TRANSLATION

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

SITE CONTENTS

Welcome to the translation website, an educational resource dealing with literature in translation.

On this site you'll find modules dealing with major works that are frequently read and taught in humanities and other courses, illustrating variations in well-known translations and defining the key issues that are involved in translating literary texts.

Each module includes illustrations of the ways in which key passages from a classic work have been translated, analyses of the variations in the translations, and exercises to aid in analyzing the differences in these translations. The final page of each module contains links to useful sites for further study.

The translation website was developed by Victoria Poulakis, now Professor Emerita, formerly Professor of English, at Northern Virginia Community College. Development of this site was aided by grants from the Virginia Community College System and the Dogwood Project of Northern Virginia Community College. Comments and questions are welcome and may be sent to

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Top of Page

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03/26/05

BEOWULF

(Page One)

Beowulf, the great Anglo-Saxon epic poem by an unknown author, was composed some time between the 8th and the 11th centuries. The text exists in only one manuscript which dates from about the year 1000. The poem was largely unknown until the first printed versions of the poem were published at the end of the eighteenth century. Soon, short English translations of various parts of the poem began to appear, and within a few decades, in 1833, the first full-length English translation was published.

Since Beowulf is written in Old English, the earliest known form of the English language, one might assume that it would be easy to translate, at least easier than works printed in languages more substantially different from modern English. Yet looking at the many translations of ***Beowulf*** that are available in bookstores and libraries, it's immediately apparent that they have important differences in language, form, and style. This immediately raises the questions: Why are these translations so different? And how can I decide which, if any, is the "best" to read?

To begin answering these questions, let's look at the opening lines of the poem. The boxes below contain the original Old English version and my own literal (word-for-word) translation.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Hwæt. We Gardena in gear-dagum, þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon, hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.	What. We of the Spear-Danes in old days of the people-kings, power heard, how the princes brave deeds did.

Next, in the following boxes, look at how four modern translators have rendered these lines.

R. M. LIUZZA	BURTON RAFFEL

Listen! We have heard of the glory in bygone days of the folk-kings of the spear-Danes, how those noble lords did lofty deeds.	Hear me! We've heard of Danish heroes, Ancient kings and the glory they cut For themselves, swinging mighty swords!
SEAMUS HEANEY So. The Spear-Danes in days gone by and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness. We have heard of these princes' heroic campaigns.	MICHAEL ALEXANDER Attend! We have heard of the thriving of the throne of Denmark, how the folk-kings flourished in former days, how those royal athelings earned that glory.

You'll note that the differences begin with the translated versions of the opening word of the poem, ***Hwaet***. This word, literally translated into modern English, means ***What***, but its Old English meaning is somewhat different. In Old English, when stories were told orally by a storyteller, the word ***Hwaet*** was used to get the audience's attention at the beginning of the story in the way that a phrase like ***Listen to this!*** might be used today. Translators know that just using the word ***What*** wouldn't make much sense to modern readers, so the four translators above have chosen words which they hope will convey a similar meaning.

Immediately after ***Hwaet***, the word ***Gardena*** is also problematic. ***Gardena*** is the name of the people who are the subjects of the poem: literally the word is translated as ***Spear*** (Gar) ***-- Dane*** (dana). Some translations **--** like those by Heaney and Liuzza in the boxes above **--** use the literal translation, ***Spear-Dane***, but others give modernized equivalents, such as ***Danish*** (in Raffel's translation) and ***the throne of Denmark*** (in Alexander's version).

You'll also observe that each translator has made a different decision about how to translate the word ***æþelingas --*** which, like many translators, I've translated literally as ***princes*** but which really has no modern equivalent. Liuzza refers to ***noble lords*** and Raffel to ***ancient kings***, while Heaney calls them ***kings*** and ***princes***. Alexander, however, chooses to stay with the original word and calls them ***athelings --*** a literal translation that leaves it to the reader to imagine what this might actually mean.

Equally difficult to translate are passages describing customs and objects for which there may not be comparable words in modern English. For example, you can see below the original passage and a literal translation of lines 1020-27 where Beowulf is being honored with gifts **--** a sword, a golden banner, and a helmet and armor **--** after he has killed Grendel. The gifts are highlighted in corresponding colors.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Forgeaf þa Beowulfe brand	He gave then Beowulf the sword of

Healfdenes segen gyldenne sigores to leane; hroden hildecumbor, helm ond byrnan, mære maðþumsweord manige gesawon beforan beorn beran.	Healfdane, golden standard [banner] victory to reward; embroidered war-banner, helmet and armor, famous treasure-sword many saw before the warrior borne.

Now look at how four translators have described these gifts. Words referring to the key objects are again highlighted in corresponding colors.

RUTH P. M. LEHMANN	BURTON RAFFEL
Beowulf received the brand of Halfdane, a battle standard, broidered in gold, warhelm and buckler, rewards for triumph, a crowd had witnessed the costly weapon borne before the warrior.	Healfdane's son gave Beowulf a golden Banner, a fitting flag to signal His victory, and gave him, as well, a helmet, And a coat of mail, and an ancient sword; They were brought to him while the warriors watched.
R. M. LIUZZA	**MICHAEL ALEXANDER**
He gave to Beowulf the blade of Healfdene, a golden war-standard as a reward for victory, the bright banner, a helmet and byrnie, a great treasure-sword -- many saw them borne before that man.	Then as a sign of victory the son of Healfdene bestowed on Beowulf a standard worked in gold, a figured battle-banner, breast and head-armour; and many admired the marvellous sword that was borne before the hero.

You'll note that the sword of Healfdane, mentioned in the first line of the original passage and then again in the fourth line, is translated differently in each of the four versions. Lehmann's version follows the wording of the first line very closely, even using the original word, ***brand***, without translating it. But the problem with this choice is, of course, that most modern readers probably won't realize that ***brand*** means ***sword***. Liuzza also follows the original wording closely, but his translation uses the word ***blade*** in place of ***brand***. This is probably a better choice than Lehmann's since ***blade***, in modern usage, can be used to refer to a sword. Considerably different, however, are Raffel's and Alexander's versions. The first lines of both translations omit the sword reference; instead, the sword is mentioned only in the fourth line. This omission does not make a great difference in terms of overall meaning, but it does seem to diminish the significance of the sword -- the first gift bestowed on Beowulf in the original version, and the only one to be mentioned twice.

Similar differences appear in the four translators' versions of the other two

gifts. Lehmann translates the words ***segen gyldenne*** as ***battle standard***, ***broidered in gold***. Liuzza and Alexander also use ***standard***, but they insert additional words to clarify that ***standard*** = ***banner***. Liuzza describes it as ***a golden war-standard...the bright banner*** while Alexander calls it ***a standard worked in gold, a figured battle-banner***. And Raffel omits the word ***standard*** entirely; he refers to it as ***a battle banner, a fitting flag***. Finally, the third gift ***-- helm ond byrnan,*** literally ***helmet and armor --*** is for Lehmann ***warhelm and buckler***; for Raffel ***a helmet, and a coat of mail***; for Liuzza a ***helmet and byrnie***; and for Alexander ***breast and head-armour***.

You may be wondering at this point why the translators made these different choices. If Beowulf was given a sword, why not simply call it a sword? The answer is that translators have to consider a number of other issues besides the actual meanings of the words that are being translated. Some of these issues will be discussed on the following pages. But before you go on to the next page, please do the exercise below.

EXERCISE A.

In the boxes below you'll see four translations -- by Howell Chickering, R.M. Liuzza, Ruth P.M. Lehmann, and Michael Alexander -- of lines 620-624 of ***Beowulf***. This passage describes the actions of the Queen of the Danes during the royal feast that takes place before Beowulf's encounter with the monster Grendel. Read these translations and then do the exercise that follows immediately below them.

HOWELL D. CHICKERING	R. M. LIUZZA
The lady of the Helmings walked through the hall, offered the jeweled cup to veterans and youths, until the time came that the courteous queen, splendid in rings, excellent in virtues, came to Beowulf, brought him the mead.	The lady of the Helmings then went about to young and old, gave each his portion of the precious cup, until the moment came when the ring-adorned queen, of excellent heart, bore the mead-cup to Beowulf....
RUTH P. M. LEHMANN	**MICHAEL ALEXANDER**
Princess of Helmings passed through the hall. In every quarter she offered the goblet to tried and untried, until the time arrived that the ring-decked queen, royal in spirit, brought the beaker to Beowulf the Geat.	The Helming princess then passed about among the old and the young men in each part of the hall, bringing the treasure-cup, until the time came when the flashing-armed queen, complete in

	all virtues, carried out to Beowulf the brimming vessel....

In the boxes below I've written five groups of words from the Howell D. Chickering translation of lines 620-624 of ***Beowulf***. Next to them, you should write in the words used by R.M. Liuzza, Ruth P.M. Lehmann, and Michael Alexander to express the same ideas. The corresponding words may occur on different lines of the translations. I've done the first one for you so you can see how it should be done.

CLICK ON THE LINK AT THE TOP OF EACH BOX TO REVIEW EACH TRANSLATION.

CHICKERING	LIUZZA	LEHMANN	ALEXANDER
The lady of the Helmings	The lady of the Helmings	Princess of Helmings	The Helming princess
offered the jeweled cup			
to veterans and youths			
the courteous queen,/ splendid in rings			
brought him the mead			

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 2.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5

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THE DIVINE COMEDY

(Page 1)

The Divine Comedy, by the poet Dante Alighieri, was originally written in the Italian language of the early fourteenth century. Although many people can read this language (it's not greatly different from modern Italian), Dante's great work would be inaccessible to the vast majority of English-language readers if it were not translated into modern English. So, there have been scores of translations made over the past few centuries and continuing into the present day.

The most popular section of ***The Divine Comedy*** and the one that has been the most often translated, is the first section, the "Inferno." Therefore, on this page and on the following pages of this website, I'll be using examples from this section to illustrate the main problems and issues involved in translating the ***Divine Comedy***.

ACCURACY To begin, it's important to consider the first requirement of any translation ***-- accuracy***. This means that the translation must convey the meaning of the original writing as closely as possible. To illustrate how this can be done, in the left-hand box below you'll see the opening lines of the "Inferno" as Dante originally wrote them; in the right-hand box is my own literal (word-for-word) translation.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, ché la diritta via era smarrita. Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte che nel pensier rinova la paura!	In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost. Ah how hard to say what a harsh thing was that wood savage and rough and hard that to think about it renews the fear!

Of course, even a word-for-word translation involves making choices since it's

extremely difficult to find synonyms (words with exactly the same meaning) for words being translated from one language to another. So, in the example above, I chose to use the word ***hard*** to represent the Italian word ***forte,*** a word which can also mean (according to Italian dictionaries) ***strong***, ***harsh, sharp***, ***severe.*** Since it's difficult to know exactly what the word meant in Dante's time, and equally difficult to find an exact English equivalent, I've had to choose the word which I feel **--** though others may disagree **--** most closely follows the original meaning.

With this in mind, let's look at two other translations of the same lines, the first by Robert and Jean Hollander, the second by Robert Pinsky.

TRANSLATION A : HOLLANDER	TRANSLATION B: PINSKY
Midway in the journey of our life I came to myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost. Ah, how hard it is to tell the nature of that wood, savage, dense and harsh -- the very thought of it renews my fear!	Midway on our life's journey, I found myself In dark woods, the right road lost. To tell About those woods is hard **--** so tangled and rough And savage that thinking of it now, I feel The old fear stirring....

After you've looked them over, the following exercise will help you to analyze their differences.

EXERCISE A.

In the left-hand box below, you'll find five groups of words that have been copied from the literal translation printed at the top of this page. Your goal in this exercise is to see how the same ideas were expressed, in different words, in the other two translations on this page: Translation A by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander and Translation B by Robert Pinsky. I've done the first one for you so you can see how it should be done.

Note: You can click on the names at the top of the boxes to go back to the original passages.

LITERAL	HOLLANDER	PINSKY
In the middle of the journey of our life	Midway in the journey of our life	Midway on our life's journey
I found myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost		

Oh how hard a thing it is to say		
wild and rough and hard		
to think about it renews the fear		

When you've finished, go to Page 2.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4

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11/10/05

DON QUIXOTE

(Page 1)

"One of the things that should give most satisfaction to a virtuous and eminent man is to see his good name spread abroad during his own lifetime, by means of the printing press, through translations into the languages of the various peoples."
-- Don Quixote, Part II, Chapter 3.
Translated by Samuel Putnam.

The words above, spoken by Don Quixote in Cervantes' early seventeenth-century novel, are both humorous and accurate: in fact translations of Don Quixote from the original Spanish began to appear in "the languages of the various peoples" almost as soon as the work was published. The first English translation, by Thomas Shelton, was published in 1612, seven years after the first part of the novel appeared, and a translation of the second part appeared in 1620, only five years after the second part was published. In the four centuries since its original publication, Cervantes' work has been one of the most widely read and most frequently translated of all literary works. In the English language, there have been at least six major translations made within the past fifty years.

Since ***Don Quixote*** is a novel and is written in prose (the language of common, everyday speech), it might seem easier to translate than a work written in poetic form such as ***The Iliad*** or T***he Divine Comedy***. But in fact Cervantes' prose style is extremely complex and difficult to translate; the translator must skillfully balance the competing demands of ***accuracy***, ***sense***, and ***sound***.

ACCURACY means following the original writing as closely as possible and not changing the original meaning. This is often difficult to do when translating Don Quixote because many of the words used in the novel have meanings that can't be translated literally. As an example, let's look at the first sentence of ***Don Quixote,*** in its original form and my own literal translation. I've highlighted one word that's particularly difficult to translate.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
En un lugar de la Mancha, de cuyo	In a village of la Mancha, the name of

nombre no quiero acordarme, no ha mucho tiempo que vivía un hidalgo de los de lanza en astillero, adarga antigua, rocín flaco y galgo corredor.	which I don't wish to recall, there lived not long ago a gentleman of those who always have a lance in the rack, an aged shield, a worn-out horse, and a greyhound for running.

Like most translators, I've used the word ***gentleman*** to translate Cervantes' word ***hidalgo***. The problem, though, is that ***gentleman*** has a generalized meaning in modern English; it's used as a polite way of referring to any man. On the other hand, ***hidalgo*** has a precise meaning in Spanish; it refers to a nobleman, someone in the upper class of Spanish society. A modern English reader can easily miss the point being made here: that Don Quixote is descended from a noble family although, as the details in the rest of the sentence suggest, his family has greatly declined. Nevertheless, English translations almost always use the word ***gentleman*** because it's the best of the choices available.

The second sentence of the novel, which describes the foods that Don Quixote typically ate, contains a different type of problem for the translator. Below you can see the original version and a literal translation; I've left untranslated the problematic words.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Una olla de algo más vaca que carnero, salpicón las más noches, duelos y quebrantos los sábados, lantejas los viernes, algún palomino de añadidura los domingos, consumían las tres partes de su hacienda.	An ***olla*** of something more beef than mutton: ***salpicon*** on most nights, ***duelos y quebrantos*** on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, and some pigeon ***de añadidura*** on Sundays, consumed three fourths of his income.

The purpose of this sentence is to show that although Don Quixote was born a nobleman, he really doesn't have much money; the foods described cost very little to prepare. However, since foods are very different in each culture, the names of these foods don't have equivalents in English. And in fact, translators aren't even sure what some of these names **--** for example, ***duelos y quebrantos*** -- actually referred to in Cervantes' time. So, most translators substitute the names of foods familiar to their own readers, hoping that these are also reasonably close to what Cervantes meant.

In the boxes below, you can see how four modern translators **--** Samuel Putnam, J.M. Cohen, Joseph R. Jones/ Kenneth Douglas, and Burton Raffel **--** have translated this sentence. After you've read these translations, the exercise below will ask you to compare their differences **--** and to give your own ideas about what Don Quixote might eat.

SAMUEL PUTNAM	J. M. COHEN
A stew with more beef than mutton in it, chopped meat for his evening	His habitual diet consisted of a stew, more beef than mutton, of hash most

meal, scraps for a Saturday, lentils on Friday, and a young pigeon as a special delicacy for Sunday went to account for three-quarters of his income.	nights, boiled bones on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, and a young pigeon as a Sunday treat; and on this he spent three-quarters of his income.
EDITH GROSSMAN An occasional stew, beef more often than lamb, hash most nights, eggs and abstinence on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, sometimes squab as a treat on Sundays -- these consumed three-fourths of his income.	BURTON RAFFEL Three quarters of his income went into his pot of stew (which contained a good deal more cow than sheep), the cold salt beef he ate most nights, Friday's beans and lentils and Saturday's leftover scraps, and sometimes a slender young pigeon for Sunday.

EXERCISE A. This exercise has two parts. Please do both parts.

1. You've just read four translations -- by Samuel Putnam, J.M. Cohen, Edith Grossman, and Burton Raffel -- of the second sentence of ***Don Quixote***. In the left-hand boxes below, I've written five groups of words from the Samuel Putnam translation. Next to them, you should write in the words used by Cohen, Jones/ Rogers, and Raffel to express the same ideas. CLICK ON THE LINKS AT THE TOP OF EACH BOX TO REVIEW EACH TRANSLATION.

I've done the first one for you so you can see how it should be done.

PUTNAM	COHEN	GROSSMAN	RAFFEL
a stew with more beef than mutton in it	a stew, more beef than mutton	an occasional stew, beef more often than lamb	his pot of stew (which contained a good deal more cow than sheep)
chopped meat for his evening meal			
scraps for a Saturday			

lentils on Friday			
a young pigeon as a special delicacy for Sunday			

2. Now write a few sentences giving your ***own*** version of the types of food that someone like Don Quixote **--** i.e., someone living on a limited income **--** might eat if he were living today. There's no right or wrong answer for this, so don't hesitate to be imaginative or humorous.

When you've finished the exercises, go to Page 2.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5

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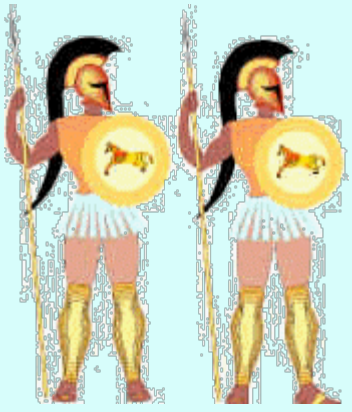
04/30/07

THE ILIAD BY HOMER (Page 1)

The Iliad, a poem composed in the 8th century B.C.E. by the Greek poet, Homer, has been translated into English more often than almost any other literary work originally created in another language. In the past ten years, there have been at least six published English-language translations of the ***Iliad***. This raises an important question: why is there a need for different translations?

Since few people nowadays can read ancient Greek, the language in which the ***Iliad*** was originally created, translations are the only way in which this poem can be known. But there's unfortunately no simple way of translating ancient Greek words into their modern English equivalents. To illustrate how two translators -- both very knowledgeable in the ancient Greek language -- have attempted to do this, you'll see in the boxes below, two different translations of the opening lines of the ***Iliad*** (Book I, lines 1-8). The first is by Robert Fagles and the second is by Richmond Lattimore. You'll see that although both versions use similar words, there are also some important differences. After you've read both versions, you'll find, at the bottom of this page, a simple exercise that will help you see these differences -- and, especially, why they're important.

Rage -- Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles,
murderous, doomed, that cost the Achaeans countless losses,
hurling down to the House of Death so many sturdy souls,
great fighters' souls, but made their bodies carrion,
feasts for the dogs and birds,
and the will of Zeus was moving toward its end.
-- Robert Fagles



Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus
and its devastation, which put pains thousand-fold upon the
Achaians,
hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls
of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate

feasting
of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished....
-- Richmond Lattimore

EXERCISE A

1. The most important difference between these two translations is that the first one, by Robert Fagles, begins with the words "***Rage -- Sing, goddess, the rage"*** while Fitzgerald's begins with ***"Sing***, goddess, the anger.***"*** What difference does it make to begin the poem with the word ***sing*** rather than with ***rage***?

2. Fagles' version uses the word ***rage*** while Lattimore uses ***anger***. The words ***rage*** and ***anger*** have the same basic meaning, but they're also slightly different. What's the main difference? And what other words could have been used to describe the same feeling?

If you're having difficulty thinking of words, you can go to a Thesaurus at this link: <http://www.m-w.com/>
In the box that says ***Thesaurus***, type the word ***anger*** and then click ***Search.***
For an excellent explanation of the differences between these words, and others with the same meaning, go again to <http://www.m-w.com/> and type ***anger*** in the ***Dictionary (***not ***Thesaurus)*** box. When you get to the ***anger*** page, you'll first find the meanings for the verb form of ***anger***. You don't want this. Click on the box that says ***noun form*** and you'll find the explanation of the differences.

Top of Page

Now please proceed to Page 2.

Works Cited Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5

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03/28/05

THE METAMORPHOSIS

BY FRANZ KAFKA

(Page 1)

Written originally in German and first published in 1915, ***The Metamorphosis*** is Franz Kafka's best-known and most frequently translated work. The earliest English translation, by A.L. Lloyd, was published in the 1930's. A slightly later translation by Willa and Edwin Muir was for many years the best-known English translation and is still widely available. Today, anyone interested in reading this story will find, in local bookstores and libraries, at least six different English translations. Most readers of ***The Metamorphosis***, however, don't realize how important their choice of a translation can be, and how much it may affect their responses to what they're reading. The purpose of this module is to compare several of the most popular contemporary translations, illustrating the ways in which different translators have dealt with the key issues involved in translating this complex work.

The first problem involves the title of the story. The German title, ***Die Verwandlung,*** can be translated as either ***The Transformation*** or ***The Metamorphosis***. The most frequent choice is ***metamorphosis,*** but this word has the disadvantage of being more "literary" and less commonly used in English than ***verwandlung*** is in German. The appearance of this word in the title perhaps too quickly alerts the reader to the strangeness of the story to follow; it doesn't really fit with the much more "ordinary" tone in which the story is narrated. Another problem is that those readers familiar with the word may know it primarily as a biological term referring to a caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly, not at all the type of transformation that the story describes. But despite these disadvantages, most contemporary translations use ***The Metamorphosis*** as the title of the story **--** mainly because it's the title that was most often used in earlier translations and therefore the one most familiar to English-language readers.

Having decided on the translated version of the story's title, the translator must now grapple with the story's first sentence **--** the sentence that announces, without apparent surprise, that Gregor Samsa awoke one morning to find he'd become an insect. In the boxes below you'll see how this sentence appears in the original German and in a literal (word-for-word)

translation.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheuren Ungeziefer verwandelt.	As Gregor Samsa one morning from restless dreams awoke, found he himself in his bed into an enormous vermin transformed.

Now let's look at four translators' versions of this sentence:

WILLA/EDWIN MUIR	J. A. UNDERWOOD
As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.	Gregory Samsa woke from uneasy dreams one morning to find himself changed into a giant bug.
STANLEY APPELBAUM	**JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL**
When Gregor Samsa awoke from troubled dreams one morning he found that he had been transformed in his bed into an enormous bug.	One morning, upon awakening from agitated dreams, Gregor Samsa found himself, in his bed, transformed into a monstrous vermin.

You'll see immediately that there are a number of differences in sentence structures and word choices among these four translations. The most important difference involves the words chosen to describe Gregor's transformation. The Muirs describe him as having become ***a gigantic insect***, Underwood ***a giant bug***, Appelbaum ***an enormous bug***, and Neugroschel ***a monstrous vermin***.

Let's consider first the different adjectives chosen by the translators ***-- gigantic, giant, enormous, monstrous --*** to translate the original German word, ***ungeheuren.*** The first three of these words -- ***gigantic, giant, enormous --*** relate to size; they tell us that Gregor has become an extremely large insect. But the fourth ***-- monstrous --*** is different; it describes something horrifying that doesn't have to be very large. The dilemma for the translators is that the original German word can mean both things at the same time ***--*** very large ***and*** horrifying ***--*** but since English lacks an equivalent word, the translators have been forced to choose between these somewhat different meanings.

Another difference involves the translators' choices of words to describe Gregor's transformed state ***-- insect***, ***bug***, and ***vermin***. The original German word ***-- Ungeziefer --*** is literally translated as ***vermin***. However, this word isn't commonly used in English, so some translators prefer to use words like ***bug*** or ***insect*** which will be more easily understood by their readers. Also, since the word ***vermin*** can describe any loathsome creature, not just an insect, using this word doesn't describe exactly what Gregor has become. The disadvantage of words like ***bug*** or ***insect***, however, is that they don't convey the sense of disgust that's implicit in the word ***vermin***. A bug or insect can be harmless, perhaps even beautiful like a butterfly. Certainly this meaning doesn't apply to Gregor Samsa, but the reader has no way of knowing this at

the beginning of the story. And this kind of misunderstanding is even more likely to occur since the word ***metamorphosis*** in the story's title is often associated with a butterfly.

An added complication familiar to most translators is that the word ***vermin*** has particular historical significance lacking in the words ***bug*** and ***insect***. In the region where Kafka lived, Jewish people were often referred to, in times of persecution by anti-Semites, as ***Ungeziefer***, or ***vermin***. Since Kafka was himself Jewish, he was undoubtedly aware of this derogatory meaning of the word ***Ungeziefer --*** but there's no way of knowing if he intended this meaning to apply to Gregor Samsa. Translators who feel he did intend to suggest it are more likely to use the word ***vermin*** in their translations; those who feel it's not an intended meaning may choose more easily-understood words like ***bug*** or ***insect***. There's no way of deciding conclusively which is the better choice. Translators have to weigh the pros and cons of the words they choose, recognizing that it's impossible to convey all levels of possible meanings in the words originally used by the story's author.

This discussion will continue on the next page with examples of other issues involved in translating ***The Metamorphosis***. But before you go on, please do the exercise below.

EXERCISE A.

In the boxes below you'll see four translations **--** by Willa and Edwin Muir, Malcolm Pasley, Stanley Corngold, and Donna Freed **--** of a passage in Part I of ***The Metamorphosis***. Read through them and then follow the instructions beneath the boxes.

WILLA/EDWIN MUIR	MALCOLM PASLEY
But Gregor was now much calmer. The words he uttered were no longer understandable, apparently, although they seemed clear enough to him.... Yet at any rate people believed that something was wrong with him, and were ready to help him. The positive certainty with which these first measures had been taken comforted him. He felt himself drawn once more into the human circle....	But Gregor had grown much calmer. It was true that the words he uttered were evidently no longer intelligible despite the fact that they had seemed clear enough to him.... But at least the others were persuaded that all was not well with him and were prepared to help. He felt comforted by the confidence and firmness with which the first instructions had been issued. He felt restored once more to human company....
STANLEY CORNGOLD	**DONNA FREED**
But Gregor had become much calmer. It was true that they no longer understood his words, though they had seemed clear enough to him.... But still, the others now believed that there was something the matter with him and were ready to help him. The assurance and confidence with which	Gregor had become much calmer however. Apparently his words were no longer understandable even though they were clear enough to him.... But at least it was now believed that all was not right with him and they were ready to help him. He felt cheered by the confidence

the first measures had been taken did him good. He felt integrated into human society once again....	and surety with which the first orders were met. He felt encircled by humanity again....

You've just read four translations **--** by Willa/Edwin Muir, Malcolm Pasley, Stanley Corngold, and Donna Freed **--** of a passage in Part I of ***The Metamorphosis***. In the left-hand boxes below, I've written five groups of words from the translation by Willa and Edwin Muir. Next to each group of words, write in the words used by Pasley, Corngold, and Freed to express the same ideas.

CLICK ON THE LINKS AT THE TOP OF EACH BOX TO REVIEW EACH TRANSLATION.

MUIRS	PASLEY	CORNGOLD	FREED
But Gregor was now much calmer.	But Gregor had grown much calmer.	But Gregor had become much calmer.	Gregor had become much calmer however.
The words he uttered were no longer under-standable, apparently....			
Yet at any rate people believed that something was wrong with him, and were ready to help him.			
The positive certainty with which these first measures had been taken comforted him.			
He felt himself drawn once more into the human circle....			

When you've finished the exercises, go to Page 2.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4

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11/11/05

MOLIERE'S

TARTUFFE

(Page 1)

INTRODUCTION Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, who took the stage name of Moliere, was one of the most popular French playwrights of the seventeenth century. His plays have endured through the centuries, frequently being translated into other languages and performed in theaters throughout the world. In the present day, an English-language reader, looking for a translation of one of Moliere's best-known plays, ***Tartuffe***, will usually find at least five different versions available in bookstores and libraries. This raises inevitable questions: Why is there a need for so many translations? And which, if any, is the "best"?

Finding possible answers to these questions requires first considering that Tartuffe is a ***play --*** a work created to be performed for an audience by actors in a theater. Translating a play is in some ways very different from translating stories or poems, works which are created primarily to be read.

As an example, let's look at the opening words of Tartuffe in both the original French and a literal (word-for-word) translation.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
MADAME PERNELLE. Allons, Flipote, allons, que d'eux je me délivre. ELMIRE. Vous marchez d'un tel pas qui'on a peine à vous suivre.	MADAME PERNELLE. Come on, Flipote, come on, deliver me from them. ELMIRE. You walk so fast that one has difficulty following you.

Madame Pernelle's words **--** the first words spoken in the play **--** are meant to be said as Mme. Pernelle is walking quickly, calling to her servant to follow her while her daughter-in-law Elmire is struggling to keep up with her. Moliere thus begins the play with a sense of impending chaos; the audience

immediately knows that something is wrong and that the household is in an uproar. Translators have to use words that will convey this feeling of action, thinking always of how actors might actually speak these lines while moving rapidly across the stage.

Now here are four examples of how modern translators have translated these lines:

WILBUR	WOOD
MADAME PERNELLE. Come, come, Flipote; it's time I left this place. ELMIRE. I can't keep up, you walk at such a pace.	MADAME PERNELLE. Come, Flipote, I'll not stay under the same roof as them a minute longer. ELMIRE. You're walking so fast we can hardly keep up.
HAMPTON	**BOLT**
MME. PERNELLE. Come on, Flipote, let's go, I can't stay here. ELMIRE. Why are you in such a rush? We can't keep up.	MADAME PERNELLE. Flipote! We're leaving.... ELMIRE. Wait!

Each of these translators has had to find a way of balancing two primary concerns: translating the words ***accurately*** while making the words ***performable*** for the actors who will actually speak these lines. You'll note that the translators have made different kinds of choices. Perhaps the most obvious difference is in the number of words used. In the original version, Elmire's speech consists of one sentence of eleven words with no internal punctuation. Richard Wilbur's version -- "I can't keep up, you walk at such a pace"-- consists of ten words with an internal comma. John Wood uses one sentence of nine words -- "You're walking so fast we can hardly keep up." Christopher Hampton creates two sentences of eleven words with a question mark after the first sentence -- "Why are you in such a rush? We can't keep up." And finally, Rajiv Bolt uses just one word -- "Wait!" Each translator arrived at a different solution, recognizing that the translation being created would be a compromise between accuracy and performability.

As another example, you'll see in the following boxes four translations -- by Richard Wilbur, Christopher Hampton, Maya Slater, and Morris Bishop -- of Madame Pernelle's third speech in Act I, sc. 1, of Tartuffe. After you've looked at them, the exercise below will help you to examine their differences.

BOX A: WILBUR	BOX B: HAMPTON
This house appalls me. No one in it Will pay attention for a single minute. Children, I take my leave much vexed in spirit.	I can't bear all the turmoil in this house. Nobody cares a button for my feelings. It's been a most unedifying visit: nobody listens to a word I say;

I offer good advice, but you won't hear it. You all break in and chatter on and on. It's like a madhouse with the keeper gone.	there's no respect, everyone shouts at once, it's like some frightful Parliament of Apes.
BOX C: SLATER There's such a carry-on in here. Why should I stay? Not one of you will listen to a word I say. I'm not at all impressed with how you run this place. I reason with you, you defy me to my face. You don't respect me: each one says what he believes. You jabber all at once. It's like a den of thieves.	BOX D: BISHOP I can't stand the way that things are going! In my son's house they pay no heed to me. I am not edified, not edified. I give you good advice. Who pays attention? Everyone speaks his mind; none shows respect. This place is Bedlam: everyone is king here.

EXERCISE A. In the boxes immediately above, you've seen four translations -- by Richard Wilbur, Christopher Hampton, Maya Slater, and Morris Bishop -- of Madame Pernelle's third speech in Act I, sc. 1, of ***Tartuffe.*** In the left-hand boxes below, I've written five groups of words from the Richard Wilbur translation. Next to them, you should write in the words used by Hampton, Slater, and Bishop to express the same ideas. I've done the first one for you so you can see how it's done. NOTE: The words may be on different lines; you should look at the ideas being expressed rather than where the words are positioned.

CLICK ON THE LINKS AT THE TOP OF EACH BOX TO REVIEW EACH TRANSLATION.

A: WILBUR	B: HAMPTON	C: SLATER	D: BISHOP
This house appalls me.	I can't bear all the turmoil in this house.	There's such a carry-on in here.	I can't stand the way that things are going!
No one in it. /Will pay attention for a single minute.			
I offer good advice, but you			

won't hear it.			
You all break in and chatter on and on.			
It's like a madhouse with the keeper gone.			

When you've finished the exercises, go to Page 2.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5

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03/28/05

	TRANSLATION WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?	
TRANS. HOME	BEOWULF	THE DIVINE COMEDY

DON QUIXOTE	THE ILIAD	THE METAMORPHOSIS	TARTUFFE

RESOURCES FOR TRANSLATION STUDIES

Included here is a selection of contemporary books and articles that are useful starting-points for the study of translation. Most of these resources contain extensive bibliographies that can be referenced for further study. Also recommended are the "translator's prefaces" included in complete editions of the translations that are listed in the "Works Cited" pages of each module on the translation website. This list will be updated as additional resources come to my attention.

Approaches to Teaching Beowulf. Ed. Jess B. Bessinger, Jr., and Robert F. Yeager. New York:
MLA, 1984.
[All of the MLA "Approaches" texts have sections discussing the translations most commonly used by college and university teachers.]

Approaches to Teaching Cervantes' Don Quixote. Ed. Richard Bjornson.
New York: The Modern Language Association, 1984.

Approaches to Teaching Dante's Divine Comedy. Ed. Carol Slade. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1982.

Approaches to Teaching Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. Ed. Costas Myrsiades. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1987.

Approaches to Teaching Kafka's Short Fiction. Ed. Richard T. Gray. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995.

Approaches to Teaching Moliere's Tartuffe and Other Plays. Ed. James F. Gaines and Michael S. Koppisch. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995.

Bassnett, Susan. ***Translation Studies***. Revised edition. London and New York: Methuen & Co., 1988.

Biguenet, John, and Rainer Schulte, eds. ***The Craft of Translation***. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Damrosch, David. ***What Is World Literature?*** Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University

Press, 2003.

Dante's Inferno: Translations by Twenty Contemporary Poets. Ed. Daniel Halpern. Hopewell, N.J.: The Ecco Press, 1993. Contains translations of different cantos of ***The Inferno*** by a number of well-known contemporary poets (among them Seamus Heaney, Galway Kinnell, Charles Wright, Carolyn Forche, and W.S. Merwin). Excellent introduction by James Merrill.

Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English. Ed. Olive Classe. 2 vols. London, Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000.

Essays in the Art and Theory of Translation. Ed. Lenore A. Grenoble and John M. Kopper. Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.

Hofstadter, Douglas R. ***Le ton beau de Marot: In Praise of the Music of Language***. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Lefevere, Andre. ***Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context***. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1992.

The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation. Ed. Peter France. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Poulakis, Victoria. "Translation and the Difference it Makes." ***Inquiry*** Fall 2001: 7-16. Web site address for ***Inquiry*** is: <http://www.vccaedu.org/inquiry> Click on <Indexes> link and then on <Fall 2001> edition.

Rabassa, Gregory. ***If This Be Treason: Translation and Its Discontents***. New York: New Directions Books, 2005.

Raffel, Burton. ***The Art of Translating Poetry***. University Park, PA: Penn. State University Press, 1988.

_____. ***The Art of Translating Prose***. University Park, PA: Penn. State University Press, 1994.

Singleton, Charles, tr. ***The Divine Comedy***. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970. Singleton's multi-volume prose translations of Dante's work and his accompanying commentary are acknowledged by most contemporary translators to be the scholarly foundation for their own translations.

Steiner, George. ***After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation***. Third Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Steiner, George,ed. ***Homer in English***. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. An excellent collection of excerpts from major translations and and adaptations of Homer's works into English from the fourteenth century (Chaucer's ***Troylus and Criseyde***) through the late twentieth century. Steiner's introduction is especially useful.

The Translation Studies Reader. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. A collection of essays by major translation theorists from 1900 to the present.

Venuti, Lawrence. ***The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference***. London and New York: Routledge, 1998. Thoughtful and provocative analysis of the status of translation studies by a contemporary theorist and translator.

Wechsler, Robert. ***Performing Without a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation***. North Haven, CT: Catbird Press, 1998. Excellent and very readable discussion of translation issues, especially useful for anyone thinking of becoming a professional translator.

Young, Philip H. ***The Printed Homer: A 3,000 Year Publishing and Translation History of the Iliad and the Odyssey***. Jefferson, N.C. and London: McFarland & Company, 2003. Contains a "comprehensive list of all known editions of the Homeric texts of the ***Iliad*** and ***Odyssey***" as well as very readable background information about the development of the texts.

Top of Page

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TRANSLATION WEB SITE

BEOWULF

(Page Two)

MAKING SENSE

One of the complex problems involved in translating ***Beowulf*** is that the grammatical structure of Old English **--** the language in which the poem is written **--** is considerably different from Modern English. Old English is an inflected language; this means that its word forms can express relationships which in modern English require the use of added words. Consequently, even a literal (word-for-word) translation of the poem must include words that are not actually separate words in the original text.

The example below illustrates this with the opening lines of the poem in the original version and a literal translation. I've highlighted comparable phrasings. You can see by comparing the highlighted words that prepositions (***of***) and articles (***the***) had to be added to the translation, resulting in the use of more words than in the original version.

Hwæt. We Gardena in gear-dagum,	What. We of the Spear-Danes in old days
þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon....	of the people-kings, power heard....

In addition to adding words, a translation must also make changes in word order if the translation is to ***make sense***. In my literal translation of the above passage, the word order isn't the normal order used in modern English. The Old English text (in a word-for-word translation) has the subject of the sentence first, then the object, and then the verb **--**

We of the Spear-Danes in old days of the people-kings, power heard.

In modern English, however, the subject is usually followed by the verb and

then by the object. A modern English translation might read like this:

We have heard of the power of the Spear-Danes and their kings who in old days....

In fact, though, there's some ambiguity in the original text because the Anglo-Saxon text omits words that are normally used, in modern English, to explain relationships. Is the text saying ***we have heard of the Spear-Danes' kings and their power*** (with emphasis placed on ***kings***, not the ***Spear-Danes*** as a group), or ***we have heard of the Spear-Danes' power -- and of their kings***? You can see in the examples below that two well-known translators have interpreted the lines somewhat differently.

E. TALBOT DONALDSON	SEAMUS HEANEY
You have heard of the glory of the Spear-Danes' kings in the old days -- how the princes of that people did brave deeds.	The Spear-Danes in days gone by and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness. We have heard of these princes' heroic campaigns.

Each translator had to decide what the relationships were meant to be because many of the connecting words used in modern English are not present in the Anglo-Saxon language. Consequently, it's essentially impossible to translate ***Beowulf*** word-for-word if the translation is to ***make sense*** to a modern reader. Most translators are forced to add words and change sentence structures **--** which is one main reason why translations of the poem are often so different from each other.

To illustrate, let's look at translations of another passage, lines 720-727, where Grendel's entrance into the hall of the Spear-Danes is described. First you'll see, in the boxes below, the original text and a literal translation.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Com þa to recede rinc siðian, dreamum bedæled. Duru sona onarn, fyrbendum fæst, syþðan he hire folmum æthran; onbræd þa bealohydig, ða he gebolgen wæs, recedes muþan. Raþe æfter þon on fagne flor feond treddode, eode yrremod; him of eagum stod ligge gelicost leoht unfæger. (3 sentences, 45 words)	Came then to the building warrior traveling, dream deprived. Door soon pushed back, forged bar fast, since his hand touched it; threw open the creature, then he swollen [enraged] was, building's mouth. Right after that on paved floor fiend trod, going angry; of his eyes came like flame light terrible. (3 sentences, 49 words)

You can see that the literal translation, even with a few words added, really

doesn't make much sense. Now look at how four translators have rendered the same passage. Beneath each one, I've indicated the number of words and sentences used by the translator.

BURTON RAFFEL	RUTH P.M. LEHMANN
He journeyed, forever joyless, Straight to the door, then snapped it open, Tore its iron fasteners with a touch And rushed angrily over the threshold. He strode quickly across the inlaid Floor, snarling and fierce; his eyes Gleamed in the darkness, burned with a gruesome Light. (2 sentences, 46 words)	Then to the building came the brute wandering, deprived of pleasure. Yet the portal gaped, though fast with forged bands, as he first touched it. Angry he opened the entrance to the building with hateful purpose. Hurriedly crossing the patterned pavement the oppressor came in fuming fury. From the fiend's eyes shot lurid light flashing like lightning glare. (5 sentences, 58 words)
SEAMUS HEANEY	**R. M. LIUZZA**
Spurned and joyless, he journeyed on ahead and arrived at the bawn. The iron-braced door turned on its hinge when his hands touched it. Then his rage boiled over, he ripped open the mouth of the building, maddening for blood, pacing the length of the patterned floor with his loathsome tread, while a baleful light, flame more than light, flared from his eyes.... (3 sentences, 64 words)	To the hall came that warrior on his journey, bereft of joys. The door burst open, fast in its forged bands, when his fingers touched it; bloody-minded, swollen with rage, he swung open the hall's mouth, and immediately afterwards the fiend strode across the paved floor, went angrily; in his eyes stood a light not fair, glowing like fire. (2 sentences, 59 words)

Along with considerable differences in word choices and word orders, the translations show wide variations in their numbers of words and sentences.

Burton Raffel's version is closest to the original text in the number of words used: he has 46 words while the original has 45. To accomplish this, however, he has had to omit repetitions used in the original poem **--** phrases saying essentially the same thing in different words, such as ***came then*** and ***warrior traveling***, ***door pushed back*** and ***threw open... building's mouth --*** that are characteristic of the style of ***Beowulf*** and other Old English poems. So, although Raffel uses about the same number of words, the style of his translation is much more straightforward and direct than that of the original poem.

The other three translations do include some of the repetitions that Raffel has omitted, but they're also much wordier than the original version. Ruth P.M. Lehmann and R.M. Liuzza use 59 words and 58 words, respectively, while the original text has only 45. Seamus Heaney's translation is by far the wordiest; it has 64 words **--** 19 more than the original text **--** and adds a number of descriptive words that aren't in the original. Heaney, however, is the only one who uses the same number of sentences as the original: he has three sentences, Liuzza and Raffel have two, and Lehmann has five.

At this point I must explain that what I'm calling the "original" text is itself a modified version of the way in which the original manuscript is written. To make the poem readable **--** even for those modern readers who can understand Old English **--** all printed texts of the poem contain a number of changes in punctuation, spelling, and line arrangements. So, in fact, translators are working with a text that has already been "translated" to some extent from Old English to modern English. From that point on, however, the differences in translations can still be quite remarkable as they're compared to the original, albeit edited, version.

Further differences between the Old English text and modern translations will be discussed on the following pages. But before going on, please do the exercise below.

EXERCISE B.

In at least one full paragraph, write your own version of a situation similar to the one in ***Beowulf*** where the monster Grendel is entering a house. Describe how the monster enters, what he looks like, and what he does after he's in the house. (In the poem Grendel attacks a sleeping soldier, tears him apart, and begins eating him **--** until he's attacked by Beowulf.) You can take this as far as you want, possibly even write a whole story. After you've written it, read it over and analyze the writing style that you've used. Is your style very descriptive? Have you used many adjectives and adverbs? Or is your style very straightforward and direct? How many sentences have you used?

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 3.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page | Page 1 | Page 3 | Page 4 | Page 5

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BEOWULF

(Page Three)

"HEROIC" VS. MODERN

Before beginning to translate ***Beowulf***, one of the important choices for the translator involves using either a "heroic" or a modern style. "Heroic" means that the translation will use sentence structures and language that are deliberately elevated and somewhat archaic so that readers will experience the poem as being from and about a much earlier time. Modern translation style is very different: this type of translation uses contemporary language and sentence structures to make the poem relevant and meaningful to modern readers. Each style has its advantages and disadvantages. The use of modern, colloquial language and sentence style makes the story easy to understand but may seem inappropriate to a work that reflects the values of a remote, mysterious culture. On the other hand, an elaborate, archaic style may seem artificial and will probably be more difficult to read.

To illustrate these differences in styles, the boxes below contain two translations of lines 1704-1708, a passage where King Hrothgar is praising Beowulf. As you read them, try to decide: Which of these sounds as if it was written in a much older time?

CLARENCE GRIFFIN CHILD	CONSTANCE B. HIEATT
"Thy fame is exalted, my friend Beowulf, among every people throughout the wide ways. Wholly with quietness dost thou maintain it, thy might with wisdom of heart. I shall fulfill my troth to thee, that we spake of, ere now, together."	" My friend Beowulf, your glory is established far and wide, over all nations. You carry all your might steadily, with discretion of mind. I shall carry out the agreement we made before."

If you chose Clarence Griffin Child's translation as the one that sounds "older," you're right. You can see the difference immediately when Child uses the archaic pronouns ***thy*** and ***thou*** while Hieatt uses the modern ***your*** and ***you***. Other archaisms in Child's translation are words like ***dost***, ***troth***, ***spake***, and ***ere now.*** In contrast, Hieatt's phrase ***over all nations*** is obviously modern since there was no concept of nations in Anglo-Saxon times, and her phrase ***I shall carry out the agreement we made before*** is typical modern wording and word order, as contrasted to Child's ***I shall fulfill my troth to the, that we spake of, ere now, together***.

Child's translation, it's important to note, was made in the 1930's while Hieatt's was published in the 1960's. Styles of translation have changed over the years. While it was common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to use deliberately elevated and archaic wordings, English translations since the 1950's have tended to use a much more contemporary style.

Nevertheless, the choice between "heroic" and modern" does not have to be absolute. Some modern translators have tried to find a middle ground between these two styles. Their goal is to create translations that modern readers can easily understand yet which will also emphasize the vast distance between our modern world and the much older world of the poem. Examples of this approach are illustrated in two translations below, both published in the 1990's. The passage being translated is from lines 1384-96, in which Beowulf is speaking to King Hrothgar.

R.M. LIUZZA	SEAMUS HEANEY
"Sorrow not, wise one! It is always better to avenge one's friend than to mourn overmuch. Each of us shall abide the end of this world's life; let him who can bring about fame before death -- that is best for the unliving man after he is gone.... For today, you must endure patiently all your woes, as I expect you will!"	"Wise sir, do not grieve. It is always better to avenge dear ones than to indulge in mourning. For every one of us, living in this world means waiting for our end. Let whoever can win glory before death. When a warrior is gone, that will be his best and only bulwark.... Endure your troubles today. Bear up and be the man I expect you to be."

While both translations avoid deliberately archaic wordings, their style is not purely contemporary. For example, there are no contractions -- both use wordings like it is (rather than it's) and do not (rather than don't). Liuzza's phrase ***Sorrow not*** is a reversal of the normal modern English word order (which would be ***Do not sorrow***) and, in general, the words chosen are somewhat more elevated **--** Liuzza's ***abide the end*** and Heaney's ***waiting for our end***, Liuzza's ***unliving man*** and Heaney's ***warrior is gone --*** than is common in ordinary spoken English. So, although both passages can be easily understood by a modern reader, they succeed in creating the sense of an

earlier time period without resorting to deliberately archaic usages.

This middle-ground approach is the most common among recent translators. Most translators today believe that using contemporary language and style is an accurate way of translating the poem since the original poem was intended to communicate directly with its audience, to tell an exciting story that wouldn't be difficult to understand. On the other hand, they also know that an effective translation will capture the unusual elements in the way the poem was written, particularly its use of repetitions and circular forms of description. In short, if the poem sounds too modern, the audience won't be able to appreciate the unique qualities of the culture which this poem so beautifully represents.

The next page will discuss another choice that must be made by the translator: to translate the poem as either poetry or prose. But before going on, please do the exercise below.

EXERCISE C.

In the boxes below you'll see two translations, by Michael Alexander and Francis B. Gummere, of lines 1373-1382, in which King Hrothgar is speaking to Beowulf. First read both of them and then answer the two questions that you'll find below the boxes.

MICHAEL ALEXANDER	JOHN R. CLARK HALL
"And the wind can stir up wicked storms there, whipping the swirling waters up till they climb the clouds and clog the air, making the skies weep. Our sole remedy is to turn again to you. The treacherous country where that creature of sin is to be sought out is strange to you as yet: seek then if you dare! I shall reward the deed, as I did before with wealthy gifts of wreathed ore, treasures from the hoard, if you return again."	"Thence riseth aloft the vaporous blend and dark, to the clouds, when the wind stirreth up the bale-bringing storms till the air becomes misty, -- the very heavens weep. Now only with thee is help once again. Thou know'st not yet the land, the awe-inspiring spot, in which thou mayest find the wight of many crimes. Now seek it if thou dar'st! Thee will I recompense with treasure for the fight, -- with old and precious things, as I once did before, -- with twisted rings of gold if thou dost come away.

1. Which of these two translations sounds "older" **--** i.e., uses words ***not*** like those used commonly used today?

Check the one that seems "older":

Alexander ___

Hall ___

2. Explain your choice by giving several examples of words used in this translation that are not commonly used today.

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 4.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 4	Page 5

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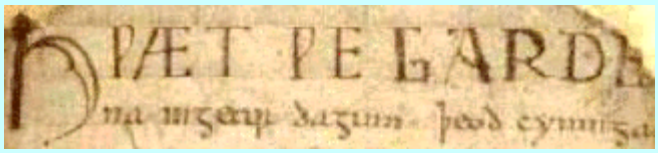
BEOWULF

(Page Four)

This page has two parts. The first part examines the differences between prose and verse translations of ***Beowulf*** and the second part looks at some of the complex problems involved in translating Beowulf as a poem.

I. POETRY VS. PROSE

There is only one existing manuscript copy of the original text of ***Beowulf***. The image below is a reproduction of the manuscript's opening words ***-- Hwaet We Gardena***. (The last letters of ***Gardena*** are missing because the manuscript was damaged in a fire.)



In this manuscript the text is written continuously without the line divisions used in poetry. In modern editions, however, the text is printed somewhat differently. The boxes below illustrate how the opening words of the poem are written in the original text and in a modern printed edition.

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT	MODERN EDITION
HWAET WEGARDENA na ingear dagum þeod cyninga þrym ge frunon huða æþelingas ellen fre medon.	Hwæt. We-Gardena in gear-dagum, þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon, hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.

The modern printing shows three main changes from the original version: the lines are arranged differently; there's a space (***caesura***) in the middle of each

line; and some punctuation has been added. The main reason for these changes is to enable readers to ***hear*** the poem as it would originally have sounded. There is, in fact, a very regular metrical pattern that indicates the story wasn't mean to be read continuously, as prose, but was actually recited in units comparable to those of the modern poetic line.

But although the original text has the sound of a poem, translations of the poem are sometimes made in prose. The two examples in the boxes below illustrate the differences between prose and verse translations: Donaldson's is in prose and Liuzza's in poetry. Both translations are of the very moving last lines of the poem, lines 3170-318, in which the Geat people perform the death-rituals for Beowulf and lament the death of their great hero.

E. TALBOT DONALDSON	R. M. LIUZZA
Then the brave in battle rode round the mound, children of nobles, twelve in all, would bewail their sorrow and mourn their king, recite dirges and speak of the man. They praised his great deeds and his acts of courage, judged well of his prowess. So it is fitting that man honor his liege lord with words, love him in heart when he must be led forth from the body. Thus the people of the Geats, his hearth-companions, lamented the death of their lord. They said that he was of world-kings the mildest of men and the gentlest, kindest to his people, and most eager for fame.	Then round the mound rode the battle- brave men, offspring of noblemen, twelve in all, they wished to voice their cares and mourn their king, utter sad songs and speak of that man; they praised his lordship and his proud deeds judged well his prowess. As it is proper that one should praise his lord with words, should love him in his heart when the fatal hour comes, when he must from his body be led forth, so the men of the Geats lamented the fall of their prince, those hearth- companions; they said that he was of all the kings of the world the mildest of men and the most gentle, the kindest to his fold and the most eager for fame.

If you read these aloud, you'll be able to hear -- rather than just see -- some of the differences between prose and verse. For one thing, the prose translation by Donaldson reads more quickly and easily than Liuzza's version in verse. This is because prose is more natural and conversational; it follows the forms of ordinary speech. On the other hand, the verse translation is more dramatic, statelier, and certainly more musical; it conveys a sense of how the poem

must have originally sounded when it was recited aloud to an audience, probably with musical accompaniment. The prose translation tells the story, but it lacks the rhythmic, melodic quality that's an essential ingredient of the original poem.

So, which is best **--** prose or poetry? There's no one answer to this question. Choosing a translation requires first considering what you want most in the translation you choose. If your aim is mainly to read the story in a form that's enjoyable and easy to understand, a prose translation is the best choice. On the other hand, a poetic translation is better if you're willing to struggle a bit more to understand the story and want to hear the ***sound*** of the original poem.

II. VERSE FORMS

Translating ***Beowulf*** as a poem is especially challenging because of the complex verse form used in the original poem. This verse form is quite different from the forms used in later English poetry.

Each line of Beowulf has four ***beats*** or stresses. There are two beats in each half-line with a ***caesura*** (pause) in the middle of the line. The number of syllables per line can vary, so long as there are four primary stresses per line. In addition, the first stressed word of the second half-line must ***alliterate --*** must have the same opening sound **--** as at least one of the stressed syllables in the first half-line. Other words may alliterate as well.

Using line 847 of the original text, the typical pattern is illustrated below. In the literal translation I've put accent marks over the stressed words and have highlighted the alliterating words in corresponding colors.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Dær wæs on blode brim weallende	There wás in bloód wáter brímming

Since it's extremely difficult to reproduce this complex pattern of stresses and alliterations in modern English **--** while still having the translation ***make sense --*** most translators don't follow this form very closely. Usually they try to have four stresses per line, more or less, with alliteration occurring only when it seems natural. However, there are a few translators **--** Ruth P.M. Lehmann being the most recent example **--** who do attempt to follow the form closely. In the right-hand box below you'll see the original text of the last five lines of the poem along with Lehmann's translation. I've highlighted the primary alliterating words in both versions.

ORIGINAL	RUTH P. M. LEHMANN
Swa begnornodon Geata leode hlafordes hryre, heorð-geneatas, cwædon þæt he wære wyruld-cyninga manna mildust ond mon-ðwærust, leodum liðost ond lofgeornost.	Thus his fellow Geats, chosen champions cheerlessly grieved for the loss of their lord, leader and defender. They called him of captains, kings of

	the known world, of men most generous and most gracious kindest to his clansmen, questing for praise.

For comparison with Lehmann's translation, the boxes below illustrate how two translators -- Seamus Heaney and Michael Alexander -- have rendered the same passage using a freer verse form: they have a four-stress line but with only occasional and much less strictly formulaic alliteration. Again I've highlighted the primary alliterating words, some of which are on different lines.

SEAMUS HEANEY	MICHAEL ALEXANDER
So the Geat people, his hearth companions, sorrowed for the lord who had been laid low. They said that of all the kings upon the earth he was the man most gracious and fair-minded, kindest to his people and keenest to win fame.	This was the manner of the mourning of the men of the Geats, sharers in the feast, at the fall of their lord: they said that he was of all the world's kings the gentlest of men, and the most gracious, the kindest to his people, the keenest for fame.

Heaney's translation method is succinctly explained in the preface to his ***Beowulf*** translation:

> ... I prefer to let the natural "sound of sense" prevail over the demands of the convention: I have been reluctant to force an artificial shape or an unusual word choice just for the sake of correctness.

His point is that strictly following the original verse pattern requires sacrificing ***sense*** to form: words must sometimes be chosen simply because of the meter or the need to alliterate. This is a sacrifice that he and some other translators prefer not to make.

As a reader, however, once again you will need to make your own choice. For a translation that gives a good sense of the original verse form of the poem, Ruth P.M. Lehmann's translation would be the best choice -- as long as you're aware that it sometimes isn't as strictly accurate as other translations. On the other hand, translations like those by Heaney, Raffel, and Liuzza might be preferred as translations that keep reasonably close to the original wording, but without strictly following the original form.

This ends the main part of our examination of ***Beowulf*** translations. The last page of this module has some final words about ***Beowulf*** translations and

some web links that you may find useful. But before going on, please do the exercise below.

EXERCISE D.

Write a tribute to someone whom you wish to honor as a great person. It can be someone well known, living or dead, or just someone you know. Describe this person so your reader will know why you feel he or she should be known and remembered. You can write this either as poetry or as prose. If you choose to write a poem, you might want to include some alliteration as you've seen in the examples from ***Beowulf*** on this page.

When you've finished the exercise, go to the final page, Page 5.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 5

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BEOWULF

(Page Five)

> Beowulf, my friend,
> your fame has gone far and wide,
> you are known everywhere.
>
> ***Beowulf***, lines 1703-5, tr. Seamus Heaney

CONCLUSION

When the above words were first written down, sometime between the eighth and eleventh centuries, the writer had no idea how prophetic they would be. Even though Anglo-Saxon is today an archaic language, millions of people throughout the world are familiar with this great poem largely because of the many translations **--** in scores of languages **--** that have been made through the past few centuries.

In addition to translations, there have been many adaptations and retellings of the story in various forms. Most of them deal mainly with the first part of the poem, Beowulf's encounter with Grendel. These are two of the best known:

- Michael Crichton's novel, ***Eaters of the Dead***, retells the ***Beowulf*** story from the viewpoint of an Arab eyewitness who travels to the Norse Lands. The film version is ***The Thirteenth Warrior*** (1999).
- John Gardner's novel, ***Grendel,*** first published in 1971, is a classic retelling of the story from the viewpoint of the monster, Grendel (with sympathy for what he experiences). A recent audiotape version is available.
- Worth at least a mention is a movie version of ***Beowulf*** (with the same title), made in 1999 with a futuristic, science-fiction setting and available in video stores. It's not a good movie but it's an interesting curiosity.

For further study of ***Beowulf*** in translation, Seamus Heaney's reading, on audiotape, of his own translation of ***Beowulf*** is highly recommended. Heaney,

who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995, is not only a great poet in his own right but also a great reader of poetry. The tapes are available from HighBridge Company, telephone 1-800-667-8433.

If you're interested in reading ***Beowulf*** in Old English, the Old English text in hypertext format, along with an interlinear translation, can be accessed at the following sites. (The translation is, however, very old and outdated.)

http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~beowulf/

http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/display/indextitle.html

The Old English text without accompanying translation can be found at this site:

http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a4.1.html/

And finally, for further study of ***Beowulf*** in all its aspects, this website contains an extensive bibliography:

http://www.lone-star.net/literature/beowulf/

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4

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THE DIVINE COMEDY

(Page 2)

MAKING SENSE The second concern of a translator is to make sense of what is being translated so that a modern reader will appreciate it -- but without changing the meaning in any substantial way.

In the past 100 years, there have been more than fifty attempts to translate Dante's ***Inferno*** into English. And before 1900, there were many other translations. The most obvious reason for this is that language constantly changes, so that the vocabulary and style of a translation can begin to seem outdated within a few years.

To illustrate how and why a translation may become outdated, let's look at two translations of another section from the ***Inferno***, Canto II, lines 121-126. You may remember that at this point in the poem, Virgil has just told Dante about the three beautiful "ladies" in Heaven who are trying to help him. Now he's saying that since Dante has such divine support, he should not be afraid to descend into the underworld.

In the following boxes you'll see two translations of these lines. One of them was created over a hundred years ago; the other was made in the 1990's. See if you can tell which is the ***older*** version. To help you, I've highlighted some of the words you should compare.

TRANSLATION A	TRANSLATION B
"Why, why dost thou delay? Why is such baseness bedded in thy heart? Daring and hardihood why hast thou not, Seeing that three such Ladies benedight	"What is this? Why, why should you hold back? Why be a coward rather than bolder, freer -- Since in the court of Heaven for your

Are caring for thee in the court of Heaven, And so much good my speech doth promise thee?"	sake Three blessed ladies watch, and words of mine Have promised a good as great as that you seek?"

As you probably guessed, the older translation is Version A. It was written by the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (author of the poem ***Hiawatha***) more than a hundred years ago. Version B (by Robert Pinsky) was published in 1996. It's evident that Version A is much older because it uses words like ***thou, baseness***, ***hast***, ***hardihood***, ***benedight***, and ***doth promise thee --*** not words that someone living in the present time would normally use.

Of course you may feel that the older version sounds more like the words that Dante, who lived many centuries ago, would have used to write about a subject of great spiritual significance. In fact, however, Dante chose ***not*** to write ***The Divine Comedy*** in Latin, the language normally used in the early fourteenth century for serious religious writings. Instead, he wrote his poem in Italian **--** the contemporary, "popular" spoken language of his time **--** because he wanted it to be understood by ordinary people. (This is one reason why he called it his ***Commedia***, or comedy, a term used in his day to describe works intended for a popular audience.) So, since Dante himself was using a "modern" language, designed to appeal to his contemporary audience, translators have good justification for using current-day English when they're translating his works from the original Italian.

Let's look at two more examples. In the boxes below you'll see two different translations of lines 133-37 of Canto II. In these lines, Dante, now fired up with courage, tells Virgil to lead the way into Hell. One of these translations was made in the 1940's, the other in the 1990's **--** not a very big time difference. Nevertheless, I think you'll be able to spot the older one. The exercise at the bottom of this page will ask you to choose the version that was written in the earlier time period and explain why.

TRANS. C: SEAMUS HEANEY	TRANS. D: DOROTHY SAYERS
"What you have said has turned my heart around so much that I am as ready to come now as I was before I started losing ground...."	"Fired by thy words, my spirit now is burning So to go on, and see this venture through. I find my former stout resolve returning...."

EXERCISE B.

Which of the two translations quoted in the boxes immediately above **--** Trans. C by Seamus Heaney or Trans. D by Dorothy Sayers **--** do you think was written in the ***earlier*** time period? Explain with reference to

specific words and phrases.
Click on their names to look again at the translated passages.

When you've finished, please go to Page 3.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 3	Page 4

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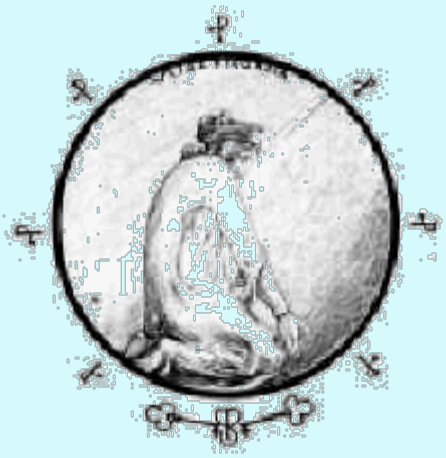
03/27/05



THE DIVINE COMEDY

(Page 3)

SOUND The final consideration in creating a translation is its sound. As I'm sure you know, the sounds of words, even when they look the same, can differ greatly from one language to another. These differences become especially important when poetry is being translated, since poems (like songs) often convey at least part of their meaning through the sounds of their words. In addition, many poems follow a set ***meter*** (a formula involving the number of stressed syllables per line) and ***rhyme*** (patterns of words with similar ending sounds) **--** two qualities that are very difficult to reproduce when words from one language are being translated into another.

Dante's ***Divine Comedy*** is particularly difficult to translate because it was originally written in a very complicated form called ***terza rima*** (meaning triplet rhyme). Throughout the entire poem, the rhyme scheme involves groups of three lines (called ***tercets***) in which the words at the ends of the first and third lines of each tercet rhyme. The second line of each tercet introduces a different rhyme which then becomes the rhyme used for the first and third lines in the next tercet. The pattern is like an interlocking chain which keeps propelling the poem forward, each tercet connected to the one before by its rhyme scheme. One of the reasons why Dante used this intricate form for ***The Divine Comedy*** is that the number three signified for medieval Christians (as it still does for many Christians today) the Holy Trinity **--** the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. ***Terza rima*** thus reflects the subject of the poem, a journey leading from the depths of despair toward a vision of God, manifested at the end of the poem in the form of three concentric circles.

Terza rima is, however, a very difficult form to use in English translations. This is because it's much easier to find rhymes in Italian than it is in English; Italian words do not have as great a variety of sounds. Nevertheless, some English translators of Dante have managed to use this rhyme scheme in their translations. In the box below you'll see an example from a translation of ***The Divine Comedy*** by Dorothy Sayers. (If her name sounds familiar, it's because

Sayers was the author of a very popular series of mystery novels in addition to being a classical scholar.) The lines translated are from Canto II, lines 127-135 of the ***Inferno***, in which Dante describes how his courage was renewed after Virgil told him about the three "blessed ladies" in Heaven who were looking out for him. I've highlighted in different colors the words which rhyme with each other.

DOROTHY SAYERS	
As little flowers, which all the frosty night Hung pinched and drooping, lift their stalks and fan Their blossoms out, touched by the warm white light, So did my fainting powers; and therewith ran Such good, strong courage round about my heart That I spoke boldly out like a free man: "O blessed she that stooped to take my part! O courteous thou, to obey her true-discerning Speech, and thus promptly to my rescue start!"	

But many other translators of Dante's works have chosen not to follow his original rhyme scheme. Translators find that searching for exact rhymes to end each line can mean sacrificing the even more important considerations of ***accuracy*** and ***sense***. So, they try to find different ways of keeping the basic sound of the original writing without worrying too much about the rhyme scheme. The boxes below illustrate two translators' different solutions, with the rhyming words highlighted in different colors.

JOHN CIARDI	
As flowerlets drooped and puckered in the night turn up to the returning sun and spread their petals wide on his new warmth and light -- just so my wilted spirits rose again and such a heat of zeal surged through my veins that I was born anew. Thus I began "Blessed be that Lady of infinite pity, and blessed be thy taxed and courteous spirit that came so promptly on the word she gave thee."	First and third lines rhyme but rhyme is not always exact, as in ***again/began.*** Middle words don't rhyme.

	ROBERT PINSKY
Words at ends of first and third lines have same ending sounds but are not exact rhymes -- ***dawn/again***. Words at ends of	As flowers bent and shrunken by night at dawn Unfold and straighten on their stems, to wake Brightened by sunlight, so I grew strong again -- Good courage coursing through my heart, I spoke Like one set free: "How full of true compassion

second lines introduce a new end sound which becomes the rhyme of the first and third lines in the next tercet-- ***wake/spoke/quick***.	Was she who helped me, how courteous and quick Were you to follow her bidding -- and your narration Has restored my spirit..."

ALLEN MANDELBAUM As little flowers, which the chill of night has bent and huddled, when the white sun strikes, grow straight and open fully on their stems, so did I, too, with my exhausted force; and such warm daring rushed into my heart that I -- as one who has been freed -- began: "O she, compassionate, who has helped me! And you who, courteous, obeyed so quickly the true words that she had addressed to you!	There are no rhymes. The form used is blank verse: unrhymed ten-syllable lines, following a regular rhythm alternating stressed and unstressed syllables.

All of these choices have advantages and disadvantages. Sayers' translation in ***terza rima*** most closely follows the original form of Dante's poem, but at times the need to find a rhyming word leads to choices that lessen the accuracy and sense of her translation. For example, line six of her translation reads,

I spoke boldly out like a free man

when the original meaning (as indicated more accurately in Ciardi's and Pinsky's translations) is that Dante suddenly ***feels*** free because Virgil's words have overcome his fears. On the other hand, Ciardi's choice -- rhyming the first and third lines of each tercet but without a rhyme for the second word -- means that each tercet stands by itself without providing an interconnection through the second-word rhyme. Pinsky's choice does create this link, but his decision to use similar end sounds rather than exact rhymes diminishes, to some extent, the musical sound of Dante's poem. Mandelbaum's non-rhyming form avoids the difficulty of finding accurate rhyming words, but it loses the music of Dante's form and the interconnectedness of the original ***terza rima***. As a reader, you can choose which you prefer -- or perhaps decide, as many readers do, that each is worth reading for its own merits.

Now do the exercise below. This is the last exercise for this unit. When you've finished, go to Page 4 for a concluding message.

EXERCISE C. Do either TOPIC 1 or TOPIC 2.

TOPIC 1

Write a six-line (or longer) poem using any one of the forms illustrated above. The subject can be anything you choose -- i.e., it does not need to be related to Dante's ***Divine Comedy***. You can look again at each example by clicking on the names of the translators:

DOROTHY SAYERS
JOHN CIARDI
ROBERT PINSKY

ALLEN MANDELBAUM

TOPIC 2

If you don't want to create a poem, write your own "translation" of the passage quoted above (Canto II, lines 127-135). You can write it either as prose or poetry; it does not need to follow any of the rhyme schemes described on this page. Try to capture the main idea but don't worry about following it line by line; your aim is to communicate the main feelings to a reader like yourself.

When you're done, go to Page 4.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 4

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03/27/05

THE DIVINE COMEDY

(Page 4)

Now that you've reached the end of this web site dealing with translations of ***The Divine Comedy***, you may be surprised to learn that Dante, the author of ***The Divine Comedy***, did not believe it was possible **--** or desirable -- to translate from one language to another. In one of his writings, he said:

> Nothing which is harmonized by the bond of the Muses can be changed from its own to another language without having all its sweetness destroyed. (qtd. in Wechsler 51-52)

Would Dante still believe this if he were alive today? There's no way of knowing, of course, but the many thousands of readers who have come to know and love his poem through its many translations would certainly disagree. I hope you are among them. And by comparing translations of ***The Divine Comedy***, I hope you have also gained some appreciation for the art of translation and for what can be learned from reading multiple translations of the same work.

If you're interested in visiting other web sites related to Dante's ***Divine Comedy***, here are two useful starting-points:

The Princeton Dante Project: comprehensive resources including links to ***Divine Comedy*** sites throughout the world. Registration is required.
<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html>

The Atlantic Online: Poetry Pages: If you have the required audio equipment on your computer, you can hear Robert Pinsky reading selections from the Italian text of the ***Inferno*** and his own translation.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/unbound/aandc/dante/rplist.htm>

Top of Page

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11/11/05

TRANSLATION
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

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Top of Page

comments to: vpoulakis@nvcc.edu

11/10/05

DON QUIXOTE

(Page 2)

MAKING SENSE Closely related to ***accuracy*** is the need for a translation to ***make sense*** of what is being translated. In ***Don Quixote*** translations, this means finding the right words to convey the idea intended by the author when a word-for-word translation won't convey the intended meaning to a modern reader.

As a first illustration, let's look at part of a sentence from Book I, Chapter 2, in its original form and a literal translation. This is a description of two women that Don Quixote sees standing in front of an inn:

Estaban acaso a la puerta dos mujeres mozas, destas que llaman del partido....	There were in front of the door two young women of those that are called of the party....

Now look at the following translations. As you read them, try to decide which of them best fulfills the goal of communicating **--** to a modern reader like yourself **--** who these women are. I've highlighted the key words.

CHARLES JARVIS	EDITH GROSSMAN	WALTER STARKIE
There chanced to stand at the door two young women, ladies of pleasure as they are called....	At the door there happened to be two young women, the kind they call ladies of easy virtue....	Now there chanced to be standing at the door two young women who belonged to the category of women of the town, as they say....
SAMUEL PUTNAM	**JONES/ DOUGLAS**	**BURTON RAFFEL**
By chance there stood in the doorway two lasses of the sort known as "of the district"....	At the door were standing two young women, party girls as they call them....	As it happened, two young women stood near the door, of the sort called party girls, or whores....

Most people would probably say that Burton Raffel's version, made in 1995, conveys the idea most clearly because it uses the word ***whore --*** not a polite word, to be sure, but one that certainly communicates the intended meaning to a modern reader. However, Raffel makes sense of Cervantes' words at the expense of being strictly accurate, since Cervantes used an expression ***-- of the party --*** which is less direct but which his readers would have immediately understood.

Equally difficult to ***make sense*** of, when a translator is also trying to be accurate, are Sancho Panza's words and expressions. Sancho's way of speaking is an essential part of his character, particularly the way he uses proverbs and sayings to express his feelings. Here's one example from Part II, Chapter 3, where Sancho is humorously expressing his opinion of the author of ***Don Quixote***.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
--Yo apostaré que ha mezclado el hi de perro berzas con capachos.	"I'll bet you that the son of a dog has mixed the cabbages with the baskets."

By ***mixing the cabbages with the baskets***, Sancho means throwing in unrelated material, confusing one thing with another. In English translation, however, this expression doesn't make sense because ***mixing cabbages with baskets*** isn't a saying commonly used in English. So, once again translators have to choose between being strictly accurate or making sense. The following examples illustrate the choices made by three modern translators.

SAMUEL PUTNAM	WALTER STARKIE
"I will bet you that the son of a dog has mixed the cabbages with the baskets."	"I'll bet that the son of a dog has made a pretty kettle of fish of everything."
EDITH GROSSMAN	BURTON RAFFEL
"I'll bet," replied Sancho, "that the dogson mixed up apples and oranges."	"I'll bet the son of a bitch has dragged in all sorts of silly stuff."

Putnam's translation is literal and accurate; he translates the words exactly and leaves it to the reader to make sense of them. In contrast, Starkie substitutes a familiar English expression ***-- pretty kettle of fish --*** that conveys the same general idea but isn't exactly what Sancho said. Similarly, Grossman's version uses a common English expression ***-- mixed up apples and oranges --*** in place of Cervantes' ***cabbages*** and ***baskets***. Finally, Burton Raffel substitutes a phrase ***-- dragged in all sorts of silly stuff --*** that gives the idea of what Sancho is saying but don't convey the colorful way in which Sancho expresses his thought. In each case, the translator has made what he felt to be the best choice in this situation; it's up to you, the reader, to decide which choice you prefer.

EXERCISE B.

You'll see below a translation of a speech made by Sancho Panza in Part II, Chapter 14, during the episode that involves the Knight of the Wood. In this speech, Sancho is expressing his anger at the Knight of the Wood's squire.

After you've read the speech, write your own version of it. Imagine that you're a translator writing to a present-day reader; your aim is to "make sense" of this passage so the reader will understand exactly what Sancho is feeling. You can use any style that you feel would be understood by a reader like yourself, including slang words, metaphors, etc. You don't have to follow the original passage exactly; you can concentrate on communicating the main feelings that Sancho is expressing.

> "I will take a big club, and before your Grace has had a chance to awaken my anger I will put yours to sleep with such mighty whacks that if it wakes at all it will be in the other world; for it is known there that I am not the man to let my face be touched by anyone. And let each man take care of his own arrow; but the most certain thing would be to let one's anger sleep; no one knows the heart of another, and he who comes for wool may go back shorn; and God bless peace and curse strife; because if a hunted cat, surrounded and cornered turns into a lion, I, who am a man, God knows what I might become...."
>
> (Translated by Samuel Putnam)

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 3.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5

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03/28/05

DON QUIXOTE

(Page Three)

No one can reproduce Cervantes' style in English. Not only is his prose uniquely magnificent, but the very music of Spanish, its syntactical structures, and the thrust and flavor of its words, are literally untransportable into another language.
-- Burton Raffel, "Translator's Note": xvii.

SOUND Probably the most challenging problem for the translator of ***Don Quixote*** is to convey the ***sound*** of Cervantes' unique prose style. Every serious prose writer has a distinctive style of writing -- a way of using words, arranging the parts of a sentence, and putting the sentences together in a paragraph -- that is impossible to reproduce in another language. This is usually true even when the languages (such as Spanish and English) come from the same language family and follow many of the same grammatical rules. Once again, the translator must make a difficult choice: either to attempt to capture the ***sound*** of the original writing in English, with possibly some loss of the ***sense*** of what is being said, or to concentrate primarily on sense at the expense of its distinctive sound.

Translators of Don Quixote make different choices, as the example below will indicate. This is a passage from Book I, Chapter 14, where a young woman, Marcela, answers the accusations of the shepherds who have blamed her for causing the death of Grisostomo, the man whose love she refused to return. As you read it, pay particular attention to the sentence structure and punctuation that is used to express Marcela's thoughts.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Yo nací libre, y para poder vivir libre escogí la soledad de los campos. Los árboles destas montañas son mi compañía, las claras aguas destos arroyos mis espejos; con los árboles y con las aguas comunico mis pensamientos y hermosura.	I was born free, and to be able to live free I chose the solitude of the fields. The trees on those mountains are my company, the clear waters of those streams my mirrors; with the trees and with the waters I communicate my thoughts and beauty.

Now look at two translations of this passage and compare them to the literal version (or the original version, if you read Spanish) with particular regard to ***sentence structure*** and ***punctuation.*** Which of the translations below, Translation A or Translation B, most closely follows the way in which the passage was originally written?

TRANSLATION A	TRANSLATION B
I was born free, and that I might live free, I choose the solitude of these fields: the trees on these mountains are my companions; the transparent waters of these brooks my looking-glass: to the trees and the waters I communicate my thoughts and my beauty. (Translated by Charles Jarvis)	I was born free, and to live free I chose the solitude of the fields. The trees on these mountains are my companions; the clear waters of these streams my mirrors; to the trees and the waters I disclose my thoughts and my beauty. (Translated by J.M. Cohen)

If you said Translation B, by J. M. Cohen, is closer in sentence structure and punctuation to the way in which Cervantes originally wrote this passage, you're correct. Cohen translates the passage in two sentences, the same as in the original version. Jarvis's version, however, translates it in one long sentence. This makes a difference because Cervantes' use of two sentences emphasizes Marcela's first statement, "I was born free and to live free I chose the solitude of the fields," by separating it distinctly from the second part. Cohen's version is also closer to the number of words used in the original writing (44 as compared to Cervantes' original 40), follows the syntax (word order) of the original very closely, and has only one minor variation in punctuation, a semi-colon instead of a comma after the first phrase in the second sentence. As a result, if Cohen's version is read aloud, it will sound more like the version that Cervantes' originally wrote -- although, of course, there's no way of translating the sound of Spanish words into English.

To give you some practice in analyzing the style of different translations, you'll see below four versions of another part of Marcela's speech in Book I, Chapter 14. After you've read them, the exercise at the bottom of the page will help you to analyze the differences in ***sound*** among these versions.

VERSION A: ORIGINAL	VERSION B: LITERAL
Y, así como la víbura no merece ser culpada por la ponzoña que tiene,	And, just as the viper does not deserve blame for the poison that it

puesto que con ella mata, por habérsela dado naturaleza, tampoco yo merezco ser reprehendida por ser hermosa; que la hermosura en la mujer honest es como el fuego apartado o como la espada aguda, que ni él quema ni ella corta a quien a ellos no se acerca.	has, which she kills with, because it was given to her by nature, so I do not deserve blame for being beautiful; since beauty in an honest woman is like the distant fire or like the sharp sword, that neither does one burn nor the other cut those who do not come near it.
VERSION C: PUTNAM As the viper is not to be blamed for the deadly poison that it bears, since that is a gift of nature, so I do not deserve to be reprehended for my comeliness of form. Beauty in a modest woman is like a distant fire or a sharp-edged sword: the one does not burn, the other does not cut, those who do not come near it.	VERSION D: RUTHERFORD And just as the viper doesn't deserve to be blamed for her poison, even though she kills with it, because nature gave it to her, so I don't deserve to be blamed for being beautiful; because beauty in a virtuous woman is like a distant fire or sharp sword, which don't burn or cut anyone who doesn't come too close.

EXERCISE C.

In the boxes immediately above, look at the ***sentence structures*** and ***punctuation*** of the two translations, VERSION C by PUTNAM and VERSION D by RUTHERFORD.

Then compare these translations -- looking mainly at sentence structures and punctuation -- to VERSION B, the LITERAL translation of the same passage.

Which of these two translations, VERSION C or VERSION D, do you think is ***more*** alike in its ***sentence structures*** and ***punctuation*** to the LITERAL translation of the passage? Give a brief explanation (two or more sentences) to support your reasoning.

Note: If you know Spanish, you can compare the translations to VERSION A: the ORIGINAL version of the passage, instead of the literal version.

Click on these links to review the selections:

VERSION A: ORIGINAL
VERSION B: LITERAL
VERSION C: PUTNAM
VERSION D: RUTHERFORD

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 4.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 4	Page 5

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05/26/05

DON QUIXOTE

(Page 4)

CONCLUSIONS Reproducing the sound of Cervantes' prose is important not only for its own sake but because this aspect of the novel is closely connected to its themes and characterizations. For Cervantes' original audience, much of the pleasure of the novel derived from the way in which the author conveyed the different "voices" of Don Quixote, Sancho Panza and other characters, as he also parodied the language and style of the overblown chivalric romances that were so popular in his time.

Capturing these different "voices" is one of the major challenges facing every translator. As an illustration, you'll see below two translations of the first words spoken by Sancho Panza in the novel (Book I, Chapter 7). In your opinion, which of these two versions sounds closer to the way Sancho Panza, an uneducated farmer/peasant, might actually speak?

CHARLES JARVIS	JOHN RUTHERFORD
Now Sancho Panza said to his master: "I beseech your worship, good Sir knight-errant, that you forget not your promise concerning that same island; for I shall know how to govern it, be it never so big."	Sancho Panza said to his master: "You'll be sure, won't you sir knight, not to forget what you promised me about the island. I'll be up to governing it all right, however big it is."

You'll probably agree that the second translation, by John Rutherford, gives a modern reader a better sense of who Sancho is. Charles Jarvis's version, which was first published in 1742, uses language that to modern ears sounds very formal ***-- I beseech your worship --*** and word orders that aren't common in conversational English ***-- forget not your promise***, ***be it never so big***. On the other hand, Rutherford's translation, published in 2000, uses a more conversational style, colloquial language ***-- you'll be sure, won't you --*** and contractions ***-- you'll, won't, I'll --*** to make Sancho sound like an ordinary person.

Making Sancho sound ordinary is especially important to emphasize his differences from Don Quixote. This difference becomes immediately apparent when Don Quixote responds to Sancho's query about the island he's been promised. Here are his words in Rutherford's translation:

> To which Don Quixote replied:
> "I would have you know, my good friend Sancho Panza, that it was a custom much in use among the knights errant of old to make their squires the governors of the islands or kingdoms that they conquered, and I have determined that such an ancient usage shall not lapse through my fault. Quite on the contrary, I intend to improve on it.... [speech continues with more than 100 additional words]

In contrast to Sancho's colloquial and informal speech, Don Quixote's response uses formal language ***-- You must know, I am resolved --***, does not contain contractions, and consists of almost 200 words (as in the original version). Thus, the ***sound*** of the two characters' speeches, when translated effectively, will reflect their completely different backgrounds, social classes, and values.

Capturing the difference in speech styles between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza at the beginning of the novel is especially important because Cervantes sometimes changes, and even reverses, their speech styles at important moments. He does this at times for humorous effect, at others to emphasize the close friendship that has developed between the two characters. This is especially apparent in the final dialogue between the two characters, in the last chapter, as Don Quixote is dying:

> And turning to Sancho, [Don Quixote] said:
> "Forgive me, my friend, for the opportunity I gave you to seem as mad as I, making you fall into the error into which I fell, thinking that there were and are knights errant in the world."
> "Oh!" responded Sancho, weeping. "Don't die, Señor; your grace should take my advice and live for many years, because the greatest madness a man can commit in this life is to let himself die, just like that, without anybody killing him or any other hands ending his life except those of melancholy. Look, don't be lazy, but get up from that bed and let's go to the countryside dressed as shepherds, just like we arranged: maybe behind some bush we'll find Señora Doña Dulcinea disenchanted, as pretty as you please. If you're dying of sorrow over being defeated, blame me for that and say you were toppled because I didn't tighten Rocinante's cinches; besides, your grace must have seen in your books of chivalry that it's a very common thing for one knight to topple another, and for the one who's vanquished today to be the victor tomorrow."

(Translated by Edith Grossman)

In this final dialogue there's a complete reversal of the pattern that was evident in the first dialogue between these two characters -- now Don Quixote speaks briefly and concretely while Sancho Panza speaks with eloquence and passion. If the translator successfully captures this shift in styles, the reader will fully grasp what Cervantes is telling us at the end: that although Don Quixote has died, his dream lives on in Sancho Panza and the many other people whose lives have been touched by the gallant knight.

EXERCISE D.

On this page, you've seen how Cervantes characterizes Sancho Panza and Don Quixote through the rhythms of their speech and the words they use in their dialogues.

To get a feeling for how Cervantes did this, write your own version of an imaginary dialogue (a conversation) between two people. You may want to choose people who are different in their interests and backgrounds -- such as, for example, a "rapster" and an English teacher. Or, you can use two people of the same type. Your aim is to give a sense of who these people are and what they're like through the way they speak.

You can choose any two people speaking on any subject; just try to characterize them through the words they use and the way they arrange them. Your dialogue can be brief (a few sentences) or as long as you want to make it.
After the dialogue, please provide a brief note with some background information about who these people are meant to be.

This is the final exercise in this module. When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 5 for some final words and links to other websites dealing with ***Don Quixote***.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 5

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03/28/05

DON QUIXOTE

(Page 5)

FINAL THOUGHTS To conclude this discussion of translation issues in ***Don Quixote***, it's worth noting that the idea of translation is in fact the starting-point for the story of Don Quixote. Near the beginning of the novel, the narrator explains that he is simply transmitting a "translation" of a history, written originally in Arabic, by an historian named Cid Hamete Benengeli. Of course this is not true **--** it's part of the humorous pretense that Don Quixote was a real knight whose exploits were recorded for posterity **--** but this "framing" device creates an element of ambiguity about what is real and unreal in the story that the narrator is telling. Occasionally Cervantes even inserts comments by the "translator" to keep reminding readers that they're not reading the work in its supposedly original form.

While this narrative technique is meant to be humorous, it also reflects Cervantes' awareness of the importance of translation: the fact that it makes possible the sharing of literary works among different groups of people. This is emphasized in the words spoken by Sanson Carrasco in Part II, Chapter 3, as Sanson extends "blessings to Cid Hamete Benengeli, who wrote the story of [Don Quixote's] great deeds, and also to the man who had [Don Quixote's] story translated from Arabic into our language, for the universal entertainment of mankind."

Of course Cervantes, like all writers, was well aware that creating a "perfect" translation is as unlikely as creating a "perfect" novel. Nevertheless, translators will continue to pursue this elusive ideal for the reasons eloquently explained by translator John Rutherford:

> Translation is only impossible as any worthwhile enterprise is impossible: impossible to perform with the perfection that we desire. What translators must do, like modern knights errant, is to come as close as we can to the impossible goal.
>
> **--** "Translating ***Don Quixote***": xxxii.

Thank you for visiting this website. If you're interested in accessing further

information about ***Don Quixote***, the following websites serve as a good starting-point.

The Don Quixote Portal. Comprehensive website with links to many resources dealing with Cervantes' life and works. Much of it is in Spanish but there are English links as well.
http://www.donquixote.com/index.html

The Cervantes Project. Another comprehensive website with many links.
http://www.csdl.tamu.edu/cervantes/english/index.html

The Don Quixote Exhibit. Displays translations and illustrations of Don Quixote from the George Peabody Library. Also contains links to other Cervantes sites.
http://milton.mse.jhu.edu:8006

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4

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05/09/05

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Top of Page

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03/28/05

THE ILIAD (Page 2)

Now that you've seen two examples of how the opening lines of ***The Iliad*** have been translated, let's consider some of the reasons why translators make different choices. For a translator, there are three main considerations: accuracy, sense, and sound.

ACCURACY means following the original writing as closely as possible and not changing the original meaning. To illustrate what's involved in this, you'll see below a transcription of the way in which the ***Iliad*** was originally written. (I have, however, used the English-language alphabet rather than the ancient Greek and have omitted accent marks that aren't easily duplicated on a computer.) The box on the right has my literal (word-for-word) translation of the original text.

menin aeide thea Peleiadeo Achileos oulomenen, he muri' Achaiois alge' etheke, pollas d' iphthimous psuchas Aidi proiapsen heroon, authous de heloria teuche kunessin oionoisi te pasi, Dios d' eteleito boule...	the wrath sing goddess of Peleus' son Achilles destructive, that great numbers of Achaeans had pain put upon them, many strong breaths to Hades were sent [of] warriors, them he made as prey to dogs and to all birds, Zeus accomplished his will....

Now let's look again at the translations by Robert Fagles and Richmond Lattimore that were on the previous page. As you read through them again in the boxes below, compare them with the literal translation that I've given above.

TRANSLATION A: FAGLES	TRANSLATION B: LATTIMORE
Rage -- Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles, murderous, doomed, that cost the	Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus and its devastation, which put pains

Achaeans countless losses, hurling down to the House of Death so many sturdy souls, great fighters' souls, but made their bodies carrion, feasts for the dogs and birds, and the will of Zeus was moving toward its end.	thousand-fold upon the Achaians, hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting of dogs, of birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished....

The following exercise will help you to analyze these differences.

EXERCISE B

In the left-hand box below, you'll find five groups of words that have been copied from the literal translation printed at the top of this page. Your goal in this exercise is to see how the same ideas were expressed, in different words, in the other two translations on this page: Translation A by Robert Fagles and Translation B by Richmond Lattimore. Click on the links to go back to these translations.
I've done the first one for you so you can see how it should be done.

LITERAL	TRANS. A: FAGLES	TRANS. B: LATTIMORE
the wrath sing goddess	***Rage -- Goddess, sing the rage***	***Sing, goddess, the anger***
destructive		
great numbers of Achaeans had pain put upon them		
many strong breaths to Hades were sent [of] warriors		
Zeus accomplished his will		

Top of Page

Now proceed to Page 3.

Works Cited Page | Page 1 | Page 3 | Page 4 | Page 5

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06/02/05

THE ILIAD (Page 3)

MAKING SENSE After accuracy, the second thing a translator has to consider is ***making sense*** of what is being translated. As you could see in reading the literal translation on the previous page, a word-for-word translation of a work created in the 8th century B.C. will probably not be meaningful -- or pleasurable -- for readers of the 21st century. So the translator's goal is to stay as close as possible to the original meaning while also using the words and style that a modern reader will understand and enjoy reading.

To illustrate how differently this can be accomplished, let's look at two translations of the lines in Book I of the ***Iliad*** where Achilles is expressing his anger at Agamemnon. One of these translations was made over two centuries ago; the other was made in the 1990's. See if you can tell which of them is the more recent.

O Monster, mix'd of Insolence and Fear, Thou Dog in Forehead, but in Heart a Deer! When wert thou known in ambush'd Fights to dare, Or nobly face the horrid Front of War?.... By this I swear, when bleeding Greece again Shall call Achilles, she shall call in vain... Then shalt thou mourn th'Affront thy Madness gave, Forc'd to deplore, when impotent to save: Then rage in Bitterness of Soul, to know This act has made the bravest Greek thy	You bloated drunk, With a dog's eyes and a rabbit's heart! You've never had the guts to buckle on armor in battle Or come out with the best fighting Greeks On any campaign!... By this scepter I swear: When every last Greek desperately misses Achilles, Your remorse won't do any good then.... And you will eat your heart out Because you failed to honor the best Greek of all.

foe.	

If you guessed that the translation in the right-hand box is the more recent, you're right. This translation **--** by Stanley Lombardo -- was made in the 1990's, while the one in the left-hand box -- by Alexander Pope **--** was first published in 1715. The differences are immediately apparent in the first line when Pope says:

O Monster, mix'd of Insolence and Fear,

in contrast to Lombardo's:

You bloated drunk!

If you think about Achilles' character in modern terms **--** he's like a super-star athlete with a very short temper **--** Lombardo's words seem closest to what he would actually say today. Also, Pope uses words like ***wert*** (for ***were***), ***thou*** (for ***you***), and ***shalt*** (for ***shall***), word forms that were commonly used in poetry (although not in spoken English) of the eighteenth century but which few poets nowadays would use. Although it's certainly possible to prefer Pope's version because his wording sounds more impressive and more heroic, it's worth remembering that the ***Iliad*** was originally created to appeal to a contemporary audience. So, the language of the poem probably reflects (although there are no written records to prove this) the language typically used in poetry of that time. Modern English translations of the poem are simply trying to create, for audiences of ***this*** time, the same experience that Homer conveyed to his original audience.

Both translators communicate the anger that Achilles is feeling here, but in order to do so effectively, they must use words that the readers of their time will understand. This is why there have been so many translations of the ***Iliad*** **--** and there will be many more in the future **--** as changing styles of language will require new translations.

The following exercise will give you the chance to imagine yourself as the "translator" of this passage.

EXERCISE C.

You've just read two translations of the passage in the ***Iliad*** where Achilles expresses his anger at Agamemnon. Now write your own version of this passage. Imagine that you're writing to a present-day reader, telling him or her what Achilles said to Agamemnon. You can use any style that you feel would be understood by a reader like yourself, including slang words. Don't worry about following the original passage exactly; just concentrate on communicating the main feelings that Achilles is expressing.

Top of Page

When you're done, please go to Page 4.

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 4	Page 5

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03/28/05

THE ILIAD (Page 4)

SOUND Finally, after ***accuracy*** and ***sense***, a translator also has to think about how the translation will ***sound***. As you're probably aware, some languages contain sounds that don't exist in other languages. A French word, for example, that may look similar to an English word can be pronounced very differently. These differences become especially important when translating poetry because poems (like songs) rely heavily on sound to convey their meaning.

To illustrate the problems involved in translating the ***sound*** of a poem, let's look at a few lines from the last part of the ***Iliad.*** This is the very moving passage in Book XXIV, where Andromache expresses her terrible grief after the death of her husband, Hector. Both translations of this passage are by Robert Fagles, but in the second box I've changed the format from poetry to prose.

O my husband... cut off from life so young ! You leave me a widow, lost in the royal halls -- and the boy is only a baby, the son we bore together, you and I so doomed. I cannot think he will ever come to manhood. Long before that the city will be sacked, plundered top to bottom! Because you are dead, her great guardian, you who always defended Troy, who kept her loyal wives and helpless children safe, all who will soon be carried off in the hollow ships and I with them	

O my husband ... cut off from life so young! You leave me a widow, lost in the royal halls -- and the boy is only a baby, the son we bore together, you and I so doomed. I cannot think he will ever come to manhood. Long before that the city will be sacked, plundered top to bottom! Because you are dead, her great guardian, you who always defended Troy, who kept her loyal wives and helpless children safe, all who will soon be carried off in the hollow ships and I with them ....

If possible, read both versions aloud. You'll notice that the rhythm of your reading is different. As you were reading the first version, you probably

paused slightly as you moved from one line to the next, but reading the second version, your pauses would have occurred only at punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and dashes. Poetry is arranged by lines; prose writing is not. This means that when translating poetry, a translator must try to arrange the lines so they will reproduce (as much as possible) the sound of the original poem.

Translating the sound of ancient Greek into modern English is especially difficult because the poetic line that is most natural in the English language has five stressed syllables (pentameter) whereas Homer's poem has a longer line
(hexameter) and is based on the lengths of syllables rather than stresses. Some translators have tried to translate the ***Iliad*** by using the hexameter form, but it's difficult to do this in English. The following example illustrates one translator's attempt:

> My husband, you were lost young from life, and have left me
> a widow in your house, and the boy is only a baby
> who was born to you and me, the unhappy. I think he will never
> come of age, for before then head to heel this city
> will be sacked, for you, its defender, are gone, you who guarded
> the city, and the grave wives, and the innocent children,
> wives who before long must go away in the hollow ships,
> and among them I shall also go....
> -- Richmond Lattimore

And here is another version which uses a very short, non-hexameter line. Note the difference in how it looks and sounds:

You have died young, husband, and left me
A widow in the halls. Our son is still an infant,
Doomed when we bore him. I do not think
He will ever reach manhood. No, this city
Will topple and fall first. You were its savior,
And now you are lost. All the solemn wives
And children you guarded will go off soon
In the hollow ships, and I will go with them.
--- Stanley Lombardo

Stanley Lombardo, whose translation is in the box immediately above, has said that his translation was intended for oral performance (similar to the way that the ***Iliad*** was originally performed), so he used short lines that would be easy to say. Lattimore's purpose, however, was to follow the line-forms of the original poem as closely as possible. Therefore his longer lines, though harder for a modern-day person to recite, fulfill his goal of reproducing the ***sound*** of the original writing.

Each translator had a different purpose that determined the form of his

translation. As is always the case, these translators had to make difficult choices before they could create their translations -- since no one translation can fully capture the meaning, the sense, and the sound of the original work.

EXERCISE D.
Similar to what you did in Exercise C, write your own "translation" of the passage that's quoted above (Book XXIV, lines 852-62, where Andromache is expressing her grief).) You can use any style you choose -- poetry or prose -- as long as you keep the main idea. It's a very sad, heart-rending, passage, so feel free to use emotional words.

Top of Page

When you've finished, proceed to Page 5, the final page.

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 5

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03/28/05

THE ILIAD (Page 5)

CONCLUSION:
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES TRANSLATION MAKE?

As you come to the end of this web site, I hope you ***won't*** feel that since translations can be so different from each other and from the original works being translated, it's not worth reading translated literature. Although it's always preferable to read a work in its original language, most people, if not for translations, would never be able to read great works like the ***Iliad***. And because of translations, a work can be read many times, each version producing a different sort of pleasure. Translation is an art **--** difficult to achieve, often frustrating because of the impossibility of "translating" certain words into other languages **--** but worthy of appreciation in its own right. As a renowned group of translators put it, many years ago:

> Translation opens the window, to let in the light that breaks the shell, so that we may eat the kernel; that puts aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removes the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.
>
> **----** Written by the translators of the King James version of the Bible, a translation of the Bible into English from the original Hebrew and Greek. First published in 1611, this became the version of the Bible used by most English-speaking Protestants for over 200 years. (qtd. in Wechsler 11)

Thank you for visiting the ***Iliad*** translation site. There are numerous resources, online and printed, for further study of the ***Iliad*** and its many translations. Following are two that make good starting points:

- This site contains the Greek text of the ***Iliad*** and an English translation by Samuel Butler: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>
- ***The Printed Homer: A 3,000 Year Publishing and Translation History of the Iliad and the Odyssey*** by Philip H. Young (McFarland & Company, 2003) contains detailed information about the many different texts and translations of

Homer's works.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4

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08/29/06

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Top of Page

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03/28/05

WORKS CITED

THE METAMORPHOSIS

BY FRANZ KAFKA

(Page 1)

Written originally in German and first published in 1915, ***The Metamorphosis*** is Franz Kafka's best-known and most frequently translated work. The earliest English translation, by A.L. Lloyd, was published in the 1930's. A slightly later translation by Willa and Edwin Muir was for many years the best-known English translation and is still widely available. Today, anyone interested in reading this story will find, in local bookstores and libraries, at least six different English translations. Most readers of ***The Metamorphosis***, however, don't realize how important their choice of a translation can be, and how much it may affect their responses to what they're reading. The purpose of this module is to compare several of the most popular contemporary translations, illustrating the ways in which different translators have dealt with the key issues involved in translating this complex work.

The first problem involves the title of the story. The German title, ***Die Verwandlung,*** can be translated as either ***The Transformation*** or ***The Metamorphosis***. The most frequent choice is ***metamorphosis,*** but this word has the disadvantage of being more "literary" and less commonly used in English than ***verwandlung*** is in German. The appearance of this word in the title perhaps too quickly alerts the reader to the strangeness of the story to follow; it doesn't really fit with the much more "ordinary" tone in which the story is narrated. Another problem is that those readers familiar with the word may know it primarily as a biological term referring to a caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly, not at all the type of transformation that the story describes. But despite these disadvantages, most contemporary translations use ***The Metamorphosis*** as the title of the story **--** mainly because it's the title that was most often used in earlier translations and therefore the one most familiar to English-language readers.

Having decided on the translated version of the story's title, the translator must now grapple with the story's first sentence **--** the sentence that announces, without apparent surprise, that Gregor Samsa awoke one morning to find he'd become an insect. In the boxes below you'll see how this sentence appears in the original German and in a literal (word-for-word)

translation.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheuren Ungeziefer verwandelt.	As Gregor Samsa one morning from restless dreams awoke, found he himself in his bed into an enormous vermin transformed.

Now let's look at four translators' versions of this sentence:

WILLA/EDWIN MUIR	J. A. UNDERWOOD
As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.	Gregory Samsa woke from uneasy dreams one morning to find himself changed into a giant bug.
STANLEY APPELBAUM	**JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL**
When Gregor Samsa awoke from troubled dreams one morning he found that he had been transformed in his bed into an enormous bug.	One morning, upon awakening from agitated dreams, Gregor Samsa found himself, in his bed, transformed into a monstrous vermin.

You'll see immediately that there are a number of differences in sentence structures and word choices among these four translations. The most important difference involves the words chosen to describe Gregor's transformation. The Muirs describe him as having become ***a gigantic insect***, Underwood ***a giant bug***, Appelbaum ***an enormous bug***, and Neugroschel ***a monstrous vermin***.

Let's consider first the different adjectives chosen by the translators ***-- gigantic, giant, enormous, monstrous --*** to translate the original German word, ***ungeheuren.*** The first three of these words -- ***gigantic, giant, enormous --*** relate to size; they tell us that Gregor has become an extremely large insect. But the fourth ***-- monstrous --*** is different; it describes something horrifying that doesn't have to be very large. The dilemma for the translators is that the original German word can mean both things at the same time ***--*** very large ***and*** horrifying ***--*** but since English lacks an equivalent word, the translators have been forced to choose between these somewhat different meanings.

Another difference involves the translators' choices of words to describe Gregor's transformed state ***-- insect***, ***bug***, and ***vermin***. The original German word ***-- Ungeziefer --*** is literally translated as ***vermin***. However, this word isn't commonly used in English, so some translators prefer to use words like ***bug*** or ***insect*** which will be more easily understood by their readers. Also, since the word ***vermin*** can describe any loathsome creature, not just an insect, using this word doesn't describe exactly what Gregor has become. The disadvantage of words like ***bug*** or ***insect***, however, is that they don't convey the sense of disgust that's implicit in the word ***vermin***. A bug or insect can be harmless, perhaps even beautiful like a butterfly. Certainly this meaning doesn't apply to Gregor Samsa, but the reader has no way of knowing this at

the beginning of the story. And this kind of misunderstanding is even more likely to occur since the word ***metamorphosis*** in the story's title is often associated with a butterfly.

An added complication familiar to most translators is that the word ***vermin*** has particular historical significance lacking in the words ***bug*** and ***insect***. In the region where Kafka lived, Jewish people were often referred to, in times of persecution by anti-Semites, as ***Ungeziefer***, or ***vermin***. Since Kafka was himself Jewish, he was undoubtedly aware of this derogatory meaning of the word ***Ungeziefer --*** but there's no way of knowing if he intended this meaning to apply to Gregor Samsa. Translators who feel he did intend to suggest it are more likely to use the word ***vermin*** in their translations; those who feel it's not an intended meaning may choose more easily-understood words like ***bug*** or ***insect***. There's no way of deciding conclusively which is the better choice. Translators have to weigh the pros and cons of the words they choose, recognizing that it's impossible to convey all levels of possible meanings in the words originally used by the story's author.

This discussion will continue on the next page with examples of other issues involved in translating ***The Metamorphosis***. But before you go on, please do the exercise below.

EXERCISE A.

In the boxes below you'll see four translations **--** by Willa and Edwin Muir, Malcolm Pasley, Stanley Corngold, and Donna Freed **--** of a passage in Part I of ***The Metamorphosis***. Read through them and then follow the instructions beneath the boxes.

WILLA/EDWIN MUIR	MALCOLM PASLEY
But Gregor was now much calmer. The words he uttered were no longer understandable, apparently, although they seemed clear enough to him.... Yet at any rate people believed that something was wrong with him, and were ready to help him. The positive certainty with which these first measures had been taken comforted him. He felt himself drawn once more into the human circle....	But Gregor had grown much calmer. It was true that the words he uttered were evidently no longer intelligible despite the fact that they had seemed clear enough to him.... But at least the others were persuaded that all was not well with him and were prepared to help. He felt comforted by the confidence and firmness with which the first instructions had been issued. He felt restored once more to human company....
STANLEY CORNGOLD	**DONNA FREED**
But Gregor had become much calmer. It was true that they no longer understood his words, though they had seemed clear enough to him.... But still, the others now believed that there was something the matter with him and were ready to help him. The assurance and confidence with which	Gregor had become much calmer however. Apparently his words were no longer understandable even though they were clear enough to him.... But at least it was now believed that all was not right with him and they were ready to help him. He felt cheered by the confidence

the first measures had been taken did him good. He felt integrated into human society once again....	and surety with which the first orders were met. He felt encircled by humanity again....

You've just read four translations **--** by Willa/Edwin Muir, Malcolm Pasley, Stanley Corngold, and Donna Freed **--** of a passage in Part I of ***The Metamorphosis***. In the left-hand boxes below, I've written five groups of words from the translation by Willa and Edwin Muir. Next to each group of words, write in the words used by Pasley, Corngold, and Freed to express the same ideas.

CLICK ON THE LINKS AT THE TOP OF EACH BOX TO REVIEW EACH TRANSLATION.

MUIRS	PASLEY	CORNGOLD	FREED
But Gregor was now much calmer.	But Gregor had grown much calmer.	But Gregor had become much calmer.	Gregor had become much calmer however.
The words he uttered were no longer under-standable, apparently....			
Yet at any rate people believed that something was wrong with him, and were ready to help him.			
The positive certainty with which these first measures had been taken comforted him.			
He felt himself drawn once more into the human circle....			

When you've finished the exercises, go to Page 2.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4

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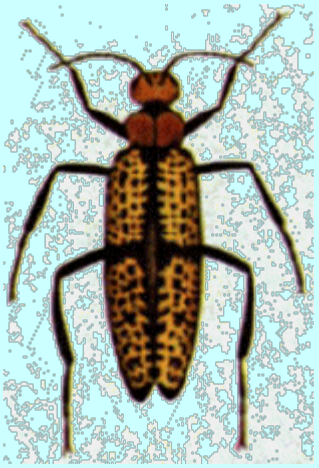
11/11/05

THE METAMORPHOSIS

(Page 2)



ACCURACY VS. READABILITY

Translations of ***The Metamorphosis*** must balance two conflicting needs: ***accuracy*** and ***readability***. The translator's goal is to stay as close as possible to the original meaning while also using the words and style that a modern reader will understand and enjoy reading. Since ***The Metamorphosis*** was written within the past 100 years, its language is fairly "modern" and therefore not difficult to translate literally. But some of the wordings may sound unnaturally stilted and artificial in a literal translation while Kafka's writing style is, at least on the surface, quite direct and straightforward. Translators must therefore use words that will sound natural even when this sometimes means not being strictly accurate.

An example of different choices made by translators when balancing ***accuracy*** against ***readability*** can be seen in the boxes below. These are four translations of the words used by the Samsas' cleaning-woman, in Part III of ***The Metamorphosis*** when she discovers Gregor's dead body.

WILLA/EDWIN MUIR	STANLEY APPELBAUM
"Just take a look at this, it's dead; it's lying here dead and done for!"	"Come take a look, it's croaked; it's lying there, a total goner."
J.A. UNDERWOOD	**JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL**
'Take a look at this -- the thing's snuffed it! It's lying here dead as a doornail!'	"Go and look, it's croaked; it's lying there, absolutely croaked!"

In the original version, the maid announces that Gregor is dead by using the German word ***krepiert***. Translated literally, this word simply means ***dead***, but German readers would immediately recognize this as a colloquial, or slang word, not the usual word for ***dead***. In fact whenever the cleaning-woman

speaks, her language is filled with colloquial expressions that contrast with the more formal, middle-class speech of the Samsa family. The problem for translators is to find English equivalents for these colloquial expressions. The examples above illustrate different ways of translating the cleaning-woman's announcement that Gregor is dead **--** the Muirs have her say that Gregor is ***dead and done for***; Appelbaum uses the words ***croaked*** and ***a total goner***; Underwood has ***snuffed it*** and ***dead as a doornail***; and Neugroschel prefers ***croaked, absolutely croaked***. You can probably think of many other expressions that could be used; the important point here is that all four translators are placing ***readability*** above ***accuracy***, choosing to communicate the cleaning-woman's way of speaking rather than giving a literal translation.

Now let's look at a slightly less obvious example of this same kind of choice. In the boxes below, you'll see two translations of a sentence in Part II of ***The Metamorphosis***. At this point in the story, Gregor's sister, Grete, is insisting to her mother that the furniture must be moved out of Gregor's room. I've highlighted the words that you should compare.

JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL	MALCOLM PASLEY
And so she dug in her heels, refusing to give in to the mother, who, apparently quite anxious and uncertain of herself in this room, soon held her tongue and, to the best of her ability, helped the sister push out the wardrobe.	And so she refused to let herself be swayed from her resolve by her mother, who in any case seemed unsure of herself from the sheer anxiety of being in Gregor's room; she soon grew silent and began doing what she could to help her daughter shift the wardrobe out.

Here the translators have made different kinds of choices. Pasley's version follows Kafka's original wordings very closely. He uses phrases that are almost literal translations of the original German: ***she refused to let herself be swayed from her resolve by her mother*** and ***soon grew silent.*** In contrast, Neugroschel prefers colloquial expressions: ***she dug in her heels, refusing to give in*** and ***soon held her tongue***, expressions that sound natural in modern English but aren't word-for-word translations of the original German.

In one important respect, however, Neugroschel's version is more literal than Pasley's. You may have noticed that, in referring to Mrs. Samsa, Neugroschel uses the words ***the mother*** in contrast to Pasley's ***her mother***. This follows the original wording very closely; in the original version Gregor's family is referred to, throughout the story, as ***the mother***, ***the father***, and ***the sister.*** Translators have to decide which form to use ***-- his mother***, which sounds more natural in English, or ***the mother***, the form used in the original German. Some translators feel that ***the mother*** should be changed to ***his mother*** in order to avoid a phrasing that's unnatural in English. Others maintain that ***the mother*** must be translated literally because Kafka deliberately chose this wording; they believe the phrasing is meant to emphasize Gregor's alienation from his parents. Which is best? Again, there's no definitive answer to this question since Kafka never explained the details of how he wrote his story.

The next page will continue this discussion by focusing on stylistic issues

involved in translating The Metamorphosis. But before you go on, the exercise below will give you the chance to be a "translator."

EXERCISE B.

Following are two versions of a passage in Part I of ***The Metamorphosis***, where Gregor Samsa, having just awakened and realized that something is definitely wrong with him**,** is thinking about his life. After you've read both versions, write your ***own*** version of the same passage. Your aim is to write this in a way that will be interesting and readable for a modern person like yourself; you don't have to follow the word orders exactly and you can use informal language, including slang words, if you wish. If you like, you can write this as if it's about yourself **--** what you're thinking about when you wake up in the morning and don't really want to get out of bed.

WILLA/EDWIN MUIR	J.A. UNDERWOOD
Oh God, he thought, what an exhausting job I've picked on! Traveling about day in, day out. It's much more irritating work than doing the actual business in the office, and on top of that there's the trouble of constant traveling, of worrying about train connections, the bad and irregular meals, casual acquaintances that are always new and never become intimate friends. The devil take it all!	'God,' he thought, 'what a grueling job I chose! On the go day in and day out. The business side of it is much more hectic than the office itself, and on top of that there's the wretched travelling, the worry about train connections, the awful meals eaten at all hours , and the constant chopping and changing as far as human relationships are concerned, never knowing anyone for long, never making friends. O, to hell with the whole thing!

When you've finished the exercises, go to Page 3.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 3	Page 4

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11/11/05

THE METAMORPHOSIS (Page 3)

STYLE AND SENSE Another issue for translators of ***The Metamorphosis*** is how to translate Kafka's distinctive writing style into a form that will make sense in English. Every serious prose writer has a distinctive style of writing **--** a way of using words, arranging the parts of a sentence, and putting the sentences together in a paragraph **--** that is impossible to reproduce in another language. The problem is compounded when sentence structures and word orders in the original language may be very different from those normally used in English, as is the case with the German language used by Kafka. So the translator of ***The Metamorphosis*** faces a difficult choice: either to follow closely the sentence structures and word order that Kafka used, with possibly some loss of the ***sense*** of what is being said, or to concentrate primarily on ***sense*** and pay less attention to reproducing his distinctive ***style.***

To illustrate, let's look again at the first sentence of ***The Metamorphosis*** in the original German and in a literal translation:

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheuren Ungeziefer verwandelt.	As Gregor Samsa one morning from restless dreams awoke, found he himself in his bed into an enormous vermin transformed.

You'll note that this sentence is made up of two clauses, the first ending in a verb, the second in a past participle **--** ***awoke*** and ***transformed***. The two words, in parallel positions, emphasize the subject of the story: that Gregor Samsa

awoke transformed. But translators of ***The Metamorphosis*** never try to reproduce this sentence structure in English because such a word order is completely unnatural in the English language. No native English speaker would write it this way:

As Gregor Samsa one morning from restless dreams awoke, found he himself in his bed into an enormous vermin transformed.

Instead this wording would normally be used:

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from restless dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into an enormous vermin.

So, most translations of this sentence end with the word ***vermin*** (or ***bug***, or ***insect***) rather than the word ***transformed --*** not a monumental difference in meaning, but definitely a change in emphasis from Kafka's original wording.

Another stylistic problem for Kafka's translators involves sentence length. Most sentences in ***The Metamorphosis*** are of normal length; they can be translated from German into English in about the same number of words without creating confusion for the reader. However, in certain key places Kafka intensifies the dramatic effect by creating unusually long and complex sentences. Translating these sentences involves a difficult choice -- translated as one sentence they will be accurate but possibly confusing to read; broken into several sentences, they will be more readable but won't convey the way in which Kafka actually described the situation.

As an example, let's look at a sentence in Part II of the story dealing with the actions of Gregor's sister **--** and Gregor's reactions **--** after their mother has fainted. Here's how it looks in the original German and in a translation by Stanley Corngold.

ORIGINAL	STANLEY CORNGOLD
Sie lief ins Nebenzimmer, um irgend eine Essenz zu holen, mit der sie die Mutter aus ihrer Ohnmacht wecken könnte; Gregor wollte auch helfen -- zur Rettung des Bildes war noch Zeit --; er klebte aber fest an dem Glas und musste sich mit Gewalt losreissen; er lief dann auch ins Nebenzimmer, als könne er der Schwester irgend einen Rat geben wie in fruherer Zeit; musste dann aber untätig hinter ihr stehen; während sie in verschiedenen Flaschchen kramte, erschreckte sie noch, als sie sich umdrehte; eine Flasche fiel auf den Boden und zerbrach; ein Splitter verletzte Gregor im Gesicht, irgend eine atzende Medizin umfloss ihn; Grete nahm nun, ohne sich länger aufzuhalten, soviel Fläschchen, als sie nur halten konnte, und rannte mit ihnen zur Mutter hinein; die Tür schlug sie mit dem Fusse zu.	She ran into the next room to get some kind of spirits to revive her mother; Gregor wanted to help too -- there was time to rescue the picture -- but he was stuck to the glass and had to tear himself loose by force; then he too ran into the next room, as if he could give his sister some sort of advice, as in the old days; but then had to stand behind her doing nothing while she rummaged among various little bottles; moreover, when she turned around she was startled, a bottle fell on the floor and broke, a splinter of glass wounded Gregor in the face, some kind of corrosive medicine flowed around him; now without waiting any longer, Grete grabbed as many bottles as she could carry and ran with them inside to her mother; she slammed the door behind her with her foot.

The original sentence consists of 132 words, an exceptionally long sentence by any standards. Corngold's translation follows the original version quite closely; he translates it as one sentence of 144 words. A sentence of this length is very unusual in English but Corngold's choice was to follow as closely as possible the way Kafka originally wrote the sentence.

Other translators make different choices when translating Kafka's lengthy sentences. Below you'll see two translators' versions of the same sentence. As you're reading them, count the number of sentences in each version.

STANLEY APPELBAUM	JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL
She ran into the adjoining room to fetch some medicine to revive her mother from her faint; Gregor wanted to help, too -- there was still time to rescue the picture -- but he was stuck tight to the glass and had to tear himself loose by force. Then he, too, ran into the adjoining room, as if he could give his sister some advice, as in the past; but he was forced to stand beside her idly. While she was rummaging around various little bottles, she got a fright when she turned around; a bottle fell on the floor and broke; a splinter wounded Gregor in the face, and some kind of corrosive medicine poured over him. Now, without waiting there any longer, Grete picked up as many bottles as she could hold and ran in to her mother with them, slamming the door shut with her foot.	She ran into the next room to get some sort of essence for reviving the mother from her faint. Gregor also wanted to help (there was time enough to salvage the picture later), but he was stuck fast to the glass and had to wrench himself loose. He then also scurried into the next room as if he could give the sister some kind of advice as in earlier times, but then had to stand idly behind her while she rummaged through an array of vials. Upon spinning around, she was startled by the sight of him. A vial fell on the floor and shattered. A sliver of glass injured Gregor's face, and some corrosive medicine oozed from the sliver. Grete, without further delay, grabbed as many vials as she could hold and dashed over to the mother, slamming the door with her foot.

You'll note that Appelbaum uses four sentences and Neugroschel uses seven sentences to translate what was originally one sentence. Comparing these translations with Corngold's one-sentence version, we can conclude that the translations using several short sentences are easier to read, less confusing than the one-sentence translation. On the negative side, the multi-sentence translations don't really sound like Kafka; they could have been written by almost any contemporary writer. The one-sentence version is confusing to read, but it's a more accurate reflection of Kafka's writing style **--** and the confusion in the sentence structure gives a much better sense of the confusion occurring in the Samsa household.

Which version is the "best"? It's up to you to decide. If you prefer a translation that's easy to read, you'll want to choose one that modernizes the writing style and breaks up the long sentences. But if you prefer to read one that conveys a sense of the author's writing style, you'll want a translation that follows the original sentence structures as closely as possible. Many editions of ***The Metamorphosis*** include a brief essay by the translator

explaining the guiding principles of the translation; it's usually a good idea to look this over before deciding which translation to read.

Before proceeding to the final page of this module on ***The Metamorphosis***, please do the exercise below.

EXERCISE C. This exercise has four parts. Please do all parts.

1. In the boxes below, you'll see two translations of a passage in Part III of ***The Metamorphosis***. The passage describes Gregor Samsa's thoughts as he's listening to his sister play the violin. In the original German version, this passage is written as one sentence.
As you're reading the two translations, count the number of sentences in each one, and write the numbers below.

JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL	WILLA AND EDWIN MUIR
He wanted to keep her there and never let her out, at least not in his lifetime. For once, his terrifying shape would be useful to him; he would be at all the doors of his room simultaneously, hissing at the attackers. His sister, however, should remain with him not by force, but of her own free will. She should sit next to him on the settee, leaning down to him and listening to him confide that he had been intent on sending her to the conservatory, and that if the misfortune had not interfered, he would have announced his plan to everyone last Christmas (Christmas was already past, wasn't it?), absolutely refusing to take "no" for an answer.	He would never let her out of his room, at least, not so long as he lived; his frightful appearance would become, for the first time, useful to him; he would watch all the doors of his room and spit at intruders; but his sister should need no constraint, she should stay with him of her own free will; she should sit beside him on the sofa, bend down her ear to him, and hear him confide that he had had the firm intention of sending her to the Conservatorium, and that, but for his mishap, last Christmas **--** surely Christmas was long past? **--** he would have announced it to everybody without allowing a single objection.

Number of sentences in translation by Joachim Neugroschel: ___

Number of sentences in translation by Willa and Edwin Muir ____

2. Now write your own description of a similar type of situation **--** a situation involving a series of rapid thoughts and/or actions. You can use a subject like the one in the passage you've just read, or it can be a subject of your own choice. Write your description in one long sentence of at least 100 words (or more). Be sure to include punctuation as you're writing the sentence so your reader will be able to follow what's happening.

Suggestion: If you're having trouble thinking of a topic, you can start with these words:
I was driving on the expressway going pretty fast when suddenly..... [go on to describe a series of events that occurred in rapid succession].

3. Now rewrite the same description, but this time break it up into at least three sentences. As you do this, you'll need to change some of the punctuation and perhaps some of the wording so that your sentences will make sense.

4. Finally, look over the two descriptions you've just written, the version that is written in one long sentence and the version that consists of three or more sentences. As you're reading each one, try to imagine you're an outside reader who has never read these passages before. Pay attention to how you're reacting to the style in which each one is written -- as one long sentence or a series of shorter sentences. Then answer the following question:

- Which version do you like best? In other words, which one do you feel is more effective in communicating the sense of what you're describing -- the version written in one sentence or the version in several sentences? Why?

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 4, the concluding page of this module on ***The Metamorphosis***.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 4

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11/11/05

THE METAMORPHOSIS

(Page 4)

My little story is finished, but today's ending does not make me happy at all; it really could have been better, no doubt about that.
-- Franz Kafka, "Letter to Felice Bauer,"
1912, qtd. in Corngold 68.

CONCLUSION

Franz Kafka's dissatisfaction with the ending of ***The Metamorphosis***, described in the letter quoted above, might also apply to the feelings of translators trying to translate the conclusion of the story. Once again translators must make difficult choices **--** in this case, choices that may influence the way in which readers will interpret the story's ending.

One of these problem places occurs in the passage where Gregor's sister is telling her parents what she feels must be done with Gregor. The boxes below illustrate two translations of this sentence; as you read them, pay particular attention to the opening words.

MALCOLM PASLEY	STANLEY CORNGOLD
'He's got to go,' cried his sister, 'that's the only solution, father. You must just try to get rid of the idea that it's Gregor.'	"It has to go," cried his sister. "That's the only answer, Father. You just have to get rid of the idea that it's Gregor."

You'll note an immediate difference between these two translations: one starts with the pronoun ***he***, the other with ***it***. The original German version uses a pronoun which can be translated either way **--** as ***he*** or ***it*** **--** but such a pronoun doesn't occur in English, so translators must decide which one to use. While doing this they must also think about a slightly earlier part of the same conversation where Grete twice says,

We must try to get rid of it.

This sentence poses no problem because the German pronoun used here definitely means ***it***. The manuscript of the story shows, in fact, that Kafka originally wrote ***We must try to get rid of him --*** then changed the pronoun ***him*** to ***it***. So there's no doubt that he was fully aware of the significance of Grete's choice of pronoun.

This leads some translators to conclude that ***it*** should be repeated in the later sentence ***-- It has to go***. Others feel that using ***he*** is preferable ***-- He's got to go --*** so that Grete won't seem to have completely forgotten that her brother was once human. It's possible that Kafka deliberately chose this ambiguous pronoun to reflect Gregor's dual identity, leaving the reader to decide whether Gregor is, finally, animal or human. Unfortunately for the translator, the English language doesn't allow this ambiguity **--** so the translator is forced to make definite what Kafka may have wanted to remain uncertain.

Finally, let's conclude by looking at the last sentences of the story. You'll see four translations of these sentences in the boxes below; I've highlighted the key words.

STANLEY CORNGOLD	WILLA AND EDWIN MUIR
...It occurred almost simultaneously to Mr. and Mrs. Samsa, as they watched their daughter getting livelier and livelier, that lately, in spite of all the troubles which had turned her cheeks pale, she had blossomed into a good-looking, shapely girl.... They thought that it would soon be time, too, to find her a good husband. And it was like a confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions when at the end of the ride their daughter got up first and stretched her young body.	...It struck both Mr. and Mrs. Samsa, almost at the same moment, as they became aware of their daughter's increasing vivacity, that in spite of all the sorrow of recent times, which had made her cheeks pale, she had bloomed into a pretty girl with a good figure.... It would soon be time to find a good husband for her. And it was like a confirmation of their new dreams and excellent intentions that at the end of their journey their daughter sprang to her feet first and stretched her young body.
DONNA FREED	J.A. UNDERWOOD
It occurred almost simultaneously to both Herr and Frau Samsa, while they were conversing and looking at their increasingly vivacious daughter, that despite the recent sorrows that had paled her cheeks, she had blossomed into a pretty and voluptuous young woman.... They thought it was time to find her a good husband. And it was like a confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions that at their journey's end their daughter jumped to her feet first and stretched her young body.	...Mr. and Mrs. Samsa, watching their daughter become increasingly animated, were struck almost simultaneously by the realization that in recent months, despite all the troubles that had drained the colour from her cheeks, she had blossomed into a beautiful, full-bosomed girl.... They thought about how the time was also coming when they must start looking round for a nice husband for her. And they saw it as a sort of confirmation of their new-found dreams and good intentions when, at the end of the journey, the daughter was the first to stand up,

	stretching her young body.

You'll note several important differences in these translations. The first involves the way that Grete's physical development is described. For Corngold, Grete is ***a good-looking, shapely girl***; for the Muirs ***a pretty girl with a good figure --*** both versions indicating that Grete has become a young woman whom men will find attractive and hopefully will want to marry.

Freed and Underwood, however, put much greater emphasis on Grete's burgeoning sexuality. Freed describes her as ***a pretty and voluptuous woman***; Underwood as ***a beautiful, full-bosomed girl***. Here she's not just a reasonably good-looking girl but an especially attractive one **--** and her sexual appeal increases the likelihood that she'll find a "good" husband.

The translations also differ in how they present the last words of the story. In Freed's and the Muirs' translations, Grete ***jumped*** and ***sprang*** to her feet, but for Corngold and Underwood she simply ***got up first*** and was ***the first to stand up***. While these aren't major differences, the choice of words does affect the reader's interpretation of the ending of the story. Is Grete so happy at Gregor's removal from her family that she can't wait to start a new life? Or is there still, perhaps, a residue of melancholy at what has happened to her family? The words Kafka originally used can be interpreted in either way, leaving the story as complex and mystifying at the end as it is in its haunting beginning.

Cynthia Ozick, a highly-acclaimed writer of our own time, has written eloquently about "the impossibility of translating Kafka." The source of this impossibility, she says, is that there is "always for Kafka, behind [the overt] meaning" another meaning that can never be translated (87). There may be some consolation for the translator in recognizing that Kafka shared this sense of impossibility, for he regarded the act of writing as ultimately "impossible" (qtd. in Ozick 82). Mere words, he felt, could never adequately express the unresolvable dilemmas of human existence. Still he dedicated his life to writing, knowing that he would never achieve his unattainable goal. Shortly before his death, he wrote the words quoted below. They serve as a summation of his literary achievement **--** and of what he endured to accomplish it.

> But what is it to be a writer? Writing is a sweet, wonderful reward, but its price? ... It is the reward for service to the devil. This descent to the dark powers, this unbinding of spirits by nature bound, dubious embraces and whatever may go on below, of which one no longer knows anything above ground, when in the sunlight one writes stories. Perhaps there is another kind of writing, I only know this one; in the night, when anxiety does not let me sleep, I know only this.
>
> **--** "Letter to Max Brod." (Qtd. in Corngold 73)

For further information about Kafka's life and work, the following web sites are good starting points.

The Kafka Project: <http://www.kafka.org>
A Good Person: Franz Kafka (Daniel Hornek web site): <http://www.kafka-franz.com>

Many other Kafka sites on the web are, unfortunately, outdated and have links that don't work.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3

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11/11/05

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Top of Page

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MOLIERE'S

TARTUFFE

(Page 2)

ACCURACY VS. PERFORMABILITY

As you've seen in the examples on Page 1, balancing the ***accuracy*** of a translation against its ***performability*** is a difficult task. ***Accuracy*** requires following as closely as possible to the original words written by the author; ***performability*** involves considering how the words would actually be spoken by living actors and how effectively they would be communicated to the audience. Moliere himself was part of a theater company and wrote his plays for his own company to perform, so the ***performability*** of his plays was a principal concern for him as it must be for his translators.

Translating French words for which there's no equivalent meaning in modern English poses a particular ***accuracy vs. performability*** problem for the translator. One good example is a passage of dialogue in Act II, scene 2, where Dorine, the maidservant, keeps interrupting Orgon as he's telling his daughter, Mariane, that she must marry Tartuffe. In the original version, Dorine uses the French word ***sot*** to describe what Tartuffe will become if Dorine is forced to marry him. In the boxes below, you'll see a literal translation of Dorine's words (except for the word ***sot*** which is left untranslated) as well as three translators' versions of what this word means. I've highlighted the words to which you'll want to pay particular attention.

LITERAL	WILBUR
DORINE She? She'll make a sot of him, I assure you. ORGON Heavens! What language! DORINE I tell you that he's made for it. It is his heritage, Sir, that will carry him Despite all the virtue that your daughter has.	DORINE And she'll make him a cuckold, just wait and see. ORGON What language! DORINE Oh, he's a man of destiny; He's made for horns, and what the stars demand Your daughter's virtue surely can't withstand.
BISHOP	**FRAME**

DORINE All that she'll make of him is a horned monster. ORGON What talk is this? DORINE I say he has the build for it. The stars have doomed him, and his natural fate Will be more powerful than your daughter's virtue.	DORINE She'll make a fool of him; just wait and see. ORGON What talk! DORINE He's built for it, believe you me. Against the power of his horoscope Your daughter's virtue, sir, has little hope.

The word ***sot*** in French refers to a ridiculously foolish person. Moliere's audience would have realized that Dorine was referring to a particular kind of fool, a man whose wife has been unfaithful. But for a modern translator, it's very hard to find an equivalent word in modern English to convey this meaning. (The word ***sot*** is sometimes used, but its meaning has changed to refer to someone who drinks excessively.)

As you can see above, the translation by Frame simply uses the word ***fool***, a literal translation of ***sot***. Wilbur's and Bishop's translations, on the other hand, use words that directly convey unfaithfulness. Wilbur's choice is ***cuckold***, a word commonly used in British English to refer to a man whose wife has been unfaithful. (The word derives from an old belief that female cuckoos laid their eggs in other birds' nests.) Bishop uses the phrase ***horned monster***, another way of describing a cuckold by referring to the horns on a cuckoo's head. To reinforce this meaning, Wilbur also uses the ***horns*** reference in the second part of Dorine's dialogue.

There are disadvantages to both these choices. In modern English the word ***fool***, Frame's choice, is used so widely and vaguely that it doesn't convey what Dorine means by ***sot***: a man whose wife is unfaithful. Wilbur's and Bishop's choices ***-- cuckold*** and ***horned monster --*** do convey this meaning, but these words are much more explicit than the word Moliere used. An added problem is that references to ***cuckolds*** and ***horns*** aren't commonly used in modern American English, so some audiences might still not get the point.

Another problem occurs later in the same scene when Orgon completely loses his temper and explodes at Dorine. This is what the passage looks like in French and in a literal translation:

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
ORGON Te tairas-tu, serpent, dont les traits effrontés...? DORINE Ah! vous êtes dévot, et vous vous emportez?	ORGON Quiet, you serpent, how can you be so shameless....? DORINE Ah! you are so devout, and you get so carried away?

In the original version, Orgon's use of the phrase ***te tairas-tu*** is significant because the pronoun ***you*** has two different forms in French. The ***tu*** form is considered familiar and is normally used in conversations with friends and family. ***Vous***, however, is a more formal usage and would normally be used when a master **--** in this case, Orgon **--** is addressing his servant. And in fact, up to this point in the play, Orgon has always used the ***vous*** form in

addressing Dorine. But now he suddenly uses ***tu***. So, when Dorine sarcastically says she's amazed at his outburst, it's not only what he's said, it's how he's said it that leads to her response. In an English translation it's impossible to capture this distinction because in modern English the only available pronoun is ***you.*** Older forms of English made this distinction by using ***thee*** and ***thou,*** instead of ***you,*** in formal conversation, but these pronouns have become obsolete. So the translator and, of course, the actor playing Orgon, have to find other ways to convey the extent of Orgon's outrage.

The next page will continue this discussion of ***accuracy*** and ***performability***. But before going on, please do the following exercise.

EXERCISE B.

You'll see below a translation by Richard Wilbur of part of the dialogue between Dorine and Mariane in Act II, sc. 3, of ***Tartuffe,*** where Dorine is trying to get Mariane to rebel against Orgon's decision that Mariane will marry Tartuffe.

After you've read this translation, write your own version of the dialogue. You can imagine you're "translating" it for a reader like yourself, so you can use any style and words, including slang words, that you feel would be appropriate. Don't worry about following the original dialogue word for word; just try to communicate the main feelings that Dorine and Mariane are expressing in each of their speeches.

MARIANE. If I defied my father, as you suggest, Would it not seem unmaidenly, at best? Shall I defend my love at the expense Of brazenness and disobedience? Shall I parade my heart's desires, and flaunt... DORINE. No, I ask nothing of you. Clearly you want To be Madame Tartuffe, and I feel bound Not to oppose a wish so very sound. What right have I to criticize the match? Indeed, my dear, the man's a brilliant match.	

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 3.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5

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03/28/05

MOLIERE'S

TARTUFFE

(Page 3)

VERSE FORM AND SOUND

Balancing the accuracy of a translation against its performability also involves considering the form in which Moliere originally wrote the play. ***Tartuffe*** is written in a poetic (verse) form of rhyming ***couplets --*** pairs of lines that rhyme with each other. Each line consists of twelve syllables, technically called an ***alexandrine***. To be strictly accurate, a translation would have to follow the same form the Moliere used: twelve-syllable lines in rhyming couplets.

Following is an example of how one translator, Maya Slater, has done this. The passage being translated is in Act II, sc. 3, just after Mariane has been told by her father that she must marry Tartuffe. I've highlighted, in matching colors, the words that rhyme.

SLATER

DORINE. And if you marry someone else, what'll you do?

MARIANE. I'll kill myself if I'm compelled to be untrue.

DORINE. Oh, very good! A fine solution to your plight!
The best thing is to die, that'll put matters right!
Your remedy's magnificent! Ugh! I can't bear
To hear that sort of talk, it drives me to despair.

The problem with this form, however, is that it's very difficult for actors to perform in a way that sounds natural and conversational. In modern English, spoken rhymed verse tends to fall into a sing-song rhythm that makes the dialogue seem stilted and artificial. In addition, twelve-syllable lines are not commonly used in English poetry since the English language falls more

naturally into a ten-syllable line (technically called ***iambic pentameter***). So, some translators avoid the verse form entirely and instead use ***prose***, the form of ordinary speech. The following translation by John Wood/David Coward illustrates how the above passage appears in their prose version.

WOOD/COWARD
DORINE. What are you going to do about this other marriage? MARIANE. I'll kill myself if they make me. DORINE. Wonderful! That's one solution I hadn't thought of: ending it all as a way of getting out of a mess. Obviously a miracle cure. Oh I get very angry when I hear that sort of talk!

If you try reading the Slater and Wood/Coward translations aloud, you'll see that they sound very different. As you're reading Slater's translation in verse form, you will probably pause slightly at the end of each line and will be inclined to stress the rhyming words. With the Wood/Coward translation, however, you'll probably read continuously, pausing only where punctuation indicates a pause. The Slater version may sound quite different from the way you normally speak, but the Wood/Coward version will give the effect of normal conversation.

Slater's version is more ***accurate*** in form because it's actually closest to the way in which Moliere wrote these lines, but when performed it's likely to be difficult for actors to speak in a natural way. In contrast, the Wood/Coward version is much easier to speak, even for someone who's not a trained actor. But while it's more easily ***performable***, it doesn't convey the ***sound*** of the original lines in the play.

Other translators have found different "solutions" to the problem of translating Moliere's verse form, two of which are illustrated in the boxes below. Richard Wilbur uses ***heroic couplets*** -- ten-syllable, iambic pentameter lines in rhyming couplets -- while Christopher Hampton uses ***blank verse*** -- ten-syllable, iambic pentameter lines without rhyme.

WILBUR	HAMPTON
DORINE. What of Tartuffe, then? What of your father's plan? MARIANE. I'll kill myself, if I'm forced to wed that man. DORINE. I hadn't thought of that recourse. How splendid! Just die, and all your troubles will be ended! A fine solution. Oh, it maddens me To hear you talk in that self-pitying key.	DORINE. So what d'you plan to do about this business? MARIANE. If they force me, I'm going to kill myself. DORINE. That's wonderful. I hadn't thought of that; 'course, if you die, you'll avoid all these problems. What a brilliant way out! It makes me angry to have to listen to this kind of talk.

If you read these translations aloud, you'll note that Wilbur's version sounds both elegant and humorous **--** the rhymes tend to make jokes in themselves. Hampton's is more conversational and, especially in Dorine's speeches, effectively conveys the contrasts between Mariane's and Dorine's speaking styles. Each translator has made a different choice, recognizing that it's impossible to fully convey in English the ***form*** and ***sound*** of Moliere's original creation.

Before going on to the next page, please do the following exercise.

EXERCISE C.
Write a dialogue (a conversation between yourself and another person) using ***one*** of the forms illustrated above -- rhyming couplets, prose, or blank verse. The subject can be anything you choose. For example, you might think of a situation where one of your friends is on the verge of doing something very foolish, and you're trying to show him/her how foolish this would be. Try to make your dialogue at least six lines.

To review the forms, click on the links below:

SLATER (rhyming couplets)
WILBUR (rhyming couplets)
WOOD/COWARD (prose)
HAMPTON (blank verse)

When you've finished the exercise, go to Page 4.

Top of Page

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 4	Page 5

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03/28/05

MOLIERE'S

TARTUFFE

(Page 4)

LANGUAGE AND SENSE

The appropriate use of language is not only a translation issue in Tartuffe, it's also one of the main themes of the play. Tartuffe uses words as a way of manipulating people, concealing his essential corruptness beneath the surface piety of his expression. Gullible characters like Orgon and Mme. Pernelle are taken in by his language; the wiser ones -- Dorine, Cleanthe, Elmire -- see through it. A central problem for the translator of ***Tartuffe*** is to accurately convey the ways in which Tartuffe uses words to gain power and control over other people.

Particularly difficult to translate are the speeches where Tartuffe uses words associated with the religious values he pretends to represent. These words were highly significant to Moliere's seventeenth-century French Catholic audience, but their meanings can be easily lost when translated into modern English.

One example occurs in the passage in Act III, sc. 3, where Tartuffe attempts to convince Elmire that there's no contradiction between his spiritual beliefs and his passionate attraction to Elmire. In the boxes below, you'll see the original French version of this passage and a literal translation; I've highlighted the words that are particularly important.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
TARTUFFE. L'amour qui nous attache aux beautés éternelles N'étouffe pas en nous l'amour des temporelles.... En vous est mon espoir, mon bien, ma quiétude, De vous dépend ma peine ou ma béatitude....	TARTUFFE. The love which attracts us to the beauties eternal Doesn't prevent in us the love of the temporal [worldly].... In you is my hope, my good, my quietude [peace of mind], On you depends my pain or my beatitude [happiness]...

The words ***eternal/temporal, quietude/beatitude*** (rhymed with each other for emphasis) would have had spiritual resonances for Moliere's audience. When Tartuffe uses the first pair ***-- eternal/temporal --*** his strategy is to convince Elmire that love of a beautiful woman like herself is the same as loving heavenly beauty. Of course the real problem is that the word love (***l'amour*** in French) can be used in very different ways that he's trying to obscure **--** the purely sexual, animal love he feels for Elmire is not at all like the spiritual, abstract love that draws an individual closer to God.

The second pair of words ***-- quietude/beatitude --*** also suggest religious values that Tartuffe is undermining. True ***quietude*** (peace of mind) and ***beatitude*** (happiness), as Moliere's audience would have known, derive from the awareness that one is blessed by God. Tartuffe is saying, though, that in Elmire he has found his ***quietude*** and ***beatitude --*** in effect, she's become the source of his salvation. Moliere's audience would immediately recognize this as a form of blasphemy, putting love for a mortal woman above love for God.

Now let's look at how two translators -- Richard Wilbur and Donald Frame -- have translated these lines. Again, I've highlighted the key words.

WILBUR	FRAME
TARTUFFE. A love of heavenly beauty does not preclude A proper love for earthly pulchritude... You are my peace, my solace, my salvation; On you depends my bliss **--** or desolation....	TARTUFFE. To love eternal beauties far above Is not to be immune to other love.... On you depends my hope and quietude, My wretchedness or my beatitude...

The most obvious difference between Wilbur's version and the literal version is that ***love of the temporal*** (in the literal version) is translated by Wilbur as ***love for earthly pulchritude***. The word ***pulchritude***, which means great physical beauty, seems to have been chosen mainly for the rhyme; it has the disadvantage of being much more explicit and suggestive than the original word ***temporal*** without containing the religious associations that are part of Tartuffe's manipulative strategy. In the second pair of lines, Wilbur substitutes ***salvation*** and ***bliss*** for the original words ***quietude*** and ***beatitude***. The words Wilbur uses have the necessary religious implications, but the need for a rhyme forces Wilbur to reverse the order in which the words of the final line are given. In the original version, Elmire is said to be the source of Tartuffe's ***pain*** or ***beatitude***, with ***beatitude*** emphasized at the end of the line. Wilbur, however, translates this with ***On you depends my bliss -- or desolation,*** putting emphasis on the pain Tartuffe will feel if he can't have Elmire, rather than the joy he'll experience if he does get her.

Frame's version arrives at different solutions. For ***temporal love***, Frame uses the phrase ***other love***. This gives him a rhyme with the phrase that ends the first line, ***eternal beauties far above***. The disadvantage here is that the phrase ***other love*** is vague and doesn't emphasize the contrast between spiritual and

worldly types of love that Tartuffe, contrary to standard religious practice, is saying are really alike. In the second couplet, Frame uses the words ***quietude*** and ***beatitude***, exactly the same words that occur in the original version. Since these words can be used in English as well as in French, Frame's choice has the advantage of being accurate and preserving the original word order and rhymes. The disadvantages, however, are that the words ***quietude*** and ***beatitude*** aren't commonly used in modern English, are difficult for actors to speak, and may not be meaningful to modern audiences.

Another example of the problems involved in translating Tartuffe's main speeches occurs near the end of Act IV, sc, 5, the climactic scene where Tartuffe attempts to seduce Elmire while unaware that Orgon is hiding under the table. Tartuffe's persuasive strategy reaches its culmination in the following lines, given below in the original form and a literal translation. The key words are highlighted.

ORIGINAL	LITERAL
TARTUFFE. Enfin votre scrupule est facile à détruire: Vous êtes assurée ici d'un plein secret, Et le mal n'est jamais que dans l'éclat qui'on fait; Le scandale du monde est ce qui fait l'offense, Et ce n'est pas pécher que pécher en silence.	TARTUFFE. In short your scruple is easy to remove: You may be assured this will be a complete secret, And evil only comes from being made known; The scandal of the world is that which makes the offense, And it's not a sin that's a sin in silence.

Tartuffe's strategy here again is to convince Elmire that having an affair with him won't be sinful. The crucial words occur when he says, in the literal version, ***evil only comes from being known*** and ***it's not a sin that's a sin in silence --*** in other words, an action is not evil unless other people know about it. In other words, he's saying that there's no higher authority than other human beings and in effect, denying the existence of God. Now look at these translations by Slater and Hampton:

SLATER	HAMPTON
TARTUFFE. Well, anyway, your scruple's easy to allay. You can be sure your secret won't be disclosed: No wickedness exists until it's been exposed. It's public outcry gives a crime its origin, And if you sin in silence, then it's not a sin.	TARTUFFE. Anyway, I can easily remove your scruples: this will be completely secret, I can assure you, and the only evil is to make a great noise about things. What constitutes the offense is public scandal. Sinning in silence is no sin at all.

Here again, the translations have both advantages and disadvantages. Both

translations come close to the literal version of the final line, ***it's not a sin that's a sin in silence --*** Slater with ***if you sin in silence, it's not a sin*** and Hampton with ***sinning in silence is no sin at all***. Both are less successful, however, with the other key phrase, ***evil only comes from being made known***. Slater's version ***-- no wickedness exists until it's been exposed --*** does convey the idea of the original wording but ***wickedness*** lacks the much stronger implications of the word ***evil*** and seems to have been chosen mainly because a three-syllable word was needed to fill out the line. Hampton's version ***-- the only evil/ is to make a great noise about things --*** has an even bigger problem. It changes the meaning of the original version, so that now the evil is in ***making*** something known, rather than in its ***becoming*** known.

The point of this analysis is not to criticize the translators' choices but to demonstrate how difficult it is to translate the key passages in the play ***--*** those passages where Tartuffe's religious hypocrisy is meant to be most fully manifested to the audience. Each translator's choices illustrated on this page have involved balancing a number of considerations: ***accuracy***, ***performability***, ***verse form***, and the need to make ***sense*** of ideas less meaningful to a modern audience than they were in Moliere's time.

EXERCISE D.

On this page you've seen examples of how Tartuffe uses words that he hopes will convince Elmire to submit to his desires. Write your own version of a similar kind of speech. If you wish, you can put this into a modern context where the person speaking is using modern language in an attempt to persuade another person to give in to what this person wants. Write this as convincingly as you can, using the kinds of persuasive words that such a person might actually use. The speech can be written either in prose or verse, but try to make it at least 5-6 lines.

Please go to PAGE 5 for the conclusion of this module on ***Tartuffe***.

TOP OF PAGE

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 5

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01/07/07

MOLIERE'S

TARTUFFE

(Page 5)

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

A final challenge for the translator of Moliere's ***Tartuffe*** is that the play is at times very funny, at other times very serious. An effective translation must capture the hilariously comic moments in the play as well as its moments of deep seriousness and near-tragedy.

The comic high point of the play is Act IV, sc. 5, when Tartuffe is trying to make love to Elmire while Orgon, under the table, remains silent. Much of the hilarity of this scene can't be translated; it must be seen. But the words used by Orgon when he finally emerges have to be especially well-chosen to provide a comic climax to the scene. Here's how six translators have translated Orgon's words; you can decide which you like best.

WILBUR	SLATER
ORGON. That man's a perfect monster, I must admit! I'm simply stunned. I can't get over it.	ORGON. Oh!... Gosh! You're right! Oh dear! What an appalling creep! I can't get over it, I'm struck all of a heap!
BISHOP	**WOOD/COWARD**
ORGON. Oh, what a bad, abominable man! I am astounded! I just can't understand it.	ORGON. There goes -- I admit it -- an abominable scoundrel! I can't get over it! It's all too much for me!
HAMPTON	**BOLT**
ORGON. So you were right, what an appalling man!	ORGON. You're right! The man's a monster! You've destroyed

I can't get over it, it's such a shock.	My world -- there's nothing left -- a gaping void!

Immediately afterward, however, when Orgon has confronted Tartuffe and made him leave the house, he realizes that Tartuffe not only has the deed to his house but the papers which may cause the King to condemn Orgon as a traitor. From then on, the play becomes very serious as it seems Orgon's gullibility will lead to the loss of his property, his family, and possibly his life.

Finally, at the end of the play, a long speech by the Officer provides the final turn in the action, saving Orgon and his family through the King's intervention. The words and style here must be appropriately formal as the Officer gives praise to an all-powerful King. Following are the key lines of the speech, in Frame's translation:

FRAME

We live under a king who hates deceit,
A king whose eyes see into every heart
And can't be fooled by an imposter's art.
The keen discernment that his greatness brings
Gives him a piercing insight into things....
His insight penetrated from the start
The twisted treason of that scoundrel's heart....

Although the Officer's praise of the King will undoubtedly seem excessive to modern audiences, and are sometimes performed with a humorous edge, the words do need to be translated **--** and taken **--** seriously. For in fact they reinforce the central theme of Moliere's play: the importance of ***see[ing] into [the] heart*** and not being ***fooled by an imposter's art***.

To conclude this discussion of ***Tartuffe*** translations, let's go back to the questions raised at the beginning of the module: Why are there so many translations of ***Tartuffe***? And which is the "best" translation? The answer to both questions is that many translations are needed because no translation can be the "best." Each translation has its positive and negative qualities; no one translation can ever be entirely accurate, performable, and meaningful to a wide audience of readers and viewers. Over the past three centuries since this play was first performed, scores of translations have been made and many more will continue to be made, so that audiences can continue to enjoy one of Moliere's greatest plays.

If you're interested in obtaining further information about Moliere and ***Tartuffe***, the following websites may be helpful:

<http://www.site-moliere.com> Contains biography of Moliere, online texts, and commentaries. The site is in both French and English; be sure to scroll down each page for the English version.

<http://www.theatrehistory.com> Click on <French Theatre> and <Moliere>.

TOP OF PAGE

Works Cited Page	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4

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03/28/05

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Top of Page

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