your worth will dignifie our feast,
With those that come; whose grace may make that seeme
Something, which, else, could hope for no esteeme.
It is the faire acceptance, Sir, creates
The entertaynment perfect: not the cates.
Yet shall you have, to rectifie your palate,
An olive, capers, or some better sallade
Ushring the mutton; with a short-leg'd hen,
If we can get her, full of egs, and then,
Limons, and wine for sauce: to these, a coney
Is not to be despair'd of, for our money;
And, though fowle, now, be scarce, yet there are clarkes,
The skie not falling, thinke we may have larkes.
He tell your more, and lye, so you will come:
Of partrich, pheasant, wood-cock, of which some
May yet be there; and godwit, if we can:
Knat, raile, and ruffe too. How so ere, my man
Shall reade a piece of Virgil, Tacitus,
Livie, or of some better booke to us,
Of which wee'll speake our minds, amidst our meate;
And lle professe no verses to repeate:
To this, if ought appeare, which I not know of,
That will the pastrie, not my paper, show of
Digestive cheese, and fruit there sure will bee;
But that, which most doth take my Muse, and mee,
Is a pure cup of rich Canary-wine,

Which is the Mermaids, now, but shall be mine:
Of which had Horace, or Anacreon tasted,
Their lives, as doe their lines, till now had lasted.
Tabacco, Nectar, or the Thespian spring,
Are all but Luthers beere, to this I sing.
Of this will have no Pooly', or Parrot by;
Nor shall our cups make any guiltie men:
But, at our parting, we will be, as when
We innocently met. No simple word,
That shall be utter'd at our mirthfull boord,
Shall make us sad next morning: or affright
The libertie, that wee'll enjoy to night.

<div align="right">(Ben Jonson)*</div>

*I am grateful to my colleague, Paul Merchant, for drawing these examples to my attention.

It is obvious that the three English poems are very different from one another, visually different in terms of length, shape, organization of lines, and enormously different in tone. What they have in common is what Popovič describes as the invariant core, elements such as *the invitation to dinner* line, the *affectionate joky tone* line and the *plea of poverty* line. What is missing in the third version, however, is the other consistent element in the original and the two English versions, the *compliment to Lesbia* line. The invariant therefore comprises both theme and tone, for the forms and approaches employed by the translators are widely different. Marris has clearly attempted a 'close' translation, in so far as the bounds of English syntax and the formal structures of rhyme and metre allow, but the method is so restrictive that by line 10 it has begun to obscure the meaning and blunt the sharpness of the poem. Catullus' skill depends on compressing a large amount of information into a small frame, of writing a poem that is sumultaneously a gently comic invitation to a friend and a token of appreciation of the woman he loves. Moreover, it relies on the familiarity of the reader with a set of referential systems—the joke about the gods, for example, or the significance of perfume, which mean nothing to the contemporary reader. Marris, however, chooses to translate the

words even though the references may be obscure, but opts for a curiously archaic formulation of lines 11 and 12. He uses the term *essence* rather than *perfume,* and translates *meae puellae* grandly as *to my lady,* retaining the plural form of *Veneres Cupidinesque* although the significance of that plural is lost on English readers. Then in the last two lines he runs into other difficulties. By translating *tu olfacies as sniff it*, he alters the register, and then returns immediately in the second part of the line to more courtly language but this time with all the connotations of the term *heaven* as opposed to *god,* by which he chooses to translate *deos*. One is left wondering exactly what Marris' criteria for choosing to translate this poem must have been. Had he merely wanted to transmit the content of the original to English readers he would have been content with paraphrase, so clearly he was concerned to create an English poem. He seems to have fallen into the pitfalls awaiting the translator who decides to tie himself to a very formal rhyme scheme in the TL version, at the expense, in this case, of giving the English poem any force and substance.

Frank Copley's criteria, on the other hand, are quite clear. He has focused on the joky, conversational tone of the original, on the close friendship between the speaker and the addressee that emerges from the poem and has updated the language in an attempt to ensure that the characterization of the speaker predominates over all the other elements. His version is a dramatic monologue in a kind of Damon Runyonesque dialect, but he gets much nearer to the original than the Marris version on several counts. His opening, *Say, Fabullus,* has the instant impact of Catullus' opening line, as opposed to the formal first line of the Marris version where the friendship element is placed after *so please the gods* and is consequently distanced. Copley's insertions and additions to the Catullus are deliberate attempts to clarify points that may be obscure to the twentieth-century reader—so the line from the song, followed immediately by *no*? is a means of linking the two parts of the poem that seem so unevenly matched in the Marris version. However, the *VENUS and CUPID LTD*. phrase is an attempt at clarification by use of a different method. Here the original joke relying on the plural form

has been transposed into another system of humour, and the joke now derives from the use of the gods' names in a deviant context.

The Copley version, then, far from being an aberration of the original, in some respects comes closer to the Latin poem than the more literal version by Marris. As Popovič has pointed out, the fact that the process of translation may involve shifts in the semantic properties of the text does not mean that the translator wanted to underemphasize the semantic appeal of the original but rather because the translator

> is endeavouring to convey the semantic substance of the original in spite of the differences separating the system of the original from that of the translation, in spite of the differences between the two languages and between the two methods of presenting the subject matter.[14]

But Copley's version is harder to justify when the register of his poem is compared to that of the Catullus poem. Catullus, after all, was an aristocrat, whose language, although flexible, is elegant, and Copley's speaker is a caricature of a teenager from the Johnny Ray generation. Copley's choice of register makes the reader respond in a way that downgrades the material itself. The poem is no longer a rather suave and sophisticated mingling of several elements, it is located very precisely in a specific time and context. And, of course, in the relatively short time since the translation appeared, its language and tone have become almost as remote as that of the original!

The third version is very obviously not a close translation of Catullus' Poem 13 and yet at the same time it comes nearer in mood, tone and language to Catullus than either of the other versions. Compare the gently mocking

> haec, si, inquam, attuleris, venuste noster,
> cenabis bene;

to

> And, though fowle, now, be scarce, yet there are clarkes,

The skie not falling, thinke we may have larkes.

The plea of poverty, the affection between the two friends, the contrast between what is projected as the ideal dinner and what is the possible dinner, all these elements are beautifully expressed by Jonson. The compliment to the lady has vanished, in its place is the love of learning; the perfume has been replaced with a Canary-wine that would have bestowed eternal life on Horace or Anacreon in person. The two sections of the poem, perfectly maintained, have nevertheless been utilized differently by the poet. Jonson's poem is a fine example of what Ludskanov describes as *semiotic transformation* (see p. 25) or *creative transposition* in Jakobson's terms, for he has taken Catullus' poem and worked outwards from it to give it a new life in the context of Renaissance England.

But there is another element in Jonson's poem, that raises again the whole question of intertextuality. The humour system within the poem is accessible to any reader, but to the reader already familiar with Catullus' poem a second system of humour comes into play. So the translator putting the Jonson poem into German, for example, would miss a great deal if he did not take into account the relationship between the English and the Latin poems, and the syntactical echoes by which Jonson deliberately recalls his source text for the discerning reader. Jonson's poem, then, may be read in its own right *and* in its relationship to Catullus.

Michael Rifaterre, in his book *Semiotics of Poetry,* argues that the reader is the only one who makes the connections between text, interpretant and intertext and suggests that

> The reader's manufacture of meaning is thus not so much a progress through the poem and a half-random accretion of verbal associations, as it is a seesaw scanning of the text, compelled by the very duality of the signs—ungrammatical as mimesis, grammatical within the slgnificance network.[15]

He goes on to suggest that in the reader's mind there is a process of 'continual recommencing', and *indecisiveness* alternately lost and recovered with each reliving of 'revealed significance'. He claims that it is this fluctuation that makes a poem endlessly readable and

fascinating. Yet clearly if he is right about the way in which a reader approaches a poem—and at the start of his book he claims that layers of meaning only emerge from *several* readings—then this thesis reinforces the argument against the one absolute, inflexible translation and against the desirability of the close translation which is, after all, merely one restricted reading of a poem.

With the three versions of the Catullus poem above, it was possible to see how the closer the translation came to trying to recreate *linguistic* and *formal* structures of the original, the further removed it became in terms of function. Meanwhile, huge deviations of form and language managed to come closer to the original intention. But this is not the only criterion for the translation of poetry, and a consideration of two attempts to translate the Anglo-Saxon poem, *The Seafarer,* will reveal a very different set of principles. Because of the length of the poem, I have restricted the discussion to selected passages (for the original, see Appendix).

The Seafarer

(1) A song I sing   of my sea-adventure,
    The strain of peril,   the stress of toil,
    Which oft I endured   in anguish of spirit
    Through weary hours   of aching woe.
    My bark was swept   by the breaking seas;
    Bitter the watch   from the bow by night
    As my ship drove on   within sound of the rocks.
    My feet were numb   with the nipping cold,
    Hunger sapped   a sea-weary spirit,
    And care weighed heavy   upon my heart.
        Little the landlubber,   safe on shore,
    Knows what I've suffered   in icy seas
    Wretched and worn   by the winter storms,
    Hung with icicles,   stung by hail,
    Lonely and friendless   and far from home.
    In my ears no sound   but the roar of the sea,
    The icy combers,   the cry of the swan;
    In place of the mead-hall   and laughter of men

My only singing   the sea-mew's call,
The scream of the gannet,   the shriek of the gull;
Through the wail of the wild gale   beating the bluffs
The piercing cry   of the ice-coated petrel,
The storm-drenched eagle's   echoing scream.
In all my wretchedness,   weary and lone,
I had no comfort   of comrade or kin.
   Little indeed can he credit,   whose town-life
Pleasantly passes   in feasting and joy,
Sheltered from peril,   what weary pain
Often I've suffered   in foreign seas.
Night shades darkened   with driving snow
From the freezing north,   and the bonds of frost
Firm-locked the land,   while falling hail,
Coldest of kernels,   encrusted earth.
   Yet still, even now,   my spirit within me
Drives me seaward   to sail the deep,
To ride the long swell   of the salt sea-wave.
Never a day   but my heart's desire
Would launch me forth   on the long sea-path,
Fain of far harbors   and foreign shores.
Yet lives no man   so lordly of mood,
So eager in giving,   so ardent in youth,
So bold in his deeds,   or so dear to his lord,
Who is free from dread   in his far sea-travel,
Or fear of God's purpose   and plan for his fate.
The beat of the harp,   and bestowal of treasure,
The love of woman,   and worldly hope,
Nor other interest   can hold his heart
Save only the sweep   of the surging billows;
His heart is haunted   by love of the sea.
   Trees are budding   and towns are fair,
Meadows kindle   and all life quickens,
All things hasten   the eager-hearted,
Who joy therein,   to journey afar,
Turning seaward   to distant shores.

The cuckoo stirs him   with plaintive call,
The herald of summer,   with mournful song,
Foretelling the sorrow   that stabs the heart.
Who liveth in luxury,   little he knows
What woe men endure   in exile's doom.
Yet still, even now,   my desire outreaches,
My spirit soars   over tracts of sea,
O'er the home of the whale,   and the world's expanse.
Eager, desirous,   the lone sprite returneth;
It cries in my ears   and it urges my heart
To the path of the whale   and the plunging sea.

                    (Charles W.Kennedy)

The Seafarer

(2) May I for my own self song's truth reckon,
    journey's jargon, how I in harsh days
    Hardship endured oft.
    Bitter breast-cares have I abided,
    Known on my keel many a care's hold,
    And dire sea-surge, and there I oft spent
    Narrow nightwatch nigh the ship's head
    While she tossed close to cliffs.   Coldly afflicted,
    My feet were by frost benumbed.
    Chill its chains are; chafing sighs
    Hew my heart round and hunger begot
    Mere-weary mood.   Lest man know not
    That he on dry land loveliest liveth,
    List how I, care-wretched, on ice-cold sea,
    Weathered the winter, wretched outcast
    Deprived of my kinsmen;
    Hung with hard ice-flakes, where hail-scur flew,
    There I heard naught save the harsh sea
    And ice-cold wave, at whiles the swan cries,
    Did for my games the gannet's clamour,
    Sea-fowls' loudness was for me laughter,

The mews' singing all my mead-drink.
Storms, on the stone-cliffs beaten, fell on the stern
In icy feathers;   full oft the eagle screamed
With spray on his pinion.
     Not any protector
May make merry man faring needy.
This he little believes, who aye in winsome life
Abides' mid burghers some heavy business,
Wealthy and wine-flushed, how I weary oft
Must bide above brine.
Neareth nightshade, snoweth from north,
Frost froze the land, hail fell on earth then,
Corn of the coldest.   Nathless there knocketh now
The heart's thought that I on high streams
The salt-wavy tumult traverse alone
Moaneth alway my mind's lust
That I fare forth, that I afar hence
Seek out a foreign fastness.
For this there's no mood-lofty man over earth's midst,
Not though he be given his good, but will have in his youth greed;
Nor his deed to the daring, nor his king to the faithful
But shall have his sorrow for sea-fare
Whatever his lord will.
He hath not heart for harping, nor in ring-having
Nor winsomeness to wife, nor world's delight
Nor any whit else save the wave's slash,
Yet longing comes upon him to fare forth on the water
Bosque taketh blossom, cometh beauty of berries,
Fields to fairness, land fares brisker,
All this admonisheth man eager of mood,
The heart turns to travel so that he then thinks
On flood-ways to be far departing.
Cuckoo calleth with gloomy crying,
He singeth summerward, bodeth sorrow,
The bitter heart's blood.   Burgher knows not—

He the prosperous man—what some perform
Where wandering them widest draweth.
So that but now my heart burst from my breastlock,
My mood' mid the mere-flood,
Over the whale's acre, would wander wide.
On earth's shelter cometh oft to me,
Eager and ready, the crying lone-flyer,
Whets for the whale-path the heart irresistibly,
O'er tracks of ocean; seeing that anyhow
My lord deems to me this dead life
On loan and on land, I believe not
That any earth-weal eternal standeth
Save there be somewhat calamitous
That, ere a man's tide go, turn it to twain.
Disease or oldness or sword-hate
Beats out the breath from doom-gripped body.
And for this, every earl whatever, for those
speaking after—
Laud of the living, boasteth some last word,
That he will work ere he pass onward,
Frame on the fair earth 'gainst foes his malice,
Daring ado,…
So that all men shall honour him after
And his laud beyond them remain 'mid the English,
Aye, for ever, a lasting life's blast,
Delight' mid the doughty,
    Days little durable,
And all arrogance of earthen riches,
There come now no kings nor Caesars
Nor gold-giving lords like those gone.
Howe'er in mirth most magnified,
Whoe'er lived in life most lordliest,
Drear all this excellence, delights undurable!
Waneth the watch, but the world holdeth.
Tomb hideth trouble. The blade is layed low.
Earthly glory ageth and seareth.

No man at all going the earth's gait,
But age fares against him, his face paleth,
Grey-haired he groaneth, knows gone companions,
Lordly men, are to earth o'erglven,
Nor may he then the flesh-cover, whose life ceaseth,
Nor eat the sweet nor feel the sorry,
Nor stir hand nor think in mid heart,
And though he strew the grave with gold,
His born brothers, their buried bodies
Be an unlikely treasure hoard.

(Ezra Pound)

First, there is the question of determining what the poem is about: is it a dialogue between an old sailor and a youth, or a monologue about the fascination of the sea in spite of the hardships endured by the sailor? Should the poem be perceived as having a Christian message as an integral feature, or are the Christian elements additions that sit uneasily over the pagan foundations? Second, once the translator has decided on a clear-cut approach to the poem, there remains the whole question of the form of Anglo-Saxon poetry; its reliance on a complex pattern of stresses within each line, with the line broken into two half-lines and rich patterns of alliteration running through the whole. Any translator must first decide what constitutes the total structure (i.e. whether to omit Christian references or not) and then decide on what to do when translating a type of poetry which relies on a series of rules that are non-existent in the TL.

Charles Kennedy's translation is restricted to the first 65 lines of the 108 lines of the poem, whilst Ezra Pound's translation comprises 101 lines and, since he omits the conclusion, he is compelled to make alterations to the main body of the text to ensure that all possible Christian significance is removed. So ll. 73–81 in Pound's version read as follows:

And for this, every earl whatever, for those speaking after—
Laud of the living, boasteth some last word,
That he will work ere he pass onward,

> Frame on the fair earth 'gainst foes his malice,
> Daring ado…
> So that all men shall honour him after
> And his laud beyond them remain' mid the English
> Aye, for ever, a lasting life's blast,
> Delight' mid the doughty,

The extent to which Pound has altered the text can be seen when his passage is set against a literal translation:

> Wherefor the praise of living men who shall speak after he is gone, the best of fame after death for every man, is that he should strive ere he must depart, work on earth with bold deeds against the malice of fiends, against the devil, so that the children of men may later exalt him and his praise live afterwards among the angels for ever and ever, the joy of life eternal, delight amid angels.[16]

Hence *deofle togeones* (against the devil) is omitted in l. 76 *mid englum* (among the angels) becomes '*mid the English, dugeþum* (angel hosts) become *the doughty*. In an even greater shift, the translation of *eorl* (man) by the specific *eorl* further serves to focus Pound's poem on the suffering of a great individual rather than on the common suffering of everyman. The figure that emerges from Pound's poem is a grief-stricken exile, broken but never bowed, who draws the comparison between his own lonely life at sea and the man

> who aye in winsome life
> Abides' mid burghers some heavy business,
> Wealthy and wine-flushed,

But the figure who is portrayed in Charles Kennedy's version, a figure who mitigates the aggressive repetition of I with the more personal object pronoun *me* and the possessive *my, is* a Ulysses-type, urged forward by outreaching desire. The concluding lines of Kennedy's version show the Ulysses figure driving himself onwards, and the deliberate translation of *gifre* (unsatisfied) by the positive *eager*

(which Pound copies) alters the balance of the poem in favour of the Seafarer as an *active* character:

> Eager, desirous,   the lone sprite returneth;
> It cries in my ears   and it urges my heart
> To the path of the whale   and the plunging sea.

There is a large body of literature on the question of the accuracy of Pound's translation and it would be possible to consider Kennedy's version within the terms of the same debate. But as Pound declared with his *Homage,* it was not his intention to produce a crib and clearly a close comparison between the original and his translation of *The Seafarer* reveals an elaborate set of word games that show the extent of his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon rather than his ignorance of that language. It seems fair to say, therefore, that linguistic closeness between SL and TL was not a prime criterion for Pound. In Kennedy's poem there are fewer major deviations from the original, but closeness should not be regarded as a more central criterion either. In an attempt to arrive at some idea of what criteria are employed in both versions, the following table provides a rough guide:

This table is by no means comprehensive, but it does serve to show some of the criteria that can be determined from analysis of the translations. Pound's version appears to be the more complex of the two, because he seems to be trying to operate on more levels than Kennedy, but both poets very definitely use the SL text as a starting point from which to set out and construct a poem in its own right with its own system of meaning. Their translations are based on their *interpretation* of the original and on their *shaping* of that interpretation.

   It has often been argued, in accordance with Longfellow (see p. 73), that *translation* and *interpretation* are two separate activities, and that it is the duty of the translator to translate what is there and not to 'interpret' it. The fallacy of such an argument is obvious— since every reading is an interpretation, the activities cannot be separated. James Holmes has devised the following useful diagram

	Pound	Kennedy
(1)	Free-verse format.	Preservation of visual appearance of original by use of half-line format.
(2)	Illusion of preservation of Anglo-Saxon stress pattern broken by irregular lines in TL text.	Attempt to preserve regular stress pattern even at risk of monotony in TL.
(3)	Complex patterns of alliteration set up superficially similar to original.	Less complex patterns of alliteration.
(4)	Attempt at mock-Germanic syntax-inversion, compounded words, archaisms, e.g. *mood-lofty man* (1.40), *bosque taketh blossom* (1.49), *any earth-weal eternal standeth* (1.68).	Some inversion, some compounding, e.g. *sea-wave* (1.36), *eager-hearted* (1.52).
(5)	No attempt to modernize language, resulting in poem where language and syntax are consistently archaic and 'strange'.	Use of twentieth-century language, e.g. *landlubber* (1.11), I've (1. 12), persistent use of object pronouns with archaisms, resulting in uneven language.
(6)	Attempt to reproduce *sounds* of original.	No deliberate attempt to reproduce sounds of original.
(7)	Poem conceived as non-Christian. Stress on pre-Christian Germanic values of strength and resilience. Final lines omitted, all references to God, after-life, etc. omitted or changed.	Poem conceived as study of an exiled individual. No attempt to eliminate religious references (see God, l. 44) but decision to only translate one part of poem avoids almost all problems in this respect.
(8)	Poem attempts to show individual in a world-system distanced in time, space and values.	Poem attempts to relate Anglo-Saxon world to that of contemporary reader.

(9)   Poem attempts to provide   Poem does not deliberately
      'flavour' of Anglo-Saxon   attempt to reproduce Anglo-
      verse through fiction of   Saxon 'flavour'.
      reproducing Anglo-Saxon
      form, language and sound
      patterns in TL.

(10) Poem attempts to reproduce   The same.
      elegiac mood of original.

to show the interrelationship between translation and critical
interpretation:[17]
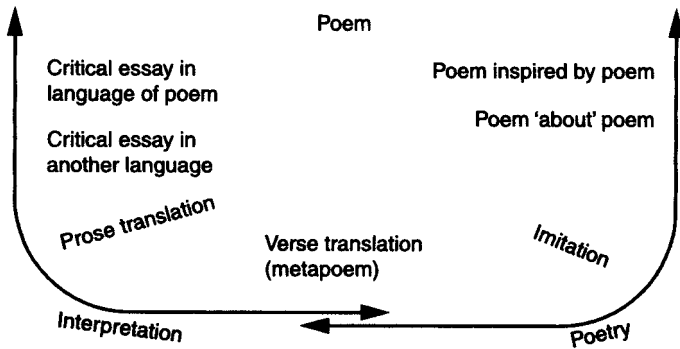
The verse translation rests on the axis point where types of
interpretation intersect with types of imitation and derivation.
Moreover, a translator will continue to produce 'new' versions of a
given text, not so much to reach an ideal 'perfect translation' but
because each previous version, being context bound, represents a
reading accessible to the time in which it is produced, and moreover,
is individualistic. William Morris' versions of Homer or of *Beowulf*
are both idiosyncratic in that they spring from Morris' own system
of priorities and commitment to archaic form and language, and they
are Victorian in that they exemplify a set of canons distinctive to one
period in time. The great difference between a text and a metatext is
that the one is *fixed* in time and place, the other is *variable*. There is
only one *Divina Commedia* but there are innumerable readings and
in theory innumerable translations.

The translations of *The Seafarer* and the Catullus poem discussed above illustrate some of the complexities involved in the translation of poetry where there is a gulf between the SL and TL cultures through distance in time and space. All the translations reflect the individual translators' readings, interpretations and selection of criteria determined by the concept of the *function* both of the translation and of the original text. So from the poems examined we can see that in some cases *modernization* of language and tone has received priority treatment, whilst in other cases conscious archaization has been a dominant determining feature. The success or failure of these attempts must be left to the discretion of the reader, but the variations in method do serve to emphasize the point that there is no single *right* way of translating a poem just as there is no single right way of writing one either.

So far the two poems discussed have belonged to remote systems. When we consider the question of translating a contemporary writer, in this case a poem by Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888–1970), other issues arise. The poem is typical of Ungaretti's work in that it is as linear and bare as a Brancusi sculpture and extremely intense through its apparent simplicity:

<div align="right">Vallone, 20 April 1917</div>

> Un'altra notte,
> In quest'oscuro
> colle mani
> gelate
> distinguo
> il mio viso
> Mi vedo
> abbandonato nell'infinito

Typical of Ungaretti, also, is the spatial arrangement of the poem, a vital intrinsic part of the total structure, which interacts with the verbal system to provide the special grammar of the poem's own system. For the translator, then, the spatial arrangement of the SL text must be taken into account but in the two versions below it is clear that some variation has taken place.

(A) In this dark
    with frozen hands
    I make out
    my face

    I see myself
    adrift in infinite space.
      (Patrick Creagh)

(B) In this dark
    with hands
    frozen
    I make out
    my face

    I see myself
    abandoned in the infinite.
      (Charles Tomlinson)

In version A there are only six lines, as opposed to the seven lines of the original and of version B, and this is due to the deliberate regularizing of the English syntax in 1.2. Version B, however, distorts the TL syntax in order to keep the adjective *frozen* in a separate position in 1.3 parallel to *gelate*. But this distortion of syntax, which produces an effect totally different from that of the original, comes from a deliberate decision to use Italian norms in English language structures. Whereas the strength of the original depends on the *regularity* of the word order, the English text relies on *strangeness*.

The problem of spatial arrangement is particularly difficult when applied to free verse, for the arrangement itself is meaningful, To illustrate this point, if we take Noam Chomsky's famous 'meaningless' sentence: *Colourless green ideas sleep furiously* and arrange it as

    Colourless

    green ideas

    sleep

    furiously

the apparent lack of logical harmony between the elements of the sentence could become acceptable, since each 'line' would add an idea and the overall meaning would derive from the association of illogical elements in a seemingly logical regular structure. The meaning, therefore, would not be *content bound,* but would be *sign bound,* in that both the individual words and the association of ideas would accumulate meaning as the poem is read.

   The two translations of the Ungaretti poem make some attempt to
set out a visual structure that accords with the original, but the
problems of the distance between English and Italian syntax loom
large. Both English versions appear to stress the I pronoun, because
Italian sentence structure is able to dispense with pronouns in verbal
phrases. Both opt for the translation *make out* for *distinguo,* which
alters the English register. The final line of the poem, deliberately
longer in the SL version, is rendered longer also in both English
versions, but here there is substantial deviation between the two.
Version B keeps closely to the original in that it retains the Latinate
abandoned as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon *adrift* in version A.
Version B retains the single word *infinite,* that is spelled out in more
detail in version A with *infinite space,* a device that also adds an
element of rhyme to the poem.

   The apparent simplicity of the Italian poem, with its clear images
and simple structure conceals a deliberate recourse to that process
defined by the Russian Formalists as *ostranenie,* i.e. making strange,
or consciously thickening language within the system of the
individual work to heighten perception (see Tony Bennet, *Formalism
and Marxism,* London 1979). Seen in this light, version A, whilst
pursuing the 'normalcy' of Ungaretti's linguistic structures, loses
much of the power of what Ungaretti described as the 'word-image'.
Version B, on the other hand, opts for a higher tone or register, with
rhetorical devices of inverted sentence structure and the long,
Latinate final line in an attempt to arrive at a 'thickened' language
by another route.

   In a brief but helpful review-article on translation Terry Eagleton
notes that much discussion has centred on the notion that the text is a
given datum and that 'contention then centres on the operations
(free, literal, recreative?) whereby that datum is to be reworked into
another.' He feels, however, that one of the great gains of recent
semiotic enquiry is that such a view is no longer tenable since the
concept of intertextuality has given us the notion that every text is in
a sense a translation:

   Every text is a set of determinate transformations of other,
   preceding and surrounding texts of which it may not even be

consciously aware; it is within, against and across these other texts that the poem emerges into being. And these other texts are, in their turn, 'tissues' of such pre-exlstent textual elements, which can never be unravelled back to some primordial moment of 'origin'.[18]

It therefore becomes possible for a translator to see himself freed from the restrictions of those conventions governing translation that have prevailed at different moments in time and to treat the text responsibly as the starting point from which the metatext, or *translation-reading* (an interlingual reading) can begin. For as may be seen from the examples given above, all kinds of different criteria come into play during the translation process and all necessarily involve shifts of expression, as the translator struggles to combine his own pragmatic reading with the dictates of the TL cultural system. The reader may not *like* Frank Copley's 1950s-style Catullus, or Ezra Pound's mock-Anglo-Saxon poetry or Tomlinson's slightly lofty Ungaretti, but no one can argue that the translation products were not the result of a carefully determined concept of translation, conceived with a precise function in mind.

   Before concluding this brief survey of some of the criteria governing the translation of poetry, I propose to look at one more text and two English versions, all distanced from the contemporary reader by several centuries. One interesting feature of these translations is that by choosing to retain, rather than replace, the form of the SL text, the translators encouraged a new form to enter the TL system; in this case, the sonnet.

   Amor, che nel penser mio vive e regna
   e'I suo seggio maggior nel mio cor tène,
   alor armato ne la fronte vène,
   ivi si loca, et ivi pon sua insegna.
   Quella ch'amare e sofferir me 'nsegna
   e vol che'l gran desio, l'accesa spene,
   ragion, vergogna e reverenza affrene,
   di nostro ardir fra se stessa si sdegna.
   Onde Amor paventoso fugge al core,

asciando ogni sua impresa, e piange, e trema;
vi s'asconde, e non appar più fore.
Che poss'io far, temendo il mio signore,
se non star seco in fin a l'ora estrema?
ché bel fin fa chi ben amando more.

(Francesco Petrarca)

The longe love, that in my thought doeth harbar
And in myn hert doeth kepe his residence
Into my face preseth with bold pretence,
And therin campeth, spreding his baner.
She that me lerneth to love and suffre
And will that my trust, and lustes negligence
Be rayned by reason, shame, and reverence
With his hardines taketh displeasure.
Wherewithall, vnto the hertes forrest he fleith
Leving his entreprise with payne and cry
And there him hideth and not appereth.
What may I do when my maister fereth,
But, in the felde, with him to lyve and dye?
For goode is the liff, ending faithfully.

(Sir Thomas Wyatt)

Love that doth raine and live within my thought,
And buylt his seat within my captyve brest,
Clad in the armes wherein with me he fowght
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
But she that tawght me love and suffre paine,
My doubtfull hope and eke my hote desire
With shamfast looke to shadoo and refrayne,
Her smyling grace convertyth streight to yre.
And cowarde love than to the hert apace
Taketh his flight where he doth lorke and playne
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
For my lordes gylt thus fawtless byde I payne;

Yet from my lorde shall not my foote remove.
Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.

<div align="right">(Surrey)</div>

The most striking aspect of any comparison of these three sonnets is the range of variation between them. Petrarch's sonnet splits into octet and sestet and follows the rhyme scheme a b b a/a b b a/c d c/c d c. Wyatt's poem is similarly divided, but here the rhyme scheme is a b b a/a b b a/c d c/c d d which serves to set the final two lines apart. Surrey's poem varies much more: a b a b/c d c d/e c e c/f f and consists of three four-line sections building to the final couplet. The significance of these variations in form becomes clear once each sonnet is read closely.

Petrarch's poem opens with a conceit: Amor (Love), the lord and ruler of the Lover's heart is depicted as a military commander who raises his standard in the Lover's face, thus becoming visible. The first four lines, a single sentence, begin with the word *Amor* and end with Amor assertively showing his colours. With the next four lines there is a shift in perspective, and the focus is now on *Quella ch'amare e sofferir me 'nsegna* (She who teaches me to love and suffer). Again the four lines make up a single sentence, beginning with a description of the Lady's desire for the Lover to be ruled by reason, shame and reverence, and ending with the verb *si sdegna* (is displeased), the hinge phrase on which the poem pivots. The following tercet describes Amor's flight back to the heart, his fear of the Lady's displeasure and his subsequent hiding. But it is in the final tercet that the Lover speaks for himself, asking the reader a direct question that implies his own helplessness, bound as he is in a feudal relationship with his Lord, Amor. What can I do, he asks, since my Lord is afeared (and I fear him), except to stay with him to the final hour? and adds, in the last line, that he who dies loving well makes a good end.

The lover in Petrarch's poem is thus presented as timid, respectful, subordinate, both to the wishes of his Lady and to the commands of Love. He does not act but is acted upon, and the structure of the poem, with the first person singular verbal form only used at the end, and then only in a question that stresses his helplessness, reinforces this picture. The final line, an elaborate verbal

conceit, emphasizes the virtues of passivity, or rather of the kind of passive love praised through the poem. But it is not enough to consider this poem in isolation, it must be seen as part of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and linked therefore through language structures, imagery and a central shaping concept, to the other poems in the collection. Moreover, the attitude expressed by the lover in this poem (which links to the Petrarchan system that in turn is tied to the fourteenth-century vision of the role of loving and writing) should not be taken too literally at face value. The gentle ironic humour that emerges most clearly from the account of Amor's defeat and the Lover's powerlessness to do anything but follow him, offsets the serious moral principles behind the poem. The *voice* of the poem as a whole is thus distinct from the voice of the Lover.

Wyatt's translation undergoes a number of significant shifts, beginning in the first line with the addition of the adjective *longe* that detracts from the sharp personification of Petrarch's opening line. Moreover, whereas Amor 'lives and reigns', Wyatt's love 'in my thought doeth harbour'. It is in Surrey's version that the military language prevails, whilst Wyatt reduces the terminology of battle to a terminology of pageantry. With the second quartet there is another major shift—the Lady in Petrarch's sonnet is angered at the *joint* boldness of Amor and the Lover (*di nostro ardir*—at our boldness) whereas Wyatt's Lady is displeased by 'his hardines'. In the description of Love's flight, Wyatt creates the image of 'the hertes forrest', and by using nouns 'with payne and cry', instead of verbs lessens the picture of total, abject humiliation painted by Petrarch.

It is in the final lines that the extent of the space between Wyatt and Petrarch becomes apparent. The Lover in Wyatt's poem asks a question that does not so much stress his helplessness as his good intentions and bravery. The Italian *temendo il mio signore* carries with it an ambiguity (either the Lord fears or the Lover fears the Lord, or, most probably, both) whilst Wyatt has stated very plainly that 'my master fereth'. The final line, 'For goode is the liff, ending faithfully' strengthens the vision of the Lover as noble. Whereas the Petrarchan lover seems to be describing the beauty of death through constant love, Wyatt's lover stresses the virtues of a good *life* and a faithful end. What emerges from Wyatt's poem is a portrait of an

active Lover, brave and faithful, for whom the manifestation of love and the Lady's displeasure are not couched in militaristic terms at all. Love shows his colours and is repulsed and the Lover sets up the alternative ideal of a good life. We are in the world of politics, of the individual geared towards ensuring his survival, a long way from the pre-Reformation world of Petrarch.

Surrey's translation retains the military language of the SL text, but goes several stages further. The Lover is 'captyve', and he and Love have often fought. Moreover, the Lady is not in an unreachable position, angered by the display of Love. She is already won and is merely angered by what appears to be excessive ardour. Petrarch's sonnet mentions *desio* and *spene* (desire and hope) but Surrey's passion is presented in physical terms. Once the Lady has changed 'her smyling grace' to anger, Love flees, but his flight is decisively condemned by the Lover. 'Cowarde love' flies and in the safety of the heart he 'doth lurke and playne'. Moreover, in the final line of the third quartet, the Lover states plainly that he is 'fawtless' and suffers because of 'my lordes gylt'. The device of splitting the poem into three four-line stanzas can be seen as a way of reshaping the material content. The poem does not build to a question and a final line on the virtues of dying, loving well. It builds instead to a couplet in which the Lover states his determination not to abandon his guilty lord even in the face of death. The voice of the poem and the voice of the Lover are indistinguishable, and the stress on the I, apparent in Wyatt's poem already, is strengthened by those points in the poem where there is a clear identification with the Lover's position against the bad behaviour of the false lord Love.

Both the English translations, products of a socio-cultural system vastly different from that of Petrarch's time, subtly (and at times not so subtly) adjust the structural patterns and the patterns of meaning within the SL text. The shifts in Surrey's translation are such that he would seem to have been not only translating but deliberately repudiating those elements in the SL text of which he did not approve (e.g. the Lover's passivity, the impenetrable hierarchy that places the Lover on the lowest rung of the ladder). These would have had no place in a society which saw upward social movement as desirable. But Wyatt and Surrey's translations, like Jonson's Catullus

translation, would have been read by their contemporaries *through* prior knowledge of the original, and those shifts that have been condemned by subsequent generations as taking something away from Petrarch, would have had a very different function in the circles of Wyatt and Surrey's cultured intellectual readership.

TRANSLATING PROSE

Although there is a large body of work debating the issues that surround the translation of poetry, far less time has been spent studying the specific problems of translating literary prose. One explanation for this could be the higher status that poetry holds, but it is more probably due to the widespread erroneous notion that a novel is somehow a simpler structure than a poem and is consequently easier to translate. Moreover, whilst we have a number of detailed statements by poet-translators regarding their methodology, we have fewer statements from prose translators. Yet there is a lot to be learned from determining the criteria for undertaking a translation, as has been demonstrated above.

For a number of years I have used an exercise designed to discover how the translation of a novel is approached. Students are asked to translate the opening paragraph(s) of any novel and the translations are then examined in group discussion. What has emerged from this exercise, time and again, is that students will frequently start to translate a text that they have not previously read or that they have read only once some time earlier. In short, they simply open the SL text and *begin at the beginning,* without considering how that opening section relates to the structure of the work as a whole. Yet it would be quite unacceptable to approach the translation of a poem in this way. This is significant because it shows that a different concept of the imaginary distinction between form and content prevails when the text to be considered is a novel. It seems to be easier for the (careless) prose translator to consider content as *separable* from form.

As an example of what can happen when the translator stresses content at the expense of the total structure, let us take the following extract; the opening of *The Magic Mountain*:

An unassuming young man was travelling in midsummer, from his native city of Hamburg to Davos-Platz in the Canton of Grisons, on a three weeks' visit.

From Hamburg to Davos is a long journey—too long, indeed, for so brief a stay. It crosses all sorts of country; goes up hill and down dale, descends from the plateaus of Southern Germany to the shores of Lake Constance, over its bounding waves and on across marshes once thought to be bottomless.

(tr. H.T.Lowe-Porter)*

* I am grateful to my colleague, Tony Phelan, for bringing this example to my attention.

This fast-moving, energetic passage, consisting of three sentences with four verbs of action and movement pulls the reader straight into the narrative. The no-nonsense details of the journey and the time of the young man's proposed stay combine with the authorial value judgement on the brevity of the visit. In short, what we have here is a strong descriptive opening, with a powerful authorial presence, and the world picture painted here has close affinities with what the reader perceives as his own rational world.

The problem with this translation comes when it is set against the original German text, and the extent of the distance between the SL and the TL versions is compared. Mann's novel opens as follows:

Ein einfacher junger Mensch reiste im Hochsommer von Hamburg, seiner Vaterstadt, nach Davos-Platz im Graubündischen. Er fuhr auf Besuch für drei Wochen.

Von Hamburg bis dorthinauf, das ist aber eine weite Reise; zu weit eigentlich im Verhältnis zu einem so kurzen Aufenthalt. Es geht durch mehrerer Herren Länder, bergauf and bergab, von der süddeutschen Hochebene hinunter zum Gestade des Schwäbischen Meeres und zu Schiff über seine springende Wellen hin, dahin über Schlünde, die früher für unergründlich galten.

In this opening passage, the reader is given a series of clues that key him in to some of the codes operating through the novel. It is, of course, not restricted within the boundaries imposed by the realist

world and depicts the ideological struggle between such dramatic opposites as health and sickness, life and death, democracy and reaction, and is set in a sanatorium where the characters are 'on holiday', removed from the struggle for existence. The journey depicted in the first few sentences is therefore functioning on more than one level: there is the young man's actual journey; the symbolic journey across a nation; the journey as a metaphor for the quest on which the reader is about to embark. Moreover, in Mann's description of the journey there are deliberate devices (e.g. the use of the classical term *Gestade* for *shore*) recalling eighteenth-century modes, for another major line through the novel is an attempt to bring together two stylistic modes, the lyrical and the prosaic. The English translator's compression of Mann's sentence structures reduces the number of levels on which the reader can approach the text, for clearly the translator's prime concern has been to create a sense of rapid movement. So the second sentence has been integrated with the first to form a single unit and the fourth sentence has been shortened by deliberate omissions (e.g. *zu Schiff*—by boat). The stylized terms describing places have been replaced by straightforward, geographical names and the stately language of Mann's text has been replaced with a series of clichés in a conversational account of an overly long journey.

There are also other variations. The introduction of the protagonist in Mann's first sentence in such deliberately decharacterized terms is yet another key to the reader, but by translating *einfacher* (ordinary) as *unassuming,* the English translator introduces a powerful element of characterization and alters the reader's perspective. And it is difficult not to conclude that the English translator has inadequately grasped the significance of the novel when there is even a case of mistranslation, *Schlünde* (abysses) rendered as *marshes*.

An example of a different kind of deviation through translation can be found by considering the following passages:

> Il primo di giugno dell'anno scorso Fontamara rimase per la prima volta senza illuminazione elettrica. ll due di giugno, il tre di giugno, il quattro di giugno. Fontamara continuò a

rimanere senza illuminazione elettrica. Così nei giorni seguenti e nei mesi seguenti, finché Fontamara si riabituò al regime del chiaro di luna. Per arrivare dal chiaro di luna alla luce elettrica, Fontamara aveva messo un centinaio di anni, attraverso I'olio di oliva e il petrolio. Per tornare dalla luce elettrica al chiaro di luna bastò una sera.

<div align="right">(Fontanara, I.Silone)</div>

On the first of June last year Fontamara went without electric light for the first time. Fontamara remained without electric light on the second, the third and the fourth of June.

   So it continued for days and months. In the end Fontamara got used to moonlight again. A century had elapsed between the moon-light era and the electric era, a century which included the age of oil and that of petrol, but one evening was sufficient to plunge us back from electric light to the light of the moon.

<div align="right">(Fontamara, G.David and E.Mossbacher)</div>

The opening passage of *Fontamara* introduces the reader immediately to the *tone* of the work, a tone that will remain through the device of the series of fictitious narrators whose accounts Silone is supposedly recording. And it is the tone, always downbeat and gently ironic even when the most moving and painful experiences are being described, that gives this novel its special quality. In the opening paragraph the narrator describes the transitoriness of progress, the way in which the long, slow development of technology that led to the arrival of electric light in a small mountain village can be overturned in a single night, and the faintly mocking, almost resigned tone is immediately established.

   The Italian text consists of five sentences. The first two open with time phrases—*il primo di giugno* locates the start of the narrative on a definite date; *il primo di giugno* opens the sentence that expands on that initial blunt statement and moves the reader on in time. The third sentence again opens with a time phrase, now qualified by the conversational first word *così,* and moves still further into time future, through weeks and months. The final two sentences both open with a verbal phrase of movement: *per arrivare* and *per*

tornare, that sum up the point being made in the opening paragraph about the slow movement of technological advancement compared to the speed with which that technology can be abandoned. The language of this paragraph is therefore misleadingly simple, and the almost conversational tone camouflages a heavily rhetorical passage, carefully structured to build to a point of climax and utilizing a series of patterns of repetition (e.g. the various time phrases; phrases such as *illuminazione elettrica, luce elettrica, chiaro di luna,* etc.).

   The English translation has not made any attempt to retain the pattern of five sentences, beginning with either a time phrase or a verb of movement. Instead the second sentence inverts the time phrases, and puts them at the end—which could be defended in terms of English stylistic modes—and the remaining three sentences are formed by splitting one SL sentence into two and then by joining two other SL sentences together. This device works well in the first instance, creating the two short, conversational statements beginning *'So it continued'* and *'In the end'*. But by joining the two SL sentences into a single, long TL sentence, the sense of movement of the original is lost in the clumsy structure. The infinitives *arrivare* and *tornare* have become *elapsed* and *to plunge back,* the phrase *attraverso I'olio di oliva e il petrolio* has been expanded (but not made clearer) into *a century which included the age of oil and that of petrol*. The use of era strikes a jarring note, the inversion of the final part of the sentence means that all the impact of the last words of the SL text is lost, and the introduction of the personal pronoun us makes the shift in register between the first four sentences and the final one all the more incongruous. Yet there has clearly been an attempt to set up patterns of repetition in the English text (e.g. the repetition of *era, century*) even though phrases such as *chiaro di luna* and *luce elettrica* are not translated consistently. In short, it is difficult to see what the criteria behind the English translation were, for there are so many inconsistencies. What does seem apparent, however, is that the English translators have not given adequate consideration to the function of the stylistic devices used by Silone.

Wolfgang Iser, developing Roman Ingarden's discussion of the 'intentional sentence correlatives' that make up the world presented in the literary text,[19] points out that

the intentional correlatives disclose subtle connections which individually are less concrete than the statements, claims and observations, even though these only take on their real meaningfulness through the interaction of their correlatives.[20]

Iser goes on to state that the sentence does not consist solely of a statement 'but aims at something beyond what it actually says', since sentences within a literary text 'are always an indication of something that is to come, the structure of which is foreshadowed by their specific content'. If the translator, then, handles sentences for their specific content alone, the outcome will involve a loss of dimension. In the case of the English translation of the texts above, the sentences appear to have been translated at face value, rather than as component units in a complex overall structure. Using Popovič's terminology, the English versions show several types of *negative shift* involving:

(1) mistranslation of information;
(2) 'subinterpretation' of the original text;
(3) superficial interpretation of connections between intentional correlatives.

Having begun by stating that I intended to avoid value judgements of individual translations, it might now seem that I have deviated from my original plan. Moreover, it might seem unfair to lay so much emphasis on cases of negative shift that emerge from the first few sentences of a vast work. But the point that needs to be made is that although analysis of narrative has had enormous influence since Shlovsky's early theory of prose, there are obviously many readers who still adhere to the principle that a novel consists primarily of *paraphrasable material content* that can be translated straightforwardly. And whereas there seems to be a common consensus that a prose paraphrase of a poem is judged to be inadequate, there is no such consensus regarding the prose text. Again and again translators

of novels take pains to create *readable* TL texts, avoiding the stilted effect that can follow from adhering too closely to SL syntactical structures, but fail to consider the way in which individual sentences form part of the total structure. And in pointing out this failure, which is first and foremost a deficiency in reading, I believe that I am not so much passing judgement on the work of individuals as pointing towards a whole area of translation that needs to be looked at more closely.

Hilaire Belloc[21] laid down six general rules for the translator of prose texts:

(1) The translator should not 'plod on', word by word or sentence by sentence, but should 'always "block out" his work'. By 'block out', Belloc means that the translator should consider the work as an integral unit and translate in sections, asking himself 'before each what the whole sense is he has to render'.

(2) The translator should render *idiom by idiom* 'and idioms of their nature demand translation into another form from that of the original. Belloc cites the case of the Greek exclamation 'By the Dog!', which, if rendered literally, becomes merely comic in English, and suggests that the phrase 'By God!' is a much closer translation. Likewise, he points out that the French historic present must be translated into the English narrative tense, which is past, and the French system of defining a proposition by putting it into the form of a rhetorical question cannot be transposed into English where the same system does not apply.

(3) The translator must render 'intention by intention', bearing in mind that 'the intention of a phrase in one language may be less emphatic than the form of the phrase, or it may be more emphatic'. By 'intention', Belloc seems to be talking about the weight a given expression may have in a particular context in the SL that would be disproportionate if translated literally into the TL. He quotes several examples where the weighting of the phrase in the SL is clearly much stronger or much weaker than the literal TL translation, and points out that in the translation of 'intention', it is often necessary to *add* words not in the original 'to conform to the idiom of one's own tongue'.

(4) Belloc warns against *les faux amis,* those words or structures that may appear to correspond in both SL and TL but actually do not, e.g. *demander—to ask* translated wrongly as *to demand*.

(5) The translator is advised to 'transmute boldly' and Belloc suggests that the essence of translating is 'the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body'.

(6) The translator should never embellish.

Belloc's six rules cover both points of technique and points of principle. His order of priorities is a little curious, but nevertheless he does stress the need for the translator to consider the prose text as a structured whole whilst bearing in mind the stylistic and syntactical exigencies of the TL. He accepts that there is a moral responsibility to the original, but feels that the translator has the right to significantly alter the text in the translation process in order to provide the TL reader with a text that conforms to TL stylistic and idiomatic norms.

Belloc's first point, in which he discusses the need for the translator to 'block out' his work, raises what is perhaps the central problem for the prose translator: the difficulty of determining *translation units*. It must be clear at the outset that the text, understood to be in a dialectical relationship with other texts (see *intertextuality* p. 82) and located within a specific historical context, is the prime unit. But whereas the poet translator can more easily break the prime text down into translatable units, e.g. lines, verses, stanzas, the prose translator has a more complex task. Certainly, many novels are broken down into chapters or sections, but as Barthes has shown with his methodology of five reading codes (see S/Z, discussed by T.Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics,* London, 1977) the structuring of a prose text is by no means as linear as the chapter divisions might indicate. Yet if the translator takes each sentence or paragraph as a minimum unit and translates it without relating it to the overall work, he runs the risk of ending up with a TL text like those quoted above, where the paraphrasable content of the passages has been translated at the cost of everything else.

The way round this dilemma must once again be sought through considering the *function* both of the text and of the devices within

the text itself. If the translators of Silone had considered the function of the tone they would have understood why the careful rhetorical patterning of the opening paragraph needed closer examination. Likewise, if the translator of Mann had considered the function of the description of both the young man and the journey, she would have understood the reasons for Mann's choice of language. Every prime text is made up of a series of interlocking systems, each of which has a determinable function in relation to the whole, and it is the task of the translator to apprehend these functions.

Let us consider as an example the problem of translating proper names in Russian prose texts, a problem that has bedevilled generations of translators. Cathy Porter's translation of Alexandra Kollontai's *Love of Worker Bees* contains the following note:

> Russians have a first ('Christian') name, a patronymic and a surname. The customary mode of address is first name plus patronymic, thus, Vasilisa Dementevna, Maria Semenovna. There are more intimate abbreviations of first names which have subtly affectionate, patronizing or friendly overtones. So for instance Vasilisa becomes Vasya, Vasyuk, and Vladimir becomes Volodya, Volodka, Volodechka, Volya.[22]

So the translator explains, quite properly, the Russian naming system, but this note is of little help during the actual reading process, for Cathy Porter retains the variations of name in the TL version and the English reader is at times confronted with the bewildering profusion of names on a single page all referring to the same character. In short, the SL system has been transported into the TL system, where it can only cause confusion and obstruct the process of reading. Moreover, as Boris Uspensky has shown in his valuable book *A Poetics of Composition,*[23] the use of names in Russian can denote shifts in *point of view*. So in discussing *The Brothers Karamazov* Uspensky shows how the naming system can indicate multiple points of view, as a character is perceived both by other characters in the novel and from within the narrative. In the translation process, therefore, it is essential for the translator to consider the function of the naming system, rather than the system itself. It is of little use for the English reader to be given multiple variants of a name if he is

not made aware of the function of those variants, and since the English naming system is completely different the translator must take this into account and follow Belloc's dictum to render 'idiom by idiom'.

The case of Russian proper names is only one example of the problem of trying to render a SL system into a TL that does not have a comparable system. Other examples might be found in the use by an author of dialect forms, or of regional linguistic devices particular to a specific region or class in the SL. As Robert Adams puts it, rather flippantly:

> Paris cannot be London or New York, it must be Paris; our hero must be Pierre, not Peter; he must drink an aperitif, not a cocktail; smoke Gauloises, not Kents; and walk down the rue du Bac, not Back Street. On the other hand, when he is introduced to a lady, he'll sound silly if he says, 'I am enchanted, Madame'.[24]

In the discussion of equivalence (see pp. 30–6) it was shown that any notion of *sameness* between SL and TL must be discounted. What the translator must do, therefore, is to first determine the *function* of the SL system and then to find a TL system that will adequately render that function. Levy posed the central questions that face the translator of literary prose texts when he asked:

> What degree of utility is ascribed to various stylistic devices and to their preservation in different types of literature…? What is the relative importance of linguistic standards and of style in different types of literature…? What must have been the assumed quantitative composition of the audiences to whom translators of different times and of different types of texts addressed their translations?[25]

TRANSLATING DRAMATIC TEXTS

Whilst it seems that the bulk of genre-focused translation study involves the specific problem of translating poetry, it is also quite clear that theatre is one of the most neglected areas. There is very

little material on the special problems of translating dramatic texts, and the statements of individual theatre translators often imply that the methodology used in the translation process is the same as that used to approach prose texts.

Yet even the most superficial consideration of the question must show that the dramatic text cannot be translated in the same way as the prose text. To begin with, a theatre text is read differently. It is read as something *incomplete,* rather than as a fully rounded unit, since it is only in performance that the full potential of the text is realized. And this presents the translator with a central problem: whether to translate the text as a purely literary text, or to try to translate it in its *function* as one element in another, more complex system. As work in theatre semiotics has shown, the linguistic system is only one optional component in a set of interrelated systems that comprise the *spectacle*. Anne Ubersfeld, for example, points out how it is impossible to separate *text* from *performance,* since theatre consists of the dialectical relationship between both, and she also shows how an artificially created distinction between the two has led to the literary text acquiring a higher status. One result of the supremacy of the literary text, she feels, has been the perception of performance as merely a 'translation':

> The task of the director, therefore, is to 'translate into another language' a text to which he has a prime duty to remain 'faithful'. This position is based on the concept of *semantic equivalence* between the written text and its performance; only the 'mode of expression' in the Hjelmslevian sense of the term will be altered, the form and content of the expression will remain identical when transferred from a system of test-signs to a system of performance-signs.[26]

As Ubersfeld shows, the danger with such an attitude is immediately obvious. The pre-eminence of the written text leads on to an assumption that there is a single *right* way of reading and hence performing the text, in which case the translator is bound more rigidly to a preconceived model than is the translator of poetry or prose texts. Moreover, any deviation, by director or translator, can be subjected to a value judgement that will assess both 'translations'

as more or less deviant from the correct norm. A notion of theatre that does not see written text and performance as *indissolubly linked,* then, will inevitably lead to discrimination against anyone who appears to offend against the purity of the written text.

Moreover, the written text is a functional component in the total process that comprises theatre and is characterized in ways that distinguish it from a written text designed to be read in its own right. Jiří Veltrusky has shown how certain features of the written theatre text are distinctive, pointing out, for example, how dialogue unfolds both in time and in space and is always integrated in the extralinguistic situation, which comprises both the set of things that surround the speakers and the speakers themselves:

> The relationship between the dialogue and the extra-linguistic situation is Intense and reciprocal. The situation often provides the dialogue with its subject matter. Moreover, whatever the subject matter may be, the situation variously interferes in the dialogue, affects the way it unfolds, brings about shifts or reversals, and sometimes interrupts it altogether. In its turn, the dialogue progressively illuminates the situation and often modifies or even transforms it. The actual sense of the individual units of meaning depends as much on the extra-linguistic situation as on the linguistic context.[27]

And the dialogue will be characterized by rhythm, intonation patterns, pitch and loudness, all elements that may not be immediately apparent from a straightforward reading of the written text in isolation. Robert Corrigan, in a rare article on translating for actors,[28] argues that at all times the translator must *hear* the voice that speaks and take into account the 'gesture' of the language, the cadence rhythm and pauses that occur when the written text is spoken. In this respect, he is close to Peter Bogatyrev's concept of theatre discourse. Bogatyrev, discussing the function of the linguistic system in theatre in relation to the total experience declares that:

> Linguistic expression in theatre is a structure of signs constituted not only as discourse signs, but also as other signs.

> For example, theatre discourse, that must be the sign of a character's social situation is accompanied by the actor's gestures, finished off by his costumes, the scenery, etc. which are all equally signs of a social situation .[29]

But if the theatre translator is faced with the added criterion of *playability* as a prerequisite, he is clearly being asked to do something different from the translator of another type of text. Moreover, the notion of an extra dimension to the written text that the translator must somehow be able to grasp, still implies a distinction between the idea of the text and the performance, between the written and the physical. It would seem more logical, therefore, to proceed on the assumption that a theatre text, written with a view to its performance, contains distinguishable structural features that make it performable, beyond the stage directions themselves. Consequently the task of the translator must be to determine what those structures are and to translate them in to the TL, even though this may lead to major shifts on the linguistic and stylistic planes.

The problem of performability in translation is further complicated by changing concepts of performance. Consequently, a contemporary production of a Shakespearean text will be devised through the varied developments in acting style, playing space, the role of the audience and the altered concepts of tragedy and comedy that have taken place since Shakespeare's time. Moreover, acting styles and concepts of theatre also differ considerably in different national contexts, and this introduces yet another element for the translator to take into account.

As an example of some of the complexities involved in determining the criteria for the translation of a theatre text, let us consider the very vexed question of Racine, the French classical dramatist. A glance through the English translations immediately reveals one significant point—texts may have been translated singly (e.g. John Masefield's versions of *Esther* and *Berenice*) or as part of a volume of complete works (e.g. R.B.Boswell, the first translator of the Racinian *oeuvre*). This distinction shows straight away that whilst some texts may have been translated with performance in mind, others have been translated *without* such a precise notion.

Arguably, the volume of 'complete plays' has been produced primarily for a reading public where literalness and linguistic fidelity have been principal criteria. But in trying to formulate any theory of theatre translation, Bogatyrev's description of linguistic expression must be taken into account, and the linguistic element must be translated bearing in mind its *function* in theatre discourse as a whole.

The difficulty of translating for the theatre has led to an accumulation of criticism that either attacks the translation as too literal and unperformable or as too free and deviant from the original. The leaden pedantry of many English versions of Racine, for example, is apt testimony to the fault of excessive literalness, but the problem of defining 'freedom' in a theatre translation is less easy to discern. In a short article[30] setting out some of the basic problems of translating theatre texts I quoted examples of translation shift where the problem lay in the deviation in *gestural patterning* between SL and TL, that resulted in dissolution in the TL of essential structures in the SL text. Ben Belitt's translation of Neruda's *Fulgor y Muerte de Joaquín Murieta,* mentioned previously (p. 81), is a good example of a case where the translator has altered the ideological basis of the text through over-emphasis of extra-linguistic criteria—in this case, according to Belitt's own preface, the expectations of the American audience.

If we take the opening line of Racine's *Phèdre: Le dessein en est pris; je pars, cher Théramène,* a series of semantic, syntactic and stylistic problems immediately emerge, together with the added difficulties of considering the conventions of French classical theatre and the vastly different audiences of seventeenth-century France and twentieth-century England or America. Three English translators treat the line as follows:

> *I have resolved, Theramenes, to go.* (John Cairncross)
> *No, no, my friend, we're off.* (Robert Lowell)
> *No. No. I can't. I can't. How can I stay?* (Tony Harrison)

All three versions translate Hippolyte's intention to leave, but whilst the first two show the relationship between Hippolyte and his friend Théramène to be a key factor, the third does not. On the stylistic

level, the first and the third versions follow the common practice of translating the French alexandrine into blank verse, since both have in common their pre-eminence as meters of classical theatre in their respective language systems. But in terms of theatre, only the second and third versions translate the *gestural understructure* of the French text, the rhythms contained within the language that determine patterns of physical gesture of the actor. Jean-Louis Barrault noted that the opening line of *Phèdre* matched the rhythms of Hippolyte's footsteps, ensuring that he was in position on the word Théramène.[31] Thereisan emphasis and determination in the SL line, stressed in both halves of the line and reaching its climax in the use of the name. Both the second and third English versions try to recreate that effect by using devices such as repetition and rhetorical question that both render the sense of the SL statement and reproduce a pattern of gesture. In short, the translation process has involved not only a sequence of linguistic transfers from SL to TL on the level of discourse signification, but also a transfer of the function of the linguistic utterance in relation to the other component signs of theatre discourse.

The first English version of Racine's *Andromache,* performed in 1674, appeared in print the following year together with an Epistle to the Reader by the man to whom the translation was generally attributed, John Crowne. In the Epistle, Crowne goes to some lengths to excuse the translation (claiming it to be the work of a 'Young Gentleman') and to explain why the production had not been a success. Crowne attributes the failure of the play not to the translation, although he admits that the English version had not bestowed 'Verse upon it', but to the expectations of the audience, accustomed to a given theatre tradition, who refused to respond to the 'thin Regalios' of the French theatre tradition. Yet less than forty years later, Ambrose Phillips' version of *Andromache,* entitled *The Distres't Mother,* was such a success that it remained in repertoire right through the eighteenth century, with the leading role a favourite of most of the great English actresses of the period. What had Philips done to make such a triumph of a play judged earlier to be unsuited to English taste?

First, Phillips made substantial alterations to the play, shortening the text in places, adding speeches and, at the ends of Acts IV and V adding whole scenes, including a final scene in which the Distres't Mother prepares for a happy ending. This view of Racine's tragedy has led a number of critics to attack Philips' translation as deviant, but in his Preface Philips explains very clearly why he felt the need to adapt Racine:

> If I have been able to keep up to the Beauties of Monsieur *Racine* in my Attempt, and to do him no Prejudice in the Liberties I have taken frequently to vary from so great a Poet, I shall have no reason to be dissatisfied with the Labour it has cost me to bring the compleatest of his works upon the *English* stage.

Philips' principal criteria for translation appear to have been:

(1) *playability*;
(2) the relationship of the play to the established conventions of the theatre of his day (a theatre which restructured Shakespeare in the interests of canons and of decorum and good taste);
(3) clarity of the interrelationship between the characters.

Accepting that the careful balance of characters, scenes and speeches so basic to the original would have no significance in English—or, if it did, would seem heavy and contrived—Phillips chose to restructure the play for an English audience. In Act I sc. i, for example, the basis of Phillips' technique can be seen. In Racine, this first scene furnishes the audience with the basic information they will need to follow the plot (e.g. Oreste's love for Hermione, due to marry Pyrrhus, and Pyrrhus' love for the Trojan widow, Andromache). At the same time the scene introduces the fatal passion of Oreste with which the play will finally terminate. Pylade's role is to act as a foil to that passion, to provide the calming tones of reason. The balance of the scene hinges on the relationship between these two different types of men. Phillip's translation preserves both the function of the first scene in introducing the plot lines and the balance of the relationship between the two friends, but

he has achieved this comparability not by following the surface structure of the SL text, but by recreating the deep structure of the scene in theatre terms. So, for example, Oreste's long monologue is broken up, since monologues of such length were not part of English stage convention; Pylade is given more lines and developed more fully as a friend rather than as a foil, since the device of the confidante was not so acceptable on the English stage. To use James Holmes' terminology, Phillips has established *a hierarchy of correspondences*[32] in which the written text is seen as an adaptable element in the production of live theatre.

A twentieth-century translation that follows similar criteria is Tony Harrison's version of *Phèdre, Phaedra Brittanica,* produced in 1976. In this translation Harrison has moved away from Greece, from the references to the gods, fate, the Minotaur—from the whole universe of myth out of which *Phèdre* originated, and has substituted colonial India. And just as *Phèdre* deals with the coming together of disparate world systems— the passions of a doomed house and a world of order and rationality, in this vision of colonial India two similar worlds come into contact: the world of English order, so helpless in its new context, and the forces of darkness, typified by an alien culture in revolt against the colonizers. So in the final scene, where Racine's Phèdre confesses *Le ciel mit dans mon sein une flamme funeste,* the Memsahib of Harrison's text says *India put dark passions in my breast*. A good example of Harrison's technique may be found by comparing his version of the moment when Oenone (the Ayah) discovers Phèdre's secret passion with Robert Lowell's version of the same scene.

<div align="center">OENONE</div>

Madame, au nom des pleurs que pour vous j'ai versés,
Par vos faibles genoux que je tiens embrassés,
Délivrez mon esprit de ce funeste doute.

<div align="center">PHÈDRE</div>

Tu le veux. Lève toi.

<div align="center">OENONE</div>

Parlez, je vous écoute.

<div align="center">PHÈDRE</div>

Ciel! que lui vais-je dire, et par où commencer?

OENONE

Par de vaines frayeurs cessez de m'offenser.

PHÈDRE

O haine de Vénus! O fatale coldère! Dans quels égarements I'amour jeta ma mère!

OENONE

Oublions-les, Madame; et qu'à tout I'avenir Un silence éternel cache ce souvenir.

PHÈDRE

Ariane, ma soeur, de quel amour blessée, Vous mourûtes aux bords où vous fûtes Iaissée!

OENONE

Que faites-vous, Madame? et quel mortel ennui Contre tout votre sang vous anime aujourd'hui?

PHÈDRE

Puisque Vénus le veut, de ce sang déplorable e péris la dernière et la plus misérable.

OENONE

Aimez-vous?

PHÈDRE

De I'amour j'ai toutes les fureurs.

OENONE

Pour qui?

PHÈDRE

Tu vas ouïr le comble des horreurs. J'aime… A ce nom fatal, je tremble, je frissonne, J'aime…

OENONE

Qui?

PHÈDRE

Tu connais ce fils de I'Amazone, Ce prince si longtemps par moi-même opprimé?

OENONE

Hippolyte? Grands Dieux!

PHÈDRE

C'est toi qui I'a nommé.

(Racine)

AYAH: (on her knees)

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                Memsahib, by these tears that wet your dress
                rid ayah of her anguish, and confess.
MEMSAHIB:   (after a pause)
                You wish it? Then I will. Up, off your knees.
                (pause)
AYAH:       Memsahib made her promise. Tell me. Please.
MEMSAHIB:   I don't know what to say. Or how to start. (pause)
AYAH:       Tell me, Memsahib. You break my heart.
MEMSAHIB:   (sudden vehemence)
                Mother! Driven by the dark gods' spite
                beyond the frontiers of appetite.
                A judge's wife! Obscene! Bestialities
                Hindoos might sculpture on a temple frieze!
AYAH:       Forget! Forget! The great wheel we are on
                turns all that horror to oblivion.
MEMSAHIB:   Sister! Abandoned…by him too…left behind…
                driven to drugs and drink… Out of her mind!
AYAH:       Memsahib, no. Don't let black despair
                flail at your family. Forebear. Forebear.
MEMSAHIB:   It's India! Your cruel gods athirst
                for victims. Me the last and most accursed!
AYAH:       (truth dawning)
                Not love?
MEMSAHIB:   Love. Like fever.
AYAH:       Memsahib, whom?
MEMSAHIB:   Prepare to bear witness to the hand of doom.
                I love…I love…I love…You know the one
                I seemed to hate so much…the Rajput's son…
AYAH:       Thomas Theophilus? The half-breed! Shame!
MEMSAHIB:   I couldn't bring myself to speak his name.
                                                    (Tony Harrison)

OENONE:     Ah Lady, I implore you by my tears,
                and by your suffering body. Heaven hears,
                and knows the truth already. Let me see.
PHAEDRA:    Stand up.
OENONE:     Your hesitation's killing me!
PHAEDRA:    What can I tell you? How the gods reprove me!
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OENONE: Speak!

PHAEDRA: Oh Venus, murdering Venus! love gored Pasiphaë with
                   the bull.

OENONE: Forget
                   your mother! When she died she paid her debt

PHAEDRA: Oh Ariadne, Oh my Sister, lost
                   for love of Theseus on that rocky coast.

OENONE: Lady, what nervous languor makes you rave
                   against your family; they are in the grave.

PHAEDRA: Remorseless Aphrodite drives me. I,
                   my race's last and worst love-victim, die.

OENONE: Are you in love?

PHAEDRA: I am with love!

OENONE: Who
                   is he?

PHAEDRA: I'll tell you. Nothing love can do
                   could equal…. Nurse, I am in love. The shame
                   kills me. I love the…. Do not ask his name.

OENONE: Who?

PHAEDRA: Nurse, you know my old loathing for the son
                   of Theseus and the barbarous Amazon?

OENONE: Hippolytus! My God, oh my God!

PHAEDRA: You,
                   not I, have named him.

                                             (Robert Lowell)

Here it is clear that Harrison has retained the essential movement of
the scene, the Memsahib's brief anguished speeches and the Ayah's
desperate insistence that lead up to the climax of the revelation, but
he has substituted another system of references for the Greek
background, and has extended Phèdre's lines to make the
significance more explicit. The connotations of the Memsahib's
illicit passion are altered too; in Harrison's play the taboo she
violates is that of inter-racial boundaries, not of incest. Yet the
translation is contained within the frame of a tight verse structure
utilizing a form that recalls Dryden rather than the usual blank verse.
When compared to the Lowell translation, that uses the same form
but with far less flexibility, the gap between a *performance-oriented*

translation and a *reader-oriented* translation becomes more clearly discernible.

Lowell expands Racine's text with explanations of the mythological background that may be unclear to twentieth-century readers. More significantly for the balance of the scene, he gives Phaedra a series of speeches in which the affirmative I is heavily stressed, whereas Harrison follows Racine in making the Memsahib's speeches a combination of direct addresses to her companion and thoughts voiced aloud. Lowell even goes so far as to give Phaedra two additional statements *I'll tell you* and *I am in love*. In short, although Lowell seems at first glance to have followed Racine's text more closely in terms of content material translated, it is Harrison who has most closely rendered the shifts in movement in the scene in spite of the obvious differences in the language.

With theatre translation, the problems of translating literary texts take on a new dimension of complexity, for the text is only one element in the totality of theatre discourse. The language in which the play text is written serves as a sign in the network of what Thadeus Kowzan calls *auditive* and *visual* signs.[33] And since the play text is written for voices, the literary text contains also a set of *paralinguistic* systems, where pitch, intonation, speed of delivery, accent, etc. are all signifiers. In addition, the play text contains within it the *undertext* or what we have called the *gestural text* that determines the movements an actor speaking that text can make. So it is not only the context but also the coded gestural patterning within the language itself that contributes to the actor's work, and the translator who ignores all systems outside the purely literary is running serious risks.[34]

Once again, as with other types of translation discussed in this book, the central issue concerns the *function* of the text to be translated. One of the functions of theatre is to operate on other levels than the strictly linguistic, and the role of the audience assumes a public dimension not shared by the individual reader whose contact with the text is essentially a private affair. A central consideration of the theatre translator must therefore be the performance aspect of the text and its relationship with an audience, and this seems to me not only to justify modifications of the kind

made by Philips or Harrison to Racine's original text, but to suggest that the translator must take into account the function of the text as an element for and of performance.

CONCLUSION

In writing the conclusion to this book I am constantly aware of the vast amount of material left undiscussed. For example, I have not mentioned the major developments in machine translation, that both contributed to advances in linguistics and then in turn benefited from those advances. The complex problems of translating cinematic texts, where the translation process also involves a kinetic-visual component as audiences focus on the lip movements of the actors, and the related question of subtitling, where reading speed, paraphrase and summary are integral elements, has not been dealt with at all. Nor, perhaps even more crucially, has the whole question of oral translation or interpreting been touched upon. It is easy to plead lack of space for such gaps, but I feel that nevertheless the point must be made so that this book may not seem to have a bias of the very kind it has sought to overcome: a bias towards 'high' literature that devalues work in the cinema, research in oral literature and electronics. Nothing could be further from my intentions, and in dealing with generally accepted 'literary' texts the central criterion was to acquaint the reader with the most widely discussed problems of translation.

Translation Studies, as stated in the Introduction, is still a young discipline and still has a long way to go. There is a need for more general theoretical discussion as to the *nature* of translation and a need for an accessible terminology with which to engage in such discussion. Anton Popovič's first attempt at a *Dictionary of Literary Translation Terminology* is to be applauded, but it needs streamlining and extending to cover discussion of theatre and cinematic texts. One great benefit to be derived from a more

accessible terminology would be that we could move away from the old vague conflict between free and literal translation, with the attendant value judgements. We could also move away from the dubious distinction between author-directed and audience-directed translation.

We need to know much more about the history of Translation Studies. More documentation, more information about changing concepts of translation has become a priority and the establishment of an international collaborative venture on translation history, of the kind envisioned by James Holmes of Amsterdam, seems a logical way to proceed. By understanding more about the changing face of Translation Studies and the changing status of the translated text, we are better equipped to tackle the problems as they arise within our own contexts.

Within literary translation the work to be done is also glaringly obvious. There is a need for a comprehensive study of theatre translation with a view to establishing a theory, and there is a need for much more serious attention to be given to the specific problems of prose translation. André Lefevere's work on the methodological problems of translating poetry should be continued and extended, and the discussion of all types of literary translation will also be greatly advanced by a consideration of the problems of translating texts from outside Europe and the Americas.

But in listing some projects that need to be pursued further, it is important not to forget two key points: the enormous progress made so rapidly within the discipline itself and the interrelationship between scholarship and practice that still prevails. Roman Jakobson, discussing the complexities of translation, noted ironically that

> Both the practice and the theory of translation abound with intricacies, from time to time attempts are made to sever the Gordian knot by proclaiming the dogma of untranslatability.[1]

Indeed, that 'dogma.' has often been used to argue for the impossibility not only of translation but also of Translation Study, on the grounds that it is not possible to discuss anything so tenuous as the transfer of the 'creative spirit' from language to language. Yet in spite of such a dogma, translators continue to translate, and the

extended discussion that has begun with such promise can now be joined by anyone who, having encountered problems while translating, wants to move from a pragmatic, empirical position towards a more scientific, collaborative discourse.