

Translators: Traitors or Traders?*

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"And they read from the book, from the law of God,
translating to give the sense
so that they understood the meaning."

Nehemiah 8:8 (NASB)

Anyone who has ever attempted to translate the famous epithet that Julius Caesar is said to have uttered in 47 BC after the battle with King Pharnaces of Bosphorus:

(1) *Veni, vidi, vici*

is aware of the futility of such an attempt. It is simply impossible to "translate" the beauty of the phrase, the incomparable cohesiveness of the phrase brought out by alliteration, rhyme, and the same bi-syllabic structure of the three words in the phrase. This is the reason why it survived millenia as an unforgettable phrase. An English translation:

(2) I came; I saw; (and) I was victorious (conquered, triumphed)

just doesn't do justice. No wonder that over the years translators have been

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branded as "traitors" ('*traduttore*' : '*traditore*')¹⁾, "unfaithful women" ('*les belles infideles*')²⁾, the reverse side of a carpet³⁾, or an outright thief. Note:

- (3) A translation is like a woman: if she is beautiful, she is not faithful; if she is faithful, she is not beautiful.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936)

- (4) Some hold translations not unlike to be the wrong side of a Turkish tapestry.

James Boswell (1594-1666)

- (5) He's Translation's thief that addeth more,
As much as he that taketh from the store
Of the first author.

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

Below are some other epithets regarding translation, some quite disparaging:

- (6) Translation is a horse trainer who is forcing his horse to learn an unnatural trick.

Andre Gide (1869-1951)

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1) This Italian aphorism actually means 'a translator traduces' where 'traduce' means 'hand over'. 'A person who hands' (over to an enemy, rather than to a son) became 'a traitor'. See Robinson 1991, p. 273, fn. 37.

2) The earliest reference is found in Tsuji/Lee (1993/2001:119). A French scholar named Gilles Menage (1613-1692) is said to have said in 1654, while criticizing a 'Perot D'Ablancourt' (1604-1664), a then noted translator: "The translation reminds me of a woman in Tours who I used to love: beautiful but unfaithful." There is also a book by a French linguist Georges Mounin titled *Les Belles Infideles* (Paris, 1955).

3) Cervantes (1547-1616) is said to have used this metaphor also. Koller/Park (1987/1990:55).

- (7) Translating is like sailing between two reefs of the original text and its translation; it is most likely to wreck.

Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) in a letter to Schlegel (1767-1845) dated July 23, 1796.

- (8) Translation is at best like a musical piece transposed in a different key. A library of translated books is like a gallery of fake arts.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

- (9) A translator is one who plays on a harpsichord a musical piece originally written for violin.

A. Lortholary⁴⁾

Over the centuries a battle has been waged between faithful and beautiful, literal and literary, accurate and articulate, or "the intolerable wrestle between words and meanings" as T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) once put it, regarding the role, the function, and the objective of translation. Roughly up to the time of the Renaissance, word-for-word literal translation was the dominant doctrine in translation, in large part due to biblical translations which prohibited any alteration in the divine text and therefore preferred accuracy over sensibility. To mutilate a single word in the Torah is to imperil the link between man and God. It is said in the *Talmud* that "the omission or the addition of one letter might mean the destruction of the whole word"⁵⁾ (Steiner 1975:61).

4) These last two (Schopenhauer and Lortholary) are quoted from Koller/Park (1987/1990:56, 57). It is my English translation from Park's Korean translation of Koller's original in German.

5) This was basically the doctrine adopted by St. Augustine (354-430) and St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) who insisted that translation had to be letter-perfect, for a translator is merely "an instrument of His will". On the other hand, St. Jerome (ca 374-419) who translated the Bible into Latin (The Vulgate) and Martin Luther (1483-1546) who translated it into German argued that the sense must have priority over the word. For

But since the Renaissance, the pendulum swung to the side of meaning. For example, Etienne Dolet (1509-1546)⁶⁾, a French humanist who is regarded as the first martyr of the Renaissance, writes in *La Maniere de Bien Traduce d'une Langue en Aultre (The Best way of Translating from One Language to Another)* (1540):

- (10) The translator must understand the original meaning, avoid literal translation, and produce the appropriate tone through a careful selection and arrangement of words. (Quoted from Robinson 1997: 253)

And Eugene A. Nida, a mid-20th century structural linguist, one of contemporary theorists of translation, wrote a paper titled: "Translating means translating meaning" (1985). Even St. Jerome (347-420), the noted translator of Bible into Latin, wrote in the 4th century:

- (11) I not only admit but freely announce that in translating from the Greek --- except of course in the case of Holy Scripture, where even the syntax contains a mystery --- I render, not word for word, but sense for sense. (Quoted from Robinson 1997: 121)

This priority of sense over word is sensible at least for three reasons: (1) idioms and proverbs cannot be translated word for word, (2) a mechanical word

example, Luther inserted the word "allein" ('alone') in the verse of Romans 3:28: "We hold that a man is justified by faith *alone*, not from works of the Law." This created a big controversy. Luther said it made the meaner clearer, but the opponents argued that inserting a word not in the original is a blasphemy.

6) Three words "*rien du tout*" ('returns to nothing') in the translation of one of Aristotle's Dialogues (about death between Socrates and Axiokos) doomed Dolet. The divinity school of the University of Paris judged that this negates the existence of soul, and condemned him. He was hanged and then burned on his 37th birthday on August 3, 1547.

for word translation often produces incorrect, at best amusing, translation, and (3) the "fields" or spectra of lexical meanings are different from language to language. Let me illustrate briefly these three below.

1. Idioms and idiomatic expressions. There's no way idioms such as 'hit the sack', 'put one's foot into one's mouth', 'kick the bucket', etc., or idiomatic expressions like 'it's raining cats and dogs', 'go fly the kite', etc. can be translated word for word, while retaining the original idiomatic meanings in the target language. Kornei Chukovsky gives an amusing example from John Galsworthy's (1867-1933) *The Forsyte Saga* (1906-1921). There's a scene where young Michael Mont is rowing across a river with a young girl when, suddenly a Russian translation says: "Mont caught a little crab, and said 'What a nasty creature that was!'" Chukovsky thought the sudden transition of the scene strange, because Mont wasn't fishing but was in the middle of an ardent conversation with his sweetheart. So Chukovsky consulted the original novel where he found: "Mont caught a little crab, and said: 'That was a nasty one!'" The mistranslation was due to the fact that the Russian translator didn't know that "to catch a crab" is an idiom meaning 'to make a faulty stroke in rowing'! (The anecdote quoted from Chukovsky/Leighton 1984:12)

(12) Orig: Mont caught a little crab, and said "That was a nasty one!"

John Galsworthy: *The Forsyte Saga* (1906-21)

Russ: Mont caught a little crab, and said "What a nasty creature that was!" to catch a crab -- 'to make a faulty stroke in rowing'

Catford (1965:26) gives an example from Russian:

(13) Russian: *Bog s n'im'!*

Literal translation: 'God (be) with them!'

Free translation: 'Never mind them!'

2. We've all seen examples of "bad" translations abroad in postcard captions, hotel posters, product manuals, etc. The following examples are taken from Douglas Robinson's collection (Robinson 1997:114).

(14) From a Brussels shop window: "Come inside and have a fit."

In a hotel in Romania: "The lift is being fixed for the next few days.

During that time we regret you will be unbearable."

In a Yugoslavian elevator: "Let us know about an unficiency as well as leaking on the service. Our utmost will inprove it."

In a hotel in Budapest: "All rooms not denounced by twelve o'clock will be paid for twicely."

From Prague: "Take one of our horse-driven tours. We guarantee no miscarriages."

In a restaurant in Vienna: "Fried milk, children sandwiches, and boiled sheep."

From Macao: "Utmost of chicken fried in bother."

In a Tokyo hotel: "The flattening of the underwear with pressure is the job of the chambermaid. To get it done, turn her on."

On a Soviet ship in the Black Sea: "Helpsavering apparata in emergings behold many whistles! Associated the stringing apparata about the bosoms and meet behind. Flee then to the indifferent lifesavering shippen obediencing the instructs of the vessel chef."

On a Tokyo map: "Osui Shobunsho (Dirty Water Punishment Place)."

In a hotel in Acapulco: "The manager has personally passed all the water served here."

3. Even such a simple phrase as "the blue sky" cannot have the same meaning in what looks like a perfectly good straightforward translation into another language. For example, *phulun hanul* is a word-for-word Korean equivalent of

English "the blue sky", but it cannot be said that the meanings of the two are the same because the "fields" of their meanings are not the same. The Korean *phulun* encompasses the color spectrum of green, blue, and indigo so that in Korean both the sky and the grass are 'blue'. In addition, changes in the vowels of the stem change the density of the 'blue' color, e.g., *phalan*, *phelen*; the former is 'light' while the latter is 'dark' in either green, blue, or indigo.

Kinship terms often behave like color terms. Korean has no equivalent for "brother" in English which is a male sibling regardless of the ego's relation to the sibling in seniority and gender. But Korean has different words for "brother": *hyeng* 'a male's older male sibling', *oppa* 'a female's older male sibling', *tongsayng* 'a male's younger male sibling', *namdongsayng* 'a female's younger male sibling', etc. In addition, while "brother" in English has additional meanings of 'a fellow man', 'a comrade', 'a male member of a religious order', 'a male member in an Afro-American community', etc., there are no such secondary meanings in the Korean kinship terms, except *hyeng* which may be used to refer to an *older* member in social groups such as alumni, company, union, etc.

Catford (1965:74) quotes Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) who pointed out that the English word "write" and the corresponding Russian word *pisal* have different fields of meaning, as the following table shows:

(15) Event:	in progress	repeated	unique, completed
Russian:		<i>pisal</i>	<i>na-pisal</i>
English:	was writing		wrote

Note that "marking" (*na-* in Russian, *was---ing* in English) is placed on different aspects.

So if the arguments for the return to sense seem, well, sensible and

persuasive, then what is the fuss about now? The problem is that, in the process of enthroning sense on the dais of translation, we seem to have exiled sound: we've thrown out the baby with the bath water, to quote a familiar idiom.

By sound, I refer to the phonetic elements or devices such as alliteration, rhyme, rhythm, phonetic symbolism, contrast, pattern symmetry, etc. that poets and writers employ consciously, but sometimes intuitively and unconsciously, in order to achieve specific literary effects. These devices give cohesion to the work. In fact, these are the features that make a piece of writing a work of literature, not a litter. Sometimes sound conveys sense. Alexander Pope (1688-1744) expressed it well when he said: "The sound must seem an echo to the sense", and then gave the following illustration:

- (16) Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,
 And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
 But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
 The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.

Alexander Pope: *An Essay on Criticism* (1711)

Note that in the first two lines, there are numerous nasals and liquids undoubtedly in order to simulate the sound of a gentle blow of zephyr and the flow of a smooth stream, while in the last two lines, harsh sibilants and fricatives echo the sound of pounding waves. Let me just cite a couple of more well-known and oft-cited examples, one a poem and one a prose.

- (17) The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
 And murmuring of innumerable bees.

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892): *The Princess* (1884)

- (18) Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-Lee-Ta:

the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap,
at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta.

Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977): *Lolita* (1955)

The dominant presence of nasals in Tennyson unmistakably evokes the moan of doves and the murmur of bees. In Nabokov's *Lolita*, the alliteration of /l/ (*light, life, loins*) is definitely an echo of /l/ in *Lolita*, and the alliteration of /t/ (*tip, tongue, taking, trip, tap*) is an expansion of /t/ in *Lolita*.

No reader or translator fails to see the elegance of sound that these lines generate. But how can one translate sound? The intuitive answer, of course, is that one cannot.

The impossibility of conveying this musical form of poetry from one language to another has indeed driven many translators to despair, and it has been said more than once that a precise translation of a work of poetry is a hopeless undertaking doomed to failure in advance. Shelley (1792-1822) expressed the vanity of translation beautifully, if somewhat cynically, by comparing the process to an analysis of a violet:

- (19) it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as to seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet.

Percy Bysshe Shelley: *A Defense of Poetry* (1821/1840)

Heine and Nabokov were equally cynical on translating poetry:

- (20) Traduced into French, my German poems are moonlight stuffed with straw."

Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)

- (21) What is translation? On a platter

A poet's pale and glaring head,
A parrot's screech, a monkey's chatter,
And profanation of the dead."

Vladimir Nabokov (1955)⁷⁾

Dante (1265-1321) also had a pessimistic view on the translatability of poetry:

- (22) Let every man know that nought involving the aims of harmony in the musical bases of poetry can be translated from one language to another without destroying its harmony and charm.

(quoted from Chukovsky/Leighton 1984:152)

I dare to disagree. I think it is possible, to a limited extent at least, to translate or transfer the musical qualities of poetry from one language to another "without destroying its harmony and charm". Not completely, anyway. What one needs is to become a literary merchant who trades one element of language for another in translating. In the rest of the paper, I will illustrate this with a few examples, mostly of my own. Let me start with a passage from *Beowulf* (lines 739, 741-745).

- (23) The original text (from *Beowulf*, by Klaeber, 1950:28) with glosses

se aglaeca
the monster
slaependne rinc, slat unwearnum,
the sleeping warrior, slit eagerly,
bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc,
bit the body, blood from veins drank,

7) Heine and Nabokov are quoted from Steiner (1975:240).

synsnaedum swealh; sona haefde
in big morsels swallowed; soon had
unlyfigendes eal gefeormod,
the unliving all consumed,
fet ond folma.
feet and hands

(24) A prose translation (by David Wright 1957:44):

The fiend wasted no time, but for a start snatched up a sleeping man. He tore him apart in an instant, crunched the body, drank blood from its veins, and gulped it down in great bites until he had wholly swallowed the dead man, even the hands and feet.

(25) "A new verse translation" (by Seamus Heaney 2000:51)⁸:

he grabbed and mauled a man on his bench,
bit into his bone-lappings, bolted down his blood
and gorged on him in lumps, leaving the body
utterly lifeless, eaten up
hand and foot.

(26) An alternate (alliterated) translation (CWK)

the monster
slit the sleeping *soldier* eagerly,
bit the body, drank blood from veins,

8) The debate as to whether to translate a verse into a prose or a verse began in the turn of the 17th century. A French classicist and translator Anne Lefebvre Dacier (1654-1720) translated Homer's *Illiad* in 1699, when a French poet Heudar de la Motte (1672-1731) translated the same work. The former was a verse-to-prose translation, while the latter was a verse-to-verse translation. This began the debate regarding the respective merits of the two modes of translating verse. Soon the debate was extended into classicism vs. modernism. The story is told in some detail in Tsuji/Lee (1993/2001:128-138).

swallowed the dead in big *sizes*; and soon
feasted, feet and *fingers* and all.

(27) Translation into Korean (in Yale Romanization)

koymul-un	
<i>the monster</i>	
cako-issnun censa-lul sinnakey calu-ko	Alliteration in /c/
<i>sleeping warrior greedily cut</i>	
mom-ul mule-ttut-ko phismul-ul masi-ko	/m/
<i>the body bit-tore blood drank</i>	
emchengnan teng'eli-lul ekcheksuley mek-ko enutes	/e/
<i>huge chunks doggedly ate and soon</i>	
sonpal-kkaci songtulichay samkhyc-pelyessta.	/s/
<i>hands-feet even thoroughly swallowed up</i>	

What I did was to trade meaning for form, or sense for sound. Namely, in order to maintain the all important alliteration in *Beowulf*, I substituted *soldier* for *warrior*, *sizes* for *morsels*, *feasted* for *ate/devoured*, and perhaps the worst of them all, *fingers* for *hands*. In the Korean translation, there is some deviation from the original in lexical choices, but the alliteration is kept, albeit the alliteration in different segments from the consonants in the original lines. Have I committed a blasphemy?

The following example is my own translation of a contemporary Korean poem:

(28) A contemporary Korean poem(Hee-Soo Kim, 1984)
 Sin-nongpu-ka (*A farmer's new song*)

新農夫歌

김희수

<p>I. 허리께 미끈한 년 도시로 가고 장판지 알밴 년 논두렁에 살고</p>	<p>Slender waisted gals Go to cities; Fat-calfed gals Stay in rice-paddies.</p>
<p>II. 팔린 땅은 트랙터가 갈고 빌린 땅은 누렁소가 갈고</p>	<p>Bulldozers plow The sold land; Brown cows plow The leased land.</p>
<p>III. 농약 안뿌린 과일은 느그 먹고 두엄가 개똥참외는 우리 먹고</p>	<p>You eat fruits Untouched by pesticide; We eat roots Dung-coated on roadside</p>
<p>IV. 남으네 자식 놈은 아파트 뒤파트 집을 짓고 사는데 우리네 못난 자식 불온책만 읽는구나</p>	<p>While your children flourish In highrise apartments And department stores, Our children languish With censured books in tents.</p>
<p>V. 느그는 하늘 보며 으시대며 살고 우리는 따올 치며 굽신굽신 살고</p>	<p>You live boasting Gazing at the sky; We live bowing Toiling in a sty.</p>

The original poem has the following phonetic, lexical, semantic, and structural characteristics that give extraordinary cohesiveness to the poem:

- (29) 1. Each stanza, except stanza IV, consists of four lines.
2. Each line consists of two feet, and lines 1 and 3, and lines 2 and 4

have the same number of syllables (exception: stanza I).

3. Lines 1 and 3, and lines 2 and 4 are rhymed.
4. In each stanza, the first half is about "you" (the accused), while the last half is about "us" (the accuser).
5. In lines 1 and 3, and in lines 2 and 4, the words in the same position are either contrastive or opposite terms, e.g., *slender* : *fat*, *waist* : *calf*, *city* : *rice paddy*, *sold* : *leased*, *tractor* : *cow*, *you* : *we*, *sky* : *land (sty)*, *boasting* : *bowing*, etc.

In my English translation, I did my best to keep these characteristics alive. To do so, however, I had to take liberty with a few lexical items. For example, *kayttong-chamoy* in stanza III is 'wild melon', not 'roots' as I translated, but *roots* rhymes with *fruits*. *Tents* in stanza IV is not in the original, but I added it because it contrasts with *apartments* as a dwelling place and also the two words *apartments* and *tents* nearly rhyme. A more serious crime is the last line, *Toiling in a sty*, in the translation which is not in the original. What the original says is *ttang'ul chimye* 'pounding the earth'. The crime was committed in defense of contrast and rhyme that this phrase establishes vis-à-vis *hanul pomye* 'gazing at the sky'.

Department stores in line 3, stanza IV, needs a special comment. Line 2, stanza IV is *aphathu twiphathu*. *aphathu* is a clipped form of '(high-rise) apartment (building)'; *twiphathu*, however, is a nonsense word. The poet is playing a word game here with *aph* 'front' and *twi* 'back'; this word-play also shows the poet's cynicism. (A comparable example in English might be *mansion* and *womansion* where *man* in *mansion*, although not a morpheme, is nevertheless homophonous with *man* 'a male human being' and may prompt a concoction of a contrastive nonsense word *womansion*.) In any event, the best I could do was turn *twiphathu* into *department (stores)*.

This example brings up the last topic of this paper: how to deal with idioms,

puns, homonyms, word plays, specific culture-bound features, etc. in translation. By consensus, these features are simply impossible to translate. Yet I believe that if one is a smart trader, or is willing to trade some accuracy for elegance, one can successfully transmit a certain amount of these features as well. Let me cite one example each of English-to- Korean translation and Korean-to-English translation.

In the graveyard scene in *Hamlet* (Act V, Scene 1), the following dialogue takes place between Hamlet and a clown, a grave digger:

(30) *Clown*: young Hamlet is mad, and sent into England.

Hamlet: How came he mad?

Clown: Very strangely, they say.

Hamlet: How strangely?

Clown: Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Hamlet: Upon what ground?

Clown: Why, here on Denmark.

It is the last question and answer that is problematical to translate. Hamlet's question: *upon what ground* here means 'why, for what reason'. But the clown deliberately takes it literally, i.e., as 'on which land' and answers accordingly; "here, on Denmark". This is a word game, of course, based on the fact that "upon what ground" has two meanings, one literal and the other figurative. As has been pointed out by many, these things are near impossible to translate into another language. Below are Korean translations by five different scholars, none quite satisfactory in my view.

(31) Translations by five scholars

1. 여석기 (1970, 동화출판공사)

H: 어디가 어떻게?

- C: 어이라고? 여기 덴마크입죠.
2. 최재서 (1973, 정음사)
 H: 어디서부터 생겨난 일이나?
 C: 어이라뇨. 이 덴마크 나라죠.
3. 이근삼 (1981, 금성출판사)
 H: 그 원인은 어디있지?
 C: 어디나료, 이 덴마크라는 땅입죠.
4. 김재남 (1992, 신원문화사)
 H: 그런데 그 원인은 어디서 일어났나?
 C: 어디서라뇨, 그야 물론 이 덴마크에서지요.
5. 최종철 (1998, 민음사)
 H: 어디가 뵈는데?
 C: 글썸, 이곳 덴마크예요.

But if one works hard, one sometimes becomes lucky enough to find a reasonably good correspondence, as in:

- (32) *Hamlet*: musun ttawi-lo?
 what way/land, earth-PP 'What on earth?'
Clown: mullon denmakhu tta(ng)-wi-co.
 of course, Denmark land-on-END 'Of course, on Denmark's earth.'

I came upon the fact that the Korean word *ttawi* is lexically ambiguous. As a single morpheme, *ttawi* means 'way, sort, reason', but as a bi-morphemic word, it means 'on earth, above the land!' It was a lucky coincidence, of course, but had I not tried, I would not have been able to come up with the translation given in (32). Now examine an old folk song in Korea given in the following:

- (33) *yangpan-un sangnom chiko* 'a nobility strikes a commoner'
 sangnom-un kyeycip chiko 'the commoner hits a woman'
 kyeycip-un kayttong chiko 'the woman sweeps a dog turd'

ttongkay-nun kkoli chiko 'the mongrel wags his tail'

This ballad plays on the word *chiko*, a polysemous verb in Korean meaning 'hit, strike, sweep, clean, set up, put in, wag,' etc. The translation given at the end of each line is fairly accurate, but the aggregate of the four translated lines does not have the cohesion present in the original song by virtue of the repetitive *chiko*. We cannot hope to find an equivalent English verb. Shall we give up? No, I don't think so. I believe we should make an honest attempt to create cohesion by other means. Here's my try:

- (34) The master *whacks* the servant,
 The servant *wakes* the maid,
 The maid *walks* the dog,
 And the dog *wags* his tail.

Note what I did. I substituted new verbs in the second and third line so that they no longer mean the same thing as the original, 'hit' and 'sweep, clean', respectively. But I gained in compensation for this loss a certain amount of cohesiveness, namely, a set of four verbs all of which alliterate with /w/ and end with a velar consonant, achieving also a near-rhyme. Is this trade "profitable"? I think so, although some readers may disagree.

Returning to Caesar's famous and eternal epithet given in (1), how can we translate it into English or Korean or any other language with at least one half of the beauty and elegance of the original Latin text intact? I tried in Korean as follows:

- (35) (nanun) watta, pwatta, ssawatta [kuliko ikyetta]
 I came saw fought [and won]

This translation manages to maintain at least the rhyme in *watta*, but this comes at the expense of (a) contracting *poatta* 'saw' to *pwatta*, and more seriously, (b) deliberately mistranslating *vici* 'conquered/was victorious' into Korean *ssawatta* 'fought, battled'. A semantically correct translation with the verb *chengpok-haytta* 'conquered' would have completely destroyed any poetic unity that was in the original text. In order to make the meaning closer to the original, one may attach a phrase (shown in square brackets above). However, this has a fatal flaw of having expanded the original elegant three-word phrase into a four-word phrase.

It's now time to make concluding remarks. What I have argued is that (1) word-for-word literary translation is not possible; all it does is achieve what Chukovsky characterized as "imprecise precision" (1984:47), (2) contra to Nida (1969) and others, translation does *not* just mean translating meaning, and (3) therefore, a translator must negotiate an uneasy but inevitable compromise between accuracy and elegance.

What one must realize is that the absolute meaning equivalence between two languages, the source language and the target language, cannot be maintained at any cost even if we sacrifice everything else such as pattern symmetry, cohesive phonetic features, rhythm, etc. This is so because no lexical fields, socio-cultural denotations, historical contexts, etc. are the same between two languages. We saw that even such simple words as "blue" and "brother" have no equivalents in Korean. Catford (1965) is categorical in stating this view: "The view that SL(source language) and TL(target language) texts 'have the same meaning' or that 'transference of meaning occurs' in translation is untenable" (p. 35). Catford goes on to argue that in translation there is only *substitution* of TL meaning for SL meaning; not *transference* of SL meaning in the TL meaning. Transference is defined as "an *implantation* of SL meaning into the TL text" (p. 48). When one goes so far as to argue that "meaning of a literary work is the

mental object the author had in mind or intended at the time of writing" (Hirsch 1967), so that "the reader is a co-author who has to awaken the meaning lying dead in the page", then it is obvious that no meaning translation is possible. The reader reads pages, not pates of authors, across time and space.

Once we are released from the bondage of meaning, we can then search for ways to make the translated passage just as pleasing, moving, and cathartic as the original passage as much as possible. This process requires a great deal of literary skills on the part of the translator. Indeed, in this process, the translator becomes, rather must become, a creative writer himself/herself in the target language. S/he cannot be a translating machine, but be an experimenter and explorer into the literary possibilities in the target language. A translator must use intuition, ingenuity, and literary sense to play a trading game; s/he must decide which forms to keep, which to trade for what so that the end product is itself a piece of poetry, a work of art in the target language. Rajendra Singh (1995) put it nicely: "A good translation is less a faithful rendering from another language and more an exploration of the potentialities of the other language". Christiane Nord (1991) is more direct and succinct: "Translation is not a sender of source language but a producer of target language." (p. 11)

The iniquity of translators, then, is not so much infidelity as infertility to produce an offspring worthy of an heir to the original writer. Translators are not traitors; they are traders, or literary merchants, who trade one form of linguistic unit for another, often meaning for form, or sense for sound, but sometimes form for meaning. A translator then is not a man of treason but is a tradesman.

What have I done this afternoon? Well, I came, I read, and, I hope, I conquered you.*

Appendix

In referring to the difficulty of translating Chinese philosophy into English, I. A. Richards is said to have said in 1953 that translation is very probably the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos. There was even a taboo in Judaism. The *Megillath Taanith (Roll of Fasting)* of the first century, A. D., records the belief that three days of utter darkness fell on the world when the Law was translated into Greek (quoted from Steiner 1975:239)⁹).

In this vein, Roman Jakobson was a propos when he said:

- (36) translation of poetry is impossible; only a creative *transposition* is possible.
Roman Jakobson: "On linguistic aspects of translation", in
Reuben A. Brower ed., *On Translation*. Harvard University
Press. 1959. Quoted in Steiner: 1975:261).

Jacques Derrida uses the term "transformation" for the same concept. He says:

- (37) for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We will never have to do with some "transport" of pure signifieds from one language to another that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and untouched."
In his "Semiology and grammatology" (original italics; quoted
from Burke et al. 2000:243)

9) This was probably in reference to the Septuagint Bible, a translation of Hebrew Scriptures by 72 people (6 each from 12 Jewish tribes) into Greek in ca. 270 B. C. for Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria. It was commissioned by Pharaoh Ptolemy II (r. 282-246 B. C.).

Translation, by undoing the effect of the Tower of Babel, bridges different languages and heterogeneous cultures. More than that, it can also initiate new literary and linguistic traditions and it heralds in a cultural Renaissance. The Medieval Renaissance itself was brought about by copious translations of Arabic texts which were in turn translations of Greek and Roman literatures, philosophy, and science. Translations of thousands¹⁰⁾ of classic works in the 15th century in France led to the establishment of French as a literary language, and led Francois I (r. 1515-1547) to decree that French should replace Latin in all legal proceedings and writings.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Germany in turn used translation as a means of developing a German literature. Goethe compared foreign literatures to mirrors which enabled domestic literatures to undergo a process of reflection and self-recognition which would not have occurred otherwise. He said:

(38) Flaggng national literatures are revived by foreign literatures. Every literature grows bored if it is not refreshed by foreign participation.

At Goethe's time, the Napoleonic wars threatened to extend French domination into Prussia, thus it was imperative to develop a nationalistic concept of a distinctively German literary culture, but this was possible only when underwritten by the translation of canonical foreign texts.

It was also translations by such avid translators as Lin Shu (1852-1924), Yan Fu (1853-1921), Lu Xun (1881-1936), and Zhou Zouren (1885-1967) in late 19th and early 20th century in China who fostered the development of a literary discourse in *baihua*, rather than in *wenyen*, which, by joining the force with the

10) According to Tsuji's calculations, there were nearly 1500 translations in a 35 year span in the latter half of the 16th century (1550-1589). See more details in Tsuji/Lee (1993/2001: 88).

Union Version of the Bible (1919), subsequently evolved into the national language of China (Venuti 1998:186).

It was also through the translations that Japanese authors such as Kawabata Yasunari, Tanizaki Jun'ichiro, Mishima Yukio, and Ooe Kenzaburo, gained a world-wide recognition and fame, which eventually let Kawabata and Ooe to receive Nobel Prizes in Literature (1968 and 1994 respectively).

Pierre Francois Caille, founder and president of SFT (Societe Francaise des Traducteurs) and FIT (Federation Internationale des Traducteurs) stated in 1995 that "*Nous sommes a l'age de la traduction*" (We live in the age of translation.). The Ex-President Kim Dae-Jung may have won the Peace Prize with the Treasury (if not with treachery), but a Nobel Prize in Literature will never be awarded to a Korean writer without *literary* translations of his/her work into major Western languages. (cf. Kim 2002)

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[Abstract]

Translators: Traitors or Traders?

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This paper argues that (1) word-for-word literary translation is not possible; all it does is achieve what Chukovsky characterized as "imprecise precision" (1984:47), (2) contra to Nida (1969) and others, translation does not just mean translating meaning, and (3) therefore, a translator must negotiate an uneasy but inevitable compromise between accuracy and elegance. To make the translated passage just as pleasing, moving, and cathartic as the original passage as much as possible, a great deal of literary skill is required on the part of the translator. The iniquity of translators is not so much infidelity as infertility to produce an offspring worthy of an heir to the original writer. Translators are not traitors; they are traders, or literary merchants, who trade one form of linguistic unit for another, often meaning for form, or sense for sound, but sometimes form for meaning. A translator then is not a man of treason but is a tradesman.

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