The Translated Poem as Aesthetic Object: A Counterproposal to Clive Scott

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The great Hungarian poet and translator Mihály Babits was asked once which was the most beautiful Hungarian poem in his opinion.[1] He answered: 'Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" in Árpád Tóth's translation'. My point is that this is not only a Hungarian masterpiece in its own right, but also flies in the face of the male chauvinist aphorism 'a translation is like a woman: if she is beautiful she is not faithful, and if she is faithful, she is not beautiful'. It offers a reasonable equivalent to the English source text. I will elucidate what 'equivalence' might mean in this context below. Even a brief analysis that does justice to this magnificent translation would require a separate paper, and might be less than meaningful to an English reader. But I will refer at some length to another translation by this translator.

Introductory

This is a counterproposal to Clive Scott's 'Free Verse and the Translation of Rhythm'.[2] The concurrence and difference between our approaches may be epitomized by the following issue. Scott objects to

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[2] My counterproposal is a concoction, sometimes verbatim, of arguments presented in many of my earlier publications; but in course of writing some new insights cropped up. I wrote in the distant

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> the assumption that constitutive elements are the same from language to language, if adjusted by a touch of equivalence. The iambic pentameter is metrical in the same way that the alexandrine is metrical (though this is clearly untrue). Rhyme in English is the same as rhyme in French, even though rhyme in French recognizes different degrees of rhyme, makes alternating rhyme-gender a principle of construction, and rhymes on endings and suffixes, which necessitates a certain practice of avoidances, all features unknown to English rhyming. To encourage readers to think of French and English rhymes as equivalent is seriously and irresponsibly to mislead them (72).

I agree with this objection, but we come to different conclusions from it. Scott assumes that nothing is as similar to a source text as the source text itself, and therefore a translation's function is to help the reader to work through the source text and expose himself to its meanings and sound patterns. He proposes that translation, irrespective of what kind of verse it is translating, should always opt for free verse in the translated text. My counterproposal is that a translated poem can be an aesthetic object in its own right, and aspire to a *different kind of equivalence*. Indeed, while some scholars efface fine distinctions like the ones suggested by Scott's above paragraph, those distinctions may serve as a basis to the translator's decisions: He must choose the nearest option available in the target language to the device in the source poem.

I even tend to agree with Scott's following assumption, though, as we shall see, in a less categorical version and with different implications:

> literary translation makes no sense to me if the reader of the target text (TT) is ignorant of the source language and source text (ST). My approach to translation always presupposes that the reader of the TT is familiar with the ST. This presupposition makes the act of translation a linguistically dialectical act, and an act of textual comparison (67).

In my work I had recourse, in my own way, to both kinds of solutions. I was brought up in Hungarian language and literature. When, at the age of sixteen, I mastered Hebrew, I devoted myself to a realization in Hebrew of the conception of

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past a Hebrew and a Hungarian paper in which I extensively discuss Hebrew and Hungarian translations, respectively, but here I must confine myself to quoting some of my standard examples.

translation I adopted from Babits, Tóth, and other great Hungarian translators, that is, a rhymed and metered poem in the target language, that makes as good a poem as possible, and chooses those options from the target language that are closest to the ones in the source language. The precision of translation depends on how fine-grained are the sign-units of the target system. If the target system is sufficiently fine-grained and its nearest options are chosen to represent a source phenomenon, it may evoke a perception that the two are 'equivalent'. I virtually gave up these activities at the time of writing my PhD dissertation, when I drifted in the direction of Scott's conception and beyond, for practical rather than theoretical reasons. In my dissertation and many of my ensuing publications I frequently analyzed poems in languages other than the one I was writing in. I quoted the original poem, providing a literal translation (and, if necessary, a transliteration). Then I offered a close reading, pointing out the subtleties in the poem's sound stratum, units of meanings stratum and projected world stratum, and even tried to integrate all of them (see below the discussion of the Hungarian and Hebrew translations of Verlaine's poem, and the Hebrew translations of the line from *Hamlet*). I felt that in this way I could convey more of the subtleness of the source text. In my artistic translations I had the satisfaction of conveying as many subtleties of the original poem as possible; later it was the suppressed subtleties that had their way, paralyzing my translation activity. The reader may derive two different kinds of experience from these two kinds of output. He may have a more direct, imaginative, experience of an integrated aesthetic object that is equivalent in *some* sense to the original; or, alternatively, he may have a more purely rational understanding of a greater number of the source poem's subtleties, which may or may not lead, *eventually*, to a direct imaginative experiencing of it. Clive Scott's solution is somewhere in the middle between these two.

Which one is the right solution? This question makes no sense to me. Each one is the right solution relative to the kind of experience it is meant to evoke. Men of letters are perfectly free to choose one conception or another; the same person may have recourse to different conceptions at different times. This is not an argument of the anything-goes type. The final result will be judged not by whether one kind of solution is selected or another, but by how well the chosen solution instantiates its

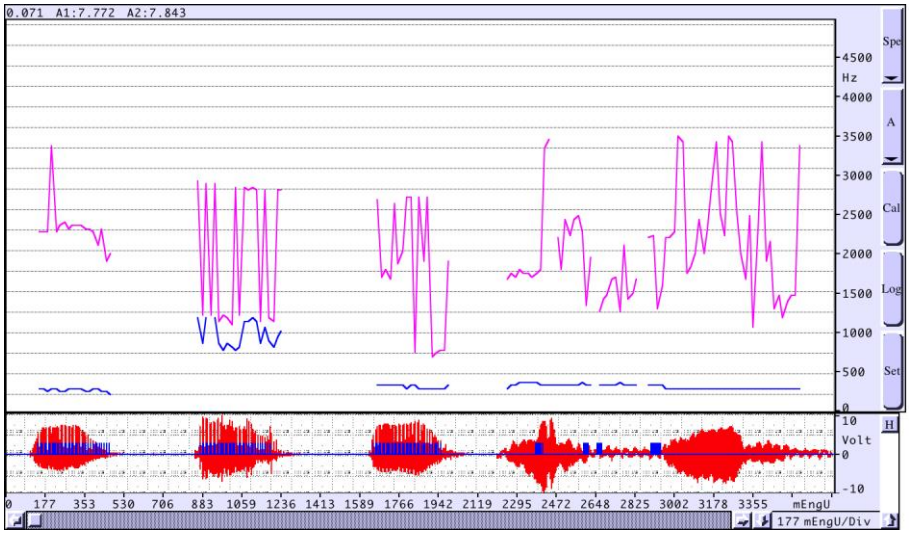
respective conception. Each kind of solution does something better than the other kinds do; and fails to do things that the other kinds may do so well. Good reasons can be given why to prefer precisely this kind of solution to the other ones—with reference to each kind. To use Morris Weitz's (1962) term, it is a 'crucial recommendation' what package of gains and losses to prefer. From this point of view, Clive Scott's paper does not propose the best kind of solution, but is a crucial recommendation for one kind, and enumerates excellent reasons in its support. The present paper makes a crucial recommendation for a different kind of solution supporting it with the best reasons I can mobilize. As we shall see, Douglas Hofstadter states, no less categorically, a position that is in headlong collision with Scott's.

The Cuckoo, the Flute and the Piglet: The Elegant Solution of a Problem

There is a parable by Izmailov about the cuckoo who tells her neighbours in the province about the wonderful song of the nightingale she heard in a far-away country. She learned this song, and is willing to reproduce it for the benefit of her neighbours. They all are eager to hear that marvelous song, so the cuckoo starts singing: 'kukuk, kukuk, kukuk'. The moral of the parable is that that's what happens to bad translators of poetry. My thesis is that Izmailov does an injustice to the cuckoo (not to some translators). When you translate from one semiotic system to another, you are constrained by the options of the target system. The cuckoo had no choice but to use cuckoo-language for the translation. The question is whether she utilized those options of cuckoo-language that are nearest to the nightingale's song. After all, Izmailov himself committed exactly the same kind of inadequacy he attributes to the cuckoo. The bird emits neither the speech sound [k] nor [u]; it uses no speech sounds at all. But a poet (any poet) in human language is constrained by the phoneme system of his language; he can translate the cuckoo's song only to those speech sounds. His translation will be judged adequate if he chooses those speech sounds that are most similar in their effect to the cuckoo's call.

How do systems of music-sounds and verbal signs assume perceptual qualities endemic to other systems, such as human emotions or animal calls? At the present stage of my argument I only want to point out that the resources available in the

target systems impose severe strictures on the process. Usually only very few features or configurations thereof are available in the target systems that may be shared with the source phenomena. So, the best one can do is to choose the nearest options available in the target system. Minute differences may suffice to transform the perceived character of a complex whole. As Krueger (1968: 100–101) observed, the overall perceived qualities of 'total complexes' is determined by minute differences: 'It has been observed over and over that the smallest changes in experience are felt emotionally long before the change can be exactly described'.



i a u ku ku

Figure 1 Wave plot, and the first and second formants of the cardinal vowels i-a-u, and of the European cuckoo's call. (Formants are concentrations of overtones that determine vowels and sound colour). Note that the formants of the bird's call are most similar to, but not identical with, the vowel [u] (produced on SoundScope).

In onomatopoeia, the phonological system of a language cannot reproduce the actual sounds of, e.g., the cuckoo's call: neither the minor-third interval, nor the sound quality, nor the abrupt onset. The bird says neither [k] nor [u]. [listen] The only thing one can do is to choose the speech sounds with the nearest formant structure (see Figure 1). A symphony orchestra, by contrast, can reproduce the minor-third interval, but not the formant structure of the call. [listen]

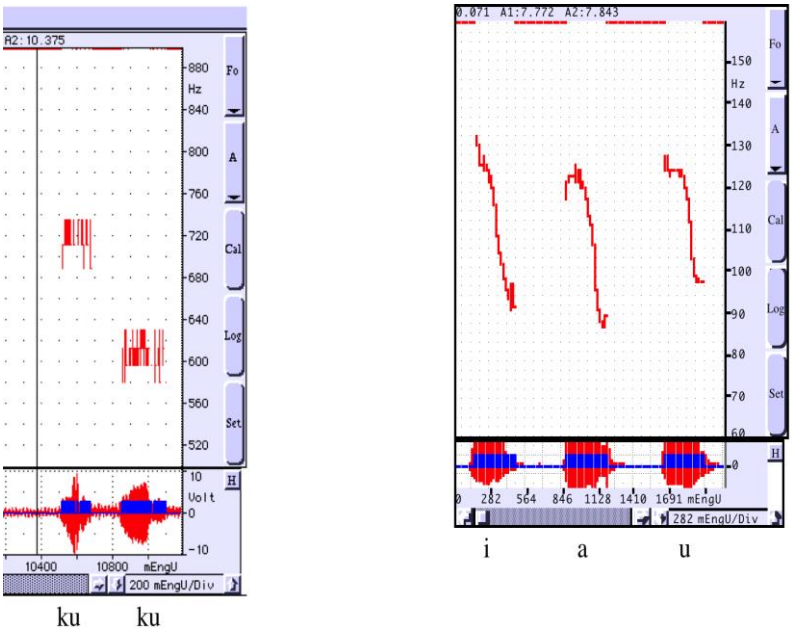


Figure 2 Wave plot and pitch abstract of the European cuckoo's call and of the cardinal vowels read by a professional reader.

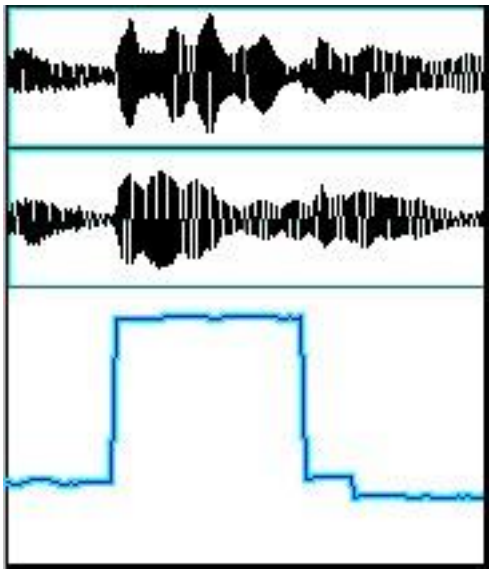


Figure 3 Sound waves and pitch extract of the imitation of the cuckoo's call in L. Mozart's 'Toy Symphony' (produced on Praat).

The nearest option to codify in human speech the abrupt onset of the call is the abrupt consonant [k]—all the other features of [k] are irrelevant. This use of voiceless stops to indicate abrupt onset appears to have some intercultural validity.

The Chinese word for 'cuckoo' is 'pu-ku'. In Japanese we have the semantically-based 'Hatodokei' = dove + clock, but also 'poppoo', 'kokyu' and 'kakkou'. In the orchestra, the abrupt onset is indicated more directly (see Figure 3). Thus, the voiceless plosive [k] is a bundle of perceptual features, a subset of which is frequently exploited by the context to suggest some abrupt metallic noises as 'ticktack' or 'click'; but in the case of 'cuckoo' only the perceptual feature [+abrupt] is utilized. Thus, the same elements or configurations in a target system may serve as the 'nearest option' for a wide range of source phenomena. Chinese is a tonal language, that is, where tones are lexicalized: the same sequence of speech sounds may have different meanings, depending on different tones. In other words, not as in Western languages, one may predict the tones with which the various syllables will be associated. In the present case, *pù-kǔ*, the diacritics indicate that *pù* is to be pronounced with a falling tone, *kǔ* with a rising-falling tone. My point is that even in a tonal language like Chinese, the lexical tones cannot be taken for granted to imitate the interval of the cuckoo's call.

The philosopher John Dewey (1980 [1934]), and others following him, conceive of an aesthetic object as of the elegant solution of a problem. Such an elegant solution is relevant to a work of art only if both the problem and its solution can be discerned in it at the same time. Flute players frequently are praised as follows: 'The flute sounds exactly like a soprano singer'. If the soprano's voice is so much more beautiful than the flute's sound, why not give the part to a singer? But no less frequently we hear the opposite praise as well: 'The voice of this singer sounds like a flute'. The praise does not indicate, then, preference of the soprano's voice or of the flute's sound, but rather refers to an artistic achievement: that one produces a certain sound quality by a basically different sound quality; and that this can be perceived even if one cannot see the source of the sound (on a record, for instance). In such a case, both sound qualities are perceptible. Then one may say that the problem of producing the sound quality of a flute by a human voice has been elegantly solved.

There is an old Greek parable about a swineherd who entertained his audience by imitating the piglet's shrieking. Another swineherd, who envied his colleague's success, hid a real piglet under his coat, and whenever asked to imitate the piglet's

shrieking, he pulled its tail. The trick failed, because the real piglet was received with scorn. This parable throws an unfavorable light on the audience's taste, who cannot discern an imitation from the real thing, giving, by the same token, a good lesson to the envious swineherd. The great Hungarian poet János Arany, in his 'Vojtina's Ars Poetica', gave a different interpretation to this parable, in harmony with certain nineteenth century aesthetic conceptions: 'not the truth, but its heavenly image' is the essence of art. The imitator shrieked as the piglet shrieks *in general*, whereas the real piglet may have shrieked as it never had shrieked before.

I will interpret this parable in the light of my foregoing argument. The real piglet will not please even with its most habitual shrieking more than the imitator, because it offers to its audience no solution of a problem. The imitator's voice, by contrast, remained basically human, but he succeeded to weave into it characteristics of the piglet's voice quality, thus arousing the *illusion* of a piglet's shrieking.

With these two parables in mind, let us return to the question, how can a poetic translation offer in the target text *some* equivalent of the sounds and sound patterns of the source text. Speech sounds are perceived as unitary events. If you replace a French word with its Hungarian equivalent, you are bound to receive different sequences of speech sounds. Period. 'To translate alliteration by alliteration, or assonance by assonance usually entails two second-bests: […] one does not alliterate the same sounds' (Scott, 73). This is one way to view the issue. Structuralist phonology since Jakobson et al. (1952), by contrast, conceives of speech sounds as of bundles of distinctive features on which a closed system of binary oppositions is constructed. These distinctive features are systematically correlated with certain nonlinguistic perceptual qualities. Thus for instance, the front vowel [i] is perceived as higher and brighter than its back vowel counterpart [u] pronounced on the same pitch. Similarly, front vowels, in general, are perceived as higher and brighter than their back vowel counterparts, as, for instance, [e] and [o] too. Such a conception is more fine-grained: it opens for the translator the possibility to choose in the target language, if not the same speech sounds as in the source language, distinctive features and nonlinguistic perceptual qualities that are nearer to, or more remote from, the ones in the source language. Let me give an example. The French word for 'violin' is 'violon'; the Hungaria word is 'hegedű'. The Hungarian word is

conspicuously unlike its French counterpart. The former approach can only acknowledge this conspicuous unlikeness. The latter approach may assign a structural description to it. Thus, for instance, in the French word, a voiced, continuous, aperiodic, and a voiced continuous, periodic consonant, as well as two back vowels (oral and nasal, respectively) are conspicuous. In the Hungarian word two abrupt, voiced stops [g, d], the front vowel [ɛ] (twice), and a middle vowel [ű] are dominant. The oral back vowel [o] is perceived as relatively dark, the nasal back vowel [õ] even darker, whereas the front vowel [ɛ] is relatively bright, while [ű] has a particular sheen. Thus, we may say that they are not merely different as any other two words, but are contrasted in a great number of distinctive and perceptual features. Below I compare Verlaine's 'Chanson d'Automne' to two Hungarian and a Hebrew translation of it. The Hungarian translator Lőrinc Szabó uses the straightforward translation 'hegedű', generating a conspicuously inappropriate sound effect. Árpád Tóth, by contrast, has recourse to a metonymy of the violin, 'húr' (string), which contains a dark long back vowel and a voiced continuous periodic consonant. Owing to vowel harmony in Hungarian, the possessive suffixes 'hegedű*je*' and 'húr*ja*' too contrast a front vowel with a back vowel. Thus, we may say that Tóth chose a nearer option available in Hungarian than Szabó, even though, from the semantic point of view, Szabó used a straightforward translation, whereas Tóth had recourse to a conspicuous metonymy of it. In the word 'húr' no nasal vowel is available; even the best translator cannot help such a state of affairs. But, as we shall see, Tóth amply compensates for this in other words.

Problem-solving implies 'constraints' or 'stringencies'. In poetry, the grammar and vocabulary of the language, as well as the various kinds of poetic conventions are the most conspicuous stringencies. These stringencies are frequently incompatible The poet must find an elegant way to satisfy the demands of one solution without infringing the demands of another. Syntax may demand one word order; metre a different order of the same words, rhetorical emphasis yet another, while manipulating a certain word into the rhyme may demand still another word order. The poet must find an elegant solution to all these and more stringencies. Thus, for instance, a poetic style demanding more unpredictable figurative language than usual may facilitate the manipulation of a word required by rhyme to the line

ending, without violating word order. Rhetorical emphasis may justify certain deviations from word order required by syntax for the sake of metre or rhyme; and so forth. Poets may be quite inventive and unforeseen in effecting such elegant solutions. This holds true of any poetry. As to translations, the translator of poetry must meet one more all-important stringency: the translated poem must be as similar as possible to the original poem in reproducing all these stringencies. Another imperative is, of course, that the final result must make a good poem in the target language. This is the sense in which I embrace Scott's statement: 'literary translation makes no sense to me if the reader of the target text (TT) is ignorant of the source language and source text (ST)' which, of course, is not in the sense he meant it.

One may, of course, compare a translated poem to its original, and point out all the figures of speech and sound patterns and other poetic devices of the source text that were lost in the target text. Likewise, one may point out all the poetic devices in the target text that don't occur in the source text. No translation in the world may survive criticism based on such distinctions. But if your objective is to discover whether the translator chose in the target language the closest options to the poetic devices of the source text and whether he found a way to bring together as many of them as possible without violating one by the other, you may find that some translations are more successful than others. Then, indeed, some target texts may be reasonably akin to the source text in their sound patterns, figurative language, syntactic structures and idea contents; some of them may even make masterpieces in the target language. It will fail to be identical with the source text, but may present a reasonable equivalent to the reader's imagination. The reader may derive aesthetic pleasure not from the point-by-point resemblance between the source text and the target text, but from experiencing the elegant solution of a problem posed by a great number of stringencies. In this context, equivalence to the source text (in the sense discussed here) is just another stringency and complying with it may increase the reader's aesthetic pleasure.

Test Issue 1: Translating Verlaine's Euphony

I propose to illustrate the above model by two examples taken from poetry translation, one concerning periodical sound patterns, the other, metrics. I have discussed the former issue at great length in my book *What Makes Sound Patterns Expressive? The Poetic Mode of Speech Perception;* the latter in my book *A Perception-Oriented Theory of Metre*. The first stanza of Paul Verlaine's'Chanson d'Automne' is renowned for its exceptional euphony. We will examine the first stanza of this poem, with two Hungarian translations and a Hebrew one:

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'Automne,
Blessent mon coeur
D'une langueur
Monotone.

Listen to three readings of this stanza, by two native speakers of French, and one probably nonnative.

Ősz húrja zsong,
Jajong, búsong
A tájon,
S ont monoton
Bút konokon
És fájón.

[trans. Árpád Tóth]

Listen to a reading of the above Hungarian translation.

Zokog, zokog
Az ősz konok
Hegedűje,
Zordúl szivem
S fordúl szivem,
Keserűre.

[trans. Lőrinc Szabó]

Listen to a reading of the above Hungarian translation.

בִּנְהִי מַמְרוֹר
הוֹמֶה כִּנּוֹר
טֵבֵת פָּרוּעַ,
וְאֶל הַלֵּב
חוֹדֵר כְּאֵב
וְגַעֲגוּעַ

Binhi mamror
Homɛ kinor
Tevet paruʕa,
Vəʔɛl halev
Ḥoderkəʔev
Vəgaʕaguʕa.

[trans. Zəʔev Jabotinsky]

Listen to a reading of the above Hebrew translation.

As I have elsewhere pointed out, one of the conspicuous sources of this poem's striking musicality is derived from its nasal vowels and the sound sequence: *eur*. This sound sequence and the nasal vowels share two characteristics: from the acoustic point of view both are continuous and periodic; from the point of view of the infant's phonological development, both are late acquisitions. Following Jakobson (1968), I have elsewhere claimed that the infant's latest phonological acquisitions have the greatest emotional and aesthetic potential in adult language, for better or for worse. Among the late acquisitions, the abrupt consonants as the affricates [pf] and [ts] are 'ugly', or 'express' unpleasant emotions; the speech sounds that are continuous and periodic from the acoustic point of view are 'musical', 'beautiful', and 'express' pleasant emotions. The 'beautiful' sounds abound in French Impressionistic-Symbolistic poetry—relative to French Classicist poetry, for instance, and occur very frequently in the rhyme words. This is one of the conspicuous sources of its 'musicality' and 'beauty'. In the phonological system of Hebrew no nasal vowels exist, nor the vowel *eu*. In his Hebrew translation, therefore, Jabotinsky had to find phonological equivalents for them, which have similar emotional character. Among the relatively late acquisitions we find in

Hebrew the consonant [r], which is continuous and periodic. Since, as I said, such later acquisitions as nasal vowels and the vowel '*eu*' do not exist in Hebrew, Jabotinsky attempted to compensate for their absence by using as many sonorants and back vowels as possible, manipulating them into as prominent places as possible. He founded his first rhyme on the continuous and periodic [r], which occurs in the first two short lines three (!) times, and on the back vowel [o]. He also had recourse in these two lines to other periodic consonants: [m] three times, [n] twice. This is a conspicuous instance of an attempt to generate a similar atmosphere in the Hebrew translation, by choosing as periodic and as late consonants as are available in the language. The perceived quality of [r] requires additional elucidation. This speech sound is double-edged: on the one hand, it is periodic; on the other hand it is *multiply* interrupted. Being both periodic and interrupted, it frequently serves as an imitation of noises and creaking sounds; but in the context of periodic consonants as, e.g., in 'Lili Marleen', the reader may attend away from the interrupted to the periodic aspect, and the [r] integrates well in the pleasant, euphonic, sonorant context. This is the case in the present phonetic and thematic context too.

It is impossible, within the Hebrew phonological system, to come nearer to the resources of musicality in French. The Hungarian translator of this poem may consider himself luckier. First of all, '[ø:]' *is* available to him; what is more, he can hardly avoid it, because it occurs in the Hungarian word for 'Autumn': *ősz*. Nasalized vowels are available in Hungarian, although less readily than in French; in a few root words, and most notably in the frequentative suffix *-ong*. Indeed, it occurs three times in the first two lines of Tóth's translation (*zs**ong**, jaj**ong**, bús**ong*** [reverberates, whines, bewails]). Consequently, when a Hungarian poet like Szabó has no nasal vowels in the whole stanza, while he emphatically repeats the velar plosives in *zo**k**o**g**, zo**k**o**g***, the translation is perceived as exceptionally 'unmusical'. Obviously, he did not have recourse to the nearest options offered by the Hungarian phonological system. In this respect, the translation is not to be judged by the criterion whether the phonemes that determine the poem's character in the source language do or do not exist in the target language, but rather by the criterion whether the translator did or did not exploit the possibilities inherent in the closed

phonological system of the target language and, in the present instance, whether he chose as many options as possible involving the distinctive features [+continuous +periodic +nasal] that are relevant to the poem's effect in the source language.

Tóth's preference for nasal vowels and consonants in this translation is conspicuous. We may also recall that the Hungarian word for 'its violin' *(hegedűje)* has been retained in Szabó's translation, whereas in Tóth's it has been replaced by a metonymy, *húrja* ('its string'), introducing a 'dark' back vowel ([u:]) and a sonorant ([r]), as well as eliminating, by the same token, such plosives as the /g/ and /d/ of the proper term. '*ű*' is a rather late acquisition of the infant but, according to Jakobson (l968), has a certain 'sheen' that would be alien to the atmosphere of this poem (Hungarian *ő* and *ű* are 'brighter' than their French equivalents).
Encouraged by the Hungarian translator's feast of nasality, I attempted several years ago to render Verlaine's poem in Hebrew; lines 4-6 run as follows:

יַנְעִים יָגוֹן
עָמוּם הַגּוֹן
וְגַעֲגוּעַ.

Yanʕim yagon
ʕAmum hagon
Vəgaʕaguʕa.

(Sounds monotonous sorrow and yearning).

Listen to the above three lines.

These words make ample use of 'dark' back vowels, nasal consonants as well as of the voiced velar stop [g] in close vicinity. Nonetheless, the poem refused to assume a musical quality comparable to the French original or Tóth's Hungarian translation. This was most conspicuous precisely where I expected the greatest similarity, in the rhyme words *yagon-hagon*. At that time I could describe the difference only in an intuitive fashion: the *-gon* sequence in the Hebrew rhyme sounded somehow too 'decisive', too 'conclusive', too 'assertive', too 'solid' as compared to the

corresponding sequences in French or Hungarian. Phonetically and phonologically speaking, in French we are dealing with nasal vowels proper, whereas in Hungarian we are confronted with an allophone of the oral vowel, strongly nasalized by coarticulation with the subsequent nasal consonant which, in turn, is attenuated by the ensuing voiced velar stop. In Hebrew, by contrast, though both [g] and [n] are present, there is no coarticulation, no nasalizing effect. Haruko Kawasaki's work in experimental phonology may throw interesting light on the aesthetic repercussions of this difference between Hebrew and Hungarian. 'It has been well documented that nondistinctive [i.e., nonphonemic] nasalization has a physiological cause: lowering of the velum adjacent to nasal consonant' (Kawasaki, 1986: 86). Historically, many instances of nasal vowels are derived from such allophonic nasalization, when the nasal consonant is dropped, as for instance French /sã/ *(cent*) from Latin *centum.* This, she claims, is a phonological universal, and brings supporting evidence from a large variety of languages, and a wide range of types of phonological constraints in them. Kawasaki adduces experimental evidence demonstrating that the degree of perceived nasality of a vowel is enhanced by the attenuation of adjacent nasal consonants or, conversely, is reduced by the presence of adjacent nasal consonants (ibid, 94).

Compare the name of the great German philosopher *Kant* to the British pronunciation of the contraction *can't.* They can be treated almost as a minimal pair. One of the most obtrusive differences between them concerns precisely the issue discussed here: in *Kant* the nasal consonant [n] has its full solid body; accordingly, no or little nasalization is perceived in the preceding vowel. In *can't,* by contrast, the [n] is strongly attenuated (by coarticulation with the [t]); accordingly, a strong nasal quality is perceived in the preceding vowel. Likewise, in Hungarian *zsong* (or, for that matter, in English *song)* the voiced velar stop [g] drastically attenuates the adjacent [n] (both being produced by manipulation of the velum); by the same token, the nasal 'perturbation' in the preceding oral vowel becomes palpable. In Hebrew *yagon* and *hagon,* by contrast, the *preceding* [g] effects no such attenuation in the nasal consonant; correspondingly, no nasal 'perturbation' becomes perceptible in the preceding vowel. The nasal 'perturbation' in Hungarian *zsong* (or in English *song)* is perceived as diffuse but rich precategorial sensory information that increases

'chaotic overdifferentiation'; whereas the 'weak, residual' [n] is perceived as a diffuse, vague, and evasive rather than a compact phonetic category. In this way, the perceptual contrast between the vowel and the consonant is reduced too. All this may reinforce the emotional atmosphere typically cherished by Symbolist poetry. In Hebrew no such attenuation of nasal consonants takes place; so, the Hebrew translator of Verlaine must be content with fully realized, relatively compact nasals.

I used phonetic equivalence to exemplify the problem of translation from one semiotic code to another; but a similar principle seems to govern metric, semantic, and syntactic equivalence as well. It should be noted, however, that the foregoing arguments regarding Jabotinsky's selection of speech sounds do not enable us to predict whether the 'equivalents' would generate in the target language an effect similar to the source language. Rather, *if* the reader receives, by direct listening, a certain impression of the translation's musicality, he may use such arguments to account for it *after the event*. Musicality of speech sounds may only be *heard*, not *inferred*.

Test Issue 2: Translating Alexandrines to Tonic-Syllabic Verse

In what follows, I propose to give a further example, this time from the domain of metric equivalence, when different kinds of semiotic systems are involved. What is the equivalent of a poem's metre, when we translate it to a language in which a different metric system is prevalent? More specifically, I propose to explore the problem of translating French alexandrines (based on the syllabic metric system) to languages in which the tonic-syllabic is the dominant metric system. Even more specifically, I will explore the problem of metre in translating Baudelaire's 'Correspondances' to such languages as English, Hebrew, or Hungarian. In an epilogue to my Hebrew volume of poetry translations I offer a cognitive theory of translation, similar to the present one. Among other things, I compare the metric organization of six Hebrew translations of this poem. Two have no recognizable metre; one is in a mixture of ternary metres, and three in the iambic hexameter. Which one of these solutions suits best the spirit of the French metre? And what reasons can be given to support one of these choices?

The metric system dominant in English, Hebrew, Hungarian, and some additional modern literatures is the tonic-syllabic system, that is, the system that determines, ideally, the number of syllables as well as the number of stresses and their placement in the verse line. In the iambic pentameter, for instance, there are ten syllables in a line, and every even-numbered syllable ought to be stressed. In the preceding sentences I used the phrases 'determines', 'ideally' and 'ought to be stressed', because in fact there is such a discrepancy between the 'ideal' and the real stresses, that the most fruitful way to speak of poetic rhythm is to define separately the metric pattern and the stress pattern, and check where the two converge and where they diverge. In French poetry (and in some additional Romance languages), by contrast, the syllabic system is the dominant metric system, that is, the system in which the syllables are counted, while the number of stresses and their placement are ignored (Scott would qualify this statement: they are not ignored, only unpredictable). In French poetry, usually two more organizing prosodic principles are added: caesura at a fixed point (the middle) of the verse line, and a predictable arrangement of 'masculine' and 'feminine' rhymes, according to certain principles of symmetry. When translating a poem from French to English, Hungarian, or Hebrew, there arises necessarily the question what tonic-syllabic metre will be equivalent to the French poem's metre—from the point of view of perceived effect.

In English, Hebrew and Hungarian, then, French alexandrines are usually translated into the iambic. My argument will rest on a Hebrew translation that deviates from the prevalent practice. So, unfortunately, I will have to keep my discussion at a highly general level.

In Chapter 3 of my book (Tsur, 1977),[3] as in all my work in metrics, I distinguish metric pattern, stress pattern and pattern of performance. When stress pattern and metric pattern converge, they yield strong prosodic Gestalts with a psychological atmosphere of certainty and patent purpose. When they diverge, the verse is in danger of falling into chaos. The coherence of the metric foot depends, to a considerable extent, on the downbeat. In binary metres (the iambic and trochaic)

[3] This chapter is available online, in PSYART
http://www.psyartjournal.com/article/show/tsur-some_remarks_on_the_nature_of_trochees_a
as well as on my website (including a bit of personal history)
http://www.tau.ac.il/~tsurxx/Trochee/bit_of_personal_history2.html

only one upbeat 'leans upon' each downbeat for support; in ternary metres two upbeats lean upon one downbeat. Consequently, binary metres are more stable than ternary metres, and more resistant to disintegration. In ternary metres, to prevent disintegration, performers are inclined to subordinate in such cases the prose rhythm to the regular metric beat. The iambic foot, with its stronger Gestalt, seems to tolerate greater deviance and complexity. In extreme cases of deviation, the performer needs—in order to prevent chaos—to accommodate the divergent patterns in a strong Gestalt of additional grouping. It is some underlying strong Gestalt—whether in the pattern of metre, or of performance—that makes rhythmicality possible when divergent elements are present. As it may be inferred from certain psychological experiments, end-accented metres (as the iambic or the anapest) allow for greater flexibility in manipulating the time factor than beginning-accented metres (such as the trochaic and dactylic). Hence the relatively greater rigidity of trochaic verse, manifest in its 'compelling' nature observed by so many critics from Aristotle to Zhirmunsky, and further to the generative metrists. Consequently, the distinctive characteristics of the iambic is that it is more tolerant of deviations than the trochaic and the ternary metres.

At this point I wish to refer back to Scott's objection to the claim that 'the iambic pentameter is metrical in the same way that the alexandrine is metrical (though this is clearly untrue)'. My attitude toward this claim depends very much on what is meant by 'is metrical in the same way that'. If it implies that the iambic pentameter is the most frequent metre in English, Hungarian and Hebrew tonic-syllabic systems just as the alexandrine is the dominant metre in the French syllabic system, then I whole-heartedly agree with Clive Scott. But there are other possibilities as well. While in English and Hungarian tonic-syllabic verse the iambic is, indeed, the most frequent metre, in Hebrew tonic-syllabic verse it isn't; for reasons relating to average word length in Hebrew, the anapest and amphibrach are more frequent. Yet, as we shall see, in Hebrew too, the iambic is felt to be more appropriate for the translation of the alexandrine than some ternary metre.

The alexandrine, the most widespread metre in French, is syllabic. It consists of twelve syllables (thirteen, in 'feminine'-ended lines), with a compulsory caesura after the sixth. It makes no systematic use of contrast between prominent and non-

prominent syllables. Alexandrines by Racine, Baudelaire and other French poets are usually translated into iambic in languages as dissimilar as Hebrew and Hungarian. In my corpus of Hebrew translations of Baudelaire's 'Correspondances', however, one translation is in a ternary metre, a mixture of the amphibrach and the anapest. Though it is remarkably polished, the rhythm sounds strikingly unsuitable. It has a vigorous, straightforward quality, quite unlike the vague impression the poem makes in French. One's first response to such an encounter is surprise. Then it comes to mind: surely it is only a matter of habit that the ear feels the iamb rather than the amphibrach as the tonic-syllabic equivalent of the alexandrine. From a purely arithmetic point of view, both possibilities are equally plausible. After all, four times three make twelve just as six times two make twelve. The caesura after the sixth syllable will coincide with a foot boundary, whether binary or ternary. Something in the perceptual aspect, however, resists this arithmetical equivalence. As I have said, compared to the iambic metre, the ternary metres are inflexible, and generate in the poem 'a psychological atmosphere of certainty, security, and patent purpose, in which the listener feels a sense of control and power as well as a sense of specific tendency and definite direction',[4] conflicting with the vague, ambiguous atmosphere, the elusive apprehension of another reality characteristic of the French original.

At first sight, there appears to be no reason why Baudelaire or Racine should not be translated into the anapest or the amphibrach. A closer look at the French poem even reveals that the 'stress pattern' of the first hemistich confirms the ternary anapest. But the second hemistich confirms the binary iambic. The third one nearly confirms the iambic (except for the 'inverted first foot'), while the fourth confirms anapest; and so forth. Consider the first two lines, indicating the position in which the 'stress' occurs:

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      3          6                    4      6
La Nature est un temple // où de vivants piliers
 1          4     6              3        6
Laissent parfois sortir // de confuses paroles;
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[4] Leonard B. Meyer: *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. Chicago: Chicago UP 1956, 160.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, this irregularity becomes significant. The alexandrine is similar to the iambic in one important respect. It tolerates greater irregularity of the stress pattern than the trochaic or ternary metres such as the anapest, the dactyl or the amphibrach would tolerate (cf. Fowler, 1966). This is the reason that the iambic metre lacks the 'psychological atmosphere of certainty, security, and patent purpose', characteristic of the trochaic and the ternary metres. Here, of course, one could ask whether this end couldn't be better attained by relinquishing metre all in all. The answer to this question seems to be that the relinquishing of metre may detract from the aesthetic nature of a poem. In view of the 'elegant-solution' conception of the aesthetic object, irregularity *in spite of* an established metre, has a more aesthetic effect than irregularity devoid of metre. Such a conclusion is borne out by the two Hebrew translations that have no recognizable metre. The English reader will have no intuitions regarding a Hebrew translation. But I will demonstrate the issue below, in a comparison between three English texts, all versions of the same speech of Gloucester's, by three different authors. Metre is one of the constraints that constitute the problem for which the poet or the translator must find an elegant solution. It would be, then, quite safe to conclude that the iambic hexameter is the tonic-syllabic system's nearest option to the alexandrine.

The Essential Tension

Here we may observe an interesting overlap and difference between Scott's and my approach. Scott describes the rhythmic nature of French alexandrines in terns of an unpredictable grouping of syllables in the linguistic stream, and predictable grouping of syllables in the versification structure ('suggesting that sequence is not a process of addition but of metamorphosis [including morphing into something numerically the same but constitutionally different])', but expects e.g. the English translator to reproduce accurately the unpredictable word group patterns of each French verse line and give up any systematic metre. I would translate Scott's position here into my terms as follows. There is in French tension between the predictable number of syllables in the verse line and the unpredictable number of groups of syllables in the

linguistic stream. This tension occurs only when the predictable stream and the unpredictable stream have the same number of syllables and a coinciding end. The unpredictable grouping of linguistic units suspends the sense of certainty; when the unpredictable linguistic pattern and the predictable metric pattern have a coinciding end and turn out to have the same number of syllables, certainty is restored and a sense of relief achieved. The suspense itself might be pleasurable, because the reader may be assured from the beginning that coincidence will be restored at the sixth and the twelfth syllable of the verse line.

This would be in perfect harmony with the present proposal. Now what Scott proposes is that in translation one should reproduce the unpredictable stream accurately, at the expense of the predictable stream, relinquishing the essential tension. My proposal, by contrast, implies that in the target text too the essential tension should be preserved, by observing both the predictable stream of (tonic-syllabic) metre and the unpredictable grouping of linguistic units, but not necessarily the exact sequence. Besides, in the tonic-syllabic system an additional option is available 'Où l'Indécis au Précis se joint' (Where the Uncertain joins the Precise), to use Verlaine's words. This system does not only count syllables, but also observes a regular sequence of downbeats and upbeats. There may be an irregular stream of downbeats and upbeats in the linguistic dimension and a regular stream of downbeats and upbeats in the metric dimension which, at certain crucial points, may have coinciding downbeats. In English poetry, for instance, one crucial difference between Alexander Pope's metric style on the one hand and Milton's and Shelley's metric styles on the other is that in the latter the stream of linguistic downbeats is less regular than in the former, while regular metre is somehow still perceived. Consequently, Pope's poetry is perceived as witty, Milton's and Shelley's as emotional. What Scott gains is the accurate reproduction of the linguistic patterns in one dimension of poetic rhythm, while he loses the interplay between two dimensions. My proposal gains, the other way around, the interplay between two dimensions, but loses the *exact* reproduction of the linguistic patterns; it preserves only a *general* notion of unpredictability. In the final resort, one must make up his mind which package of gains and losses one prefers: the essential tension or the exact sequence of groups in the unpredictable linguistic stream.

Three Versions of Gloucester's Speech

I will demonstrate this essential tension and the lack of it by comparing two metered passages to a text where there is no versification pattern (reproduced, with the necessary changes, from my book [Tsur, 2008: 145–146]). The next three excerpts are versions by three different authors of the same speech. One of the most memorable instances of Gloucester's villainy *(Richard III)* is the scene in which he gets rid of Lord Hastings:

> If? thou Protector of this damned Strumpet,
> Talk'st thou to me of Ifs: Thou art a Traytor,
> Off with his head; now, by Saint Paul I sweare,
> I will not dine, vntill I see the same.

The situation has its particular wit. It is reinforced by the 'sharpness' of Richard's speech which, in turn, is a corollary of the rapid shift of diverse phrases, *without violating the integrity of the line.* Here we witness not merely a sequence of irregular groupings of syllables; group boundaries are enhanced by shifting levels of speech. Notice the isolated tense 'If' at the beginning of the speech, quoted from Hastings' discourse, whereas the rest is Gloucester's direct speech. The rapid shift of levels of discourse appears here in the shift from 'If' to direct speech and back to the quoted 'Ifs', as well as in the rapid shift from the second person to the third person, varying the direction of his address ('thou Protector', 'Off with his head', 'now, by Saint *Paul*' etc.). In this speech, the conflicting linguistic pattern and versification pattern compete to establish themselves in the reader's perception, thus enhancing each other. The group boundaries intrude on the line, but the line strives to retain its integrity.

Shakespeare actually amplifies here a technique which he found in Dolman's poem in *The Mirror for Magistrates:*

> Yf, traytor quod he? playest thou with yfs and ands?
> Ile on thy body avowe it with these hands

Notice the isolated 'Yf' followed by a short vocative ('traytor'), followed by a short parenthesis ('quod he'). The quoted 'yfs' and 'ands' not only diversify—intensify the subdivision of—the line. They give, at the same time, rise to a bold 'antigrammatic' rhyme, by rhyming a noun with a conjunction (in the plural!, involving a leap from first-order language to second-order language and back). So it strengthens the closure of the rhymed couplet—heightening its sense of unity. It will be illuminating to compare this couplet of Dolman's to Sir Thomas More's prose account of the same incident.

> What quod the protectour thou seruest me I wene with iffs and andes, I tell the thei have so done, and that I will make good on thy body traitour.

Verbally, More's account does not greatly differ from Dolman's. It displays the same (or even more) emphatic segmentation of the syntactic stream. Still, there seems to be a perceptual difference between them: segmentation stands out less clearly in the unmetered version. The present comparison highlights an illuminating aspect of the issue. The first two excerpts conspicuously demonstrate how shifting phrases may enhance the prosodic unit. The third excerpt foregrounds in them an unexpected, obverse, aspect: how the prosodic structure imposed on the phrases in Dolman's poem renders their shift far more emphatic than in More's prose account.

Problem within *the Tonic-Syllabic System*

There is a notorious problem regarding translation *within* the tonic-syllabic system too. The average word-length is different in various languages. Consequently, there is a pernicious if largely implicit belief that translators are free to translate iambic pentameter into iambic hexameter or the other way around, according to the requirements of the average word length in the target language — as long as the basic iambic pattern is observed.

I have encountered so far only one, rather militant, statement of this position explicitly stated. But practice based on this assumption is virtually ubiquitous. English pentameter verse is frequently translated into Hebrew hexameter, and French alexandrine is most frequently translated into English decasyllabic verse.

Hungarian translators usually don't sin in this respect. Most notably, the great Hebrew poet and translator Abraham Shlonsky translated *Hamlet* into iambic hexameter, usually regarded as a masterpiece of translation. Shlonsky himself seems to have felt that something was wrong with this, because later he translated *King Lear* into pentameter. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to render in a Hebrew pentameter line all the information given in an English pentameter line. The average word in Hebrew is two and a half times longer than in English. The reverse happens when translating French alexandrines into English. The average French word is much longer than the average English word.

The most outrageous instance of this tendency is Shlonsky's translation of Hamlet's line

> It is not, nor it cannot come to good.

This line occurs at the peak of one of Hamlet's 'hypomanic' outbursts, and is uncontrolled — within controlled prosodic constraints. Syntactically, Hamlet 'corrects' himself in mid-sentence, leaving the first clause incomplete. Stylistically, it has that double-negation 'nor it cannot'. Prosodically, this is one of the very few iambic pentameter lines in major English poetry in which you cannot observe a caesura after the fourth, fifth, or sixth position; the major syntactic juncture occurs after the third position (as we shall see in a moment, caesura in the iambic tetrameter and hexameter is rigidly fixed at the middle, for good perceptual reasons, whereas the pentameter is much more flexible). Shlonsky renders this verse line in an elegant hexameter line:

> לֹא טוֹב הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, וְלֹא יִיטַב סוֹפוֹ
>
> lo tov hamaʕasɛ, vəlo ji:tav sofo

Syntactically, this is a coordinate sentence with both clauses completed: 'This deed is wrong, and it will not come to good'. Prosodically, the major syntactic juncture occurs after the sixth position and produces a perfectly symmetrical parallelism — yielding a psychological atmosphere of a rational analysis of the situation, in the Neoclassic vein. Listen to this verse line.

In an undergraduate seminar paper back in the nineteen-fifties I criticized Shlonsky's translation at considerable length, and offered an alternative translation to this line:

כִּי אֵין זֶה, אַף לֹא יִגָּמֵר בְּטוֹב

ki eyn zɛ, ʔaf lo jiggamer bətov

(for it is not, nor will it come to good). Listen to this verse line. Here the first clause is interrupted leaving a meaningless stump ('it is not'), and the major syntactic juncture occurs after the third position.

The aforementioned belief ignores the really important thing, the gestalt qualities generated by the various metres. The iambic hexameter and the iambic tetrameter divide the verse line into two segments of equal length and equal structure. Each segment has the same number of syllables, begins with a weak position and ends with a strong position. The iambic pentameter, by contrast, can be divided into segments of equal length and dissimilar structure, or of similar structure and unequal length. It may be divided into 5+5 positions, but then the first segment begins and ends with a weak position, whereas the second segment begins and ends with a strong position. To obtain segments that both begin with a weak position and end with a strong position, the verse line must be divided into 4+6 or 6+4 positions. Owing to these respective structures, the hexameter and tetrameter enforce a caesura exactly at the middle, are symmetrical and stable, and frequently have a rational or simplifying effect. The pentameter may have a caesura after the fourth, fifth or sixth position, is necessarily asymmetrical and more flexible. Such a difference may crucially affect the perceived aesthetic quality of a poem. Thus, for instance, in Verlaine's view, to render a verse line musical, first of all one must liberate it from the tyranny of symmetry: 'De la musique avant toute chose, / Et pour cela préfère l'Impair'. In the iambic pentameter we have an exceptionally sophisticated version of asymmetry—within an even-numbered structure.

People who entertain the belief in the equivalence of the pentameter and the hexameter sometimes don't even realize that by shifting from the one to the other the rules of the game have changed. While the placement of caesura is flexible in the pentameter, in the hexameter it is rigidly fixed after the sixth position, for good

perceptual reasons. First, as George Miller (1970) demonstrated, the span of short-term memory is limited at the magical number seven plus or minus two; longer verse lines have a compulsory break. Secondly, there is a gestalt rule that the organization of a perceptual object cannot be equally good at all levels. Greater simplicity of the parts makes them stand out at the expense of the whole; the parts must be weakened to some extent to make them dependent on, and integrated with, the whole. The symmetry of the hexameter line makes the segments divided by the caesura stand out, whereas the asymmetry of the pentameter line renders them integrated with the whole.

Let me illustrate the dynamics involved by quoting from my book (Tsur, 2012: 116–117) the following exercise:

> Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song.
> (*Paradise Lost* I, 13).

In this pentameter line, the caesura occurs after *aid* in position 4. Suppose however, that we add two more syllables to the verse line, turning it into an iambic hexameter, thus:

> Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song of praise.

If one continues to observe a caesura after *aid*, the line is liable to fall apart. Here the caesura, in harmony with the perceptual needs of the iambic hexameter, is automatically shifted to after *my* in position 6, even though this happens in mid-phrase. To be sure, a poet may insert a syntactic break anywhere in his verse line. But this will not necessarily be related to caesura. This is no mere circular toying around with words, as in "If we define the fish course as that which comes after the soup, then if a hostess serves fish first, it cannot be the fish course" (Wimsatt, 1971: 208). Caesura is a perceptual fact of versification, not of syntax. Perceptually, not only by definition, a word boundary *at the appropriate place* confirms caesura; its absence causes syntax to override it. Consider the following two lines:

> One single point in this belief
> From this organization sprung

(Shelley, "Peter Bell the Third", 569-570)

We know, without rule-checking, that the boundary of the word "point" in the fourth position confirms something, whereas "organization" in the next line overrides something, generating palpable tension. In both cases, this something is caesura.

Hofstadter on Translation

At this point I wish to make a digression to a paper in *Thinking Verse* volume 2 (2012), 'Different music, same condition: Hofstadter and Lyotard' by Peter Dayan. Hofstadter, Dayan says, 'has shown why, for him, only translations that take account of the formal patterns of the original poem can be received as themselves poetic; why regular verse can only be translated as regular verse', leading to the conclusion that 'the essence of the act of writing poetry is the indissoluble fusion of a medium with a message, the unsunderable wedding of form to content as equal partners' (524). Hofstadter adopts this position in an extreme version. 'He finds poetry that eschews the constraints of regular verse, like atonal music, aesthetically objectionable because in it, he cannot see content wedded to form. Instead, he sees a purely intellectual art in which 'form is seen as the dog's tail, content as its body' (527), and the artist refuses to let the formal tail wag the dog of content' (Dayan, 2012: 12). All this, as I said, is in headlong collision with Clive Scott's position.

It will be noticed that this argument contains elements of mine, but there are two substantial differences. First, while Hofstadter speaks of 'the unsunderable wedding of form to content' and 'the constraints of regular verse', I am speaking of *mutually constraining* stringencies. This is no verbal hair-splitting, but a distinction of substance. When I claim that Scott 'loses the interplay between two dimensions', I don't mean between form and content, but between two sound patterns, that is, the sound patterns of language and metre, both within what for Hofstadter would count as form. In other words, though both of us defend the rights of regular verse, the 'mutually-constraining-stringencies' conception is more fine-grained than the 'form-and-content' conception. Secondly, while Hofstadter adopts an uncompromising all-

or-nothing stance, I am speaking of 'crucial recommendations', each of which is justifiable in view of the kind of response it is meant to evoke.

Now let us see how Hofstadter's practice bears out his generalization. In the last, 'Conclusion' Chapter of the book, says Dayan, 'at last, Hofstadter answers a question which, for anyone interested in the condition of music in verse, will have been hanging in the air for five hundred pages: what, exactly, is the music of language, in praise of which, according to the subtitle, the book has been written?'. So, I went to this chapter. Here, among other things, Hofstadter offers translations of his own of two French poems by Armand Silvestre. I will refer only to the first one. Consider the first stanza of, 'Aurore' (Dawn), in French and in English:

> Des jardins de la nuit s'envole les étoiles,
> Abeilles d'or qu'attire un invisible miel,
> Et l'aube, au loin tendant la candeur de ses toiles,
> Trame de fils d'argent le manteau bleu du ciel.
>
> From the gardens of night the bright stars are in flight,
> Golden bees subtly lured by a nectar unseen,
> And the dawn, far off spreading its canvases white,
> Shoots its silvery threads o'er the sky's azure screen.

On the whole he does a beautiful job, the English poems are good poems in their own right, and convey fairly the meaning. Versification is highly polished. In this stanza, the meaning comes through, and so does the rather moderate figurative language. There is one interesting exception. In the English version, the dawn spreads 'the white canvases', whereas in the French original, it spreads 'the whiteness of the canvases'. There is a huge difference between the two. In 'white canvases' a physical-action predicate is applied to a physical object, resulting in physical movement in space. In 'the whiteness of the canvases' the physical action is applied to an abstraction, a thing-free quality, generating an intense, thing-free presence. To be sure, we are speaking of the *dawn*'s canvasses, which are immaterial and have no stable visual shape, but, still, 'the whiteness of the canvases' is an abstract quality of that immaterial entity. In other words, in a concrete noun many abstract properties are 'grown together'; the genitive construction loosens the relationship between the abstract quality and the object whose quality it is; the

application of a predicate to the abstract quality as an object suggests that it has some independent existence.

This change is not forced on the translator by the constraints of versification; he could solve the problem with a simple apostrophe, by writing 'spreading its canvases' white'. 'White canvases' suggests relative stability, whereas 'the whiteness of the canvases' as object of the verb 'spread' suggests massive presence, diffuseness, elusiveness and intangibility. Thus, 'white canvases' generates 'a psychological atmosphere of relative certainty, security, and patent purpose.[5]

As to versification, there seems to be a problem here relating to metre. Hofstadter translates the French alexandrine into English anapests. A closer look at the French stress pattern reveals that, indeed, just as in 'Correspondances', the first hemistich is clearly anapestic. The second, third, fourth and fifth hemistichs, however, are clearly iambic. The sixth hemistich, again, is clearly anapestic. The seventh hemistich is iambic with an 'inverted first foot', while the last one contains two consecutive stressed syllables: 'manteau bleu', rendering the pattern indecisive.
As I suggested earlier, the iambic is more tolerant of deviant stresses, without falling apart; the anapest more rigidly exerts its will, and tends to suppress linguistic stress that happens to occur in a weak position (and there are quite a few of them in the translation of this stanza). The effect of the anapest here is by far less devastating than in Baudelaire's 'Correspondances', because the contents is less elusive; but still, it reinforces the sense of control, the psychological atmosphere of relative certainty, security, and patent purpose generated by manipulating the solid object 'canvas' rather than its thing-free quality into the referring position. To use Hofstadter's own words, 'the indissoluble fusion of a medium with a message, the unsunderable wedding of form to content as equal partners' has here the wrong effect—the unsunderable wedding of the ternary metre to the manipulation of a relatively solid object into the referring position of the phrase. Their indissoluble fusion suggests here a psychological atmosphere of stronger than appropriate certainty and security (reinforced by the internal rhyme at the caesura and the end of the first line, that

[5] As I have argued in many of my writings, such constructions of "the ABSTRACT of the CONCRETE" abound in Baroque, Romantic and Symbolist poetry and in Whitman's "meditative catalogue", with similar effect.

articulates the verse line into two clear-cut, terse segments). In other words, it's not enough that form and content are unsunderably wedded; their interplay must generate the right kind of atmosphere or perceived quality.

Note on Terminology

Finally, I wish to emphasize that Scott and myself use two of our crucial terms, 'rhythm' and 'equivalence', in different senses. A reader sympathetic to both Scott's and my work made the following comment at one point of my paper:

> This as I see it is the crucial point of divergence with Scott: that you see metre's constraints as central to how the poem's rhythms engender a perceptual response, whereas Scott thinks that there can be no equivalence between constraints and so we should aspire to *give an account of* a rhythmic experience rather than *engender* that experience metrically in the target language.

Apparently, the opposition here is between *giving an account of* and *engendering*. From my vantage point, however, Scott does not give an account of a rhythmic experience, only of one important ingredient of it, which by itself does not make a rhythmic experience. Later this reader points out again the same difference, but also emphasizes our different conceptions of the relationship between rhythm and metre.

> It strikes me that the question of metre versus free verse is ultimately secondary to your argument—it's a question of whether one is using the translation to *describe* a rhythmic experience, or to *engender* that experience through metrical constraints. *So on your account, the translation of rhythm cannot take precedence of the translation of metre simply because the metre is integral to the rhythm*.

Scott handles equivalence in an all-or-nothing manner: 'equivalence' for him is near-synonymous with 'identity'. For me, 'equivalence' is based on structural resemblance (not identity), that allows for varying degrees of similarity. Equivalence is achieved when the most similar options available in the target system are chosen. The guiding principle for this is the similar *perceived effects* to which the structures in question

contribute. In structuralist phonology, speech sounds are conceived of as of bundles of distinctive features. For Scott, different speech sounds cannot be equivalent, only different. For me, different speech sounds may share similar distinctive features, that may contribute to similar perceived effects. In this case I speak of varying degrees of equivalence.

As to metric equivalence, French metre is based on syllable count; English metre is tonic-syllabic, that is, based on syllable count and a regular sequence of upbeats and downbeats. We both agree that equivalence between e.g. French alexandrine and English iambic cannot be based on their similar traditional status. For Scott, however, English metre is opposed to French metre, wholesale, by virtue of the 'regular sequence of upbeats and downbeats' in English metre. For me, English iambic is equivalent to French metre in a sense in which the trochaic, anapestic or dactylic metres are not—by virtue of their similar perceived effects: both are more tolerant than the other metres of irregular stress patterns.

As to rhythm, for Scott it is contrasted to metre; for me, it results from an interplay between prose rhythm and metre. I adopted this conception from Wellek and Warren, who say that one may account for poetic rhythm only by relying on three dimensions: prose rhythm, metre and performance. Wellek and Warren need 'performance' to make clear that when you measure relationships in a recording, you measure an accidental performance, not poetic structure (this is, indeed, what happens with many measurements from the nineteen-twenties to the nineteen-sixties, or even later). In his brilliant paper 'Prose Rhythm and Metre', Roger Fowler elaborates on the first two of Wellek and Warren's notions, mentioning 'performance' only for completeness' sake. Generative metrists have reinvented Wellek and Warren's 'prose rhythm' and 'metre', but ignore performance (some of them even object to it). I go one step further: poetry reading is a problem-solving activity both on the semantic and the prosodic level. In understanding a metaphor you accommodate the conflicting meanings in a semantic interpretation, whereas in a vocal (or subvocal) reading, you accommodate the conflicting patterns of prose rhythm and metre in a rhythmical performance. Thus, the semantic and rhythmic processing of a poem are governed by a homogeneous set of principles. According to this conception, we are measuring not *accidental* vocal features, but vocal features

that serve to accommodate the conflicting patterns of prose rhythm and versification in a rhythmical performance constrained by them.

Accordingly, Scott and myself mean very different things by 'rhythm'. If I understand him correctly, he means by rhythm something very similar to prose rhythm, whereas I mean the accommodation of the conflicting patterns of prose rhythm and metre. Briefly, one of the main points in my counterproposal is to suggest the conception of rhythm-as-problem-solving instead of Scott's conception of rhythm-as-prose-rhythm.

The afore-said reader raised another issue regarding my use of critical terms. With reference to my comment 'equivalence to the source text […] is just another stringency' he observed: 'this seems slightly to downplay what you are arguing!' This is a notorious problem in literary criticism, about which I have written quite a lot. In order to make distinctions in a text or between texts you need a metalanguage with terms that have considerable descriptive contents. Such terms, however, make, by themselves, rather trivial distinctions. In order to render those distinctions significant, you need a theoretical model, that in itself cannot be directly applied to texts without the mediation of those descriptive terms. When you say 'this poem contains 41 lines', your metalinguistic statement may be perfectly true, but lack significance. If, however, you reverse the order of digits 'this poem contains 14 lines', your statement will gain significance by virtue of the model 'sonnet'. In this case, 'equivalence to the source text' treated as 'just another stringency' is rather trivial. But it gains significance from Dewey's conception of the aesthetic object as the elegant solution of a problem. That's how critical terms work.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper is a counterproposal to Clive Scott's claim that translation, irrespective of what kind of verse it is translating, should always opt for free verse in the translated text. This paper reviews three possible approaches to the issue: literal translation plus close reading, opting for free verse, and elegant solution to a problem, resulting in an aesthetic object in its own right. The third one is the proposal expounded here. None of these approaches is right or wrong per se. Each one offers its peculiar

package of gains and losses, prone to offer the reader different kinds of experience. Thus, each approach should be assessed in view of the kind of experience it offers. The basic assumption of the proposal propounded here is, then, that the aesthetic object is an elegant solution to a problem. Such a solution is constrained by conflicting stringencies. The elegant solution occurs when the text accommodates the incompatible stringencies in an overall structure. The grammar and vocabulary of a language as well as poetic conventions are such stringencies. The requirement that the translated poem should be as similar to the original as possible is just one more stringency. Not all the options in one semiotic system are available in another. Equivalence in translation will be judged according to whether the nearest options available in the target system are chosen.

I agree with Scott's misgiving that 'It is easy to forget that translation is not a translation of the signifier into the signified, but of the signifier into another signifier' (Scott, 73). Consequently, this paper explores the problems of equivalence in relation to two aspects of the sound patterns of poetry: speech sounds and metre. In this respect I wish to observe that versification patterns and linguistic stress pattern are conveyed by the same noises; but they conflict, nevertheless. The pattern of performance too, that accommodates them, is conveyed by the very same noises. Of course, the whole array of patterns—alliteration, consonance, pararhyme, etc. too are conveyed by the same noises.

The structuralist conception of speech sounds as bundles of distinctive features and perceptual qualities offers a wealth of fine-grained options of oppositions and similarities to choose from. Poetic metre is based on regularity and predictability. The French alexandrine is based on the predictability of the number of syllables, of the placement of the caesura, and of the order of 'feminine' and 'masculine' rhymes. The order of stresses is unpredictable. In tonic-syllabic verse, stress is more predictable. Even when stress pattern is irregular to some extent, it typically confirms the metric pattern at certain crucial points. In translating French poetry into languages with tonic-syllabic metre the option most tolerant of unpredictable stresses should be selected within this metric system, which is the iambic metre. The foregoing considerations have been explored with reference to French poems

translated into Hebrew, Hungarian and English (as well as one line from *Hamlet* and its Hebrew translations).

The present paper adds to the discussion what in my mind is a crucial variable: the perceived effect generated by the interaction of the other variables. Equivalence is not based on a point-by-point correspondence, but on a device's potential to contribute to a certain perceived effect.

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