

15

STUDIA TRANSLATORICA

15

STUDIA TRANSLATORICA

SONG TRANSLATION STUDIES

STUDIEN ZUM ÜBERSETZEN VON LIEDERN

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Spis treści · Inhalt · Contents

Johan Franzon, Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz, Michał Gąska Introduction to volume 15 of the journal <i>Studia Translatorica</i> on song translation studies	7
Johan Franzon, Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz, Michał Gąska Einführung in den 15. Band der Zeitschrift <i>Studia Translatorica</i> zu Studien zum Übersetzen von Liedern	17

ARTYKUŁY · ARTIKEL · ARTICLES

Johan Franzon Song and translation – song translation studies.....	31
Kenny Wesley Rhythm and blues song translation during the yé-yé period in France and Spain	53
Mattias Aronsson From Waterloo Road to the Champs-Élysées. A study of French translations of British and American pop songs	71
Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz Singing within constraints: Strategies of translating songs on early Polish National Television	89
Beatrice Carpi I am not throwing away my shot! (at discussing multimodality): How a multimodal analysis can support song translation – the case of <i>Hamilton</i>	111
Tim Reus How music and lyrics interact: A translation-oriented analysis of musical narrative in Disney's "Let it go"	133

Karen Wilson-deRoze	
The marriage of modes: Singable opera translation	155
Matthew Guay	
Translating songs between endangered and modernized languages: The case of Ryukyuan in Okinawa, Japan	183
Marco Agnetta	
Translation und Zyklizität: Zur Übersetzung der Winterreise von Wilhelm Müller und Franz Schubert durch Bélanger	207
Arianna Autieri, Lauri A. Niskanen	
Translating the songs of the “Sirens” in James Joyce’s Ulysses	235
Anna Mach	
The ensemble of death and dance: Songs of The Tiger Lillies in Polish translation by Szymon Jachimek	261
Małgorzata Kodura	
Activating creativity in translation training courses through song translation	281

RECENZJE · REZENSIONEN · REVIEWS

Johan Franzon	
Beat music, sláger, and different song translations in Socialist Hungary ...	301
Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz	
Between translation and semiotics and into artistic transduction	306
Michał Gąska	
Das Übersetzen von Kunstliedern vor dem Hintergrund der funktionalen Translationswissenschaft	311

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Introduction to volume 15 of the journal *Studia Translatorica* on song translation studies

This volume owes its existence to the coincidence of two happy events. The first was the 10th EST Congress, taking place in Oslo in 2022, which housed a well-filled panel named *Song translation studies*. Chaired by Johan Franzon and Annjo Klungervik-Greenall, the panel was the first of its kind in the history of EST congresses and contained some of the papers appearing in this volume. The second was the journal *Studia Translatorica*, which, apart from being consistently ambitious and well-edited, has begun to take an interest in the subject. Its volume 14 contained an analysis by Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz (2023) about the challenges facing translation and music as a new subfield within translation studies. In its history, it also boasts an article about the prolific Polish song translator Wojciech Młynarski (Wysocka 2020). By these events, a general ambition to collect and collaborate on insights about translation and music turned into an actual, welcome opportunity.

This subfield of translation studies did not originate as a naturally unified school of research. From the outset, the writings on the subject have entered from different directions, with quite different goals. The oldest interest seems to be the one connected to singable opera translation, for performance as well as printed publications (e.g. Apter/ Herman 2016; cf. Apter 1985; Apter/ Herman 1995; Gorrée 1997). Another goal was to offer practical help in the translating of all kinds of song lyrics – with an emphasis on translating as opposed

to rewriting (e.g. Low 2017). A third direction followed a socio-cultural interest: it may be illustrated by, for example, Susam-Saraeva's publication from 2015 concerning a genre of Greek music and its presence in Turkey, examined through its cultural and political as well as textual consequences. Last but not least, a fourth opening can be seen as stemming from a theoretical interest in multimodal or intermedial interactions (e.g. Kaindl 1995; Desblache 2019; Kaindl 2020). Several collected volumes have also provided input from disciplines as varied as semiotics, musicology, popular music studies, theatre studies, or just plain empirical, descriptive investigations into largely uncharted translation practices (e.g. Gorlée 2005; Susam-Sarajeva 2008; Minors 2013; Şerban/Chan 2020; Cayuela/ Bertoneche 2020). In encyclopedic overviews, all these strands of input are increasingly seen as an established, common field of research (García Jiménez 2012; Mateo 2012; Bousseaux 2012; Desblache 2018; Greenall et al. 2021; Low 2022).

The object of study within this (sub)field has gone under different names: vocal translation, translation and music, translation of music, translation of song, translating texts of songs, and translating for singing. Accordingly, the field gives an impression of being undefined, fragmented, or fractured. A simple, symptomatic sign of this is evident in the bibliographies of earlier studies and collections, which have few references that they share. Still judging only by references, many of the articles appearing in the overviews and collections show limited acquaintance with one another. To be honest, there are some that show little explicit connection to translation studies at all. Nevertheless, the creation of sound theoretical systems is dependent on there being empirical data of enough variety to base them on. Every edited collection is a step in this direction. This volume hopes to be yet another step toward more shared knowledge and a more easily overviewed research field.

Song translation studies is the name we have chosen for this volume. It is grounded in the fact that the act and fact of song is central to all 12 articles presented here. In most of them, the object of study is *song* in the sense of 'an artistic artifact comprised of music and lyrics', often published in a recorded or printed form, thus copyrighted, though sometimes living primarily in oral tradition. Some of the articles focus more on *song* in the sense of 'sung performance'. The English language allows a conflation of the double meaning – one can say both “sing that song” and “raise your voice in song”. This close link between song and singing is natural in languages as different as Italian (*canzone, canto*), Finnish (*laulu, laulaminen*), and the Scandinavian languages (*sång* or *sang*). Unfortunately, there are languages with a more split terminology; they include German (*Gesang, Lied, Popsong*) and Polish (*śpiew, pieśń, piosenka*). But as discussed in the article by Franzon (in this volume), we find *song translation* (and thus possibly *Übersetzen von Liedern* and *tłumaczenie piosenek*) to be the

most practicable and commonly used term for what is at the center of attention in this field of study.

Naturally, this volume also is a smorgasbord offering demonstrations of different aims, approaches, and materials. It contains pairs of languages, some of whose song traditions and norms for singability have not been studied much before: from Ryukyuan languages into Japanese and English (in the article by Guay), and between English and Polish, French, Spanish, Italian, Finnish, German, and Uchinaaguchi. One study of German-into-French translation may serve to defy the anglicization that appears to somewhat dominate both the business and research field of song translation.

We have representations of different media and genres, from printed novels and printed music based on printed poetry (the case of Schubert–Müller, in the article by Agnetta) to opera, musical theatre, Disney songs, punk cabaret, and a few examples from the vast field of “folk music”: songs in non-standardized form belonging primarily to vernacular language contexts. Several papers deal with what, at one point in this volume, is called “the golden age of pop song translation”, i.e. the post-WWII growth of an international music business and its need for translations, which was different then than now. It can be pictured both as a story of American exports to the world (as in the case of rhythm and blues in the article by Wesley) and as a project of inter-European exchange (in the form of a Polish variety television show in the article by Rędzioch-Korkuz).

A reader will find research ventures placed at both ends of the spectrum of fidelity and liberty: from a natural wish to respect the intentions of great creators, be it Mozart, Schubert, James Joyce, or Lin-Manuel Miranda – and several other original creators of the musical *Hamilton* – to freer uses, or appropriations, of song for various purposes such as sung or subtitled music videos, satirical theatre productions, or covers for immediate release onto a current, domestic pop scene. Reasons are given to ponder the translation needs of booklets accompanying CD editions, the functionality of AI translations, the effect of subtle shifts such as the rearrangement of repeated verses (evaluated through the idea of *Invarianz*, which is how fidelity is conceptualized in German terminology), or the opportunities for amateur or professional song translators to exert some creativity or authorial agency. Theoretical input comes from the disciplines of musicology, popular music studies, ethnolinguistics, narratological and literary theory, multimodality studies, and various areas of translation studies, such as translation didactics.

The articles may pave the way for mapping the field of song translation studies in different ways. We find here at least two possibilities in the application of theory. One is through more exact specification in order to get a deeper understanding of single cases and examples, such as distinguishing between three kinds of intra- and extradiegetical singing in literary fiction (in the article

by Autieri/ Niskanen), distinguishing between convergence or divergence in musical semiosis, or identifying several levels of analysis related to musical narrative, rhetoric, and semantics, as well as within the verbal, visual, and audio mode in multimodal artworks. But, in order to forge paths through larger corpora of song, rougher distinctions can be of use, as between semantic and semi-otic retentions in cover recordings or between three general genres: love song, protest song, and novelty song (including every other kind of song, in the article by Aronsson). Another basic choice of focus may be between three research areas: source text analysis (of music in the article by Reus, or of the multimodal whole in Carpi); the technical and practical “how to” (as in the articles by Wilson-deRoze, Guay, and Kodura); or possible reasons why, concerning, for example, textual themes (religious, in Mach) or the connotations of a special musical genre (R&B, in Wesley).

A more practical way of ordering studies is according to the choice of subject matter, which in this volume makes them fall roughly into three groups: pop music studies, multimodal and musical meaning, and special cases and applications. The volume opens with an overview of the subfield presented by **Johan Franzon**, who attempts to systematize previous research on song translation and create a map of song translation studies. Franzon proposes a threefold division into a source-oriented branch, meant to embrace the genius of the song; a transfer-oriented branch, with special focus on different modes and media; and a target-oriented branch, dedicated to the study of “the afterlife” of source songs, their target versions, and the post-translation effects. He claims that the breadth and variety of research on song translation, which often creates a relatively non-coherent picture of the subfield, may indeed be an advantage.

This metatheoretical paper is followed by articles that utilize the descriptive-explanatory methodology, which has been considered one of the most suitable means of analysis within song translation (Greenall et al. 2021). **Kenny Wesley** presents an analysis of French and Spanish translations of English-language songs representing the so-called *yé-yé* period in the 1960s, when anglophone songs, both originals and covers, contributed to the development of new genres of pop music in western and southern Europe. Wesley provides an explanatory analysis of four songs representing the R&B genre, concentrating on individual strategies, changes at different levels of the songs, and the socio-cultural context. He shows how a musical genre that originally was of merely a local, even marginalized, significance gained an increasing presence and popularity in Europe, where some attentive re-creation combined with changes caused by socio-political circumstances.

Similar research material is discussed by **Mattias Aronsson**, who examines French translations of British and American pop songs released in the 1950s and onwards from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. His research

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proves that songs reached their target pop market through strategies representing the whole continuum of semantic fidelity, starting with the most faithful renditions and finishing with all-new lyrics that bear no semantic resemblance to their source texts. Among the many factors that may determine choices of translation strategy, two important ones are the genre identity of songs and the fact that the translators often had their own stakes and status within the music business.

The question of genre is further examined in the paper authored by **Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz**, who presents a descriptive analysis of translation strategies used in translating foreign songs presented in the early episodes of a well-known entertainment show broadcast on Polish National Television. In addition to offering a descriptive overview, she indicates significant changes made to English-language songs at the level of genre, medium, and mode, thus highlighting the significance of multimodality in song translation as well as drawing attention to salient non-linguistic constraints.

That paper is a bridge between descriptive methodologies and those which are slanted toward the problem of multimodality and musical meaning. In what follows, **Beatrice Carpi** draws attention to the question of adopting a holistic approach to song translation, as it can help embrace the significant quality of songs being plurisemiotic artworks. She puts forward her own model of analysis, which accommodates the multimodal nature of songs. Having analyzed a song from the musical *Hamilton* (2015), Carpi demonstrates how meaning is conveyed through the interplay of various semiotic resources, which she groups under the labels of verbal, audio, and visual modes. She provides us with detailed and step-by-step instructions on how to apply the model, thus encouraging researchers to test it against other genres and contexts and translators to bear in mind that theatre song lyrics are closely involved with staging and acting.

A music-centered model of analysis is demonstrated in the paper authored by **Tim Reus**. Having employed three paradigms of meaning in music – musical narrative, music rhetoric, and music semantics – the author presents an in-depth analysis of how meaning is constructed in the song “Let it go” from the popular Disney animated film *Frozen* (2013). Reus foregrounds the meaning conveyed by the vocal melody and the progressive growth and flow of the musical accompaniment on the soundtrack. By doing this, he underlines the significance of music in song translation and offers an analysis tool for song translators to at least sharpen their ears toward how music can communicate meaning.

Karen Wilson-deRoze also advocates the music-based approach to song translation, arguing that music can amplify or modify the semantic meaning of words, and as such, it carries significant implications for translation. This is done by critically discussing Jeremy Sams’ English singable translation of Mozart’s

Le nozze di Figaro (1786) and juxtaposing it with her own solutions that give primary attention to musical semiosis, i.e. the interplay between the verbal and the musical content. Even though her in-depth analysis pertains mainly to the genre of opera, her conclusions are of universal relevance, as again, they underline the need to consider the musical dimension while translating songs.

The importance of minding an artful composition is carried on by **Marco Agnetta**, who sees it through the idea of cyclicity – how the coherence created by a series of poems gets rearranged in the processes of setting them to music and translating them. The case studied is the song cycle *Winterreise* by Wilhelm Müller and Franz Schubert (1828). By concentrating on intratextual and extratextual references, he traces how the French translator Bélanger, whose translation is discussed in detail, negotiated the basic demands of singability without changing Schubert's music. Even so, some significant changes in the cyclical structure can be seen: in his manipulating of repetitions, an essential characteristic of song, and certain lexical choices, such as concerning religious elements.

The concluding four papers present case studies of particular problems concerning different languages, cultural and medial contexts, and translation *skopoi*. The paper by **Matthew Guay** shifts attention to the socio-cultural importance of song translation and the sensitive relations between translation and indigenous languages. He discusses the highly endangered languages of the Ryukyuan Archipelago, the southernmost Japanese islands, and argues the unique opportunities that song translation may afford. More systematic study, informed practices, and comparisons with other endangered languages can help song translation contribute to the preservation of indigenous languages.

Arianna Autieri and **Lauri A. Niskanen's** paper addresses the problem of translating songs that are only alluded to, as they are presented as part of prose fiction in a printed novel. This offers another challenge for translators when a text that by definition is multimodal and multimedial switches to a (theoretically) monomedial channel. The authors provide a thorough analysis of nine Italian (re)translations of the songs in the chapter "Sirens" from James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and two (re)translations into Finnish. As they work with two comparatively different languages, they indicate not only objective impediments resulting from the structure of the source and target languages but also various means of making literary fiction sing and different strategies used by the translators in order to make "on-paper" lyrics resemble the songs as vitalized by Joyce. The fact that opera arias are generally known for being sung in Italian, but in the 19th century were also often sung in translation, is a further complicating factor.

The translator's decision-making process is also investigated by **Anna Mach** from a contrasting point of view. Instead of a literary translator aiming for fidelity, we see a song translator taking responsibility for producing effective or

entertaining songs. She discusses a theatrical production based on Polish translations of songs by the British band The Tiger Lillies, focusing mainly on reconstructing the translator's rationale, as evidenced in the departures he made from the source texts. Questions regarding (self)censorship and deliberate domestication, the intertextuality of political discourse, and differences in factual knowledge between source and target audiences are raised and discussed in relation to the creativity and appropriating practices that we often find in song translation.

In her paper, **Małgorzata Kodura** demonstrates how song translation may contribute to the education of translation trainees. Having conducted a small-scale experiment in which she used both machine-generated and human-generated translations in a university course, she confirms that song translation is characterized by a relatively high degree of difficulty and requires a good deal of culturally relevant creativity. Since the latter is a necessary skill of translators, the author encourages incorporating song translation tasks into translation courses or workshops.

In our attempt to keep an update on everything new in this field where music, song, and translation meet, we include reviews of an edited collection and two monographs that cultivate the field in three different ways. First is an entry in a well-established book series of popular music studies, whose eighth volume, edited by **Ádám Ignác**, gives us a many-sided understanding of Hungarian popular music history, with some emphasis on translating the influx of "beat music" of the 1960s in a politically oppressive climate. **Dinda L. Gorlée**'s book serves as a perfect example of a holistic approach to analyzing the word-sound or language-culture interplay, emphasizing the concept of artistic transduction, which she explains as a process of transenergizing creativity. **Sigmund Kvam**'s monograph focuses on **Edvard Grieg**'s art songs and their translations into German and Norwegian/Danish, which are analyzed from a communicative-functional vantage point. **Kvam**'s work is a significant contribution to the study of singable song translations within German discourse on translation.

The editors would like to thank **Anna Małgorzewicz** and the editorial board of *Studia Translatorica*, as well as the other individuals lending their invaluable efforts to producing this volume. We hope that all the papers will contribute to the development of the field of song translation by providing insightful observations and opening promising research avenues.

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Einführung in den 15. Band der Zeitschrift *Studia Translatorica* zu Studien zum Übersetzen von Liedern

Dieser Band verdankt sein Bestehen einer glücklichen Fügung von zwei Gegebenheiten. Die eine war der 10. EST-Kongress, der 2022 in Oslo stattfand und in dessen Rahmen die Sektion *Song translation studies* mit hervorragenden Vorträgen organisiert wurde. Die von Johan Franzon und Annjo Klungervik-Greenall moderierte Sektion war die erste Sektion dieser Art in der Geschichte des EST-Kongresses und beinhaltete Vorträge, von denen einige in diesem Band erscheinen. Die andere ist die Zeitschrift *Studia Translatorica*, die neben ihrer ambitionierten und exzellenten Redaktion immer größeres Interesse für dieses Thema zeigte. Der 14. Band der Zeitschrift beinhaltet einen Beitrag von Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz (2023) über die Herausforderungen in der Translation und Musik als einem neuen Teilgebiet innerhalb der Translationswissenschaft. Zur Geschichte der Zeitschrift gehört auch die Veröffentlichung des Artikels über den unermüdlichen polnischen Liedübersetzer Wojciech Młynarski (Wysocka 2020). Diese Ereignisse boten Gelegenheit dafür, neue Erkenntnisse über die Translation und Musik zu gewinnen, und eine Plattform für Zusammenarbeit zu schaffen.

Dieses Teilgebiet der Translationswissenschaft entstammt keiner ursprünglich als einheitlich gefassten Forschungstradition. Von Anfang an kamen Beiträge zu diesem Thema aus verschiedenen Richtungen und sie verfolgten sehr unterschiedliche Ziele. Das früheste Interesse scheint mit der singbaren Opernübersetzung, sowohl zu Aufführungszwecken, als auch für gedruckte Veröffentlichungen,

verbunden zu sein (z.B. Apter/ Herman 2016; vgl. Apter 1985; Apter/ Herman 1995; Gorlée 1997). Ein weiteres Ziel war es, praktische Hilfsmittel zum Übersetzen von Liedtexten aller Art – mit Nachdruck auf das Übersetzen im Gegensatz zum Neuschreiben – anzubieten (z.B. Low 2017). Die dritte Richtung war soziokulturell motiviert: es kann beispielsweise anhand von der Veröffentlichung von Susam-Saraeva aus dem Jahr 2015 über ein griechisches Musikgenre und seine Präsenz in der Türkei veranschaulicht werden. Dieses Musikgenre wird in Bezug auf seine kulturellen und politischen, aber auch textuellen Auswirkungen untersucht. Nicht zuletzt kann ein relevanter, vierter Ansatzpunkt als Resultat eines theoretischen Interesses an multimodalen oder intermedialen Interaktionen angesehen werden (z.B. Kaindl 1995; Desblache 2019; Kaindl 2020). Bereits vorhanden sind Sammelbände mit Beiträgen zu unterschiedlichen Disziplinen, wie Semiotik, Musikologie, Populärmusikforschung, Theaterwissenschaft oder einfach nur empirischen, deskriptiven Untersuchungen zu weitgehend unerforschten übersetzerischen Praktiken (z.B. Gorlée 2005; Susam-Sarajeva 2009; Minors 2013; Şerban/ Chan 2020; Cayuela/ Bertoneche 2020). In enzyklopädischen Überblicken werden all diese Stränge als ein etabliertes und gemeinsames Forschungsfeld angesehen (García Jiménez 2012; Mateo 2012; Bousseaux 2012; Desblache 2018; Greenall et al. 2021; Low 2022).

Im englischsprachigen translatorischen Diskurs wurde das Forschungsobjekt innerhalb von diesem (Teil-)Gebiet unter verschiedenen Namen behandelt: *vocal translation*, *translation and music*, *translation of music*, *translation of song*, *translating texts of songs*, *translating for singing*. Aus diesem Grund scheint dieses Teilgebiet undefiniert, fragmentiert oder geteilt zu sein. Ein einfaches, symptomatisches Anzeichen davon ist in Literaturverzeichnissen der früheren Studien und Sammelbände sichtbar, die nur wenige gemeinsame Literaturangaben haben. Aus den Literaturverzeichnissen lässt sich zudem erschließen, dass viele Artikel in diesen Übersichten und Sammelbänden nur selten wechselseitig zitiert werden. Offengestanden gibt es einige Beiträge, die einen geringen Zusammenhang mit der Translationswissenschaft überhaupt aufzeigen. Die Voraussetzung für ein solides, theoretisches System sind zunächst empirische Daten in ausreichend großer Vielfalt. Jeder Sammelband ist somit ein Schritt in diese Richtung. Dieser Band soll ein weiterer Schritt hin zu mehr geteiltem Wissen und einem übersichtlicheren Forschungsfeld sein.

Song translation studies (dt. *Studien zum Übersetzen von Liedern*) ist der Titel, den wir für diesen Band gewählt haben. Der Grund dafür liegt in dem für alle hier präsentierten zwölf Artikel gemeinsamen Forschungsgegenstand, d.h. das *Lied* [eng. *song*]. In den meisten Artikeln stellt das *Lied* im Sinne von einem künstlerischen Artefakt, das aus Musik und Text besteht, oft in einer aufgenommenen oder gedruckten Form veröffentlicht wird und daher urheberrechtlich geschützt ist, obwohl es manchmal hauptsächlich in der mündlichen Tradition

lebt, das Forschungsobjekt dar. Manche Artikel fokussieren primär den *Gesang* im Sinne der gesungenen Aufführung. Die englische Sprache erlaubt das Zusammenspiel dieser beiden Bedeutungen in dem Wort *song* – so ist es sowohl möglich „sing that song“ als auch „raise your voice in song“ zu sagen. Diese enge Verbindung zwischen Lied und Gesang ist auch üblich für so unterschiedliche Sprachen wie Italienisch (*canzone, canto*), Finnisch (*laulu, laulaminen*) oder die skandinavischen Sprachen (*sång* oder *sang*). Leider gibt es Sprachen mit einer gespaltenen Terminologie; dazu gehören eben Deutsch (*Gesang, Lied, Popsong*) und Polnisch (*śpiew, pieśń, piosenka*). Aber wie in dem Artikel von Franzon (in diesem Band) erörtert, betrachten wir *song translation* auf Englisch und *Übersetzen von Liedern* auf Deutsch (sowie *tłumaczenie piosenek* auf Polnisch) als die wohl forschungspraktischsten und am häufigsten verwendeten Begriffe dafür, was in diesem Forschungsfeld im Mittelpunkt steht.

Dieser Band bietet zudem eine Vielfalt an Zielen, Ansätzen und Forschungsmaterialien. Er beinhaltet Paare von Sprachen, deren Liedtraditionen und Normen der Singbarkeit bisher kaum erforscht wurden: aus den Ryukyu-Sprachen ins Japanische und Englische (im Artikel von Guay) und zwischen dem Englischen und dem Polnischen, Französischen, Spanischen, Italienischen, Finnischen, Deutschen sowie Uchinaaguchi. Eine Untersuchung der Übersetzung aus dem Deutschen ins Französische kann übrigens dazu dienen, sich der Anglisierung zu widersetzen, die sowohl das Geschäfts- als auch das Forschungsfeld im Bereich des Übersetzens von Liedern etwas zu dominieren scheint.

Es sind verschiedene Medien und Genres vertreten, angefangen von gedruckten Romanen und gedruckter Musik, die auf Dichtung basiert (der Fall von Schubert-Müller im Artikel von Agnetta), bis zu Oper, Musicals, Disney-Liedern, Punk-Kabarett und einigen Beispielen aus dem weiten Bereich der „Volksmusik“: Lieder, die in einer nicht-standardisierten Form und hauptsächlich in einer Mundart gesungen werden. Einige Beiträge setzen sich mit „dem goldenen Zeitalter des Übersetzens von Popsongs“ auseinander, d.h. dem Wachstum des internationalen Musikgeschäfts nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg und dessen Bedarf an Liedübersetzungen, der im Gegensatz zu der heutigen Situation steht. Es kann jedoch sowohl anhand der Geschichte des amerikanischen Exports in die Welt (wie im Falle des Rhythm & Blues im Artikel von Wesley) als auch aufgrund des Projektes des intereuropäischen Austausches (in Form eines polnischen Varieté-Fernsehprogramms im Artikel von Rędzioch-Korkuz) veranschaulicht werden.

Die Leser und Leserinnen finden in diesem Band Beiträge, die sich an beiden Enden des Spektrums von Treue und Freiheit befinden: beginnend vom selbstverständlichen Wunsch, die Absichten der großen Schöpfer, wie Mozart, Schubert, James Joyce oder Lin-Manuel Miranda, sowie mehrerer anderer ursprünglichen Schöpfer des Musicals *Hamilton* zu respektieren, bis hin zu freieren

Verwendungen oder Bearbeitungen von Liedern zu unterschiedlichen Zwecken: gesungene oder untertitelte Musikvideos, satirische Theaterproduktionen oder Coverversionen, die sofort in der gegenwärtigen Popszene des Ziellandes veröffentlicht werden. Es werden Gründe gegeben zur wissenschaftlichen Reflexion über die Anforderungen an das Übersetzen von Booklets, die die CD begleiten, über die Funktionalität der KI-gestützten Übersetzungen, über das Resultat subtiler Verschiebungen wie die Umordnung wiederholter Verse (ausgewertet im Hinblick auf das Konzept der *Invarianz*, mithilfe dessen Treue in der deutschen Terminologie konzeptualisiert wird), oder über Möglichkeiten für Amateur- oder professionelle Liedübersetzer, ihre Kreativität und Leistungsfähigkeit auszuüben. Theoretische Impulse kommen aus Disziplinen, wie Musikologie, Populärmusikforschung, Ethnolinguistik, Narratologie, Literaturwissenschaft, Multimodalitätsforschung und aus verschiedenen Bereichen der Translationswissenschaft, z.B. der Translationsdidaktik.

Die Artikel mögen auf unterschiedliche Weise den Weg für die Kartierung des Forschungsfeldes des Übersetzens von Liedern ebnen. Hier können zwei Möglichkeiten der Anwendung von Theorie gefunden werden. Eine der Möglichkeiten besteht in einer genaueren Spezifizierung, die zum tieferen Verständnis der einzelnen Fälle und Beispiele führt: wie die Differenzierung zwischen drei Arten des intra- und extradiegetischen Singens in der literarischen Fiktion (im Artikel von Autieri/ Niskanen), zwischen der Konvergenz und Divergenz in der musikalischen Semiose oder die Identifizierung einiger Ebenen der Analyse in Bezug auf die musikalische Narration, Rhetorik und Semantik sowie innerhalb der verbalen, visuellen und auditiven Modi in multimodalen Kunstwerken. Um jedoch Wege durch größere Korpora von Liedern zu bahnen, können breitere Differenzierungen ihre Anwendung finden: wie zwischen semantischen und semiotischen Beibehaltungen in Cover-Aufnahmen, oder zwischen drei Hauptmusikgenres: dem Liebeslied, dem Protestlied und dem Novelty Song (einschließlich aller anderen Liedtypen im Artikel von Aronsson). Eine weitere grundlegende Wahl des Schwerpunktes könnte zwischen drei Forschungsbereichen liegen: entweder die ausgangstextorientierte Analyse (der Musik im Artikel von Reus, des multimodalen Ganzen bei Carpi), oder die technischen und praktischen Aspekte (wie in den Artikeln von Wilson-deRoze, Guay und Kodura), oder mögliche Beweggründe, die potenziell entweder die aufgegriffene Problematik (z.B. Religion bei Mach) oder die mit einem konkreten Musikgenre verbundenen Assoziationen (R&B bei Wesley) betreffen.

Praktischer erscheint es, die in diesem Band gesammelten Beiträge hinsichtlich der jeweiligen Thematik in drei Gruppen einzuteilen: Popmusikforschung, Forschung zur multimodalen und musikalischen Bedeutung, sowie spezielle Fälle und Anwendungen. Der Band beginnt mit einem Überblick über das Teilgebiet von **Johan Franzon**, der versucht, die bisherige Forschung zum Übersetzen

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von Liedern zu systematisieren und die wechselseitigen Verknüpfungen innerhalb der Studien zum Übersetzen von Liedern darzustellen. Franzon schlägt eine dreifache Unterteilung des Teilgebiets vor: den ausgangstextorientierten Zweig, der darauf abzielt, die Genialität des Liedes zu erfassen; den transferorientierten Zweig mit besonderem Fokus auf verschiedenen Modi und Medien; und den zieltextorientierten Zweig, der sich auf die Forschung zum „Nachleben“ der originellen Lieder, ihren zielsprachlichen Versionen und den Nachwirkungen der Übersetzung konzentriert. Der Autor behauptet, dass die Breite und Vielfalt der Studien zum Übersetzen von Liedern, die häufig ein relativ inkohärentes Bild des Teilgebiets schafft, tatsächlich dessen Vorteil sein kann.

Diesem meta-theoretischen Artikel folgen Beiträge, in denen deskriptiv-explanative Methodologie angewandt wird. Diese wird als eine der geeignetsten Analysemethoden innerhalb der Studien zum Übersetzen von Liedern erachtet (Greenall et al. 2021). **Kenny Wesley** präsentiert eine deskriptive Analyse französischer und spanischer Übersetzungen von englischsprachigen Liedern aus der sog. Yéyé-Periode der 1960er Jahre, als die englischsprachigen Lieder, sowohl die Original- als auch Coverversionen, zur Entwicklung neuer Genres der Popmusik in West- und Südeuropa beitrugen. Wesley führt eine explanative Analyse von vier R&B-Songs durch, wobei er sein Augenmerk auf individuelle Strategien, Veränderungen auf verschiedenen Ebenen der Lieder und des sozio-kulturellen Kontextes richtet. Der Autor veranschaulicht, wie ein Musikgenre, das ursprünglich vorwiegend eine lokale, sogar marginalisierte Bedeutung hatte, an Präsenz und Beliebtheit in Europa gewann, wo eine achtsame Nachgestaltung mit den durch sozio-politische Umstände verursachten Veränderungen kombiniert wurde.

Ein ähnliches Forschungsmaterial wird von **Mattias Aronsson** behandelt, der französische Übersetzungen von britischen und amerikanischen Popsongs, die ab den 1950er Jahren veröffentlicht wurden, sowohl aus qualitativer als auch quantitativer Perspektive untersucht. Seine Analyse beweist, dass die Lieder den Zielmarkt dank Strategien erreicht haben, die das ganze Kontinuum der semantischen Treue repräsentieren: angefangen von den treuesten Übersetzungen bis hin zu neuen Liedtexten, die keine semantische Ähnlichkeit mit dem Ausgangstext aufweisen. Unter den vielen Faktoren, die die Wahl einer Translationsstrategie beeinflussen haben könnten, sind die Spezifik der Gattung und die Tatsache, dass die Übersetzer oft ihre eigenen Interessen und ihren eigenen Status in der Musikbranche hatten, zu nennen.

Die Frage des Genres steht auch im Mittelpunkt des darauffolgenden Artikels von **Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz**. Sie bietet eine deskriptive Analyse von Translationsstrategien, die beim Übersetzen fremder Lieder angewandt wurden, die in frühen Folgen eines bekannten von dem Polnischen Fernsehen ausgestrahlten Unterhaltungsprogramms präsentiert wurden. Neben einem deskriptiven Überblick

weist die Autorin auf wichtige Veränderungen hin, denen englischsprachige Lieder auf der Ebene des Genres, des Mediums und des Modus unterzogen wurden. Dadurch betont sie die Bedeutung der Multimodalität beim Übersetzen von Liedern und lenkt Aufmerksamkeit auf wichtige nicht-linguistische Einschränkungen.

Dieser Artikel schlägt eine Brücke zwischen deskriptiven Methodologien und denjenigen, die auf die Problematik der Multimodalität und musikalischen Bedeutung fokussiert sind. Im Folgenden richtet **Beatrice Carpi** ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf die Frage der Adaptierung eines holistischen Ansatzes an das Übersetzen von Liedern, was bei der Erfassung der bedeutenden Qualität der Lieder, die als plurisemiotische Kunstwerke betrachtet werden, behilflich sein kann. Die Autorin schlägt ihr eigenes Analysemodell vor, das die multimodale Natur der Lieder berücksichtigt. Anhand der Analyse eines Liedes aus dem Musical *Hamilton* (2015), veranschaulicht Carpi, wie die Bedeutung durch das Zusammenspiel verschiedener semantischer Mittel übermittelt wird, die sie in verbale, auditive und visuelle Modi unterteilt. Die Autorin bietet eine detaillierte und schrittweise Anleitung zur Anwendung des Modells, was Forscher dazu ermutigt, es im Hinblick auf andere Genres und Kontexte zu testen, und Übersetzer dafür sensibilisiert, dass Texte der Musical-Songs eng mit der Inszenierung und dem Schauspiel verbunden sind.

Ein musikzentriertes Analysemodell wird im Beitrag von **Tim Reus** vorgestellt. Unter Anwendung von drei Paradigmen der Bedeutung in der Musik, d.h. der musikalischen Narration, der musischen Rhetorik und der musischen Semantik, präsentiert der Autor eine tiefgründige Analyse dessen, wie Bedeutung im Lied „Let it go“ aus dem populären Disney-Animationsfilm *Frozen* [dt. *Die Eiskönigin – Völlig unverfroren*] (2013) konstruiert wird. Reus rückt die Bedeutung in den Vordergrund, die durch die Gesangsmelodie und die fortschreitende Zunahme und den Fluss der musischen Begleitung auf der Tonspur übermittelt wird. Auf diese Art und Weise betont der Autor die Bedeutung der Musik beim Übersetzen von Liedern und bietet ein Werkzeug zur Analyse für Übersetzer von Liedern, um zumindest ihr Gehör dafür zu schärfen, wie Musik Bedeutung übermitteln kann.

Auch **Karen Wilson-deRoze** vertritt den musikbasierten Ansatz zum Übersetzen von Liedern, indem sie behauptet, dass Musik die Bedeutung der Wörter verstärken oder modifizieren kann und somit eine bedeutende Auswirkung auf das Übersetzen hat. Die Autorin bespricht dies kritisch anhand der singbaren Übersetzung von Mozarts Oper *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786) ins Englische von Jeremy Sams und vergleicht sie mit ihren eigenen Lösungen, die primäre Aufmerksamkeit auf die musikalische Semiose, d.h. das Zusammenspiel zwischen dem verbalen und musischen Inhalt, lenken. Obwohl die tiefgründige Analyse sich nur auf die Oper beschränkt, sind die Schlussfolgerungen von universeller

Relevanz, zumal sie die Notwendigkeit, die musikalische Dimension beim Übersetzen von Liedern zu berücksichtigen, hervorheben.

Auf die Wichtigkeit der Rücksichtnahme auf die geschickte Komposition wird auch im Artikel von **Marco Agnetta** hingewiesen, der dies anhand des Konzeptes der Zyklizität eruiert, d.h. wenn die in einer Gedichtzusammenstellung ersichtliche Kohärenz durch Prozesse der Vertonung und Übersetzung einer Umordnung unterzogen wird. Den Untersuchungsgegenstand stellt der Liederzyklus *Winterreise* von Willhelm Müller und Franz Schubert (1828) dar. Fokussiert auf die intra- und extratextuellen Verweise, skizziert der Autor, wie der französische Übersetzer Bélanger, dessen Übersetzung detailliert besprochen wird, die Grundforderungen der Singbarkeit erfüllte, ohne Schuberts Musik zu verändern. Der Übersetzer führte trotzdem bedeutsame Änderungen der zyklischen Anlage: Änderung der zyklischen Anlage durch Manipulation der Wiederholungen, die eine wesentliche Eigenschaft des Liedes darstellen, sowie durch lexikalische Entscheidungen, beispielsweise in Bezug auf religiöse Elemente, ein.

Die abschließenden vier Beiträge bieten Fallstudien zu bestimmten Problemen, die verschiedene Sprachen, kulturelle und mediale Kontexte und Translationskopoi betreffen. Der Artikel von **Matthew Guay** richtet Aufmerksamkeit auf die soziokulturelle Bedeutung des Übersetzens von Liedern und die sensiblen Beziehungen zwischen Translation und indigenen Sprachen. Der Autor behandelt die stark gefährdeten Sprachen des Ryukyu-Archipels, d.h. der südlichsten Inseln Japans, und erörtert die einzigartigen Möglichkeiten, die das Übersetzen von Liedern bietet. Eine systematischere Untersuchung, wissenschaftlich untermauerte Praktiken, sowie Vergleiche mit anderen gefährdeten Sprachen können sich für das Übersetzen von Liedern, das tatsächlich zur Erhaltung der indigenen Sprachen beiträgt, als nützlich erweisen.

Der Artikel von **Arianna Autieri** und **Lauri A. Niskanen** adressiert das Problem des Übersetzens von Liedern, auf die nur angespielt wird, da sie als Teil der fiktionalen Prosa in einem Roman vorkommen. Dies stellt eine andere Herausforderung für Übersetzer dar: wenn ein Text, der definitionsgemäß multimodal und multimedial ist, zu einem (theoretisch) monomedialen Kanal wechselt. Die Autoren bieten eine gründliche Analyse von neun italienischen (Neu-)Übersetzungen der Lieder im Kapitel „Sirens“ aus James Joyces *Ulysses* (1922) und zwei (Neu-)Übersetzungen ins Finnische. Da sie mit zwei vergleichsweise unterschiedlichen Sprachen arbeiten, weisen sie nicht nur auf objektive Hindernisse hin, die aus der Struktur der Ausgangs- und Zielsprachen resultieren, sondern auch auf verschiedene Mittel, die literarische Fiktion zum Singen bringen, sowie auf unterschiedliche Strategien, die von Übersetzern angewandt werden, um die „auf dem Papier“ stehenden Liedtexte den von Joyce belebten Liedern ähnlich zu machen. Die Tatsache, dass Opernarien im Allgemeinen dafür bekannt sind, dass sie auf Italienisch gesungen werden, aber im

19. Jahrhundert häufig auch in Übersetzung gesungen wurden, stellt einen weiteren verkomplizierenden Faktor dar.

Der Entscheidungsprozess des Übersetzers wird auch von **Anna Mach** erforscht, jedoch aus einer gegenteiligen Perspektive: statt einen Literaturübersetzer, der nach Treue strebt, sehen wir einen Übersetzer von Liedern, der Verantwortung dafür übernimmt, eindrucksvolle oder unterhaltsame Lieder zu schaffen. Die Autorin behandelt eine Theaterproduktion, die auf polnischen Übersetzungen der Lieder von der britischen Band The Tiger Lillies basiert, wobei sie sich vorwiegend auf die Rekonstruktion der Beweggründe des Übersetzers konzentriert, die sich in Abweichungen vom Ausgangstext manifestieren. Die Fragen der (Selbst-)Zensur und vorsätzlicher Domestizierung, der Intertextualität des politischen Diskurses sowie des tatsächlichen Vorwissens unter den Empfängern des Ausgangs- und Zieltextes werden in Bezug auf die Kreativität und Anpassungspraktiken, mit denen wir häufig beim Übersetzen von Liedern zu tun haben, aufgegriffen und erörtert.

In ihrem Beitrag geht **Malgorzata Kodura** noch weiter auf das Konzept der Kreativität ein und erläutert, wie das Übersetzen von Liedern zur Ausbildung der Translationsstudenten beitragen kann. Anhand von einem kleinen Experiment, in dem sowohl maschinell als auch menschlich erstellte Übersetzungen während eines Universitätskurses verwendet wurden, beweist die Autorin, dass das Übersetzen von Liedern tatsächlich durch einen relativ hohen Schwierigkeitsgrad geprägt ist und ein hohes Maß an kulturbedingter Kreativität erfordert. Da die letztgenannte eine notwendige Fähigkeit des Translators darstellt, empfiehlt die Autorin, Aufgaben zum Übersetzen von Liedern in Übersetzungskurse oder -Workshops zu integrieren.

In unserem Bestreben, die Leserschaft auf den neuesten Stand in Bezug auf das Gebiet, in dem Musik, Lied und Translation aufeinandertreffen, zu bringen, fügen wir Rezensionen eines Sammelbandes und zwei Monografien hinzu, die das Gebiet auf drei verschiedene Weisen erforschen. Die erste Publikation ist in einer etablierten Buchreihe zur Popmusikforschung erschienen. Der achte Band der Reihe, herausgegeben von **Ádám Ignác**, gewährt vielseitige Einblicke in die ungarische Geschichte der Popmusik. Besonderer Nachdruck wird in der Publikation dem Übersetzen des Zustroms der „Beatmusik“ (von The Beatles und anderen) der 1960er Jahre in der Atmosphäre der politischen Unterdrückung verliehen. Das nächste rezensierte Buch, verfasst von **Dinda L. Gorrée** bietet ein ausgezeichnetes Beispiel eines holistischen Ansatzes für die Analyse des Zusammenspiels zwischen Wort und Klang oder Sprache und Kultur, wobei die Autorin das Konzept künstlerischer Transduktion hervorhebt, das sie als einen Prozess der Umwandlung der Kreativität betrachtet. Die Monografie von **Sigmund Kvam** fokussiert Edvard Griegs Kunstlieder und ihre Übersetzungen ins Deutsche und Norwegische/Dänische, die aus kommunikativ-funktionaler Sicht analysiert

werden. Kvams Buch stellt somit einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Forschung der singbaren Liedübersetzungen innerhalb des deutschen translatorischen Diskurs dar.

Die Herausgeber dieses Bandes möchten sich bei Anna Małgorzewicz und der Redaktion der Zeitschrift *Studia Translatorica* sowie bei anderen Personen bedanken, die zum Entstehen dieses Bandes durch ihre unbezahlbaren Anstrengungen beigetragen haben. Wir hoffen, dass alle Artikel die Studien zum Übersetzen von Liedern voranbringen, indem sie aufschlussreiche Beobachtungen liefern und vielversprechende Forschungswege eröffnen.

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Song and translation – song translation studies

ABSTRACT

Song and translation – song translation studies

The article overviews recent research in song translation studies. A growing interest and the not-too-coherent wealth of case studies need to be made relatable to one another. The article asks what makes song a special object for translation studies and what a map of song translation studies should encompass. The answer suggests three cornerstones: source-oriented, transfer-oriented and target-oriented studies. The first would need some acquaintance with musical verse and a fluid definition of song; the second some kind of multimodal conceptualization – one that allows both plain prose translation of song lyrics, such as in for example subtitling, and much variable audiovisual adaptations, such as, for example, the many YouTube videos of Shervin Hajipour’s “Baraye”; and the third would need to chart the long-term afterlives of songs, conceptualizing their post-translation use in manifold ways. The discussion is exemplified by translations of Bertolt Brecht and Pete Seeger’s “My rainbow race”.

Keywords: song, song translation, multimodality, tradaptation, transcreation

1. Multifaceted song

Songs are paradoxical in many ways. Music is a universal language (of sorts), but songs are quick to split into particular, culture-bound styles, genres and sub-genres. Songs live on ethereal sound waves but cling tightly to the corporeal: moving vocal cords, hands and bodies as well as global dance trends. People enjoy them collectively, but just as often, just as deeply, in emotional, personal ways. Songs are made for sharing: having written them, composers and songwriters want them heard by many, but when used, some are strictly guarded by

copyright laws. Textually, they are essentially lyrical, flying on the wings of music, but also vernacular, made to fit into singers' mouths. They enable individual expression but depend on intertextual cues and clues. They can be subtly or highly original or (enjoyably) clichéd. Singers are sometimes asked to imitate another singer and sometimes told to "make the song your own". A song's form is made for easy, exact recollection, but songs also invite to be changed: through reinterpreting performances, rearranged covers, medleys, mashups, parodies and response songs. Some songs are tied to specific times, actual places and timeworn traditions, some transport us to timeless fantasy worlds. Songs can be stories told to audiences, props in dramatic or ritual enactments, or fragments of abstract mental states. They can be folk songs, pop songs or art songs, and many blends between them. Influences may flow between songs in oral tradition and songs fixed on printed paper or (since 1857) phonic recordings. Songs are oral and aural, poetic and onomatopoeic, somehow verse-shaped, prosodic and rhetoric, pragmatic instruments – malleable to any context: musical, performative, visual, technological, socio-cultural, historical – or any function: to celebrate, consecrate, bemoan or protest, heal or hurt, calm or activate, or simply amuse and pass time.

Songs can be all these things in different cases to varying degrees. This collection of truisms is meant to sketch the outlines of the territory that song translation studies must somehow map. Must a study of Beethoven's musical intentions in his settings of Scottish folk songs relate to a K-pop music video reworking Mariah Carey's "We belong together"? Not as individual case studies, but a useful conceptualization of song translation should at least make widely different approaches, in terms of topic and study object, relatable to each other. Another dicey question is this one: on account of all these multifaceted aspects and uses, can we state that songs are a different object of study than most other kinds of text normally studied in translation studies? To make generalizations in terms of a simplified dichotomy is often tempting, in order to highlight how songs differ from "other texts" – but of course, just as song is not one and the same thing, neither are "other texts". Nevertheless, for half a century or so, translation studies has had the bulk of its theories built on the solid ground of printed prose texts and literary or institutional contexts, where consistent translation norms can be found. Those are contexts into which songs do not always fit. This article is an attempt to address these two questions: What makes song a special object for translation studies? What must a map of song translation studies encompass? The provisional answers offered here are based on a review of recent writings on topics that I would place under the rubric of song translation studies. What are the achievements? Which are the needs?

In the early 2000s, it was normal for papers on song translation to begin by stating that this field of study was forgotten or neglected in translation studies.

That claim no longer holds. In a recent essay attempting to survey most previous research (Greenall et al 2021), the bibliography contains 84 works specifically about songs in translation (in some respect), mostly articles written in the last decade or so. A list including Master's theses published online could be twice as long. However, most are case studies, focused on one single genre or medium, songwriter or song, and often do not relate to one another in a coherent way.¹ The wealth of study and breadth of topics grow, but so does the problem of overviewing the field.

The body of work gives the impression that song translation studies has retraced the stages translation studies went through, only more rapidly. It began with testimonies and policy proclamations from practicing translators (some more objective than others: for example Drinker 1950 on opera, Grandmont 1978 on musicals, Rodda 1980 on art song), which grew into a prescriptive-instructive phase, focusing on discussing the practical problem of writing singable lyrics that were also (faithful) translations. Most notable are Apter and Herman (2016) and Low (2017), whose books systematized views they had presented in several, previous articles. After that, a “cultural turn”, possibly spearheaded by Susam-Saraeva (2015), opened up for descriptive song translation studies: various kinds of empirical exploration of songs crossing language borders. But the breakthrough of song translation studies getting noticed by translation studies seems to have come with the audiovisual-technological turn of this new millennium. AVT (audiovisual translation) is a field where songs are unignorable; some action must be chosen, and will be noticed: dub, subtitle or send them off untranslated. Likewise, papers on opera surtitling (also moving from practitioners' reports to more systematic study such as Rędzioch-Korkuz 2016) have merged into a wealth of analyses of song subtitling strategies, dubbing of songs in animated films and audience satisfaction surveys.

Can all of this be put under the heading of song translation studies? Other superordinate names have been suggested for largely the same field of study: vocal translation, music-linked translation, music translation, melic translation, and a few more. The quickest response is to observe that most current researchers (writing in English) use the phrase “song translation” (for example Low 2003; Kaindl 2005; Franzon 2008; Cintrão 2009; Greenall 2015; García Jiménez 2017; Carpi 2017; Haapaniemi/ Laakkonen 2019; Aleksandrowicz 2019; Fochi 2019; Treece 2019). A more diplomatic discussion may get a grasp based on Snell-Hornby's application of prototype theory (1988: 26–37), used then to

1| If a coherent conceptualization is something to be expected. I would compare it to another field of study that similarly, and slowly, grew into a recognized subdiscipline: drama translation studies. Though fragmented and diverse, the many unconnected papers and approaches that shaped it still share, somewhere, a natural connection to theatre work and staged productions.

address differences between academic approaches in relation to text types and translational equivalence. Different prototype concepts may exist on a spectrum. A general, popular or simplified idea can form the center of a concept, but the borders to less typical, less obvious phenomena and subcategories must be permeable. It seems fair to claim, judging from the body of work presented, that the majority of researchers in music and translation choose to study songs – and even more: songs translated as songs (as defined below). There are other topics that are certainly relevant, such as (purely) vocal qualities of song, musical pieces without lyrics, or prose translations of song lyrics (which are neither vocal nor necessarily musical); they are clearly part of the field but will perhaps be found each on their own separate side of it.

And what heading can song translation studies be placed under besides translation studies? Multimodality studies and adaptation studies seem like natural candidates, but similarly to translation studies, most theory in those fields was developed for other media products than song. There are highly relevant concepts, suggested by many: multimodality, remediation, intermedial/plurisemiotic/multi-channel text, syncretic semiotics, constrained translation, audiovisual translation, and transcreation/tradaptation. They can certainly bring fruitful discussion and interesting comparisons, but everything done to songs in translation can probably not be equated with or subsumed under a single one theoretical construct. In the following, I will discuss how song translation studies might benefit from recognizing not one, but three cornerstones (prototype concepts): verse translation, with some measure of fluidity; multimodal texts, variable as to which modes are present and relevant for the translator; and songs as multivalent cultural items, with a view on long-term use or function in target language cultures. The existent research in the field has touched upon all three, which may roughly be labeled as source-oriented, transfer-oriented and target-oriented approaches. And as is inevitable with any interdisciplinary study, one will find prototypically fuzzy boundaries, and cases where ideas and methods combine in different proportions.

2. Three approaches in song translation

2.1. Source-oriented approaches

2.1.1. Songs as fluid source texts

Does *song* in song translation mean translational activity using songs as source texts or delivering songs as target texts? It is often both, but it must also sometimes be either/or: anything translational happening to a song, or something translated ending up in a song form. Songs are less fixed – and often shorter – than printed texts, their forms may change over time, and source songs can

exist in different guises that are in circulation simultaneously. A simple example is offered by Mus' studies (2018; 2019) of translations of Leonard Cohen. Cohen first published some of his song lyrics as poems in his poetry books, and translations into French could be made for inlays to LP albums, for sung cover recordings, as part of anthologies of poems and lyrics, or when reproduced and discussed in music magazines. This last kind of publication was an even more widespread practice in Brazil, as described by Kaross (2013): close translations of lyrics to foreign hit tunes were read on radio shows, published in several kinds of magazines and, later still, made and shared by fans on websites. The paths of print and song intertwine in various ways.

Descriptive translation studies relies for its definition of translation on Toury's (1995: 33–34) three postulates, two of which assume that a (retrievable) source text exists and that it was actually used by the translator in question. With songs, the sources used can vary. When Kvam (2021) studies the German-language publications of the songs of Edvard Grieg, we assume that both the input and output for the translators consisted of music printed on paper. However, when Greenall (2015) looks for translators' "voices" in three Norwegian poet-authors' translations of Bob Dylan's songs, a major part of the process will also be the singing voices of both Dylan and the three cover artists. We will not always know if the TT lyricist wrote the TT song lyrics after just listening to a recording, by just reading sheet music, or doing both – but different processes may leave different traces in the target product. Sometimes, a canonical, recorded version will be the obvious source. In other cases, there may be both studio and live recordings, cover versions and songs learned by ear. As Smith-Sivertsen (2014) shows, not seldom will a more high-profiled, same-language cover be the basis for cover versions in other languages, not the first one (because it was covered, meaning 'hid', by a more successful later production). There is also the phenomenon of self-covers, which put Meunier (2023) before the problem of deciding which one(s) of Dylan's changing versions of his songs served as a source for any particular French cover.

Toury's second postulate, the transfer postulate, also crashes with cases more variable than the printed text. With singable target lyrics, a researcher may prototypically assume that the source text were the song lyrics, as tied to the given piece of music. Could other sources have been involved as well? Kaindl (2005: 242) was the first to describe song translation as a kind of *bricolage*, a free mix – listing "a number of elements" that might act as potential sources for both target lyrics and the musical, physical, visual presentation of the target song: "music, language, vocal style, instrumentation, but also values, ideology, culture, etc." For theatrical songs, Carpi (2017: 78–95) makes an even more detailed itemization of source material to observe: "repetitions, evocative meaning, key clusters, expressive meaning, intratextuality, music, interludes, pauses, sound

effects, paralinguistic features, dancing, embodied behaviour, stage props” – all properties that can sometimes be read, sometimes just inferred from the source lyrics, at least in musicals. Both listings list “music” as a singular thing, but as a source for target lyrics, it can also be subdivided – for example as a prosodic-phonetic template, a pattern for a verse form, or inspiration for the semantic-narrative substance of (both source and target) song lyrics (Franzon 2008).

All this will influence which elements are seen as indispensable in a definition of song: music, lyrics, voice, genre, accompaniment, performance or the total presentation. In her review of theoretical works within this field, Rędzioch-Korkuz (2023: 70) points out inconsistencies in how the object of study is identified or named: lyrics, song, song-text or musical text. I have myself suggested a definition of song based on three elements: music and lyrics combined and intended for performance (Franzon 2008: 376). In his definition of song, Meunier (2023: 65–75) instead includes four modes: text, music, voice and (sound) production, which serves the purpose when the study object is cover recordings. Rędzioch-Korkuz (2023: 69) suggests two: “a text set to music” as a minimal entity, but there are definitions of song that do not even include lyrics: “**Song.** A piece of music for voice or voices, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, or the act or art of singing” (Chew 1980: 510). Naturally in opera, “voice or voices” get the highest priority (not equal but comparable to the prime importance of lip sync in film song dubbing). With pop songs, the intended target presentations matter more but may also vary more (if made for a local cover band, TV show, music video, etc.). With a *skopos* more similar to transcription of folk song (oral epic poetry), there is interest in documenting the whole original context of performance, but less so in voice, sound production or a fixed text, because they may not exist in the sources. What connects all these is the concept or phenomenon of song, but what goes into that concept must probably be allowed to be a little fluid.

The most stable point, from which one might resolve differing definitions or conceptualizations, may be the concept of *genre*. A minimal requirement of a musical genre is that it has a name and some actual content – a musical expression, style or form – that some people associate with the name.² As such, genres are imprecise and changeable constructs, but they are central factors in the ecosystems that develop around ever-changing musical practices, each with their own history, supporters, performance ideals, means of financing, and other circumstances: who the driving agents and initiators are (the composers or artists or producers) and how the listeners prefer to receive what they (may) pay for.

2| This web site: <https://everynoise.com> is the result of a project to generate a genre map from Spotify classifications. So far, one finds well over 6000 genre names listed and linked, from *pop* and *rap* to *grunge brasileiro* and *schrammelmusik*.

The shape of the ecosystem determines how the translation norms affect the texts. There are several genres that – for different reasons – stick to the principle that “the original tune which fitted the original words, will be re-used, virtually unchanged” and require a translator to follow it closely (Low 2017: 78). But empirical studies may reveal how some genres do it differently. Haapaniemi and Laakkonen (2019) describe an American country song (“Ramblin’ man”) translated as a Finnish blues rock song. The cover recording shows rhythmic variations, clearly made to accommodate the multisyllabic words and phrasal forms of the Finnish target lyrics. But the source song by Hank Williams does similar things – in a folksy, improvisatory style, his strophes do not follow a strict meter. Another genre is “jazz song translation”, whose rhythmic and syllabic freedom is described in a Master’s thesis (Schreuder 2023) comparing translations into and from several languages.

Another common denominator is the concept of *verse*. Unlike many specimens of modern poetry, verse is identified by a form that derives from being intended to be recited – or sung. Normally or essentially, song lyrics are verse-shaped. In a prototypical conceptualization, this text type, too, can be placed in a spectrum – consisting of at least four types: spontaneous, spoken language – written prose – rhetoric art – poetry with fixed meters. In a time when metered poetry was common, an encyclopedic description could simply offer a list of textual properties: “some form of regular occurrence, whether meter, accent, vowel quantity, rhyme, alliteration, parallelism, or any combination of these, and which we may call *verse*” (Frye 1965: 885). What matters in this context is that all these and suchlike properties carry a natural, age-old relation to music. Any “regular occurrence” found in song lyrics naturally or potentially matches the regularity of the melodic phrases and harmonic-rhythmic form of a (traditional) musical composition. (Whether a definition of music as “sound organized in space and time” (Morehead 1993: 359) is sufficient is another question, but “regular occurrence” is the essence of it.) In translation, a text form similar to verse may thus arise from both slavishly following a given rhyme scheme and just listening to a source piece of music. Verse translation has eternally grappled with the problem of following both form and content and solved it by combining and compromising. In Polish translation studies, various notions of verse translation seem to have gathered under the concept of *melic translation* (see Szota 2018), but their integration with international concepts requires further research. But because there are natural links between “language-in-song, language-as-song”, they will constantly be rediscovered, as for example by Treece (2019), who translated a body of Brazilian political songs into English for the purpose of a touring exhibition and workshop project. He found that he combined everything there was: “sonic, melodic, prosodic, rhythmic and phonological features” in order “to enact, in a new linguistic and cultural setting, its

integral meaning as a musically intoned utterance”, everything pointed towards “the core”: perhaps best understood as the harmonic structure and movement of the musical composition (Treece 2019: 2 and 11).

Elements such as vocal style, embodied behaviour and a perceived, musico-textual “core” direct attention to a sung performance. Song translation can be compared to metered poetry, but it can also be compared to verbal art as performance, which has been described from an ethnological point of view: “Performance thus calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity” (Bauman 1977: 11). The point is that acts of expression in front of an audience favor certain formal and framing devices. Bauman (1977: 16) goes on to sketch a list of often observed devices: “special codes; figurative language; parallelism; special paralinguistic features; special formulae; appeal to tradition; disclaimer of performance”. Common for most or all cultures and genres, the list describes features typical of verse and song – special codes such as a lyrical register, paralinguistic features such as vocal ornamentation. (Though, more often than disclaimers of performance: denying the fact the text is not spontaneous, one finds the opposite. Many a song mentions, even highlights, the act of singing – for instance the children’s song that begins: “Sing. Sing a song. Sing it loud. Sing it strong”³.)

2.1.2. “An die Nachgeborenen” and “My rainbow race”

Two brief examples will serve just to demonstrate how song translation studies must negotiate quite different source text situations – in terms of music, lyrics, genre and verse forms. It must contain both Bertolt Brecht and Pete Seeger but will in reality have to be wider still. In his exile from Nazi Germany, Brecht wrote a long poem in three parts, “An die Nachgeborenen“, which was set to music by Hanns Eisler around 1939. In 1967, a music book of “singable English translations” of Brecht’s songs, made by Eric Bentley, was published in New York. As the source text here is a prose poem, the verse characteristics lay not in rhymes and meter but a more subtle rhetoric structure that utilized repeated and varied key words and lines. Translating into English, the primary concern would be the prosodic matching of English sentences to melodic lines designed for German. Presumably driven by the wish to present this piece of work in Finnish to equivalent effect, in 1969, the theatre composer Kai Chydenius instead took a Finnish translation of Brecht’s poem, by Brita Polttila, and set it to music of his own. Bentley, faced with this line in the song: “weil es Schweigen über so viel Untat einschließt“, decided upon: “we are silent about atrocities”. The word “silent” takes the same, prominent place as “Schweigen”, but the rest of the

3| “Sing” by Joe Raposo (1971), written for the television show *Sesame Street*.

sentence becomes tangled in added and deleted unstressed notes (trickily indicated with double musical notation in the American publication's display of both language versions), also unnaturally stressing the "-cit-" in "atrocities".⁴ Chydenius made his music fit the natural rhythms of Finnish prosody, its multisyllabic words always stressing the first syllable: "koska siinä vaietaan niin monista rikoksista"⁵.

Looking at the Norwegian song "Barn av regnbuen", translated by Lillebjørn Nilsen (1973) after Pete Seeger's song "My rainbow race" (1968), we have a simpler target–source relation: both of the songs were evidently made primarily to be sung and spread live and on vinyl recordings, with hardly any printed text involved at all. Perhaps indicating that Nilsen translated by ear, there is much variable fidelity in terms of the syllable count, but a good match of the basic rhythm and phrasal melody, as laid out in Seeger's chords and song structure (chorus – verse – chorus). The alliteration of the title phrase "[To show my] rainbow race" seems to have mattered to Nilsen, because he recreates it in his title phrase: "Små barn av regnbuen" – though the /b/:s fall on different notes than the /r/:s.

A key question is what "rainbow" means. Seeger is not too specific, but a fair assumption – given that he called his song a "love song to the earth" and that he was engaged in the civil rights movement of the 1960s – is that he meant the human race: humanity as a whole, all skin colors and races. Nilsen changes the metaphor when he states, abstractly but plainly, that we are all 'small children of the rainbow and a lush earth'. This veers toward an ecological reading, supported in the verse that follows: 'someone steals from the young' and 'someone steals from the many who come after us'⁶. Nilsen added that to replace some words he left out: Seeger's stabs at capitalism ("greedy hands") and warfare ("Poison, bombs"). Such changes and shifts – Nilsen downshifting the character of a political song and upshifting the character of a children's song, further evidenced by the addition of a children's choir to his 1973 recording – are often occurring, workaday phenomena in song translation: such as preserving the exact word – stated in the song title – but manipulating its implications. Textual comparisons can lead to interesting conclusions about the cultural context of the two languages and song traditions, but must also take the concrete target situation and medium into account.

4| Bentley's English language version has in fact been sung in concert. To explain, one may perhaps raise the concept of genre: concert singing within this genre of music in English seems able to accommodate some unnatural phrasal intonation and syllabic stress.

5| Literally: 'because in [doing] that, one shushes about so many crimes.' Lyrics quoted from the publications *The Brecht–Eisler song book* (1967: 52) and Chydenius (2002: 36).

6| In Norwegian: "noen stjeler fra de unge" and "noen stjeler fra de mange".

To sum up, source-text oriented approaches can reveal much of great interest to song translation studies. A verse translation will unavoidably make changes in exact wordings, and these changes will offer clues – often very visible ones – about how either the song's themes, use or genre have been viewed or understood (or not) by the translator or the receiving culture. The fact that a song is meant to be performed places an even greater emphasis on the need to be coherent and comprehensible. Given the inherent difficulties of form-bound verse translation, technical or practical singability as such may motivate close scrutiny as a tool of quality control. For the same reason, a traditional focus on verbal fidelity can be motivated, but it should be tempered by a consciousness of style and genre – a dramatist like Brecht expresses his views rather plainly, while songwriters like Seeger rely on metaphor, implication and association. Many songs are short – most perhaps between fifty and a hundred words, which means that just a single word, kept or changed, can matter much in regard to what impression it makes. Both a changeable oral text and one fixed in print, both respect for authors and less-than-close reworkings of songs, and both good and not-so-good ears for musical prosody, may be objects of study in song translation studies. Verse translation and verbal art in performance, often following patterns of genres, seem like the most natural contexts of comparison in this respect.

2.2. Transfer-oriented approaches

2.2.1. Texts in variable modes and media

Songs are naturally multimodal. Songs are the original multimodal human product. Anthropologically, before grammatical language, but perhaps after body language, intoning vocables must have been a way of expressing oneself, communicating and creating culture. The essence of song must therefore be the act of singing, producing a somehow memorable and repeatable text. Everything that comes after is technology: musical instruments, notation, and media of dissemination. Much later still came the ideas that translation, understood as transfer of meaning between languages, rests on a fixed understanding of what constitutes 'meaning' and 'translation', or even 'language'. Cross-cultural transfer of sung language has to be more flexible than that.

To begin with the obvious, it is a fact that not all song translations are made for singing. But as Aleksandrowicz (2019) shows, subtitlers for songs in musical films may devise variable attempts at singability, through experiments with rhythm and rhyme, though inconsistently applied. Regarding singable translations printed in music books ostensibly made for singing, at least in the genre of art song, *Lieder* or opera arias, for example Pernod (2017) shows that the printed target song lyrics are not always as easily singable or comprehensible for

listeners as they purport to be. Very ambitious subtitlers, literary art song translators lacking somewhat in skill – both these cases of conflicting translation norms can perhaps be understood as differently balanced negotiations of the eternal, multimodal nature of song (cf. Low 2017: 65–69).

A basic division among researchers may be whether they see translation from the perspective of the text production or of the song as presented and received. Low (2003) focused on the former when he described *skopoi* and text strategies for translated song lyrics printed in programs, librettos, etc., or in spoken summaries at concerts, etc. From the latter point of view, Susam-Saraeva (2015) charted four options (for receiving Greek songs in Turkey): importing songs and singers without translating lyrics at all, supplementing vinyls and CDs with translations and explanations on inner sleeves, inlays, etc., making cover versions with target language lyrics (often far from faithful), and lastly, the depositing, requesting, discussing and revising of amateur translations of songs on web forums. The inclusion of non-singable translations connects to the field of audiovisual translation, which provides a steady flow of studies of dubbing, subtitling and surtitling of songs, in films, theatre, opera, internet videos (García Jiménez 2017; Reus 2020; Rędzioch-Korkuz 2021; Khoshsalighe/ Sravghadi/ Mohammad-Alizadeh 2022; Abu-Rayyash/ Haider 2023). The idea of song translation as a customer or community service is present here, especially in surveys of audience satisfaction with the subtitling both of musical films (Aleksandrowicz 2019) and on the classical music concert scene (Campbell 2023).

The basic division can most simply be understood as one between auxiliary and artistic song translations. The difference in method is clear in theory but not always in practice. This may explain why the use of the term *translation* easily gets confusing. Susam-Saraeva (2018: 47) writes about interlingual cover versions, that they “act as ‘translations’, as can be seen in the Youtube comments invoking the word”, but when looking closer, “one finds only partial translations, usually a line or two”. She takes the fair enough measure of using apostrophes to indicate an alleged or perceived ‘translation’, and reserves the unmarked term to denote semantic likeness. Describing much the same phenomenon – the unfaithfulness of pop song covers, Franzon (2021: 118), however, mixes perhaps three meanings of the term: “the liberal mixture of translation and non-translation in song translation is a universal tendency, somehow part of the essence of song tradition itself”. Despite the term having been thoroughly defined and debated for decades, translation studies harbors different understandings of its fundamental concept.

Going by a pragmatic principle, many use translation as a general cover term for ‘translational action’ or ‘translingual exchange’. But a literary application is likely to see translation in a more exact sense of ‘close approximation’: rendering meaning, emulating stylistic effects, narrative intentions, etc. A multimodal

approach may treat any transmedial transfer as translation – wherever a text (liberally defined as any combination of sensory signs carrying communicative intention) “is replaced by another text reflecting, or inspired by, the original entity” (Gottlieb 2017: 50). Confusion among these conflicting views is avoided when research communities focus on different objects of study: all language services given by professional translators and interpreters (according to a *skopos* at hand, see Nord 1997; Reiss/ Vermeer 2014, etc.), ideals and norms in literary publishing (see for example Boase-Beier 2020), or multimodal products – and the ones most often studied are iconotextual or audiovisual rather than sung. These differing views can co-exist peacefully, but with song, all three perspectives can be equally relevant. With the very same song translation assignment, one may need to ponder all three things: its practical use, its stylistic (music-linked) intricacies, and also how music makes meaningful contributions as both the input and outcome of the text made from sensory signs.

Table 1: Fictitious examples of different uses of the term translation

About...	...some people might say:
the subtitling of a song,	I am not going to write singable lyrics here. I will just do a straight translation.
translating a high-profile songwriter such as Brel or Cohen,	My lyrics are just a pale copy of the powerful poetry of this genius. I dare not call it translation, so let's just say I made a version, an adaptation.
the rewriting of “First we take Manhattan” as ‘First we take Pest – then we take Buda’ (in Hungarian) or “Raindrops keep fallin’ on my head” as ‘Snowflakes fall in my hair’ (in Swedish) [Both exist.],	Song translations cannot be literal translations. Here is something that evokes the same meaning and values for a domestic (Hungarian/Swedish) audience. A true song translation must mind sound and feeling just as much as sense.
a singer who himself translates and performs foreign songs,	He hasn't written any songs himself. He just sings translations. He is a bit of a fake.
opera or art song,	No need to have the words translated. Puccini/Schubert already translated them into music in a most eloquent way.

More difficult to apply is the fourth, classic definition of translation, which covers “all utterances which are presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on no matter what grounds” (Toury 1995: 32). This practical dictum to start with alleged translations and then find out what made them acceptable as

such can be applied to song translation only with some modification. Translation and song have mostly combined in vague, inconsistent and contradictory ways. (Not accounting for all languages, of course, but the term is avoided by calling it *lyric adaptation* in copyright contexts and using blanket phrases like *cover* or “sung in English/Swedish/Polish” in other contexts). For lack of an extensive, multilingual investigation, I here take the liberty of constructing examples to demonstrate how song translation can be “presented or regarded as such” in quite different ways (see Table 1, p. 42).

As long as there are stylistically sensitive song lyric translators who hesitate to call their work translation (because of the small changes they make), and others who gladly use the word even where linguistic aspects play just a peripheral role, it will not help however clear and precise the definitions or categorizations provided by translation scholars are. Working with a variably multimodal text type such as song, pragmatic, literary and intersemiotic perspectives will simply have to co-exist.

A temptation to achieve more precision is by introducing alternative terms such as *transcreation*, *transadaptation* or *tradaptation* (used by both some literary translators and language service companies; regarding song translation, see Guillemain 2019). If understood as a general description, explaining how target lyric writing will necessarily involve some artistic deliberations or reworking, it can be helpful when discussing singular cases or strategies, but again, no matter how precise the academic definition, the risk for confusion remains. Are singable song translations transcreative by definition? Can tradaptations be both of a freer and a more faithful variety? Will changes involve both the music and lyrics – or just lyrics? Isn't the singer's interpretation another transcreation? Can you transadapt just a line or two, as a micro-strategy, or is it always a macro-strategy, a total characterization of one person's method or approach? The problem is much the same with the term *adaptation* – even more difficult because it has been used longer, in very many ways. It may be useful to characterize an otherwise well-described case, but as discussed in a comparison between the two disciplines of translation and adaptation studies, the uses of the word in both disciplines are ambiguous and diverse (Doorslaer/ Raw 2016). But is a uniform terminology a necessity?

Lucile Desblache instead suggests a broader use of the concept of translation. In her book *Music and translation* (2019: 4), she explores at least three understandings: as “the process of transferring a text from one language, be it verbal or not, into another”, but also the transfer (or transmutation) of musical forms and ideas into other musical forms, as well as music manifesting abstract things: human activities, ideologies, emotions and phenomena from the natural world. Using both terms: *song translation* and *music translation*, she includes within this realm of interest opera surtitles, accessibility provisions for young or

novice audiences, and the deaf or blind, film dubbing, video games, and all genres of music. And besides the well-established semiotic triad of intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic modes of meaning transfer (Jakobson 1959), she suggests that we also take interest in intersensorial and interspecies translation – animal communication which (rightfully or not) is music to our ears. One is tempted to travesty Toury’s basic tenet: take any utterances which are presented or regarded as song, and then investigate how translators make use of them in their work.

2.2.2. “My rainbow race” and “Baraye”

When exploring song translation, we are bound to find cases where many aspects of a potentially limitless multimodal, plurisemiotic situation come into play. Then again, there are situations where all that is needed is a plain report on the meaning of the lyrics. In April 2012, “My rainbow race” gained new attention as it was called out by Anders Behring Breivik, at his trial following the Utøya murders. He accused it of being “cultural marxist propaganda” and part of what motivated his terrorist acts. As this was discussed in worldwide news reports, lines from Nilsen’s Norwegian song lyrics – not identical with Seeger’s – were quoted and translated many times over.⁷ And apparently, despite Nilsen’s different framing of the ‘rainbow’ metaphor, it seemed enough that the specific word was kept as such for all the political ideas of the early 1970s – multiculturalism, pacifism, feminism and gay rights – to somehow stick to it and be a trigger for anti-liberalism, anti-Islamism and homophobia.

Some songs resurface as emblems of ideas, as much as forty years after they were written. In the digital age, it can go much faster and involve a greater palette of multimodal resources. In September 2022, the Iranian musician Shervin Hajipour posted a video of his song “Baraye” on his Instagram account, with lyrics based on tweets (shown in the video in captions marked “#MahsaAmini”) from Iranians telling of their hopes and sorrows about the situation in Iran – and in general. It disappeared, was reposted, and spread virally.⁸ Remarkably soon, all sorts of translations began to appear (here I restrict myself to YouTube videos): most multimodally interesting perhaps, on October 4, a video combined the original film and musical track with photos showing some of the events, places and

7| Some web pages quoting and explaining the Norwegian target song may still remain: <https://www.tampabay.com/incoming/thousands-defy-accused-norway-mass-killer-breivik-in-song/1227109/>; <https://www.mic.com/articles/7556/how-to-upset-a-terrorist-sing-a-song-of-peace-with-40-000-loud-enough-for-him-to-hear>; <https://humanrightswarrior.com/2012/04/26/children-of-the-rainbow-v-anders-breivik-and-charles-taylor/> (all accessed: 6.06.2024).

8| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmHpGpcADbI> (released: 2 October 2022, accessed: 6.06.2024).

people referred to, with English subtitles and captions giving facts to unpack the implicit references.⁹ On October 6 came a cover version in English, by the translator Rana Mansour accompanying herself on the piano.¹⁰ On October 15, there was an Italian cover to a pre-recorded musical track.¹¹ And on October 19, a pronunciation tutorial, with a rough phonetic transcription and subtitles in Farsi and English.¹² On October 30, it was sung in Swedish to a live band at a televised concert.¹³ On November 3, a prose translation was read by Senator Ratna Omidvar in the Canadian Senate.¹⁴ On November 30, there was a guitar accompanied Spanish cover.¹⁵ A bit later there appeared more elaborate versions: sung in Farsi by an opera singer to a full orchestra, subtitled in English,¹⁶ and sung in a mix of Farsi and English by a German a cappella choir¹⁷ – plus several intralingual covers, a piano tutorial, instrumental versions, danced versions, AI-created music videos as well as plain “reaction videos”. Such manifestations and translations may not give freedom to the people or direct aid to the suffering, but at least it shows how when historical events occur, there are almost always songs there, somewhere, somehow taking part in the events. And in a digitally interconnected world, song translation is a more varied and widespread phenomenon than ever before.

The key questions to conclude this chapter are the following: What meaning in the song or sung material is (to be) transmitted, recreated or preserved (or lost/sacrificed)? Is the analysis (made by a translator or a researcher) focused on music, lyrics or performance, on the whole of all three, on the text in itself or the cultural implications or resonance of either music, lyrics or the whole? How does the medium or reception situation affect the functionality of the translation? Song translation studies must be open to explore whatever meaning the multimodality of a song contains, and whatever part of it passed through the translational filter. The most important or helpful measure may be to be as explicit as possible about how the particular translation was brought about, through what means, using what form of source and target material, in what medium or language, and for which purpose and use.

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- 9| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jApvQCo4HDk> (accessed: 6.06.2024).
 10| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCUfgHHkLcA> (accessed: 6.06.2024).
 11| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AZTDWQO77s> (accessed: 6.06.2024).
 12| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdpfahGeFJg> (accessed: 6.06.2024).
 13| By Carola Häggkvist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RI0ERyzBuc> (accessed: 6.06.2024).
 14| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgH6u9T1KkY> (accessed: 6.06.2024).
 15| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qzyoRwAUPo> (accessed: 6.06.2024).
 16| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0oLLYq0vvk> (released: 7 December 2022, accessed: 6.06.2024).
 17| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07oFqGIL2IE> (released: 8 March 2023, accessed: 6.06.2024).

2.3. Target-oriented approaches

2.3.1. Empirical post-translation studies

Translated songs can have a long and varied afterlife. This chapter will be shorter because there has not been quite as much research in this direction. The full realization of Toury's dictum of studying translations as "facts of a target culture" may need to have first gone through the other two stages: analyzing target texts in relation to sources and as variable products of working translators. Of course, in translation studies the idea has been present ever since the concept of *refraction* was presented in literary studies, for example in Lefevere (1993) and Bassnett and Lefevere (1998). Still, attempting a seminal study, Gentzler (2016: 18 and 23) calls for a turn towards "post-translation studies": an expanded focus on not merely translated texts but "the post-translation repercussions generated in the receiving culture over subsequent years" as well as "transnational migrations" of texts and ideas, recognizing hybridization and mutual appropriations, multimedia adaptations, metropolises and peripheries, or any inspiration taken from abroad. To demonstrate his proposed integration between national literary canons and the modern, multisemiotic world of cross-pollination, he naturally turns to high-profile classics: productions of Shakespeare plays and rewritings of Goethe's *Faust* and Marcel Proust, on stage and film, classical music pieces and book publishing in China.

There is room for similar empirical investigations of target musical cultures and the roles or functions that imported and translated songs perform in them. As examples of works operating from broader, target-oriented approaches I will just mention a few: Fochi (2019) studied the Neapolitan song "O sole mio" and its migration to the international hit market in several American versions – and back again to Italy. Hava and Yildirim (2016) charted the place of imported song on the Turkish popular music market through the concept of *aranjman* – roughly meaning 'imported pop songs sung in Turkish'. (Taken from the English word *arrangement*, it hardly denotes faithful reproduction.) Greenall (2014: 99) gathered a large corpus of singer-songwriter songs in Scandinavian languages and identified four *skopoi* in effect: "tribute, pedagogical, language-political, and artistic". Another in-depth analysis of a large corpus is Meunier (2023), whose study of all French-language covers of Dylan's songs integrates both source text analysis and their long-term presence on the French music scene. What seems to remain a methodological difficulty is to extend a corpus analysis beyond a specific genre or type of song.

2.3.2. "Air des bijoux", "My rainbow race", "Stille Nacht"

Such approaches, if expanded and integrated – ideally also with each other – are steps in the way of realizing Gentzler's dictum (2016: 86) of seeing translation

as “a form of double writing: domesticated and resistant, Eurocentric and indigenous, global and local, appropriating and expropriating, elite and popular” – both things at once, in different proportions. Post-translation repercussions of songs are wide and manifold; songs live and function as cultural items in multi-valent ways. They can appear and reappear in unexpected places and forms, in large theatrical productions or brief references. Gentzler (2016: 122) mentions how Goethe’s *Faust* lived on in French as the opera *Faust* (1859, by Charles Gounod) and how the “Air des bijoux” from it became well-known from being repeatedly ‘sung’ in Hergé’s *Tintin* albums (starting in 1938). Besides creating a translation problem for translators, the quoted aria lyrics form an intersemiotic joke: Hergé portrays the sound of singing as the most horrible thing, but it happens in a graphic medium, which is modally incapable of conveying (understanding, translating) sound.

What makes song a special object for translation studies? Besides tracing the long afterlife of songs in descriptive studies, it should be possible to explore the essential functionality of songs. Translation analysis may help to identify unique features that make them, to some extent, different from “other texts”. A list of likely candidates include: phonic values, links to dance and physicality, what singers may bring and inspire translators to do, mixed-language songs, or obscure or implicit cultural resonance. There is the big question about music genre and intertextuality, and the occasional presence of a metatextual dimension, brought into play by the performance situation: if song lyrics can betray awareness of being sung (“Sing it loud. Sing it strong”), perhaps song translations are sometimes aware of being translations.

Susam-Saraeva (2018: 8) brings up *iterability* as an essential characteristic of songs; they exist for and function by being played or sung over and over again. This means that originals and translations easily appear side by side. As a response to Breivik’s attack on “Barn av regnbuen” in April 2012, many thousands of Norwegians (and Lillebjørn Nilsen too) gathered in public spaces and sang the song together, in both Norwegian and English. It is somewhat similar to the legendary event at Christmas in 1914, when the soldiers on both sides in the First World War started singing the hymn “Stille Nacht” and its translation into English, “Silent night”, stepped out of the trenches, and made peace with each other in no man’s land. Though certainly some words in these songs – Seeger’s, Nilsen’s, Joseph Mohr’s and John Freeman Young’s words – must have reverberated especially strongly in the emotionally fraught situation, the reason they worked was probably not the fidelity of the translations, perhaps not even the quality or coherence of the lyrics, but the fact that a song existed in several languages. Whatever the effect was – comfort, hope, shared grief, longing for peace, international understanding, humane values, friendship despite religious differences – what mattered was the mere fact that songs have always been shared over language borders.

3. What is song translation studies?

Song translation studies can be simply defined as the study of song as affected by translation. On the strength of at least a few hundred research contributions in the new millennium, song translation studies has established itself as a special field of study. What remains is for these multivarious research efforts to communicate with each other to at least be able to present their choices and approaches in relation to other possible research schemes and cases. To be a legitimate subdiscipline of translation studies, a uniform theoretical framework may not necessarily be expected. Despite the risk of confusion and criss-crossing definitions, the multifaceted, interdisciplinary and multilingual nature of song translation studies can perhaps be seen as an advantage. It mirrors the complex functionality of song.

Song translation at best would harbor three approaches and allow investigation in every one of these directions without excluding others: source-oriented, exploring the genius of songwriters and qualities of songs through how they have been understood or misunderstood in translation; transfer-oriented, describing the affordances, needs and effects of different translation modes and media; and target-oriented, studying the long-term effects and afterlives of songs and sharing of music in cultural, national or global perspectives. All would be wise to keep in mind the fluidity and instability of the sung source text, the variability of the translation situation, and the diverse use of song in cultures of all kinds.

Three cornerstones on the map of song translation studies might be pinned upon songs as verse, as multimedial entities and as cultural items. Studies can investigate the products, processes and effects of song translation, and focus on songs having form, carrying meaning, or performing a function. Following the line of analysis a bit further, it might link to a Peircean semiotic notion of song as iconic, indexical and symbolic entities. Translated song is iconic in the immediate, sensory state of being a song; indexical as it represents or refers to its source song (its original context or performance – or not); and symbolic when it inspires new interpretations in ever new contexts.

Songs will go on being sung, played and translated. Songs have been studied in a great number of academic disciplines for a long time. Translation studies is late on the ball. For songs in translation, there remains a lot of languages, song genres, media of transference and unique features and cases to be explored.

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Rhythm and blues song translation during the yé-yé period in France and Spain¹

ABSTRACT

Rhythm and blues song translation
during the yé-yé period in France and Spain

Music is said to be a powerful, universal tool capable of taming savage beasts when skillfully wielded. During the years 1958 through 1968, known as the yé-yé period, anglophone forms of popular music made a significant impact on the southwestern corridor of Europe, inspiring a cultural revolution among teenagers. The increased demand for anglophone art and cultural productions led to a surge in the release of singable pop song translations, including a considerable amount of rhythm and blues (R&B) music. This article, which is an exploratory study, seeks to discover the discursive and sociopolitical implications of singable American R&B song translations commercially released in France and Spain during this period. The song translators' strategies, the semantic and semiotic retentions in the cover recordings, as well as the sociocultural context are discussed in four song examples that seem most representative of the manifestation of R&B in France and Spain.

Keywords: R&B, marketing, minority, yé-yé, censorship, translation

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1. Introduction

Listening to a few minutes of Franco-Italian singer/songwriter Nino Ferrer’s “Je veux être noir” (‘I want to be Black’)² may leave some in shock and yet bring up feelings of nostalgia for others. In live performances of the tune, Ferrer dances intensely, belting out the lyrics with great enthusiasm: “je voudrais être noir, noir, noir, noir [...] et je pourrais crier yeah yeah yeah!” His homage to African American artists who inspired him profoundly, released in 1966, hearkens to a moment where anglophone forms of music, dance, and cultural expression, captivated the hearts of teenagers in many parts of the world, particularly in Europe. Spanning approximately a decade (from 1958 to 1968), this time is often referred to as the *yé-yé* period. This article will focus on its manifestation in France and Spain. The term *yé-yé* (or *yéyé*), originating in France, is a borrowing of the English *yeah, yeah* – an ad lib found in anglophone pop songs – reformulated phonetically into French (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 8). In Spain, the term was reformulated phonetically into Spanish as *yeyé*. In both countries, the name served as a term which described a myriad of concepts: youth-oriented styles of pop music and dance crazes of the time (i.e. rhythm and blues, rock and roll, twist, etc.); fashion trends set by *yé-yé* artists (many of which were influenced by anglophone artists); individuals who embody the characteristics of the *yé-yé* artists; and the overall cultural movement.

The *yé-yé* explosion took place during a dynamic moment in history, amidst major social reformations, wars, and the aftermath of the latter: the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the Vietnam War, the Franco-Algerian War in France, and the post-Civil War Francoist dictatorship in Spain (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 8). Concurrently, mass media was evolving in terms of its radio and television broadcasting capabilities, facilitating the spread of information across borders at unprecedented rates. In Europe, the commercial release of singable pop song translations was at an all-time high (Franzon 2021: 88), and many of the target text (TT) performers would go on to become some of their nations’ first pop stars (Forneri 2019). Several of the translations released during this period were from the rhythm and blues (R&B) genre – still relatively in its infancy – consequently fostering the international proliferation of a cultural production of African Americans, considered a minority group in the United States. This unique set of circumstances could lead one to ask the following questions, regarding the translation of such culture-specific source texts (STs): What is retained? What is changed? Are the TTs still recognizable stylistically as R&B?

Previous studies in both singable and non-singable song translation have covered various genres, including classical music (Beavitt 2018; Apter/ Herman

2| “Je veux être noir”, © Éditions Beuscher Arpège. Lyrics for this song can be found at <https://genius.com/Nino-ferrer-je-voudrais-etre-noir-lyrics>. All gloss translations found in this article are my own.

2012), pop music (Tinker 2005; Haapaniemi/ Laakkonen 2019), and even spirituals (Desblache 2001; Jakubiak 2011) – a genre also originated by a minority culture. However, there remains a substantial gap in research within the pop genre on singable R&B song translations. For this reason, this article seeks to investigate textual strategies, constraints and sociocultural implications involved in American R&B song translations released commercially during the yé-yé Period in France and Spain.

2. The yé-yé period in France and Spain

Realizing the potential of this burgeoning movement among French teenagers and enamored by the success of *American bandstand*, Daniel Filipacchi and Frank Ténot decided to launch the radio program *Salut les copains* in 1959 (Buggy 2018: 31). Later, a magazine of the same name was launched in 1962, selling millions of copies across southwestern Europe. Once this phenomenon reached Spain, executives followed the French model with radio programs, such as *Caravana musical* (1960), and magazines, such as *Discóbolo* (1962). Print media, radio and television programs dedicated to yé-yé music provided further publicity for national artists as well as exposed consumers to teen heartthrobs from other countries, including Elvis Presley and Sylvie Vartan (Otaola 2012: 2–3). This cultural shift was responsible for turning young talents, many from humble beginnings, into superstars (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 7–9). Yé-yé artists were also among the first to be sought after by brands and fashion designers for endorsements, a practice now commonplace in the entertainment industry (Forneri 2019).

3. R&B song lyrics as minority literature

The *Psalms*, one of humanity's oldest recorded forms of lyric poetry, were generally performed to music. Avant-garde and performance poetry utilize repetition, rhyme, rhythm, melody, metaphor, simile, and allusion to convey concepts and ideas much like songs. Despite the evidence of a historic synergy existing between musical and literary forms, many scholars do not hold song lyrics in high regard, inferring that they emerge because of their music (Moore 2001: 1). Fortunately, such disparaging perspectives are beginning to change, as song lyrics are becoming of increasing research interest in the fields of sociology, musicology, linguistics, among others (Valdés 2016). Further evidence of a global paradigm shift among academics is the 2016 awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature to folk artist Bob Dylan, the first songwriter to ever receive the distinction (Sisario/ Alter/ Chan 2016). For these reasons, this article holds that R&B, and all pop song lyrics should be considered literature.

Coined by *Billboard magazine* in 1949, the term R&B originally denoted “all types of secular music recorded by and for African Americans” (Maultsby 2015: 239). In its beginnings, R&B remained underground, relegated to late-night, local AM radio programs. Mainstream radio stations refused to play this music, deeming it subpar, uncouth, and undeserving of significant marketing and distribution (Maultsby 2015: 252). As the genre would later reach France in the late 1950s, elites labeled the genre, and the other forms of anglophone pop music, “the music of savages”, performed by “daft, slightly idiotic sub-humans” (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 7–8). While the older generation of Spanish music consumers at the time shared an equally unfavorable view of the genre, the youth-oriented releases were classified as popular music rather quickly, garnering moderate media support in the beginning stages, unlike in France. (Otaola 2012: 1–2). The initial rejection and vilification of R&B by mainstream society are reactions concomitant to minority languages and literature, often considered to “lack prestige or authority” and to be of little to no interest to the majority (Venuti 1998: 135).

4. Material and method

4.1. Multimodal translation

This study considers singable song translations to be characteristically multimodal (Kaindl 2013) and tend to underscore the sociocultural context through the retention of semiotic features (Kaindl 2013: 259). The *skopos* (Vermeer 2012) or purpose for singable pop song translations is particularly distinct, as it is often one of achieving a hit record. These types of TTs are the end product of an intricate system of *patronage* (Lefevere 1992), involving a variety of agents (managers, music executives, music publishers, record labels, songwriters, lawyers, producers, music rights organizations, music distributors, etc.), who potentially impact the nature of the commission. In the examination of the multimodal text, I draw a distinction between the semantic and semiotic features: the semantics being the song lyrics, and the semiotics the multimodal product (i.e. the recorded performance). In analyzing the sociocultural context, I conceptualize the translation product as the center of a constellation of both linguistic and extralinguistic factors, drawing general inspiration from Chesterman’s causal model (2000) as well as Toury’s descriptive approach (1995) and Venuti’s colonial perspectives on translation (1998).

4.2. Song translation theories

For the more specific song analyses, I base this study on theories by Low and Franzon. Low’s pentathlon principle (2005) holds that five key, interdependent

elements must be considered when creating singable song translations: (a) singability (the TT avoids consonant clusters, ending lines on open-ended syllables, excessive amounts of plosive consonants, and placing high notes on closed front vowels); (b) sense (the TT faithfully rendered the deeper meanings of the ST); (c) rhythm (the TT has retained the rhythm of the ST); (d) rhyme (the TT has retained the rhyme pattern of the ST); and (e) naturalness (the TT possesses idiomaticity). Naturalness has been omitted from this study, since I share Low's assertion that native speakers of the TL are best suited to assess this (Low 2017: 68). I will use each category of Low's principle to assess whether semiotic (singability, rhythm, vocal approach, musical arrangement, key, tempo and instrumentation) and semantic (rhyme and sense) retentions are reflected in the TTs.

Franzon's (2021) study of singable pop song translations offers six methods on the approximation-adequation continuum, which I will use as a typological tool to describe how target language (TL) lyricists transferred meaning (akin to Low's *sense* category) from the STs:

- a. *Near-enough translation* – a TT displaying the highest level of fidelity to the ST;
- b. *Perspective-shift* – a TT displaying a high level of fidelity but with slight changes and additions to the narrative;
- c. *Lyric hook transposition* – a TT displaying a hybrid of ST semiotic and semantic retentions as well as innovative additions;
- d. *Single-phrase spinoff* – a TT displaying a low level of fidelity while retaining some *iterative* (Susam-Saraeva 2018) features of the ST;
- e. *Phonetic calque* – a TT word or a phrase sharing only a phonetic link to the ST;
- f. *All-new target lyric* – the TT is not based at all on the ST (Franzon 2021: 85).

4.3. Semiotic features of R&B songs

Known for its danceable and rhythmic qualities, R&B fused earlier forms of Black music, such as jazz, blues, and gospel, and differed slightly from region to region (Maultsby 2015: 239). Other semiotic features associated with this genre, commonly referred to as *Africanisms* (Baraka 1963), include a highly emotional approach to performance, a guttural or throaty vocal technique characterized by shouting, call-and-response, three-part vocal harmonies, and various forms of rhythmic and melodic extemporization (Stewart 1998: 3–8). A wide array of instrumentation was common due to its varied stylistic influences. The most rudimentary combination, known as a rhythm section, includes a drum set, bass, guitar, and piano. Horn sections were often utilized as a result of the jazz and bebop roots of the genre. By the mid-1960s, inspired by other forms of popular music, producers also began integrating string sections

and other European stylistic elements into productions to reach broader audiences (a concept known as *acculturation*, which will be discussed later in this article).

4.4. Semantic features of R&B songs

R&B narratives recount the realities of a group of people on the margins of a society whose constitution labels them as subhuman, often including themes of struggle, triumph, love, and hope. Lyrical extemporization is regularly employed in the repetitive section of the song, known as the *vamp*, which generally occurs at or near the end (Stewart 1998: 8). Its lyrics frequently use African American Vernacular English (AAVE), a distinguishing characteristic of most forms of African American cultural expression (Baldwin 2011). AAVE is widely considered by linguists as a postcolonial dialect on the creole continuum containing a series of grammatical and syntactical structures not found in conventional American English (McWhorter 1995: 355). It often exhibits a reappropriation of language, resulting in the coding of terms and expressions – initially holding negative connotations – into neologisms with positive connotations (BETNetworks 2021). Such resistance to hegemonic and linguistic norms is a common feature of minority literature (Venuti 1998: 142).

4.5. Song selection

The song selection was the result of a series of successive database searches, including the following:

1. Music rights organization databases (SACEM for France; SGAE for Spain; ASCAP and BMI for the United States);
2. Copyright databases for all three countries;
3. Online music databases (allmusic.com, whosampled.com, discogs.com, secondhandsongs.com, bide-et-musique.com, and also: wikipedia.com, google.com, youtube.com).

I began by generating a list of R&B hit songwriters from the period: Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Ashford and Simpson, Holland-Dozier-Holland, Berry Gordy, Otis Redding, Ray Charles, Hank Ballard. I then searched for all titles ascribed to them in the databases, making note of every French and Spanish entry. This first search, yielding 129 compositions, was further refined based on the following factors: (1) the release date of the TT performance must be between 1958 and 1968 (the generally accepted span of the *yé-yé* period); (2) the availability of biographical information for named and identifiable TL lyricists (essential for finding data on translation approaches or constraints); and (3) the presence of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the ST. The latter is due to the well-documented use of slang and colloquial dialects, including AAVE, in pop song lyrics

(Low 2017: 28). Moreover, AAVE is widely recognized as one of the key semantic indicators of African American cultural discourse.

5. Song analyses

It bears to mention that eight of the fourteen (57.14%) hit songwriters included in the corpus search were once contracted to Motown Records, a label whose history of fusing European cultural aesthetics with African American forms of pop music to maximize its marketability is well-documented (Early 2004). Hence, while all songs in the preliminary corpus were stylistically representative of African American R&B, 117 (90.6%) of them showed signs of semantic and semiotic acculturation to hegemonic norms. The remaining twelve songs that matched the inclusion criteria (eight French and four Spanish TTs) were further narrowed down to four, based on an equal distribution of languages (two TTs per language) and authors/translators (no ST or TT was written or translated by the same person).

5.1. Semantic innovation in Francoist Spain:

Augusto Alguero's "El twist"

The international hit record and dance craze, "The twist", written by Hank Ballard (originally performed by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters) was introduced to Spanish audiences by Chico Valento, affectionately known as "the Elvis of Zaragoza". His cover version titled "El twist"³ was released in 1962 on the La Voz de Su Amo label, and was translated by famed composer, arranger, and prolific song translator, Augusto Alguero (usually credited under the pseudonym C. Mapel). Semiotic retentions can be seen in terms of the rhythm, vocal approach, and musical arrangement. To facilitate singability, the TT performer simplifies the melismas sung in the ST, resulting in an occasional difference of one to three syllables. The vocal approaches are similar, blending gospel and lyric singing techniques with a pronounced tremolo. Since earlier metronomes were known to be inconsistent, the minor change in tempo (the ST is 78 bpm and the TT 84 bpm) is negligible. According to the renowned music producer and drummer Eric Seats, perfectly synchronized tempos were not the norm in pop music recordings until synthesizers, drum machines, and other digitized musical technologies gained widespread use in the 70s and 80s.⁴ Although the keys of the arrangements differ by two whole steps (the ST is in E major and the TT in C major),

3| "El twist", © Trio Music Company, Fort Knox Music Co., Greenhorn Warner. TL lyrics for this song were transcribed by myself and proofed by a few colleagues, since I could not find the lyrics. SL lyrics can be found at: <https://genius.com/Hank-ballard-and-the-midnighters-the-twist-lyrics>.

4| Based on a telephonic interview on 13.02.2024.

this seems to have been a decision to further enhance TT singability by accommodating the vocal range of the performer. While the TT omits the double refrain ending, the decision to replace it with a repeat of the first verse and a vamp of its final line is in keeping with R&B stylistic norms. Semiotic retentions are also seen in terms of the chord structure, instrumentation, and three-part harmony backing vocals employing a call-and-response technique.

Table 1: Verse 1 of “The twist”, lines 1–6

Line	English ST	Spanish TT	Gloss translation
1	Come on, baby	Como en sueños	Like in dreams
2	let's do the twist.	yo canto el twist.	I sing the twist.
3	Come on, baby	Como en sueños	Like in dreams
4	let's do the twist.	yo bailo el twist.	I dance the twist.
5	Take me by my little hand	A poco sólo me divierto	I really only have fun
6	and go like this.	bailando el twist.	dancing the twist.

On the semantic level, it is possible that the TL lyricist experienced translation constraints due to censorship. Foreign tourism exploded in Spain beginning in 1959 due to the government's aggressive marketing efforts to stimulate the suffering economy. As a result, R&B and other forms of pop music began to enter the country, enthraling the youth as well as the younger generation of artists (Qué me estás container? 2021). However, the path to integrating this music style into Spanish society was not an easy one. During this post-Civil War era, all press and media underwent a rigorous and unpredictable censorship process. Abellán (1980) notes that while there seemed to be basic thematic categories that were either banned or returned to their creator for editing (e.g. political opinion, religion, sexual morality, improper language), censors did not consistently apply these criteria (Abellán 1980: 87–89).

Such an unstable environment would indelibly stifle translators as well, requiring them to avoid particular subjects, submit numerous drafts, or attempt to self-censor. Early R&B lyrics, often replete with sexual innuendos and double entendres, would be a natural target for censorship. In their resourcefulness, Spanish song translators took a few different approaches in the face of these constraints: to modulate potentially censurable phrases and concepts, to write TTs completely unrelated thematically to the STs, or to simply avoid STs whose lyrics were banned or could undergo censorship.

With this in mind, this romantic ST invites the narrator's love interest to “do the twist”, likely an allusion to sex. In the second verse, the narrator made plans to “tear the house down” doing the twist with the love interest since his parents were asleep. Hence, Algueró had some difficult decisions to make. He could not

risk completely replacing the ST, since “The twist” by this time had become somewhat of an emblematic song globally and would practically ensure commercial success. The sexual subtext, however, while subtle, could mean the song would either never be released or be returned for revisions. His solution was both ingenious and practical.

Algueró shifts the point of view from the second-person singular and first-person plural to only utilizing the first-person singular and eliminates the term of endearment *baby*. Consequently, he has omitted all potentially sexual double meanings embedded in the ST. This modification additionally transposes “the twist” from being an act taking place between two individuals into a desirable commodity, a dance, or a type of song. By creating a series of phonetic and rhyming parallelisms, he has retained all critical terms from the original refrain, and its verses whenever possible.

Phonemic parallelisms appear a total of 27 times in the song. Arguably, the most critical word in the ST, *twist*, appears in all the same places in the TT as well as an additional five times in lines 6, 9, 26, 31, and 40, as a phonetic calque (Franzon 2021: 85) with *this*. In Table 1 (p. 60), another phonetic calque can be seen on lines 1 and 3 with *come on* and *como en*. The rhyme pattern of the TT refrain (ABABAB) almost perfectly matches the ST (ABABCB). While retentions at both the semiotic and semantic levels abound in this translation, the minimal omissions and change of the point of view reflect the usage of Franzon’s perspective shift strategy by the TL lyricist. The extra emphasis placed on the idea of *the twist* as a music and dance style to replace the ST’s sexual allusions was an effective solution, which reinforced the already pervasive trend and circumvented censorship concerns.

5.2. When style matters most: Eddy Mitchell’s “Pas de chance”

The iconic French singer-songwriter and actor Eddy Mitchell (née Claude Moine) launched a solo career in the early 1960s after a stint with the group Les Chaussettes Noires. Known for his affinity for African American styles of music such as R&B and its sub-genre, rock and roll, he recorded several albums with anglophone bands in hopes of achieving a more authentic sound. Considered a central figure among the first wave of yé-yé artists to introduce R&B to French audiences, primarily through French-language cover versions, Mitchell also translated most of the covers himself. “Pas de chance”⁵, his translation of Berry Gordy and Janice Barrett’s “Money (that’s what I want)” (originally performed by Barrett Strong), was released in 1964 on the Barclay label. Using the music as a guide for new lyrics,

5| “Pas de Chance”, © Jobete Music Co., EMI Music Publishing. TL lyrics can be found at: <https://genius.com/Eddy-mitchell-pas-de-chance-lyrics>. SL lyrics can be found at: <https://genius.com/Barrett-strong-money-thats-what-i-want-lyrics>.

Mitchell appears to apply Franzone's all-new target lyrics strategy. He aimed to transfer as many original semiotic features as possible, which are equally essential to the cultural identity of R&B music as the lyrics are. The musical retentions can be seen in the harmonic structure of the arrangement, including three-part harmony backing vocals that employ a call-and-response technique. To enhance singability, the TT performer simplified the ST melismas at times, which differ from the ST by one to four syllables. The tempo is slightly faster (the ST is 132 bpm and the TT 150 bpm), which may have also influenced the previously mentioned stylistic choice. In terms of instrumentation, a horn section was added. While the vocal performances both utilize a guttural singing approach, the TT's key is dropped one and a half steps (from F major to D major) to further foster singability, accommodating the performer's baritone vocal range.

Table 2: Verse 2 (lines 7–8) and refrain (lines 9–10) of “Money (that’s what I want)”

Line	English ST	French TT	Gloss translation
7	Your love gives me such a thrill	Elle est vilaine, elle est très moche	She is mean, she is very ugly
8	But your love don't pay my bills	Tu devais avoir tes yeux dans tes poches	You must've been blind
9	I need money	Pas de chance	You're out of luck
10	That's what I want	Qu'est-ce qui t'a pris	What's gotten into you?

The sole semantic retentions are reflected in rhyming parallelisms in the verses (AA), the use of lyrical extemporization in the vamp, and the TL lyricist's attempt to match the ST register with the use of slang expressions and terms. Verse two contains the expressions “avoir tes yeux dans tes poches” (line 8), and “qu'est qui t'a pris” in the refrain (lines 9 and 10), with the latter appearing six times in the song. In terms of the narrative, both the ST and the TT involve a female love interest but with different perspectives. While the ST narrator is an active participant in the relationship he finds to be exciting, the TT narrator is only an observer of the relationship, and he mocks the woman using terms like *vilaine* and *moché* (line 7). This addition could reflect an association of such pejorative concepts, and their negative connotations, with the genre by the TL lyricist.

5.3. Translating for an emerging star: Vline Buggy's “J'attendrai”

Released in 1966 on the Phillips label, “J'attendrai”⁶ is Claude François's performance of famed Motown songwriting team Holland-Dozier-Holland's classic,

6] “J'attendrai”, © Jobete Music Co., Inc. TL lyrics can be found at: <https://genius.com/Claude-francois-jattendrai-lyrics>. SL lyrics can be found at: <https://genius.com/The-four-tops-reach-out-ill-be-there-lyrics>.

“Reach out (I’ll be there)”, originated by the Four Tops. Its translator, Vline Buggy, considered one of France’s most treasured songwriters, became an in-demand lyricist during the yé-yé period thanks to her success penning one of François’s earliest hits, “Belles! Belles! Belles!” (a French-language cover of the Everly Brothers “Made to love”). Most French composers at the time considered yé-yé music decadent and refused to work with the artists who recorded it. Fortunately, Buggy was more open-minded than her contemporaries and began amassing so much songwriting work that she had to quit her permanent job (Buggy 2018: 50).

At the semiotic level, the TT rhythm only differs from the ST occasionally by one or two syllables, warranting singability. The TT lyrics also follow Low’s criteria for singability and the TT performer occasionally matches many of the melismas and guttural vocal approach found in the original. In terms of the arrangement, both performances were recorded with similar instrumentation and tempos (the TT is 124 bpm and the ST 120 bpm), including three-part harmony backing vocals that employ a call-and-response technique. They are also in the same key (D sharp major). However, some lines were omitted. The first and second verses of the ST each contain five lines, and the third verse contains six lines. The equivalent TT verses are consistently four lines in length, with a total of four lines omitted. (Since each line of the verses is identical in its rhythmic and harmonic structure, it would be difficult to notice this omission if casually listening to the TT performance.) This change of arrangement is possibly the indication that Buggy experienced translation constraints due to intervention by the artist-producer.

Table 3: Verse 2 of “Reach out (I’ll be there)”, lines 11–15

Line	English ST	French TT	Gloss translation
11	When you feel lost and about to give up	Oui et si un jour tout n'est que confusion	Yes and if one day everything is only confusion
12	Cause your best just ain't good enough	Que ce nouvel amour n'était qu'illusion	That this new love was only an illusion
13	And you feel the world has grown cold	Qu'à la dérive tu te laisse aller	That you let yourself drift away
14	And you're drifting out all on your own	Que tu cherches une main pour te rattraper	That you look for a hand to catch you
15	And you need a hand to hold	[omitted]	[omitted]

While one may assume that pop song translators work under conditions similar to those of other types of conventional translators, the additional external

agents involved in the creation of commercial music can occasionally impact the TTs. It is common for pop song translations to be tailored to fit the niche style and persona of the artist, even in terms of the musical arrangement's structure (Cintrão 2009: 818). Such lyrical and musical adjustments are usually made by the producer, the lyricist, the artist, or a combination of the three. Buggy makes it clear that François selected the hit songs he wanted to cover, and always had a clear vision for how he wanted the songs arranged and translated. At times, he even insisted on the use of specific terms that he thought would resonate best with the public (Buggy 2018: 51). Although not officially listed as a rights holder for this cover, he is credited on the liner notes as a co-writer. Hence, it is possible that the decision to shorten each verse was made by François or even the producer. Regardless of whose decision it was, it is clear that the shortened arrangement forced Buggy to omit semantic units that were either repetitive or non-essential to the main theme. Such a strategy would still facilitate the transfer of all primary semantic units to the TT.

The ST features semantic fields of hopelessness (line 11), low self-worth (line 12), pessimism (line 13), drifting and being alone (line 14), and holding a hand (line 15). Most of these semantic fields were approximated in the TT: a hand (catching instead of holding) and hopelessness (confusion instead of feeling lost). The semantic fields of pessimism and low self-worth are transferred as rejection in line 12 of the TT, which is a close semantic link. Additionally, the words “reach out,” found in the title of the ST, appear in the backing vocals at the end of each verse as loanwords. The decision to retain them is quite possibly a marketing-based decision made by the artist to give the cover a more authentic flair. In each ST refrain, the phrase “I’ll” appears twice, always on the downbeat and heavily accentuated, further emphasizing its importance to the narrative and the iterability of the composition. A phonemic parallelism can be noted in the TT on these prominent syllables with the phrase “j’attendrai”, as it also begins with the open front unrounded vowel /a/. The lyrical extemporization technique employed in the ST’s vamp was transferred, and the TT matches and surpasses the ST’s rhymes. Although described with slightly different terms, the main theme is retained and places the TT narrator in a situation identical to that of the ST. Such characteristics point to Franzone’s near-enough translation strategy.

5.4. Adequation against the odds:

José Carreras Moysi’s “Tráeme tu amor”

After a year of minimal public appearances, Chico Valento would reemerge in 1966 to promote his fifth release, a four-song extended play (EP). This project, which would be his final recording, included the tune, “Trámeme tu amor”,

a Spanish-language cover of “Bring it on home to me” (written and originally performed by Sam Cooke). This standout performance, translated by José Carreras Moysi, is another example of the near-enough translation strategy. There are several semiotic parallelisms in terms of rhythm, vocal approach, instrumentation, and arrangement. The rhythm of the TT usually differs from the ST by one to four syllables, and at times matches perfectly, contributing to singability. The TT performer, like the ST performer, employs a throatier vocal approach. Despite the slightly increased appearance of the closed front vowel /i/ in the TT, an inescapable norm for Spanish, the TT remains singable as this vowel does not appear on sustained high notes. To further enhance singability, melismas are used to elongate TT vocal lines in an attempt to create a prosodic match with the ST. This vocal technique, semiotically linked to R&B, and the ST performance in particular, was both pragmatic and emotionally compelling. The call-and-response motif in the ST was transferred to the TT’s musical arrangement but was sung an octave higher in falsetto by the backing vocalists, perhaps to add more fun and youthful aesthetics to the overall production. Although the first verse of the TT performance includes only piano and vocals compared to the full rhythm section and vocals found in the original, their instrumentation is identical for the remainder of the performance. Both performances share the same chord structure, key (C major), and are close in tempo (the ST is 71 bpm and the TT 78 bpm).

On the semantic level, the TL lyricist retains key semantic units by the use of adequation strategies.

Table 4: Refrain of “Bring it on home to me”, lines 3–6

Line	English ST	Spanish TT	Gloss translation
3	Baby, bring it to me	Uao oh, tráeme tu amor	Wow oh, bring me your love
4	Bring your sweet loving	Tráemelo de nuevo sí	Bring it to me again, yes
5	Bring it on home to me	Tu dulce amor a mí	Your sweet love to me
6	Yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah)	Yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah)	Yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah)

The main themes of the ST refrain are transferred: “bring” (lines 3, 4 and 5) appears twice in the TT (lines 3 and 4); “sweet loving” (line 4) appears once in the TT (line 5), as well as an additional “love” (line 3). A phonemic parallelism was created by borrowing from the English “yeah yeah...” (line 6) in the call-and-response section. (This was perhaps to retain the iterability of the original performance, as well as to capitalize on the popularity of the phrase that marked the cultural movement.) Although the surface meaning of the recurring phrase,

“bring it”, is conveyed in the TT, its deeper meaning was not transferred. In AAVE, the expression *bring it (on)* can also imply sex, possibly omitted from the TT due to censorship concerns. The TT also perfectly matches the original rhyme pattern (AA in the verses and ABA in the refrain). Additionally, the TT performer’s lyrical extemporization and banter in the source language (SL) evinces an occasional use of foreignization as a strategy to reinforce semantic features of the ST. The retention of key ST semiotic and semantic items reflected by this TT is in keeping with the characteristics of the near-enough translation strategy.

6. Discussion

In all of the compositions, several key semiotic features of the R&B genre were retained: guttural singing, call-and-response, vocal and rhythmic extemporization, and the fundamental musical arrangement. At the semantic level, both the deeper meanings of the STs as well as the lyrical extemporization technique were retained in three of the four compositions (the ST for “El twist” contained no lyrical extemporizations). The TTs showed signs of omissions, transpositions, and additions due to possible external agents including censorship and artist-producer intervention. As the yé-yé period occurred during the Francoist dictatorship, it is not surprising that both Spanish TTs transposed sexually suggestive semantic items. With Buggy’s “J’attendrai”, there is a possibility of external constraints to the creative process resulting in the removal of several measures of the original musical arrangement. While noted key modifications were a consequence of the physiology of the performers for “El twist” and “Pas de chance”, the additions to the musical arrangement of these compositions (a vamp and a horn section) were pragmatic choices semiotically linked to R&B. The pejorative reference to a woman embedded in the all-new lyrics strategy of “Pas de chance” potentially links the concept of undesirableness to R&B, a prevailing viewpoint of the music style at the time.

The strategies utilized by the translators ensured that a number of the vital characteristics of the genre were reflected in the TTs. Showing a consistent prioritization of body-sense feel through the replication of features including rhythm, vocal approach, musical arrangement, extemporization, and SL phonetic elements (through phonetic calques and loanwords). Although the motivations for Mitchell’s strategy are unclear, censorship appears to be the most recognizable influence impacting semantic shifts as noted in the TTs. The strategies employed by the translators reflect the continual mitigation of innumerable musical, textual, and sociopolitical constraints while exhibiting impressive creative facility and innovation, typical characteristics seen in minority translation.

7. Conclusion

R&B is an African American form of cultural resistance, rich in allusions, dialect, and dynamic musical structures. The singable *interlingual covers* (Susam-Saraeva 2018) of this genre released during the yé-yé period created an aperture through which the culture of a people – labeled as three-fifths of a person by their constitution – could expand beyond small clubs and late-night radio programs and conquer the hearts of teenagers worldwide. While there were economic and artistic motivations for the creation of singable R&B song translations, their distribution concurrently facilitated a fortuitous transcultural collaboration between R&B composers, producers, artists, and translators, forever revolutionizing the global pop culture lexicon. Future studies of R&B song translations involving a larger sample (with fewer criteria of exclusion) could potentially provide more insight into translation norms and other translation constraints from the period. A comprehensive study of the importance of the transfer of semiotics in singable minority song translation could also be very promising.

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From Waterloo Road to the Champs-Élysées. A study of French translations of British and American pop songs

ABSTRACT

From Waterloo Road to the Champs-Élysées.
A study of French translations of British and American pop songs

This paper investigates French versions of British and American pop songs from the post-war period until the early twenty-first century. The aim is to establish which translation methods were used when the songs were transferred into the target language and covered by French artists. Fifty target texts were analyzed by means of Franzon's typology of popular songs in translation. The corpus material was analyzed with regard to such factors as distribution among categories in the typology, the lyrical themes of the texts, the choices of individual translators, and the way these translators transferred the works of different composers. The results show that, even though no significant development over time could be detected, translation methods were rather evenly distributed on the spectrum between the fairly faithful variants and target texts bearing no resemblance in content to the source texts. The results also indicate that protest/anti-war lyrics were more faithfully transferred into the target language than texts exploring other lyrical themes. The domination in the corpus of covers made in the 1960s seems to reveal that decade as a golden age of pop song translation from English into French.

Keywords: song translation, British and American pop music, post-war period, lyrics, French singers

1. Introduction

There are many reasons why song lyrics are translated. The target texts may, for instance, be made for subtitles, or made to be performed vocally on stage

and/or on a record. It is the latter category of target texts, i.e. singable translations, that is of interest for this article, which investigates French versions of mainstream anglophone pop songs from the post-war period until the early twenty-first century. After World War II, Anglo-American cultural influences spread rapidly throughout western Europe, and France was no exception. Francfort (2020: 39) stresses the importance of imported cultural products such as pop songs in this context and uses the expression *soft power* to describe the American popular cultural dominance that emerged with the Cold War. This paper describes, compares and analyzes the methods used by the translators creating French cover versions of anglophone pop songs and answers the following research questions: What is the proportion of faithful and less faithful translation methods in the corpus? Is there any development over time? Are the lyrical themes of the source texts of any importance? Can the choices of individual translators be identified, and have the works of different composers been transferred differently? The theoretical framework of the study is made up of Franzone's (2021: 83–121) system of classification of popular songs in translation.

The translation of song lyrics places great demands on the translator. Franzone (2010: 49) argues that song translation is an activity that balances “between respect and hit capacity”, which, of course, is a way of expressing the translator’s eternal dilemma: how to find the right balance between translation choices that remain faithful to the source text and choices that are effective in the target language context? It is a known fact that the translation of singable lyrics requires a significant amount of freedom vis-à-vis the source text. Franzone (2010: 55), for instance, argues that the genre challenges the perception that a translator’s main task is to transfer semantic content into the target language. Apter and Herman (2016: 14) confirm that the music accompanying the source text constitutes a challenge that is specific to this textual genre: “[i]n order to fit the music, a singable translation must sacrifice some literality, some meaning”. Some academics even hesitate to use the term *translation* in the context of singable lyrics. Froeliger (2007), for instance, makes a clear distinction between adapting and translating song lyrics and prefers the term *adaptation* where Apter and Herman and other scholars would use the term *singable translation*. Froeliger (2007: 177) writes: “[a] translator puts words on paper; for an adapter, the lyrics must also be performable. Orality is first and foremost”. The issue here, however, seems to be about terminological preferences, and there is no fundamental clash of opinions as far as I can see. Indeed, Guillemain (2019) bridges the gap by using the verb *tradapter*, a neologism that amalgamates the French verbs *traduire* (‘to translate’) and *adapter* (‘to adapt’). Whatever one chooses to call the devising of performable song lyrics in a new language, the genre-specific constraints relate to what Low (2005) labels the “non-verbal code” – that is, the melody, the key, the chords, and the rhythm of the original song. As he explains:

[...] song-translating is significantly different from most interlingual translating (e.g. poetry translation). This is particularly true of the devising of singable translations: here the TT – the verbal message in the new code – is intended specifically to be transmitted simultaneously with the very same non-verbal code that accompanied the ST (Low 2005: 187).

As Rędzioch-Korkuz (2023: 65) points out in a recent metatheoretical article, “translation and music” can be considered “a new subfield of translation studies”. Indeed, in the early twenty-first century, the translation of song lyrics was still a fairly unexplored research field; however, there has been a significant development over the last twenty years. Important contributions have been published by Bosseaux (2011), Apter and Herman (2016), and Low (2017), and there are collective volumes edited by Gorlée (2005), Susam-Saraeva (2008), Minors (2013), and Franzon et al. (2021), to name but a few of the main contributors. French translations of Anglo-American pop songs, however, have yet to be extensively examined by the research community, even if there are exceptions – see, for instance, Francfort’s (2020) overview and articles focusing on French translations of Bob Dylan’s lyrics (Froeliger 2007; Meunier 2020).

2. The corpus of the study

A corpus of fifty English source texts and their French target texts from the latter half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century has been selected with the purpose to create a representative sample of what could be called the standard repertoire of French cover songs of English originals. Of course, these fifty songs do not constitute the total sum of British and American pop songs covered in French during the period – but they may be, to many people, the most well-known examples of the genre. All of the songs, both the original and cover versions, were originally published as phonograms, either in a vinyl (record) format or in a digital (CD) format, and they may be categorized as songs aimed at the mass market. Some are popular mainstream songs performed by slick crooners and pop stars; some are more rebellious rock or protest songs that in the 1960s became an integral part of popular culture (see e.g. Francfort 2020: 40). The corpus was established using various means of selection. The songs are all performed vocally, and the examples quoted on the following pages show that they have entered the standard repertoire. A list of American pop songs covered in French (Francfort 2020: 49–54) was used as a means of finding cover versions in the target language, as were several online playlists and articles – especially those about British pop and rock songs covered in French¹. In order to access

1| For instance, the Wikipedia page “Liste d’adaptations de chansons des Beatles en français” (https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_d%27adaptations_de_chansons_des_Beatles_

the original lyrics as well as the French cover lyrics, a criterion of selection was that both versions had to be available on online streaming services such as YouTube. The original songs were often interpreted by famous stars of the day and, for the most part, they became big hits in the English-speaking world. The French cover versions were often recorded by artists well-known in the target culture, such as Tino Rossi and Edith Piaf in the 1950s, Johnny Hallyday and Eddy Mitchell in the 1960s, and Sacha Distel and Sylvie Vartan in the 1970s and 1980s. It is generally the English recording that has gained the status of a timeless classic. However, the title of the article alludes to one of the exceptions to this general trend. Joe Dassin's "Les Champs-Élysées"² from 1969 has become a veritable classic, a Parisian anthem of sorts. The original, "Waterloo Road",³ recorded by the British band Jason Crest the year before, pales in comparison. It was at the time, and remains to this day, the lesser-known version of the song.

The objective was to include songs from the post-war period to the present day. It was relatively easy to find French cover versions of British and American pop songs dating back to the "vinyl era", that is, from the mid-1950s until the end of the 1970s. However, it proved more difficult to find examples from the immediate post-war period – when shellac records turning at 78 rpm still dominated the market – and later times when vinyl records were gradually being replaced by compact cassettes, then digital compact discs, and ultimately streaming services. The corpus consists of six target texts from the 1950s, 32 from the 1960s, and seven from the 1970s. Only three songs are from the 1980s and a mere two songs represent the more recent decades from 1990 and onwards (see Table 2, p. 81).

3. Analysis of the corpus material

In Section 3, the results will be presented with regard to the research questions presented in the introduction of this paper.

3.1. Lyrical themes

Thematically, the 50 source texts that make up the corpus of the study can be divided into three groups based on the subject matter of the lyrics. Most of the songs (30 of the 50 songs studied, or 60%) are *love songs*. Be they happy or sad, these lyrics deal in one way or another with matters of the heart. An illustrative

en_fran%C3%A7ais) was used for the selection of Beatles songs covered in French. Another source of inspiration was the site <https://theculturetrip.com/france/articles/9-great-french-covers-of-english-songs> (accessed: 12.02.2024).

2| French lyrics Pierre Delanoë. © CBS.

3| Music and lyrics Mike Deighan and Mike Wilsh. © Philips.

example is The Everly Brothers' "Made to love" (1960),⁴ covered as "Belles, belles, belles" by Claude François in 1962.⁵ A smaller proportion (8 of 50, or 16%) are *protest* or *anti-war songs*. Their main purpose is to deliver a critical social commentary of some kind, an example being Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the wind" from 1962,⁶ known in France as "Écoute dans le vent" (1964) and interpreted by Richard Anthony.⁷ The remaining 12 songs (24%) have been put into the group *novelty songs (and other themes)*, since they focus on very different lyrical topics. Their subject matter can range from a novelty song celebrating a new form of fashionable beachwear ("Itsi bitsi petit bikini" 1960)⁸ to a parody of a third-class western movie ("Zorro est arrivé" 1964,⁹ known in its original version as "Along came Jones", The Coasters 1958).¹⁰ It may also be noted that two of the groups presented here – *love songs* and the group labeled *novelty songs (and other themes)* – span the entire period, from the 1950s until the early twenty-first century, whereas the remaining group (*protest/anti-war songs*) was published exclusively in the years 1962–1968.

As one might expect, most of the target texts explore the same lyrical theme as their original versions of the song. There are, however, exceptions: Ben E. King's hit "Stand by me" (1961)¹¹ has been classified as a love song, since its overall message is that everything will be all right if only the narrator's "darling" stands by his side. The song was covered in 1963 by Dalida as "Tu croiras".¹² The French title can be translated as 'You will believe', and the target lyrics introduce the theme of religious salvation, a subject that is completely absent from the source text.

3.2. Qualitative classification

As previously mentioned, the theoretical framework of the study is made up of Franzone's (2021: 83–121) system of classification of translated pop songs. His typology consists of six categories, ranging from the most faithful translation method to cases where the target texts bear no resemblance to the source texts. In the following sections, each category is briefly presented and illustrated with examples taken from the corpus.

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- 4| Music and lyrics Phil Everly. © Warner Bros.
 - 5| French lyrics Claude François. © Fontana.
 - 6| Music and lyrics Bob Dylan. © Columbia.
 - 7| French lyrics Pierre Dorsey. © Columbia.
 - 8| French lyrics André Salvat and Lucien Morisse. © Barclay.
 - 9| French lyrics Bernard Michel. © Rigolo.
 - 10| Music and lyrics Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. © ATCO Records; London Records.
 - 11| Music and lyrics Ben E. King, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. © ATCO Records; London Records.
 - 12| French lyrics Jacques Plante. © Barclay.

3.2.1. Near-enough translation

The most faithful translation method in Franzon's typology is characterized by target texts that bear a close, if not complete, resemblance to their source texts – hence the term “near-enough” translation. The translator has a certain amount of room for maneuvers, as some deviations from the original lyrics are permitted within this category. Franzon (2021: 91) explains: “[t]he label ‘near enough’ covers a plethora of changes that are manifold and recurrent but somehow minor: concerning syntax, exact references, emphases of points, stylistic values and such”. An example taken from the corpus of this study is “Qu’as-tu appris à l’école?”, the French version of “What did you learn in school today?”.¹³¹⁴

Table 1: “What did you learn in school today?” (source text) and “Qu’as-tu appris à l’école?” (target text), excerpts

“What did you learn in school today?” (music and lyrics by Tom Paxton 1964) ¹³	“Qu’as-tu appris à l’école?” (French lyrics by Graeme Allwright 1968) ¹⁴
What did you learn in school today, dear little boy of mine? I learned that policemen are my friends I learned that justice never ends I learned that murderers die for their crimes Even if we make a mistake sometimes And that’s what I learned in school today That’s what I learned in school	Qu’as-tu appris à l’école mon fils ? À l’école aujourd’hui Que les gendarmes sont mes amis Et tous les juges très gentils Que les criminels sont punis pourtant Même si on s’trompe de temps en temps C’est ça qu’on m’a dit à l’école Papa C’est ça qu’on m’a dit à l’école

We can easily see how close the target text keeps to the original version. The story is identical: the narrator asks his son what he learned in school, and the child candidly responds that he was taught about the flawlessness of the police and the judicial system. The innocence of the young boy brings home the song’s message: equality before the law does not exist, but the system of education indoctrinates children to believe it does. The departures from the source text are rather insignificant and are only minor in detail. For instance, in the French cover version, the boy states that “tous les juges [sont] très gentils” (‘all judges [are] very kind’), which is a more direct (and perhaps also more child-like) way of expressing that “justice never ends”. The original lyrics state that “murderers die for their crimes”, but in the target version “les criminels sont punis” (‘the criminals are punished’). This could be considered a generalization, as the French phrase by definition covers other types of offenders than merely murderers and

13| © Elektra.

14| © Mercury.

a broader range of punishments than merely the death penalty. However, these modifications are indeed minor, and the text is a good illustration of a near-enough translation.

3.2.2. Perspective-shift translation

In this category of translation, some aspects of the source text have been more noticeably reworked, and the story is narrated from a different point of view than the original text. For instance, a common enough phenomenon is *gender transposition*, which means that the story is narrated from a female, instead of a male, perspective (or vice versa) (Franzon 2021: 99). In the corpus, a case of gender transposition can be found in “Elle chantait ma vie en musique” (1973),¹⁵ a cover version of Roberta Flack’s smash hit “Killing me softly with his song” (1972).¹⁶ As the English title indicates, the original lyrics are narrated from Flack’s female point of view, and the object of desire (or at least admiration) is a male singer performing on stage. The female narrator thus starts the chorus with: “Strumming my pain with his fingers/ Singing my life with his words”. The French version is performed by a male artist (Gilbert Montagné), and the person put on a pedestal is a woman – heterosexuality, of course, being the normative sexual orientation in mainstream popular music. The French refrain begins: “Elle chantait ma vie en musique/ Elle disait mes mots en chanson” (‘She sang my life in music/ She said my words in song’).

3.2.3. Lyric hook transposition

The modifications in this third category in Franzon’s typology have to do with central textual aspects such as “the setting”, “the subject matter”, and “the premises of the story” (Franzon 2021: 101). However, the title phrase and/or the chorus of the source text – that is, the song’s “lyric hook” – is transferred into the target text. An illustration of this translation method can be found in “Fiche le camp, Jack” (1961),¹⁷ a cover version of “Hit the road, Jack” (1960).¹⁸ The title and the lyric hook are clearly transferred into the target language, but elsewhere the French text diverges substantially from the original lyrics. For instance, the male protagonist in the American version is dismissed for being poor (“You ain’t got no money, you just ain’t no good”) – the French “Jack”, on the other hand, is accused of being unfaithful to his wife: “Tu n’ès qu’un coureur, avec elle je t’ai vu c’était pas ta sœur” (‘You’re nothing but a womanizer, I saw you with her and she wasn’t your sister’).

15| French lyrics Eddy Marnay. © CBS.

16| Music and lyrics Charles Fox and Norman Gimbel. © Atlantic.

17| French lyrics Georges Aber. © Columbia.

18| Music and lyrics Percy Mayfield. © ABC–Paramount.

3.2.4. Single-phrase spinoff

A single-phrase spinoff is a target text that is partly based on a foreign song text but where the main inspiration is derived from another source. The cover version is linked to the original text by a principle that Franzon (2021: 107) calls “random fidelity”. This means that the translator creates new lyrics out of a single phrase in the original song, thereby taking many liberties with the source text. Franzon (2021: 107) explains: “[i]n a *single-phrase spinoff*, the TL lyricist has taken only fragments from the source lyrics and has spun her/his lyrics around them”. An example of this category of target texts can be found in the French version of “Apples, peaches and cherries” (1953),¹⁹ called “Scoubidou (pommes et poires)” (1959).²⁰ In Peggy Lee’s original version, the story is narrated from a third-person perspective. An itinerant merchant, accompanied by his beautiful daughter, sells the above-mentioned fruit from a cart. A young man falls in love with the girl, and the listener learns that he “wooed and won the maiden’s heart/ And now ten children ride the cart”, which may be interpreted as being a variation on the theme “and they lived happily ever after”. However, in the French version, a male first-person narrator meets a girl at a friend’s place. They fall in love, dance all night long, and start a romantic relationship. Unfortunately, the love story turns sour. The man decides to leave the girl, uttering the following words: “La leçon que j’en ai tirée/ Est facile à deviner/ Célibataire vaut mieux rester” (“The lesson that I have learned from this/ Is easy to guess/ It’s better to stay a bachelor”). Hence the denouement is quite the opposite to the one expressed in the original lyrics. There are, nevertheless, fragments of the source text that are transferred into the target version. The association of the fruit motif and the theme of romantic love also appear in the French text, as the girl sells “pommes et poires” (‘apples and pears’) for a living, and this information is repeated in the song’s chorus. Therefore, we can conclude that the French lyricists have taken this association of ideas from the original text and built a new story around it.

3.2.5. Phonetic calque

This translation method is based on the premise that the phonetic sounds of the lyrics are sometimes just as important for a pop song as the semantic meaning of the lyrics. Therefore, it may very well make sense to the translator to transfer the phonetics rather than the semantics of the source text, especially in “rhetorically effective places” (Franzon 2021: 117). This translation method can be combined with any other category above. An obvious example from the corpus is the line “itsi bitsi tini ouini” which is devoid of meaning in

19| Music and lyrics Lewis Allan (pseudonym for Abel Meeropol). © Decca.

20| French lyrics Maurice Tézé and Sacha Distel. © Philips.

French but mimics the English “itsy bitsy teeny weeny” in the chorus of “Itsi bitsi petit bikini” (1960),²¹ the French cover version of “Itsy bitsy teeny weeny yellow polkadot bikini” from the same year.²² The onomatopoeia “Bang bang”²³ in the French version of “Bang bang (my baby shot me down)”²⁴ (both versions from 1966) also serves the purpose of transferring the phonetics of the original hit song into the target text. Other examples in the corpus include various “oh-ohs”, “woahs”, and “yeahs” – exclamations that mimic those of the source lyrics. There is, however, no example of an exclusively phonetic calque in the corpus material.

3.2.6. All-new target lyrics

With this last category, we have reached the utmost point of the fidelity–freedom continuum: a category of target texts that bear no semantic resemblance to their source lyrics at all. The result is a completely new and unrelated text, built upon the “non-verbal code” (Low 2005: 187) of the original song. Franzon (2021: 113–116) explains that the method has been used for a long time and for a variety of reasons. For instance, secular songs received new spiritual lyrics with the purpose of being used in a religious context. The case of “Tu croiras”, the target text that introduced a religious theme completely absent from the source lyrics of “Stand by me”, has already been mentioned. Another example of this phenomenon is “La terre promise” (1966),²⁵ which contains phrases like “C’est pour toi Seigneur qu’ils ont tant marché/ Tous ces voyageurs récompense-les/ Toutes les églises sont pleines à craquer/ La terre promise ils l’ont bien méritée” (‘It is for you, Lord, that they have walked so long/ Reward all these travelers/ All churches are cram-full/ The promised land, they have indeed deserved it’). These phrases have no equivalents in the source text “California dreamin” (1965).²⁶ They are, therefore, clear examples of the last category of target texts, all-new target lyrics.

3.3. Quantitative results

In Section 3.3, the following research questions will be addressed: What is the proportion of faithful and less faithful translation methods in the corpus? Is there any development over time? Are the lyrical themes of the source texts of any importance?

21| French lyrics André Salvat and Lucien Morisse. © Barclay.

22| Music and lyrics Paul Vance and Lee Pockriss. © London American Recordings.

23| French lyrics Claude Carrère and Georges Aber. © Philips.

24| Music and lyrics Sonny Bono. © Polydor.

25| French lyrics Pierre Delanoë. © Columbia.

26| Music and lyrics John and Michelle Phillips. © Dunhill.

3.3.1. Translation methods: absolute numbers and distribution

The categorization of target lyrics according to Franzon's taxonomy is no exact science. When classifying the translated texts, I sometimes hesitated between the categories of near-enough translation and perspective-shift translation, as well as between lyric hook transposition and single-phrase spinoff. Consequently, there is no guarantee that another researcher would classify each and every target text in the exact same category as I have done here. There are, however, sufficiently clear distinctions between, on the one hand, the two categories that sit at the faithful end of the spectrum and, on the other hand, the two freer variants in the middle. Likewise, the all-new target lyrics distinguish themselves clearly from all the other categories and can hardly be confused with any other group.

As shown in Table 2, the classification of the 50 songs included in the corpus reveals the following results: 18 target texts (or 36% of the corpus material) remain sufficiently close to the source lyrics to be classified as near-enough translations, 2 texts (4%) present the characteristics of the category of perspective-shift translation, 11 target texts (22%) are lyric hook transpositions, 8 texts (16%) are categorized as single-phrase spinoffs, and the remaining 11 texts (22%) bear no resemblance to the source text and therefore fall into the final category, all-new target lyrics. Put together, these five categories make up the entire corpus (50 songs, or 100%). As previously mentioned, no example of an exclusively phonetic calque was found in the corpus material, but this method always serves to complement other translation categories. Nine target texts of various classifications also show the characteristics of a phonetic calque.

3.3.2. Development over time

In an analysis of the figures in Table 2, the first thing worth noting is that the corpus is largely dominated by target lyrics dating from the 1960s (32 texts out of 50), which is a phenomenon mentioned earlier in the paper. The results are summarized in Table 2.

The figures in Table 2 show no clear development over time with regard to translation methods. For each decade, there are roughly as many target texts that lean toward the faithful end of the spectrum (near-enough translations and perspective-shift translations) as there are freer variants (lyric hook transpositions and single-phrase spinoffs), with no significant differences to be observed. There are also some examples of all-new target lyrics in the decades from the 1950s to the 1980s. Hence, there is no "new-fidelity trend" to be identified in this material, as opposed to what was found in previous studies targeting Swedish renditions of French *chansons*.²⁷

27| See Aronsson (2021a and 2022), where a change over time from somewhat loose adaptations to more faithful translations was identified with Swedish cover versions of Jacques Brel's and Georges Brassens' songs.

Table 2: Translation methods classified by decade

	Near-enough translation	Perspective-shift translation	Lyric hook transposition	Single-phrase spinoff	All-new target lyrics	Total
1950s	2	0	1	2	1	6
1960s	13	1	7	5	6	32
1970s	2	1	2	0	2	7
1980s	0	0	0	1	2	3
1990s	0	0	0	0	0	0
2000s	0	0	1	0	0	1
2010s	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	18	2	11	8	11	50

3.3.3. Lyrical themes

If time does not seem to be an important factor in the analysis of this English–French corpus material, there are, however, other features that are worth investigating. If we return to the three genres of source texts – love songs, protest/anti-war songs, and novelty songs (and other themes) – we receive the results presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Translation methods classified by lyrical theme

	Near-enough translation	Perspective-shift translation	Lyric hook transposition	Single-phrase spinoff	All-new target lyrics	Total
Love songs	8	2	7	6	7	30
Protest/anti-war songs	6	0	1	1	0	8
Novelty songs (and other themes)	4	0	3	1	4	12
Total	18	2	11	8	11	50

When we look at the figures in Table 3, we see that the genres of love songs and novelty songs (and other themes) show roughly the same proportion of songs leaning toward the faithful and the less faithful side of the spectrum, which

indicates that a variety of translation methods were used when these songs were transferred into French. The genre that stands out here is the socially conscious protest/anti-war songs. Most of the songs belonging to this genre (6 out of 8 songs, or 75%) have been classified as near-enough translations. This is a significantly larger proportion than for the love songs (8 out of 30 tunes, or 27%), and the group novelty songs (and other themes) (4 out of 12 songs, or 33%). The conclusion is that, generally speaking, the French translators transferred the protest/anti-war songs in a more faithful manner than was the case with the other types of songs.

3.4. The translators

All the translators in the corpus were in the music business, either as performing artists (singer-songwriters) in their own right or as professional lyricists who translate song lyrics on the side. None of them has made a career from translating other textual genres. It can be noted that 31 of the 35 translators in the corpus (or 89%) are men²⁸. Hence, the material reflects the gender situation that prevailed prior to both the general breakthrough of women in the labor market and the feminization of the translation industry in particular. We can note that the person responsible for most target texts in the corpus is Pierre Delanoë, since he transferred five of the 50 songs into French. Georges Aber translated four songs and is followed by a group of individuals who each translated three texts: Ralph Bernet, Graeme Allwright, Hugues Aufray, and Michel Mallory. With the possible exceptions of Aber and Bernet, they all belong to the category of translators and mediators that Casanova (2002: 18) calls “consacrants consacrés” (‘consecrating and consecrated’). What this means is that they are well-known and well-respected in the target country, and that they can use their symbolic capital to promote a new product – in this case, a French cover version – and give it their seal of approval. The other translators (of just one or two songs each) are more anonymous and illustrate the category of intermediaries that Casanova (2002: 17) calls “médiateurs ordinaires” (‘ordinary mediators’).

The corpus material makes it clear that the translators to a certain extent follow individual preferences or habits when it comes to the translation of song lyrics. On the one hand, there are those translators whose contributions all fall neatly into the category of near-enough translations. This is the case with Bernet, who transferred “I saw her standing there”,²⁹ “Anyone who had a heart”,³⁰

28| A similar phenomenon was identified in a previous study focusing on Swedish translations of 200 French popular songs, where 81% of the translators were male (Aronsson 2021b: 37).

29| French title “Quand je l’ai vue devant moi” (performed by Johnny Hallyday). © Philips. Original music and lyrics Paul McCartney and John Lennon. © Parlophone; Odeon.

30| French title “Ceux qui ont un cœur” (performed by Petula Clark). © Disques Vogue. Original music and lyrics Burt Bacharach and Hal David. © Scepter Records.

and “(There’s) always something there to remind me”³¹ into French, and Allwright, who translated (as well as was recorded singing) French versions of the songs “Little boxes”,³² “What did you learn in school today?”,³³ and “Suzanne”.³⁴

Meanwhile, there are those lyricists who tend to free themselves completely, or almost completely, from the source texts. For instance, Jacques Plante presented French versions of The Platters’ smash hit “Only you”³⁵ and Ben E. King’s “Stand by me”,³⁶ songs that have been billed as all-new target lyrics. Michel Mallory is responsible for the French adaptations of Sheena Easton’s “Morning train (nine to five)”,³⁷ “Sweet dreams (are made of this)” by Eurythmics,³⁸ and Irene Cara’s “Flashdance... what a feeling”,³⁹ all of which were recorded by the French singer Sylvie Vartan in the early 1980s. Two of these target texts bear no resemblance to the source lyrics and are thus illustrative of the category all-new target lyrics, and the third text has been classified as a single-phrase spinoff.

The remaining translators show a flexible attitude toward the act of translating popular songs, employing different methods on different occasions. For example, Eddy Marnay made a rather faithful target text of “Killing me softly with his song”,⁴⁰ classified as a perspective-shift translation, before transforming the Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons’ hit “December, 1963 (oh, what a night)” into a semantically completely different French version,⁴¹ classified as all-new target lyrics. The works of Delanoë and Aber, the most prolific translators in the corpus, similarly show them sometimes translating closely, sometimes adding their own ideas to the mix.

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- 31| French title “Toujours un coin qui me rappelle” (performed by Eddy Mitchell). © Barclay. Original music and lyrics Burt Bacharach and Hal David. © Pye Records; Reprise Records.
- 32| French title “Petites boîtes”. © Mercury. Original music and lyrics Malvina Reynolds. © Cassandra; Columbia.
- 33| See above for copyright details.
- 34| French title “Suzanne”. © Mercury. Original music and lyrics Leonard Cohen. © CBS.
- 35| French title “Loin de vous” (performed by Anny Gould). © Pathé; Trianon. Original music and lyrics Buck Ram and Ande Rand. © Mercury.
- 36| See above for copyright details.
- 37| French title “L’amour c’est comme une cigarette”. © RCA Victor. Original music and lyrics Florrie Palmer. © EMI.
- 38| French title “Déprime”. © RCA Victor. Original music and lyrics Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox. © RCA.
- 39| French title “Danse ta vie”. © RCA Victor. Original music and lyrics Giorgio Moroder, Keith Forsley and Irene Cara. © Casablanca.
- 40| See above for copyright details.
- 41| French title “Cette année-là” (performed by Claude François). © Disques Flèche. Original music and lyrics Bob Gaudio and Judy Parker. © Warner Bros.

3.5. The composers

The most prominent composers of the original songs in the corpus are the three well-known songwriting duos: Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, Burt Bacharach and Hal David, and John Lennon and Paul McCartney – each being responsible for three songs. Other recurring songwriters, represented by two songs each, are Bob Dylan, Irving Berlin, Pete Seeger, Ray Davis from the Kinks, and the Rolling Stones' Glimmer Twins, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. As was the case with the translators, the composers also constitute a masculine hegemony: 57 of 64 (or 89%) of them are men.

Most of the original composers have had their lyrics translated with different translation methods – if, that is, they have more than one song included in the corpus material. Often, these methods range from very faithful to not at all faithful. For instance, Leiber and Stoller had a song transferred in the category of near-enough translation (“Black denim trousers and motorcycle boots”)⁴² as well as an example of all-new target lyrics (“Stand by me”).⁴³ The other famous songwriting duos Bacharach and David and Lennon and McCartney have also seen faithful as well as not so faithful French versions of their hits. The same goes for single songwriters, such as Pete Seeger and Ray Davis.

However, even if variety and heterogeneity seem to be the *modus operandi* here, the material reveals two exceptions worth noticing. Bob Dylan has two original songs in the corpus (“Blowin’ in the wind” and “The times they are a-changin’”),⁴⁴ both of which have been very faithfully transferred into French by two different translators, in the tradition of near-enough translations. The opposite is true for the two Jagger and Richards compositions (“(I can’t get no) Satisfaction” and “Paint it, black”).⁴⁵ Here, the French target texts are clear examples of the other end of the spectrum, i.e. the all-new target lyrics. This is most likely an illustration of the previously mentioned phenomenon: the socially conscious protest/anti-war songs – such as Dylan’s contributions to the corpus – have been more faithfully rendered in the target language than lyrics dealing with other subject matters.

It is, in fact, logical that protest/anti-war songs are translated in a more respectful manner than songs exploring other lyrical themes. Reiß and Vermeer

42| French title “L’homme à la moto” (performed by Édith Piaf), target lyrics Jean Dréjac. © Columbia. Original version © Capitol Records (performed by The Cheers).

43| See above for copyright details.

44| French titles “Ecoute dans le vent” (performed by Richard Anthony), target lyrics Pierre Dorsey, © Columbia, and “Les temps changent” (performed by Hugues Aufray), target lyrics Hugues Aufray, © Barclay. Original versions © Columbia.

45| French titles “Rien qu’un seul mot” (performed by Eddy Mitchell), target lyrics Claude Moine, © Barclay, and “Marie douceur – Marie colère” (performed by Marie Laforêt), target lyrics Michel Jourdan, © Disques Festival; Select. Original versions © Decca; London Records.

(2014: 89–90) point out, when formulating the *skopos* rule of translation, that “any action is determined by its purpose” and therefore “the purpose determines whether, how and what is done”. In the case of the target lyrics analyzed in this study, we may presume that the translational *skopos* varies significantly from one genre of text to the other. The main *raison d'être* of protest and anti-war songs is their socio-political message, and, in most cases, it clearly makes sense to transfer this message as unaltered as possible into the target language. The lyrics of other kinds of popular songs tend to have less importance for the average listener, and it may therefore be sufficient for the translator to transfer the gist of the original lyrics.

4. Concluding remarks

The corpus material seems to reveal that the 1960s were the golden age of pop song translation from English into French, at least quantitatively. This can be explained by the fact that at the dawn of the decade, American pop and youth culture had invaded most parts of western Europe, France included, and the domestic stars of the era adopted personas that closely imitated their transatlantic idols. An American-sounding stage name was a *sine qua non* for the likes of Johnny Hallyday (born Jean-Philippe Smet), Eddy Mitchell (Claude Moine), Dick Rivers (Hervé Forneri), and Richard Anthony (Ricardo Anthony Btsh). Those young performers looked like American rockers in their blue jeans and black leather jackets, but their lyrics were in French. The habit of translating foreign hits remained very much alive during the British Invasion of the mid-1960s (when the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, the Animals, the Who, et al. dominated the airwaves) and through the 1970s.

The corpus material shows that some French translators of Anglo-American pop songs stay close to the intentions of the original lyricists, whereas other translators free themselves almost completely from the source texts. The material reveals no significant development over time regarding the use of faithful and less faithful translation methods, but the results do indicate that protest/anti-war lyrics have been more respectfully transferred into the target language than other kinds of song lyrics. Moreover, the writing, composition, and translation of popular songs were clearly male-dominated activities. The songs may in some (or even many) cases be performed by female artists, but the individuals working behind the scenes were often men.

After the 1970s, there is a definite decrease in translation activity around imported Anglo-American pop music, perhaps related to what Franzon (2021: 90) describes as a “translation-phobic era” and an “internationalized, globalized, anglophone era” in the 1980s. True, Franzon’s study focuses on Swedish translations of English pop songs, but his conclusions seem to be just

as pertinent to the English-French context. Since the 1980s, the consumption of popular music by the general public has become increasingly dominated by original versions of anglophone hits. Translated cover versions performed by domestic artists are no longer in fashion the way they were in France in the 1960s (as shown in Table 2, p. 81). According to Francfort (2020: 41), the gradual phase-out of domestic versions of Anglo-American hits shows that the American cultural hegemony and its *soft power* has reached its goal. In a globalized and English-speaking world, there is no need for national adaptations of imported cultural products, and as such, there is no longer any widespread need for translated pop songs.

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Singing within constraints: Strategies of translating songs on early Polish National Television

ABSTRACT

Singing within constraints:
Strategies of translating songs on early Polish National Television

The relationship between the word and sound seems best exemplified in song. The indefinite and semantically broad meaning of music becomes more specific and precise thanks to words, which are believed to belong to a more conventionalised semiotic system. However, in the process of singable translation this intrinsic connection between the word and sound may become distorted because of various reasons, including the question of the target context or the profile of target audiences and their expectations. This paper presents a descriptive analysis of strategies used in translating foreign songs presented in four early episodes of the entertainment show *Muzyka lekka, łatwa i przyjemna*, aired on Polish National Television since the 1960s. Apart from global observations drawn from the overview of translation strategies across the analysed episodes, the paper presents also a more explanatory and multimodal analysis of singable translations of English-language songs and highlights the problem of context-driven constraints.

Keywords: translation and music, singability, song text, translation strategy, multimodality, constraints

1. Constrained song translation

A song is generally defined as words with some type of melody, i.e. a combination of words sung with or without instrumental accompaniment (see *Oxford English Dictionary*). Naturally, such a general definition does not include important

criteria of genre-related features or the performance context and as such may not be appropriate in the case of translation, since there is no universal strategy of translating song. If needed to be translated, a pop song would require a different approach and strategy when compared to, for instance, an art song. Accordingly, a full singable translation may be juxtaposed with a prose translation intended for reading and both will represent viable options or choices within the field of translation and music determined by a relevant purpose (see the classification by Franzon 2008: 376 or the approach represented by Low 2013a: 72 and 2017: 40–41).

The *skopos* of song translation has been one of the main problems discussed within the field of translation and music. Some scholars clearly see the need to underline the function of a target song text and the context in which it is to appear, claiming that the functionalist framework may prove efficient in this type of translational action (see e.g. Greenall et al. 2021: 17). Apart from the fairly obvious benefit of shifting the attention towards the target context, functionalist approaches seem helpful because of another reason: namely, they help to move the debate beyond the “translation vs. adaptation” dichotomy, which is especially helpful in the case of singable translation.

Indeed, singable translation has been considered challenging, as it is beset with plentiful difficulties. For instance, Gorfée (1997: 235) claims that translating song texts is “a complex enterprise subject to multiple constraints”. This claim is supported by Apter and Herman (2016: 2), who write that:

[b]ecause singable translations are almost always designed to fit the original music, they face a constraint beyond those imposed on other translations. No translation is ever “perfect,” but this constraint [...] perhaps renders singable translations even less “perfect.”

The main source of difficulty in singable translation is then the semiotic complexity of the source text, as translating requires that target lyrics fit the source melody to a desired extent. It follows that in the case of singable translation, changes to the original source text, especially to lyrics, may be inevitable. Desblache (2004: 28) states firmly that in singable translation equivalence is “doomed” or is simply “not desirable”. Apter and Herman (2016: 14) contend that “in order to fit the music, a singable translation must sacrifice some literalness, some meaning”. Low argues that translating songs is impossible unless we accept the fact that taking some liberties is a necessary procedure (2003: 92, also Low 2017: 63–64). Franzon (2022: 38) echoes the claim, writing that studies of song translation may fall under the label of restricted translation, since specific constraints would mean that a song translation “will approximate certain properties of its source song, but also differ from it [...] because of the need to appropriate the song for use as a song”.

Although the constraint of singability resulting from the semiotic make-up of the text is undeniable, translating song texts (as translation in general) takes place in a wide context of a specific time and locale, users, translators or regimes. In other words, some translational decisions may not necessarily result from the singability-related and textual constraints, but rather from deliberate decisions made because of some extratextual constraints.

The aim of the paper is to present a descriptive analysis of singable translation strategies used across four early episodes of the show *Muzyka lekka, łatwa i przyjemna* ('Light, easy and entertaining music'), aired on Polish National Television in 1963 and 1970. The analysis includes two episodes from 1963, i.e. the carnival episode from January (Rzeszewski 1963a) and the summer episode from August (Rzeszewski 1963b), both of which are the oldest and the only ones from the 1960s available in the archives of Polish Television. Two subsequent episodes from the archives, i.e. the New Year episode (Rzeszewski 1970a) and the subsequent January episode (Rzeszewski 1970b), were also analysed for the sake of diachronic comparison.

The discussion consists of two parts. Firstly, it provides a systematic overview of choices in song translation and indicates the predominant strategies of singable translation. To this end, the paper utilises the classification of five choices introduced by Franzon (2008) as well as the classification of strategies¹ by the same author (Franzon 2021). Apart from global observations concerning the overall shape of the episodes, the paper offers a more explanatory and multimodal analysis of singable translations of the English-language songs, following the framework put forward by Kaindl (2020). A special focus is placed on the question concerning the influence of the specific target context (including the question of the educational role of television or the profile of the target audience). Accordingly, translation is understood here as a semiotic process, which results in changes made to the text and its materiality, including linguistic, generic, medial and/or modal modifications, all of which are constraint-driven.

It is assumed here that a song text (used interchangeably with the word "song") is an integral composition based on words and music which is delivered by means of specific modes and media (Rędzioch-Korkuz 2023: 223). In other words, a song text (either source or target) consists of lyrics, vocal melody, often with instrumental music, and (vocal) performance. Additionally, a song text may include the visual element (e.g. as is the case with stage productions, video clips or TV shows). A song text is then a plurisemiotic and multimedial composition.

1| Franzon uses the term "translation method"; however, for the sake of terminological consistency, I use the term "translation strategy", which means here a global approach to the translation process and the translated text.

2. Light and entertaining songs

The analysis included four early episodes of the entertainment show *Muzyka lekka, łatwa i przyjemna*, which started to be broadcast on Polish National Television at the beginning of the 1960s. As the name indicates, the main aim of the show was to present music and melodies that were light and entertaining. All of the analysed episodes were directed by Janusz Rzeszewski, an experienced film director, who was responsible for entertainment television shows, and anchored by Lucjan Kydryński, a well-known music journalist and radio host, who was also the author of scripts. Music was arranged by Tadeusz Suchocki in the 1960s episodes and by Leszek Bogdanowicz in the 1970s ones.

The show was one of the few programmes offered by television at the time and, initially, was aired once a month, with episodes lasting for approximately 40 minutes. Both the number of episodes per month and their duration increased with time. The shift towards light music was driven by the fact that classical pieces were not popular with the new television audience: the medium of television proved inappropriate in this case, as the visual element became more powerful and desirable than the subtle sound (and the rather still image) of orchestral music (see e.g. Kofin 1980: 50–51 or Kurek 1986: 89–90). As a result, the show featured some of the latest hits of popular music performed by both Polish and overseas artists. As such, it was the only TV production presenting foreign songs to the Polish audience, which were sung both in original languages and in translation. That fact, along with the charisma of the host, the skilful directing of Rzeszewski and performances delivered by some of the best singers, contributed to the great popularity of the show.

Songs that were presented in the show were not random: the choices made by Kydryński and Rzeszewski were to be accepted by the artistic editorial office and the chief TV director. It was a form of institutional censorship, i.e. control exercised by the authority, which in this case was motivated mainly by the political context. Most of the foreign songs presented in the analysed episodes were performed either in original by singers coming from the Eastern Bloc states or in translation by Polish singers. Both of the options allowed for a certain degree of control: it pertained to the presented content as well as to the mode in which it was used. Not only was censorship present at the initial stage of choosing the songs, but it also shone through some of the singable translations presented in the episodes.

3. Choices and strategies: descriptive analysis

The following section discusses the four episodes in the chronological order. Each episode is briefly presented, with particular reference to singable translations.

3.1. Carnival episode

The carnival episode (Rzeszewski 1963a) featured twelve foreign songs, including nine songs originally performed in English and three in French. Viewers were presented with post-synchronised performances recorded in the studio. In this case, there were no singable translations, which means that the songs were original lyrics-, music- and performance-wise (the overall choice was to leave the lyrics untranslated; see Franzon 2008: 376). Translation was observed at the level of the non-linguistic visual dimension, which was added as a result of the so-called medial translation. According to Kaindl (2020: 60), medial translation may be defined as transfer within and between media of communication, including, for instance, a shift from the medium of an LP recording to a television performance observed in the episode. Performers in the studio wore masks that resembled the performers of the STs (by referring to distinctive hairstyles or facial expressions). Additionally, they wore clothes that could be linked to the looks of the foreign singers pictured, e.g. on LP covers (as was the case with the Peters Sisters, where the actors wore distinctive shawls and had characteristic hairstyles visible on one of the album covers), and moved in a manner typical of the foreign performers' demeanour (e.g. in the case of Edith Piaf's 'performance' with her typical gestures and intense facial expressions). The similarity at the visual level was based on some kind of iconicity that was supposed to direct viewers' attention to specific performers. Otherwise, linguistic translation was observed only at the level of the song titles presented by the host.

3.2. Summer episode

The summer episode (Rzeszewski 1963b), on the other hand, followed a different line of presenting the songs: there were eleven song texts, including four originally performed in English, two in Hungarian, two in Italian, and one performed in French, in German and in Polish. The main mode of presenting the songs was playback singing; however, in two cases, viewers could watch performances recorded directly in the studio (the songs by Manfred Krug and Perry Friedman, both arriving from East Germany). As for the foreign songs, four were performed in their original languages and modified by the obvious procedure of medial translation, as the visual dimension was added to the otherwise original performance. Six songs were presented as singable translations.

Generally, in the case of song translation, Franzon (2008: 376) lists five choices, i.e. leaving the song untranslated, translating the lyrics without considering the melody, writing new lyrics, translating the lyrics and adapting the melody as well as preparing a fully singable translation. It follows then that in the summer episode there were two choices representing the opposing ends of

the spectrum, i.e. leaving the song untranslated² and singable translation³. Franzone (2021: 91–116) provides also a typology of singable translation strategies, which he situates along a scale of semantic fidelity:

- near-enough translation with the highest degree of semantic fidelity;
- perspective-shift, i.e. a translation with some significant changes resulting from modulating the perspective;
- lyric hook transposition, in which the main characteristics of the song (i.e. the hook) are retained, but which otherwise includes more changes at the level of semantic meaning;
- single-phrase spinoff, a relatively free translation, in which the similarity is based on a specific phrase or leitmotiv;
- phonetic calque, i.e. a translation aimed at rendering similarities at the level of phonetics rather than semantics;
- all-new target lyrics, i.e. writing new lyrics.

As is the case with most equivalence-based typologies, applying the labels in practice may prove problematic, especially that the difference between particular strategies, e.g. perspective-shift and lyric hook transposition, may not be distinct. So may be the distinction between what is significant and what is less significant as regards lyrics⁴. However, the typology works as a kind of approximation or continuum, which at least in this paper helps to indicate some tendencies. Accordingly, Table 1 presents the singable translation strategies used in each song from the episode.

What seems striking is the differences in terms of singable translation strategies across the language pairs and genres. The English-language songs were rendered by means of strategies which allow for more liberties, whereas the Italian songs and the French one were translated more closely to the original. Both of the Italian songs were originally performed by the band led by Marino Marini, who had already toured Poland several times and was generally well-received (he even released a song in Polish under the title “Nie płacz, kiedy odjadę”, which became a great success). Apart from that, the songs performed by the band represented a relatively ‘safe’ style of Italian song with light content devoid of any dangerous political agitation. The French song was presented by means of the near-enough translation strategy combined with a perspective-shift.

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- 2| The main focus of this classification is placed on the linguistic and musical dimensions and therefore medial or modal translation is not considered here.
- 3| The singable translations exemplified in the paper fall within two choices from Franzone’s list, namely translating the lyrics and adapting the original music as well as translating the lyrics to match the original melody.
- 4| For similar reasons, the distinction between song translations, adaptations and replacement texts founded on the (im)possibility of translating significant elements and put forward by Low (2013b: 237) seems also rather problematic.

Table 1: Singable translation strategies in the summer episode

ST/ TT title	Source language	ST/ TT performer(s)	Singable translation strategy
“Tanta innamorata twist”/ “Taki jestem zakochany”	Italian	Marino Marini/ Tadeusz Woźniakowski	near-enough translation
“Happy birthday sweet sixteen”/ “Szesnaste urodziny”	English	Neil Sedaka/ Irena Santor	single-phrase spinoff
“Johnny one note”/ “Johnny jedna nutka”	English	e.g. Judy Garland/ Bohdan Łazuka	perspective-shift
“Are you lonesome tonight”/ “Pierwszy deszcz”	English	Elvis Presley/ Irena Santor	lyric hook transposition
“Les boîtes à musique”/ “Pozytywka”	French	Les Frères Jacques/ Krystyna Sienkiewicz	near-enough translation/ perspective-shift
“Mille luci”/ “Tysiące światel”	Italian	Marino Marini/ Tadeusz Woźniakowski	near-enough translation

In the original, the song could have been meant as a satire on French society and an irony-filled comment on fleeting beauty. The TT text was consequently adapted to a certain degree (or appropriated to use another term; see Franzon 2022: 26) to fit the Polish context and modified into a light story sung by a petite ‘mascot of the show’⁵ imitating a figure in the eponymous music box. The English-language songs, on the other hand, were imported from a more distant locale and therefore translated in a more adapting/appropriating manner (see Section 4). A similar tendency was observed also in the 1970s episodes discussed below.

3.3. New Year episode

The New Year episode (Rzeszewski 1970a) aired at the beginning of 1970 proves the rapid development of television in Poland: not only was the episode longer and more advanced in terms of the sound and image quality, but it was also more elaborate in terms of the content. Kydryński explained in the opening sequence that the show would be based on a new convention of a current-affairs programme rather than an entertainment show. From then on, the aim of the show was to present the current developments in song, both Polish and foreign.

5| Originally, Krystyna Sienkiewicz, who performed the target song, was referred to by the host as “maskotka programu”.

As a result, viewers were presented not only with post-synchronised or live sung performances, but also with dance performances delivered by some of the best dancers at the time (including e.g. Gerard Wilk, a great ballet dancer) or child actors lip-synching short extracts of Polish songs as well as with puppet shows.

The episode featured seventeen songs, including six performed originally in Polish, one performed in a foreign language (Russian), seven performed in translation and three presented in their original language versions as soundtrack to dance performances. Again, in terms of the lyrics, the overall choice was to either leave the song untranslated or translate it singably. Table 2 presents the strategies of singable translation.

Table 2: Singable translation strategies in the New Year episode⁶

ST/ TT title	Source language	ST/ TT performer(s)	Singable translation strategy
“Can’t take my eyes off you”/ ---	English	Frankie Valli and The 4 Seasons/ Irena Santor, Halina Kunicka and a ladies’ choir	single-phrase spinoff
“La table habituelle”/ “Jej stolik”	French	Henri Tachan/ Tadeusz Ross	near-enough translation
“My way”/ “Inaczej niż wy”	English	Frank Sinatra/ Jerzy Połomski	lyric hook transposition
“La première étoile”/ “Gwiazda naszej miłości”	French	Mireille Mathieu/ Halina Kunicka	near-enough translation/ perspective-shift
“Noch einen Tanz”/ “Jeszcze jeden taniec”	German	Esther & Abi Ofarim/ Ewa Wiśniewska and Mieczysław Czechowicz	near-enough translation/ perspective-shift (at the end)
“A boy named Sue”/ “Chłopiec zwany Zuzią”	English	Johnny Cash/ Mieczysław Czechowicz	lyric hook transposition
“Au bal du grand amour”/ “Bał wielkiej miłości”	French	Mireille Mathieu/ Irena Santor	???

6] Unfortunately, the final song has been cut from the retained copy. It was also impossible to find the recording of the performance elsewhere.

In this case, there seems to be more consistency as for the translation strategy, which may be connected with the fact that all of the translations may have been done by the same translators. In the New Year episode, as opposed to the earlier ones, in which translators are not named, the host boasted that the programme team included two great translators, namely Agnieszka Osiecka and Wojciech Młynarski. However, it is still not fully clear which translations were done by them (their names are mentioned in the opening scene and subsequently in the context of only two target songs).

The English-language songs were again translated with more liberties, though the French song “*La première étoile*” represents a perspective-shift to a certain extent, as the role of the eponymous star is slightly changed and so are the perspectives of the lyrical subjects (in the ST the star is meant to be a kind of medium that will connect the beloved irrespective of the distance or time, whereas in the TT the lyrical subject reminisces about her past and the boy that once loved her, with the star of love meant to travel back to her hometown to tell him about her). In the case of the German song, the perspective-shift is visible in the final lines, which is also made clear by the host, who explained that the punchline of the song was modified by Młynarski to make it fit the Polish context (in the TT, the female lyrical subject intends to kill not only her husband, but also her lover, which is meant to highlight the perfidy of women). Otherwise, both of the songs were translated fairly faithfully.

3.4. January episode

The January episode (Rzeszewski 1970b) was a follow-up to the New Year episode convention-wise, with sixteen songs presented along with sung opening and closing verses in Polish (the “*Dobry wieczór*” and “*Do widzenia*” songs performed by the Partita band). There were three songs originally performed in Polish, six performed in their original languages (including three cases of puppet shows), four performed in translation and three presented in the original language versions as soundtrack to dance performances. The overall choice was then to either leave the lyrics untranslated or translate them singably. The strategies used in the episode are demonstrated in Table 3 (p. 98).

In this episode the departures from the source text lyrics in the case of English-language songs are even more glaring. The Italian song, on the other hand, represents the strategy of perspective-shift because of the gender shift: instead of a perspective of a male lyrical subject, in the TT we deal with a female perspective, with the lyrical subject wishing her beloved one would work. In addition, there is also another salient change in the TT lyrics, as they do not contain any allusions to striking, which, most likely, was a decision resulting from the socio-political context. The work-related theme was retained, as it was considered one of the pillars of communism, whereas the potentially harmful details were removed.

Table 3: Singable translation strategies in the January episode⁷

ST/ TT title	Source language	ST/ TT performer(s)	Singable translation strategy
“Gentle on my mind”/ “Łagodnie tak jak ja”	English	Glen Campbell/ Bohdan Łazuka	single-phrase spinoff
“Chi non lavora non fa l’amore”/ “Gdybyś pracował”	Italian	Adriano Celentano/ Halina Kunicka and a male-voiced choir	perspective-shift
“A boy named Sue”/ “Felieton chłopca zwanego Zuzią” ⁷	English	Johnny Cash/ Mieczysław Czechowicz	single-phrase spinoff
“Good morning starshine”/ “Dzień dobry, gwiazdo”	English	<i>Hair</i> musical cast/ Maryla Rodowicz with a male-voice choir	lyric hook transposition

The Italian example indicates that the lyrics of the analysed songs were subject to context-based censorship, which was used only in some cases. As exemplified above, these were mainly English-language songs. The question is then why those songs tended to be translated in a less faithful manner. To provide an answer to this question it is crucial to present a more detailed and explanatory analysis and examine all of the dimensions of these songs.

4. Beyond lyrics: explanatory analysis

In order to address the question posed in the previous paragraph, it is necessary to move beyond the level of lyrics, analyse the other song text dimensions and consider the socio-cultural context. In addition to the changes introduced at the linguistic level (signalled in the previous section by indicating relevant singable translation strategies), the target songs presented in the episodes were subject to generic, modal and medial translation, as exemplified in Table 4. It presents the most distinctive differences between the target texts and the versions of the source texts retrieved from the sources listed in the footnotes.⁸

7| This is actually a follow-up story of the boy named Sue, which may be considered a spin-off of the first performance from the New Year episode. The two target texts are similar music- and performance-wise, but there is a substantial difference in what kind of story is presented in the lyrics, with the female name being the only element they have in common.

8| Generally, even the songs presented in their original language, music and performance versions were subject to medial translation, as the visual dimension offered by the

Table 4: Translation processes in the case of English-to-Polish singable translations⁹¹⁰

ST/ TT title	Translation			
	linguistic	generic	modal	medial
“Happy birthday sweet sixteen” ⁹⁹ / “Szesnaste urodziny” (1963b)	teen love vs. a desire to dance during the 16 th birthday	pop song – pop song	instrumentation (percussion vs. trumpet) voice qualities (female voice in the TT)	additional visual dimension (hand painted images corresponding to the TT lyrics)
“Johnny one note” ¹⁰ / “Johnny jedna nutka” (1963b)	the TT lyrics clearly changed by omitting crucial instruments and details	show tune – actor-performed song	instrumentation (fewer distinctive sounds in the TT) visual modes (in the TT hand painted images of instruments and a stave) voice qualities (male voice in the TT)	intramedial switch (cinema – television)

medium of television would often supplement the original ST that had been previously known to the audience mainly as a radio or LP song, or to modal translation in cases where the original ST was accompanied by dance performances or the visual performance was arranged anew. However, the aim of this paper is to discuss singable translations and that is why these cases are only signalled marginally. Nevertheless, they prove that a song text is indeed a multimodal composition and translating it is not restricted to linguistic operations. There is an important caveat concerning the comparison, as the target songs were compared with versions of the source songs that are currently available. It was not possible to determine which versions of the original songs were used as the actual source texts.

9| The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFns51r4BU> (accessed: 6.09.2023).
 10| The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxJlcVYBvOY> (accessed: 6.09.2023).

ST/ TT title	Translation			
	linguistic	generic	modal	medial
“Are you lonesome tonight” ¹¹ / “Pierwszy deszcz” (1963b)	a series of questions vs. a confession of confidence founded on faithful love	traditional pop – pop song	instrumentation (more instruments in the TT) singing (no background humming and spoken bridge in the TT) voice qualities (female voice in the TT)	additional visual dimension (hand painted images corresponding to the TT lyrics)
“Can’t take my eyes off you” ¹² — (1970a)	the TT lyrics as New Year wishes centred around the ST title	pop soul – pop song	singing (choir in the TT chorus) voice qualities (female voices in the TT)	additional visual dimension
“My way” ¹³ / “Inaczej niż wy” (1970a)	an ideal of a self-made man and expression of determination vs. a confession of an adult referring to a love relation	traditional pop – pop song	instrumentation (fewer instruments and less audible trumpets in the TT)	additional visual dimension

11] The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XVdtX7uSnk> (accessed: 6.09.2023).

12] The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J36z7AnhvOM> (accessed: 6.09.2023).

13] The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQzdAsjWGPg> (accessed: 6.09.2023).

ST/ TT title	Translation			
	linguistic	generic	modal	medial
“A boy named Sue” ¹⁴ / “Chłopiec zwany Zuzią” (1970a)	both stories revolve around the name, but in the TT the lyrical subject does not dislike his name	country song/ talking blues – actor-per- formed song	instrumentation (more “exotic” instruments in the TT) singing (in the TT more spoken-like interrupted with laughter)	additional visual dimension (props corresponding to the TT lyrics)
“Gentle on my mind” ¹⁵ / “Łagodnie tak jak ja” (1970b)	a story of a lyrical subject who cannot settle down, but keeps in the memory an image of a beloved person vs. a gentle approach to meeting a lady	country pop – actor-per- formed song	instrumentation (more instruments in the TT) singing (more gentle and less dynamic in the TT)	additional visual dimension (acting corresponding to the lyrics of the TT)
“A boy named Sue” ¹⁶ / “Felieton chłopca zwanego Zuzią” (1970b)	the TT lyrics tell a story of a comic train journey	country song/ talking blues – actor-per- formed song	instrumentation (more “exotic” instruments in the TT) singing (in the TT more spoken-like interrupted with laughter)	additional visual dimension (props corresponding to the TT lyrics)

14| The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOHPuY88Ry4> (accessed: 6.09.2023).

15| The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfMnNqn-hKg> (accessed: 6.09.2023).

16| See footnote 11.

ST/ TT title	Translation			
	linguistic	generic	modal	medial
“Good morning starshine” ¹⁷ / “Dzień dobry, gwiazdo” (1970b)	a positive song about love and happiness vs. a prayer-like dialogue to a star	pop song/ psychedelic pop – pop ballad	instrumentation (fewer instruments in the TT and more audible acoustic guitars)	additional visual dimension

17

In the English-language songs the changes at the linguistic level were quite significant, representing mostly less faithful strategies. In the case of the non-English-language songs, a tendency to introduce noticeable changes was observed mainly in the case of a slight perspective shift (Section 3.3) or single culture-specific items which were adapted for the sake of target viewers (e.g. in the song “La table habituelle”, where French food was replaced with more common Polish dishes). However, in the songs indicated in Table 4 (p. 99), the departures from the ST lyrics seem to have been more regular and integral, as they included the whole lexical layer rather than single lexical items or themes (as was the case with the theme of striking mentioned in Section 3.4). Apparently, specific themes could have been considered inappropriate (see also Wesley, this issue), and therefore, were subject to the institutional censorship mentioned in Section 2. For instance, most likely because of social conventions, the theme of being infatuated with a sixteen-year-old girl was modulated and presented as a social gathering, as demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5: “Happy birthday sweet sixteen” and its Polish version “Szesnaste urodziny”¹⁸

ST: “Happy birthday” ¹⁸ sweet sixteen”	TT: “Szesnaste urodziny”	English gloss translation
Tonight’s the night I’ve waited for Because you’re not a baby anymore You’ve turned into the prettiest girl I’ve ever seen, Happy birthday sweet sixteen [...]	Przybrany stół i radio gra Janina urodziny dzisiaj ma Co chwila nowi goście dzwonią do jej drzwi Jeden z najpiękniejszych dni [...]	The table is laid and the radio is on It’s Janina’s birthday today New guests are ringing her doorbell all the time It’s one of the most beautiful days [...]

17| The source song was retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0LW8dfq910> (accessed: 6.09.2023).

18| Lyrics Howard Greenfield and music Neil Sedaka (© Aldon Music).

A similar type of change in the lyrics could have resulted also from socio-political reasons, which may be illustrated by examples in Table 6 and 7, where expressing strong self-confidence was replaced with an obscure image of giving up, whereas praising freedom and sheer love was rendered as a series of innocent questions, respectively.

Table 6: “My way”¹⁹ and its Polish version “Inaczej niż wy”

ST: “My way”	TT: “Inaczej niż wy”	English gloss translation
[...]	[...]	[...]
Yes, there were times I’m sure you knew When I bit off more than I could chew But through it all when there was doubt I ate it up and spit it out	Był taki czas, ty o tym wiesz, Że chciałem mieć więcej niż plan Był oczu blask i dłonie dwie, I chłodny głos, i słowa złe	There was a time, you know it well when I wanted to have more than I had planned There were sparkling eyes and two hands And a cold voice and wrong words
I faced it all and I stood tall And did it my way	Odszedłem więc, zamkną- łem drzwi, Lecz nie tak jak wy	So I left and closed the door But not like you
[...]	[...]	[...]

Table 7: “Good morning starshine”²⁰ and its Polish version “Dzień dobry, gwiazdo”²¹

ST: “Good morning starshine”	TT: “Dzień dobry, gwiazdo”	English gloss translation
[...]	[...]	[...]
Good mornin’, starshine There’s love in your skies Reflecting the sunlight In my lover’s eyes Good mornin’, starshine So happy to be My love and me as we singing Our early mornin’ singin’ song	Dzień dobry, gwiazdo Czy to ty, czy ja Tak płynę po niebie W podróży przez noc? Dzień dobry, gwiazdo Czy to ty czy ja? Czy dla mnie, czy dla ciebie Niebiesko-biała ta noc?	Good morning, star Is it you or is it me swimming across the sky, on a journey at night? Good morning, star Is it you or is it me? Is this blue-white night for you or for me?
[...]	[...]	[...]

19| English lyrics Paul Anka and music Jacques Revaux (© Chrysalis Standards, Inc., Iway Holdings Sas c/o Concord Copyrights).

20| Lyrics James Rado and Gerome Ragni and music Galt MacDermot (© EMI U Catalog Inc.).

21| Polish lyrics Agnieszka Osiecka (© Universal Music).

In general, the lyrics of the TTs in all the cases presented in Table 4 (p. 99) revolved around relatively neutral themes, including the theme of a generation gap defined by new music styles (“Szesnaste urodziny”), faithful love (“Pierwszy deszcz”), features of a real gentleman (“Łagodnie tak jak ja”), a story and advice given by an experienced man (“Inaczej niż wy”) or happiness caused by singing to a star (“Dzień dobry, gwiazdo”). In addition, some of the songs embraced the comic element (“Chłopiec zwany Zuzią”/ “Felieton chłopca zwanego Zuzią” or “Johnny jedna nutka”), which was even strengthened in the Polish songs, or fulfilled the situational needs of the production team (the opening Polish version of “Can’t take my eyes off you”).

The changes in the linguistic dimension were reinforced by other modifications, which helped to create coherent texts that would fit the target context. As regards generic translation, which here means a shift in the music genre, most visible changes were observed in the cases where the source genre did not seem to be very popular. This may be illustrated by the songs “A boy named Sue” or “Gentle on my mind”, both of which represented country, a music genre common to specific regions in the USA. The target songs were presented as actor-performed songs, which is a specific song genre combining music, vocal and acting skills that has been relatively popular in Poland. The TTs were performed by character actors, who highlighted the main features of the songs and reinforced the lyrics: Czechowicz’s acting highlighted the comic element of the TTs, whereas Łazuka’s exemplified the quality of gentleness. Another glaring example is the song “Good morning starshine”. Even though the song was presented by the host as a hit from the rock musical *Hair* (most probably viewers did not know the musical, as it was staged in Poland only after 1989), its controversial character was hidden behind a common guitar ballad with no nonsense lyrics or rapid percussion sounds. Otherwise, generic changes seemed to be justified by the immediate context of the show and available modes of expression (meaning both the performers and instruments). Overall, the music presented in the episodes was arranged to fit a small orchestra and/or specific instruments used by the individual performers.

Accordingly, there were specific changes in the modes used, understood as means of expressing the semantic meaning of the text. A case in point is the song “Good morning, starshine”, where in the TT the main instrument is the acoustic guitar, or “My way”, which was modified into a more ‘modest’ genre of a pop song with less audible trumpet sounds signalling a triumphant chorus of the ST. In some cases, there was also a change of the key, which naturally may be connected with the voice qualities and preferences of the singer (e.g. a switch in the case of the “Are you lonesome tonight”/ “Pierwszy deszcz” song pair from C major in the ST to E flat major and then E major in the TT). In the case of the song “A boy named Sue” there was also a visible change in the tempo: both of the TTs were slower (100 bpm in the ST and 88 in the TTs), which contributed

to the image of a drunken man and matched the spoken-like performance and acting. Modal translation also included changes in the manner of singing, which in most of the cases were connected with the presence or absence of additional voices, the overall character and genre of the song or the switch between male and female singers.

Medial translation is understood here as a switch across or between media, defined as the manner through which a text is communicated to its intended audiences (including auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory and gustatory media; see Kaindl 2020 for a slightly different definition). It was assumed that in most of the cases, viewers could have previously known the songs mainly through the auditory medium, so in a majority of cases there was an additional dimension of a visual medium (one exception could be the song “Johnny one note”, which was included in the 1948 musical film *Words and music*, and hence the changes in the visual dimension could have been of modal rather than medial character). The visual dimension of the episodes was generally modest with few props. In earlier episodes, those were drawings, including the ones drawn live during the performance (e.g. in the “Pierwszy deszcz” song), that would correspond to the lyrics, thus underlining the dominant theme. In the later episodes, the stage sets were simple and minimalist, often including only single items (e.g. a bottle and a guitar in “Chłopiec zwany Zuzią”/ “Felieton chłopca zwanego Zuzią”) or large letters that would make up the name of the performer (e.g. in the New Year episode). In this way, the visual dimension either reinforced the semantic meaning of the lyrics and their effect or drew attention to the performance of the song.

5. Discussion: revisiting the constraint of singability

It is clear that the process of translating the songs involved modifications at all levels of the song text, which confirms the fact that a song is a multimodal and plurisemiotic composition. One of the reasons for these changes was the meta-translational constraint of singability: the songs analysed in the paper were to be performable. However, in addition to this constraint, there were also other factors that altogether determined the shape of the target texts.

To start with, there was the technical constraint of the immediate context of the show, which meant that there were specific modes of presentation available at the time. Due to time constraints, in some of the analysed TTs there were matricial changes, which made them fit particular time sequences (e.g. as was the case with “Pierwszy deszcz” with no spoken bridge or the abridged Polish version of “Can’t take my eyes off you” used in the New Year episode opening scene). The profile of the television orchestra resulted in necessary intra- and intermodal changes observed mainly at the level of instrumental music. The time of broadcasting the episode was another factor, as it influenced the choice

of the songs to be translated (usually following the recent events in the song world or song festivals) as well as the translation strategy (e.g. as was the case with “Can’t take my eyes off you” rendered in Polish as New Year wishes).

Another important constraint was the user of the TT, i.e. the prospective performer. The translations were done for particular individuals, which resulted in required linguistic changes, including intrasystem shifts (e.g. one music box instead of several in “Les boîtes à musique” or the change of the grammatical gender in “Tanta innamorata twist”) or a switch between male-female (and *vice versa*) perspectives. At the level of modal translation, the changes would include mainly musical keys and styles of singing and performing. The power of the performers was visible also in the choice of the song or theme, which frequently matched their repertoires (e.g. “Good morning starshine” performed by Maryla Rodowicz, as it corresponded to her musical style; see also Rędziuch-Korkuz 2023: 230).

Then, there was the constraint of the target audience, for whom the STs were adapted to a certain extent. As already mentioned, noticeable changes were observed mainly in the case of single culture-specific items, which, generally, made the TTs more local. Most of the TTs, though, still retained their intended foreignness, which was signalled mainly by the host presenting the TT as a Polish version of a *foreign* song²². As indicated in Section 2, the show was a window to the world at the time of communism: the mission of the national television was then to open this window in an educational and controlled manner, granting its viewers, who frequently represented mainly affluent intelligentsia (as few could afford a TV set at the time), access to the western side of the Iron Curtain. The singable translations analysed in the paper were officially presented as translations, or rather adaptations²³. However, they were examples of covert translation, since the original lyrics had been replaced with the target version in a way similar to dubbing (Gottlieb 1994: 102; cf. House 1997: 69). The translations were covert not only because there was no direct access to the source lyrics, but also because of the obvious language barrier²⁴. This in turn seemed to help to choose the appropriate level of semantic fidelity and translation strategy: in the case of less acceptable content, there was the possibility to decrease the level of

22] An interesting exception was the Polish version of “A boy named Sue”, which was a foreignised translation, with phrases borrowed directly from English, references to cowboy culture, both linguistic and visual, as well as instruments that would produce a ‘foreign’ sound (a banjo, clarinet and double bass).

23] Kydryński often referred to the songs as ‘adapted for the sake of the target context’ or said that those were songs ‘in adaptation’ rather than in translation.

24] Few citizens at the time had the ability to speak foreign languages other than Russian, which means that even the lyrics of the songs presented in original languages were most frequently inaccessible to an average viewer. For the same reasons, getting access to the original lyrics of the translated songs would be of little help as well.

faithfulness and control both the message which was to be presented to the audience and the way it was presented to them, moving beyond the strategy of adapting only culture-specific items and instead rearranging the whole source song.

The reasons for that were mainly socio-cultural and political circumstances, which altogether acted as a powerful ideology-based constraint. Censorship in Poland at the time of communism was institutional and preventive, which means that each episode of the show had been approved by authorities (including TV editors as well as the so-called Main Office of Controlling Press, Publications and Shows operating between 1946 and 1990) before it was broadcast. The translations discussed in the paper must have been put through the filter of the dominant ideology and modified accordingly. As indicated above, this was visible mostly in the case of the English-language songs, which were too distant from the desired viewpoint, as they could have represented a culture that was 'too western' and liberal. A striking example was the song "My way", which was initially translated by Młynarski, but turned out to be too subversive (the initial TT presented an image of a strong independent individual who was not afraid to walk his own path; see Rędzioch-Korkuz 2023) and was subsequently replaced by Osiecka's 'safer' translation. Another example was the song "Good morning starshine", which was transformed into a pleasant guitar ballad with no features of the hippie movement. In line with the title of the show, the presented songs had to be light, easy and pleasant, also for the dominant power.

What is more, the changes aimed at making the songs lighter, easier and more pleasant (i.e. more acceptable in the local context) were observed also at the levels of the genre, modes and media. The lesser-known genres would become more familiar and modest; the music would be usually more subtle, impeccably rearranged and conducted, with fewer instruments heard in the background; the performance of the singers would be of the highest quality, with either skilful acting or the best vocals characterised by clear enunciation; the visual dimension would be an artful addition or a significant element reinforcing the comic effect. In this way, the target songs were coherent and highbrow compositions with a clearly determined character (either a comic song or a lyrical one), meaning and form, thus fulfilling the educational role of a national television (or its propaganda purposes).

Naturally, all of these constraints were brought under the umbrella of the song text, which itself was another source of limitations stemming mainly from its composition. The changes in the linguistic dimension may have indeed resulted from the goal of warranting the performability of the TT. However, the variety of translation strategies observed across the analysed episodes is indicative of the fact that the functional constraint of singability may be tackled in a number of ways, depending on deliberate contextual decisions. The context of translation discussed here included far more than the metatranslational constraint of

the TT function and its singability. As evidenced by the analysis, it was mainly the socio-cultural and political circumstances and the resulting role of television that shaped the target songs with regard to their lyrics, music, performance and the visual dimension. All of the constraints were tackled in a way that produced either a more faithful representation of the original song or a target song that departed from its original to be more acceptable.

6. Conclusions

The socio-cultural and political circumstances are an important constraint on translation, as they include the translational *here and now*, cultural conventions accepted by the target audience or the intended role of the target text. In the analysed episodes, the English-language songs represented a locale that proved to be too distant to be accepted without significant changes that pertained to all the four dimensions of a song text (i.e. lyrics, music, performance and the visual dimension). The socio-cultural and political constraints and the ones related to the semiotic make-up of the songs were tackled in a way that helped to arrive at a pragmatic compromise: on the one hand, the English-language songs still retained their foreign character in that the original context (i.e. their performers or the titles) was revealed to viewers. On the other hand, though, those songs were presented in a controlled form that seemed more familiar and thus acceptable.

The discussion presented in the paper is only a pilot study and more research, including a larger sample, is needed to describe the actual norms of translating songs during a specific period of time. However, even such a small-scale study confirms the importance of adopting a wider perspective while analysing translations, a perspective in which all textual and extratextual constraints are combined. In the case of song translation, the technical constraint of singability is not always the main and only parameter that determines translation and explains the nature of this activity. As it can be addressed deliberately in various ways, ranging from faithful reproductions of all song dimensions to free appropriations of lyrics, music and performance, it is vital to move beyond this technical aspect, which seems to have defined the field of song translation, and look into the whole context of translation.

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I am not throwing away my shot! (at discussing multimodality): How a multimodal analysis can support song translation – the case of *Hamilton*

ABSTRACT

I am not throwing away my shot! (at discussing multimodality): How a multimodal analysis can support song translation – the case of *Hamilton*

Stage musicals stand out for their multimodal nature, and thus convey meaning through verbal, audio and visual semiotic resources. So far, studies on the translation of musicals have focused mainly on lyrics, without taking into consideration their multimodal nature; when the topic of the multimodality of songs has been researched, it was mostly in popular music and opera. When it comes to stage musicals and their translation, it is evident that there is a lack of substantial research on how meaning is expressed through interaction between modes. However, due to their nature, stage musicals require a multimodal translation approach. To tackle this, the paper presents a model of analysis that considers the semiotic complexity of these songs and demonstrates how they use verbal, audio and visual resources to further the plot. This model was applied to the musical *Hamilton* (2015) to understand the role of multimodality in a modern stage musical and to address the question on how to tackle its translation.

Keywords: translation, multimodality, stage musicals, song translation, themes

1. “Who lives, who dies, who tells your story”: stage musicals and multimodality

Song translation plays a critical role in musical theatre around the world; many stage musicals are in English and thus a translation into another language is required when the performance is aimed at a target audience whose language is

not English. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, there was a rise in the number of operas performed in translation; however, today it is more common to experience an opera in its original language. By contrast, stage musicals tend to be experienced entirely in translation (Mateo 2012: 119), as indicated by the many translated Anglo-American musicals that have reached Europe and Asia.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in song translation; among others, studies on opera, pop music, films, folk music or cover songs have been published (Minors 2013; Low 2017; Franzon et al. 2021). However, little research has been attempted in the field of stage musicals¹.

Several attempts have been made to devise models of translation to be applied to the lyrics of songs; however, studies on the translation of musicals (Low 2017) have focused mainly on lyrics, while studies that take into consideration the multimodality of songs (Kaindl 2005) mostly discussed popular music and opera.

The main challenge faced by these various efforts to create models of song translation is related to the specificity of the genre and of particular source texts involved. Songs are “verbal-musical hybrid[s]” (Low 2003: 229), and when it comes to stage musicals, they are used to convey a message via the interaction of verbal, audio and visual semiotic resources. The analysis of these songs for translation purposes should therefore address this multimodal interaction to provide a full understanding of the text. To date, there does not yet seem to be any study that has actually investigated how to disentangle the complexities of song translation by examining how different semiotic modes interact to create meaning.

A recent study (Carpi 2020) on the multimodality of songs in stage musicals acknowledged the lack of substantial research on how meaning is expressed through interaction between modes. The result was the development of a model of analysis that considers the semiotic complexity of these songs and explains how they use verbal, audio and visual resources to further the plot.

This model, which will be described further in the paper, has been so far only applied to four traditional stage musicals (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, *My Fair Lady*, *Cats* and *Grease*). Providing a newer approach to the topic of song translation as it has, it has not been tested on more recent productions.

The aim of this paper is therefore to explore the relationship between semiotic modes at play in the musical *Hamilton* (2015), with the use of a systematic model for their analysis, and subsequently for their singable translation. There are several reasons why *Hamilton* was chosen as the subject of this study: first, it is a newer and more disruptive production, which is based on a different

1| The term stage musical follows the definition provided by Woolford (2012: 5), according to whom a stage musical is “a theatrical presentation where the content of the story is communicated through *speech, music and movement* in an integrated fashion to create a unified whole” (my emphasis).

genre of songs (rap) than the ones that were previously used. This offered the opportunity to investigate what multimodality looks like in a more modern stage musical. Finally, this analysis also aimed to identify which elements of the model, if any, would need updating when dealing with this particular type of show.

Section 2 of this paper provides a description of the multimodal model of analysis and its categories, detailing its theoretical framework and background. Section 3 introduces the research material (*Hamilton*) and it describes how the model of analysis was applied to this musical. Finally, Section 4 reviews the data obtained and offers some considerations on the advantages and shortcomings of the model as well as its further applications in the field of translation studies.

2. “What’d I miss”: a multimodal model of analysis

When discussing the translation of popular songs, Kaindl (2005: 242) states that:

Any translation works through dialogue at various levels: dialogues with previous texts, genres, styles of the source culture and the target culture, dialogues between (musical, verbal and visual) discourses, dialogues between producers and addressees (real or imagined), dialogues between various interpretations of an individual song. These various echoes, traces, contrasts lead to a multiple-voice signifying stream and to a concept of translation that is intertextual, in process and never complete.

This also perfectly relates to musical theatre songs and the concept of dialogue between different semiotic modes that is at the basis of the model used here.

The model looks at the “semantic interaction among semiotic systems” (Pastra 2008: 300) and aims to provide more information on the multiple modes at play in songs of stage musicals, which could eventually inform their translation. It was developed with a particular focus on the identification of relevant themes in lyrics, which are then replicated (or not) in audio and visual modes. These themes represent the information that each song wants to transmit to the audience, expressed via verbal, audio and visual semiotic resources². For the purpose of this research, the verbal mode expressed by lyrics is considered the primary mode of interest, due to the fact that, in the event of a translation, lyrics would be the translator’s initial working material. The other two modes (audio and visual) are then analysed in their interaction with the verbal mode. The analysis is based on a principle of sequentiality, meaning that the audio mode is analysed after the verbal mode, and only then the visual mode is analysed. The

2| For a more in-depth description of the model of analysis presented here see Carpi 2020.

audio mode is given the second place due to the strict relation that music has with its lyrics, and consequently the visual mode is the last one to be considered.

The analysis of the verbal mode should be based on the printed libretto of the show; however, it is recommended to compare it with the recording of the show, in case any changes have been made when performing it live. The analysis of the audio mode can be based on an audio recording of the songs as sung, because it does not require the musical analysis of a printed score. The analysis of the visual mode should be based on a video recording of a suitable production of the source text musical; this should be a live performance on stage and not a film.

A schematic summary of how the model is structured can be found in Table 1, while a step-by-step guide on how to apply the model will be the subject of Section 3.

Table 1: Multimodal model of analysis for songs of stage musicals

Verbal mode	Audio mode	Visual mode
Repetitions	Music	Dancing
Evocative meaning	Interludes	Embodied behaviour
Key clusters	Pauses	Stage props
Expressive meaning	Sound effects	
Cultural background	Paralinguistic features	
Intratextuality		

2.1. Verbal mode

In this multimodal model of analysis, the verbal mode focuses on lyrics, i.e. written words performed on stage during a song. The categories developed to analyse this mode (see Table 1) are based on modified versions of the Pentathlon Approach by Low (2003; 2005) and the functional system proposed by Franzon (2005). Additionally, when a song is translated, assuming that the final aim is a performance in a target language, the most important aspect is its singability, which in Franzon's words (2015: 333) is "the prosodic, poetic-rhetoric and semantic fit that a target text lyric may show to a certain piece of music – the music the source text is linked to".

With these elements in mind, the categories of the model are organised following three streams of analysis (linguistic, semantic and social/cultural), which group together categories covering different aspects of songs. First are those related to the linguistic aspect of the text (repetitions), then the categories analysing the semantic properties of the song (evocative meaning, key clusters, and expressive meaning) and finally the categories that look at the social/cultural aspects of the text (cultural background and intratextuality).

2.2. Audio mode

The audio mode analyses the components that relate to sound: music, interludes, and pauses are linked to the musical background that supports lyrics, while sound effects and paralinguistic features (such as laughter) look at specific sounds that can be heard on stage.

Given the general lack of unanimous guidelines, the subcategories that compose this mode (see Table 1) were developed borrowing from the fields of theatre and music studies, and mostly based on the classification of theatre signs by Kowzan (1968). This study on sign systems looks at different modes of communication that can be found in a theatrical performance. The sign systems at play in the theatre are divided into auditory and visual signs as well as those signs that are directly related to the actor and those that are “outside the actor”.

2.3. Visual mode

A song is not influenced and determined by its verbal and audio components only, but also by a series of visual elements seen on stage while the song is performed. The visual mode of this new model analyses visible components that have an impact on the meaning of lyrics. As with the analysis of the audio mode, the aim of the visual analysis is to investigate how verbal resources interact with visual resources, and how the two modes complement each other.

The theoretical basis for the development of the subcategories of the visual mode (see Table 1) was mostly drawn from Kowzan’s (1968) previously mentioned classification of theatre signs.

3. “Wait for it”: introducing Hamilton

There is no doubt that since its debut off-Broadway in 2015, *Hamilton* was an immediate sensation. The musical has smashed record after record, and it now sits among the greatest in the musical theatre universe. What could have been a potentially uninteresting, or even difficult topic to treat (the history of Alexander Hamilton, one of America’s Founding Fathers and the first US Secretary of the Treasury) managed to thrill audiences the world over. Lin Manuel Miranda, the mind behind this success, created a show that is both anchored to the musical theatre tradition and, at the same time, recognized as hugely innovative³. One reason for its popularity surely lies in the complexity of its songs. The music and the lyrics present many different layers that can attract audiences of different age, sex, race and social rank. What is in fact extremely interesting

3| See for example: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/dec/01/hamilton-mashed-up-musical-theatre-and-hiphop-lin-manuel-miranda> (accessed: 28.9.2023); <https://common-reader.wustl.edu/c/hamilton-innovative-not-quite-revolutionary/> (accessed: 28.9.2023).

about this musical is how a localized and, to some, even unknown story can reach so many individuals and convey the universal message of inclusiveness.

As perfectly stated by Churchwell (2016), *Hamilton*

[...] is the story of a “young, scrappy and hungry” immigrant from the West Indies who became the quintessential American success story through a combination of brains, hard work and audacity. Miranda creates a myth for Hamilton by celebrating him as a symbol of immigrant inclusiveness, egalitarianism and meritocracy: historically it’s a stretch, but theatrically it’s genius.

On top of that, Churchwell (2016) points out, “[e]verything about the show is ‘meta,’ as layered references compound meaning like interest: Hamilton is metatheatrical, metahistorical, metamusical, metamorphic”.

However, despite these elements of novelty, we should not make the mistake of thinking that *Hamilton* is not in line with its predecessors: as stated by Lawson (2017),

Hamilton, though, is no aberration. It continues the American musical’s impressive tradition of creative radicalism. While Stephen Sondheim is often singled out for his unlikely subjects – presidential shootings (*Assassins*), US-Japanese trade wars (*Pacific Overtures*), pointillist art (*Sunday in the Park with George*) – audacious combinations of content and expression have always been integral to the genre.

Two of the most-revived musicals, *Cabaret* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, are stories of anti-Jewish genocide. *West Side Story* turned Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* into a multiracial teenage dance musical. And the last Broadway import to create anything close to the heat around *Hamilton* made another improbable subject – Latter Day Saints evangelism – into *The Book of Mormon*.

It is also important to note that *Hamilton* is considered a through-sung musical, given that there is barely any spoken dialogue and the narration proceeds entirely via songs (there are, however, a few moments in the show where spoken dialogue is used instead of singing). This makes the songs (and the lyrics) the focal point of the show. As previous studies have shown, the verbal mode is not the only important element of a musical, as audio and visual modes contribute to the telling of the story too.

This brief presentation of *Hamilton* showed how this musical is the most suitable material for a multimodal analysis with translation in mind. Sections 3.1. to 3.5. provide a detailed description of how the model previously developed in Carpi (2018) was applied to this musical, specifically to the song “My shot”.

3.1. “My shot”: an overview

“My shot” is song number 3 of Act 1 of *Hamilton*, and it is one of the best-known songs of the entire show. “My shot” falls under the labels of anthem and group song, as detailed in Carpi (2018: 102):

Anthem: The most (or one of the most) popular song of the musical, which immediately reminds the audience of that particular show. This type of song can highlight a relevant theme of the show and could include the title of the musical itself.

Group song: A randomly selected song where there is singing interaction between more than two characters. This type of song could also be quite spectacular from the visual point of view, and it is sometimes referred to as the “production number”.

In “My shot” there are several characters on stage at the same time: Hamilton, Lafayette, Mulligan, Laurens and Burr, together with the ensemble.⁴

The recorded clip analysed here was taken from the filmed version of the show that was made available on Disney+ in 2020. Due to the fact that only one small difference was found between the original Broadway cast recording (2015) and the 2020 Disney+ recording, the lyrics were taken from the libretto published with the CD, with just one small amendment compared to the recording.⁵

The following sections show how to practically apply the model of analysis to a song taken from a stage musical in order to understand how the process works and how the data is extracted from the model.

3.2. “My shot”: analysis of the verbal mode

This section analyses the lyrics of “My shot” in detail in order to show how the multimodal model of analysis can be applied to verbal semiotic resources. As a preliminary step, lyrics taken from the libretto should be compared with those sung in the video version analysed, checking for any differences; as in the case study presented here none could be found⁶, the categories of the verbal mode (see Table 1, p. 114) could then be applied to the libretto. The categories should be applied one after the other and the results annotated in tables; at this stage, it is worth remembering that the application of the model is partly characterised by subjectivity.

3.2.1. Repetitions

For the purposes of the model, repetitions are “words or clusters of words that are repeated more than once” (Carpi 2020: 425). Table 2 (p. 118) lists a few of

4| <https://hamiltonmusical.fandom.com/wiki/Category:Characters> (accessed: 23.09.2023).

5| Towards the end of the song, Hamilton sings the lyrics: “I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory. When’s it gonna get me? In my sleep? Seven feet ahead of me? *If I see it comin’*, do I run or do I let it be?”. However in the booklet published with the original Broadway cast recording (*Hamilton* 2015), the segment ends: “Seven feet ahead of me? *comin’*, do I run or do I let it be?” (my added italics). Given that the difference is minor (and it could very well be a typo), the words were added to the lyrics used for this paper and analysed as if part of the original booklet.

6| Please refer to the previous footnote.

the repetitions that can be found in “My shot”. Those words and expressions that were repeated only two or three times were left out of this table. From this list, some thematic patterns can already be spotted. They will be useful when applying the next categories.

Table 2: Repetitions

Word(s)	Iterations
shot	41
shoot	1
my	39
throwing	23
throwin’	3
rise up	18
I am not throwing away my shot	10
time	10
country	6
hungry	6
hungriest	1
I’m young, scrappy and hungry	5
colonies	5
colony	1
free	4
freedom	1

3.2.2. Evocative meaning

The analysis of what is defined as evocative meaning should look at words or groups of words that concern language variations (Carpi 2020: 426).

Noticing these writing choices is useful to understand the tone of the text and the type of relationship between characters on stage. Table 3 provides a few examples from “My shot”.

Table 3: Evocative meaning

Examples	Comments
Hey yo	Informal register
I got y’all <i>knuckleheads</i> in loco parentis	Colloquialism
where all the <i>hungriest brothers</i> with something to prove went?	Informal register

3.2.3. Key clusters

The category of key clusters provides a clearer identification of more significant themes of the song. With two categories applied, it is likely that at this stage some information could already be evident; however, it is only with the creation of key clusters that a more definite thematic structure can be attached to the song.

The analysis includes multiple scannings of the text, in order to group together words or clusters of words that refer to a similar topic (see Table 4). The process of grouping the expressions is based on personal knowledge and experience, whilst always acknowledging the subjectivity of this process. This is then followed by a labelling phase as objective as possible, using labels that can be recognised and understood universally. The aim is to link these words to general themes that could easily be replicated in a target language and culture.

Table 4: Groups of key clusters

Group 1 (Intellect)	Group 2 (Fight)	Group 3 (Freedom)
I amaze and astonish	I am not throwing away my shot!	I dream of life without a monarchy
I got a lot of brains but no polish	'm joining the rebellion	But we'll never be truly free until those in bondage have the same rights as you and me
With every word, I drop knowledge!	A bunch of revolutionary manumission abolitionists	For the first time, I'm thinkin' past tomorrow
Don't be shocked when your hist'ry book mentions me.	Rise up!	
Between all the bleedin' 'n fightin' I've been readin' 'n writin'		

As Table 4 shows, this step of the analysis only concerns the grouping phase; the labelling phase should happen at the end of phase 1 (verbal analysis), when useful information can be gathered through all the categories (identification of themes). Nevertheless, it is usually possible to identify some thematic areas in the song at this stage of the process of analysis, which is why some labels were already added to show this.

3.2.4. Expressive meaning

The category of expressive meaning bears many similarities to that of key clusters, in that it looks at the meaning of words; specifically, this category aims

to locate words or expressions that refer to emotions and/or attitudes (Carpi 2020: 428). Examples 1–5 show some expressions in “My shot” that could be interpreted from an emotional point of view.

- (1) I am *not throwing away* my shot
- (2) The plan is to *fan this spark into a flame*
- (3) I said *shout* it to the rooftops!
- (4) where all the *hungriest brothers* with something to prove went?
- (5) I’m past patiently waitin’.
- (6) I’m *passionately smashin’* every expectation, every action’s an act of creation!

3.2.5. Cultural background

This category helps locate the expressions that are specifically related to the source culture, and/or to culture in general (see Table 5). This way, it should be possible to define whether further explanation is needed in the event of a translation, either in the text or via other semiotic modes.

Table 5: Cultural background

Examples	Field
Scholarship to King’s College	Education
A colony that runs independently. Meanwhile, Britain keeps shittin’ on us endlessly. Essentially, they tax us relentlessly, then King George turns around, runs a spending spree. He ain’t ever gonna set his descendants free, so there will be a revolution in this century.	History
I dream of life without a monarchy. The unrest in France will lead to ‘onarchy?	History
we roll like Moses, claimin’ our promised land	Religion
We need to handle our financial situation. Are we a nation of states? What’s the state of our nation?	History

3.2.6. Intratextuality

This category refers to the knowledge that the audience has acquired throughout the show and points out which information should not require any extra explanation, had this already come up in the previous stage of the performance. However, it is to be considered how much of this information the audience is able to retain, and how frequently it should be made explicit again, possibly via different semiotic resources.

The examples in Table 6 show how some information is left implicit in “My shot”, because it is expressed in previous songs and/or interactions between characters on stage.

Table 6: Intratextuality

Expressions	Explanation
ev’ry burden, ev’ry disadvantage I have learned to manage	Hamilton’s upbringings and difficulties growing up
I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory	Foreshadowing of Hamilton’s future, previously referenced in other songs
See, I never thought I’d live past twenty. Where I come from some get half as many	Hamilton’s past

3.2.7. Summary of verbal mode analysis

Once all the categories of the verbal mode have been applied to lyrics, results can be analysed, with the main themes extracted from the information gathered. Tables 7 and 8 (p. 122) provide a summary of all the categories and a few labels that indicate the main thematic areas identified in “My shot”. As previously mentioned, the themes were named in the most generic and understandable way possible. The aim is to identify those topics that would need to be restated in a target text, as the most important elements conveying meaning. Borrowing Franzon’s words (2015: 339), the aim of this category is “to create focus [...] observing the workings of this structuring effect may matter more than counting rhymes and copying rhyme schemes”.

Table 7: Summary of verbal mode

Verbal modes	Present or not
Repetitions	✓
Evocative meaning	✓
Key clusters	✓
Expressive meaning	✓
Cultural background	✓
Intratextuality	✓

Table 8: Overall themes in the verbal mode

Theme	Origin
intellect	from key clusters
fighting	from repetitions, key clusters and expressive meaning
freedom	from repetitions and expressive meaning
future	from key clusters and expressive meaning
history	from cultural background and intratextuality
family	from evocative meaning and intratextuality

3.3. “My shot”: analysis of the audio mode

This section analyses the audio recording of “My shot” in detail, in order to show how the model should be applied to the audio semiotic mode. Specifically, the second step of the analysis consists in the application of the categories of the audio mode (see Table 1, p. 114).

This analysis was performed on a recording of the examined staged performance. As a general note, the performance analysed should preferably be a video one, as songs recorded for CDs tend to be polished afterwards, and the video is necessary for the visual analysis as well.

3.3.1. Music

This section of the analysis does not require specific musical knowledge and it does not aim to provide a detailed reading of the score. This level of information will be necessary in a later phase of the song translating process (as explained in Carpi 2018). The purpose of this current stage of the analysis is simply to know more about the way audio semiotic resources contribute to the meaning of the song, and what impact they have on lyrics. As described in more detail in Carpi (2020: 431), in order to classify differences across musical motifs, a taxonomy provided by Kaindl (1995) was used as a basis. Specifically, a distinction was made between:

- 1) signs relating to characters, 2) signs relating to situational references, and 3) signs relating to concepts and ideas. The first type expresses psychological and/or physiological and/ or sociological states, the second type is used to indicate spatial relations and objects, while the third type links music to specific concepts.

See Table 9 for an example of note taking on the music in “My shot”.

Table 9: Music

Examples	Comments
Chorus: increasing rhythm, the beat provides a sense of urgency	Referring to concept or ideas (upcoming revolution)
Stanzas: music drops to punctuate the words and serve as support to the narration	Referring to concept or ideas
Specific words are marked by the same instruments (e.g., cymbals under the word “shot”)	Referring to concept or ideas
Fingers snapping as the only accompaniment to Hamilton’s own thinking	Referring to characters (symbol of hesitation before joining in)
Music becomes more powerful towards the end	Referring to characters, and concept or ideas (marking the increasing understanding of Hamilton and the others of what is about to happen)

3.3.2. Interludes

This category should look at any moment in the song where music is played with no lyrics, for a noticeable duration. Interludes can happen at the beginning or at the end of the song, but tend to occur most often in the middle, and are frequently accompanied by a dance routine. In the analysed song, no instances were identified for this category.

3.3.3. Pauses

As stated in Carpi (2020: 432),

[...] the category of pauses is different from that of *interludes* as it keeps track of interruptions in which no music or other sounds can be heard. This definition does not refer to the transitional moments between songs, but to those silent moments that are purposely inserted in the song itself. Pauses may give information on specific moments or themes that are to be highlighted in the song.

In this specific song no real pauses can be identified; however, there is a moment in the middle of the song when Hamilton hesitates and the only sound heard is that of fingers snapping (performed by other characters on stage). This is to signify doubts popping into Hamilton’s head, before he fully commits to the idea of revolution. While not a real pause *per se*, given that a sound can still be heard, this should still be noted, as it represents an important and meaningful moment in the song.

3.3.4 Sound effects

As stated in Carpi (2020: 432), “the category of sound effects analyses the sounds that are ‘artificially reproduced for the aims of the spectacle’ (Kowzan 1968: 72) and that are used to recreate on stage a sound that is normally heard in real life (rain, bells, etc.)”. In the case of “My shot”, no instances were identified for this category.

3.3.5. Paralinguistic features

It was previously established that paralinguistic features include all those non-lexical elements that can be heard during the song (for instance, laughter, crying), which are uttered by the actors.

“My shot”, however, poses an interesting question when discussing its paralinguistic elements: in fact, due to the rapping nature of the song, many of the sounds uttered by the actors are closer to regular conversation than actual singing. How should we then approach the analysis of these elements? Should we still look for instances of “paralanguage” (Poyatos 1997: 42), or are rap songs different from the more traditional musical theatre songs? In other words, does the fact that there is a lot more spoken dialogue in these songs than there would be in other musicals, make the category of paralinguistic features redundant?

When performing the analysis of “My shot”, the second approach was followed, but this shows how this model could still be subject to change the more we study this topic. For these reasons, for the purposes of this study, no paralinguistic features were identified in the song.

3.3.6. Summary of audio mode analysis

After applying all the categories of the audio mode to “My shot”, the next step is to extract themes from the information obtained. The notes taken during this phase of the analysis will now be compared with the themes already gathered from the verbal analysis. The first step should be to check whether the themes identified in the verbal analysis are replicated by the audio analysis or not, and then proceed in identifying any new ones. Tables 10 and 11 summarise the results obtained in “My shot”; the labelling system was the same as used for the verbal analysis.

Table 10: Summary of audio mode

Audio modes	Present or not
Music	✓
Interludes	×
Pauses	✓
Sound effects	×
Paralinguistic features	×

Table 11: Overall themes in the audio mode

Theme	Origin
awareness	from music
fighting	from music
hesitation	from pauses

3.4. “My shot”: analysis of the visual mode

The final step of the analysis consists in the application of the categories of visual mode (see Table 1, p. 114) to the same recording used for the audio mode analysis. As with the first two semiotic modes, the aim is to gather information on the song and on how the identified themes can be expressed via different semiotic resources. The visual resources identified in “My shot” were specific to the staging in question (filmed version available on Disney+, 2020⁷); however, this section of the analysis is also useful to generally understand how the meaning of lyrics could be expanded via visual semiotic resources.

3.4.1. Dancing

This category specifically looks at the choreographed routines that could be seen on stage and leaves the analysis of spontaneous movements to the category of embodied behaviour. See Table 12 for an example of note taking on the dancing in “My shot”.

Table 12: Dancing

Example	Comments
Choreographed routine whenever the refrain of “My shot” is sung. First there is only a few dancing, and Hamilton does not immediately join in. Then more and more characters join as the song continues, until everyone is dancing.	It is a crescendo of interactions, to signal the plan that is taking form and the more and more people that start to believe in it (Hamilton included). It is a call to action, and it foretells the fighting that will come later.

3.4.2. Embodied behaviour

This category aims to identify spontaneous visual cues that add more information to the lyrics of the song. As previously stated in Carpi (2020: 434),

7| See official trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSCkFXpAGHc> (accessed: 27.09.2023).

[...] the focus was placed on iconic gestures, that is, marked cues that deviate from “regular” behaviour. However, instances of gaze following speech and body movements that logically follow words will also be analysed when they appear to add more to the communication.

In addition to this,

[...] the acts inserted in this category are classified under the labels “logical” (acts linked to speech) and “objective” (acts independent from speech), both borrowed from Efron (1941). Not every gesture is to be listed, but only those that carry a meaning”.

Based on this, Table 13 offers an overview of a few selected examples from “My shot”.

Table 13: Embodied behaviour

Examples	Type	Symbolic Function
Hamilton pointing at his glass before putting it back on the table: something is about to start	Objective	Anticipation
Hamilton pointing at his temples when talking about his “brain”	Logical	Intellect
Lafayette, Mulligans and Laurens standing up and surrounding Hamilton to listen to him: they are getting interested in what he is saying.	Objective	Anticipation

3.4.3. Stage props

The final category of the visual mode looks at props that are used on stage to support or add to the meaning of the song. See Table 14 for an example of the props found in “My shot”.

Table 14: Stage props

Examples	Comments
Drinking glasses	Characters on stage often drink whenever the word “shot” is sung. This could be a foretelling for the fighting that is to come.
Lights	The stage gets darker to mark Hamilton’s moment of hesitation, then the lights are back on once he regains confidence in himself. Lights are also used to mark moments when Hamilton thinks about the future and what is to come.

3.4.4. Summary of visual mode analysis

As with the verbal and audio modes, the themes identified in the visual analysis have been summarised and compared with the already identified ones, in order to see whether they were new or not.

Table 15: Summary of visual mode

Visual modes	Present or not
Dancing	✓
Embodied behaviour	✓
Stage props	✓

Table 16: Overall themes in the visual mode

Theme	Origin
fighting	From dancing and stage props
anticipation	From embodied behaviour
intellect	From embodied behaviour
hesitation	From stage props
future	From stage props

3.5. Relationship between verbal, audio and visual mode: an overview of “My shot”

Table 17 (p. 128) provides a complete overview of the analysis of “My shot”, showing the relationships between the three modes; it is possible to notice which new themes emerged from which mode, and whether these themes were enhanced, modified or omitted.

According to Table 17, nine themes were identified in “My shot”: six in the verbal mode analysis, two in the audio mode analysis and one in the visual mode analysis; some of these themes were repeated across the different modes. *Fighting* is a multimodal theme, because it is expressed via all the three semiotic modes. The themes of *intellect*, *future* and *hesitation* could be defined as “bimodal”, because they recur in two out of the three modes available: *intellect* and *future* are expressed via the verbal and visual modes, while *hesitation* is expressed via the audio and visual modes. Finally, *freedom*, *history*, *family* and *anticipation* could be defined as “monomodal” themes, as they are expressed via one mode only: the verbal one for *freedom*, *history* and *family*, and the visual one for *anticipation*.

Table 17: Summary of themes in “My shot”

Themes	Verbal	Audio	Visual	Modality
intellect	+		✓	bimodal
fighting	+	✓	✓	multimodal
freedom	+			monomodal
future	+		✓	bimodal
history	+			monomodal
family	+			monomodal
awareness		+		monomodal
hesitation		+	✓	bimodal
anticipation			+	monomodal
Total	6	3	5	

To summarise, Section 3 outlined a step-by-step guide on how to apply the model of analysis to songs of stage musicals. Each category was used to analyse “My shot”, in order to provide a more holistic view of the song and of its themes.

4. “What comes next?”: a few considerations on the model

As stated at the beginning of this paper, the model of analysis for songs of stage musicals has been created to provide a useful tool that could serve as a basis for, among other things, the potential translation of these shows. An important aspect of this research has always been to keep the model up to date, and this is why it was tested on a more recent musical (*Hamilton*, in this case).

The first consideration regarding the application of the model is that the verbal analysis step is still the strongest and the most articulated one. Thanks to the categories in this section, it was easy to extract the main themes of the song, and it was possible to see the links between “My shot” and the other songs of the show. Additionally, the verbal analysis highlighted an interesting aspect of this song and of *Hamilton* in general, which is the use of an extremely contemporary and colloquial language. This almost street-like language is one of the defining features of this show and something that makes it stand out. This element should be kept in mind when approaching the translation of this musical, given how the language used is extremely linked to the source culture.

As stated by Cammarata (2016), *Hamilton* “communicates visually and textually in the language of our time to give the intended message to the audience

of our time. Resonance depends on receptiveness and relevance”. This not only means that the show wants to communicate with its audience using a language they would understand, but that it can also tell a story that, although technically set in the past, becomes extremely current.

For example, if we look at the themes that are identified at the end of the verbal analysis, we notice how universal they are: *freedom, future, family* are themes that can resonate with every person in the audience, whether or not they had known the story of Alexander Hamilton before sitting down in the theatre.

Regarding the potential improvement of the verbal mode analysis, some next steps to be taken could be to systematise the scanning of the text even more, especially with the following categories: evocative meaning, key clusters or expressive meaning. When it comes to the audio and visual analysis, as previously noted (Carpi 2018), the model requires a stronger effort from its users: they need to be able to look at the performance in its entirety, whilst simultaneously taking into consideration what emerged from the verbal analysis. The previous research on the model indicated not to focus on one element only in a too detailed manner, but to look at audio and visual in a holistic way: one of the reasons this model was created was to provide a tool to translators, who might not necessarily have musical or dance training. However, it is evident that when approaching the translation of a stage musical, there needs to be a team that works on it together, as the various levels of meaning need not be analysed and translated separately. This is why the analysis that a translator could provide would offer a good starting point to identify which areas of the show might need more attention, while taking into consideration the input that the director and the choreographer will give to the target adaptation.

In terms of audio analysis, what made this musical an interesting candidate for the testing of the model was the choice of hip-hop as the basis for the story. While not a new sound *per se*, it is definitely more contemporary than the “usual” stage musical sound. Therefore it is yet another way that the show finds to relate to its audience. While providing a solid base for the audio analysis of the song, applying the categories of this mode showed how a few of them might need some adapting when used on such a specific genre of music. In the case of paralinguistic features, for example, the definition could be expanded to include the different ways that rap and hip-hop have to express “non-musical” sounds. Or again the category of pauses, which was here used to cover a moment of finger-snapping and to allow the model to capture its meaning, could be rethought.

Similarly, the visual analysis worked well to provide information on how this semiotic mode was used to express meaning in “My shot”. For example, an interesting aspect that was identified via the visual analysis is how the characters are always moving, conveying a sense of urgency that comes across from the words as well as the actions. The need for freedom and the consequent desire

to fight that emerges from the song is also evident in the characters' movements, in an increasing rhythm that culminates with the final repetition of the song's motto, "not throwing away my shot".

At the same time, however, this part of the analysis also offered food for thought regarding the complexity of this semiotic mode and the categories used to analyse it. For example, the interesting use of the lights highlighted how a specific category could be created to look at this powerful instrument. Additionally, the category of dancing could be expanded to include comments on how the characters/actors present themselves on stage (or potentially even create a new category for this aspect). In relation to this, one extra point that the visual analysis brings to our attention and that the model as it is now does not have the instruments to discuss, is the diverseness of the cast that is performing the show, singing about freedom and future. This is clearly a choice that was made to communicate something to the audience, and one aspect that would need to be communicated in a target adaptation as well.

At this stage, it is worth noting that the data collected is not vast enough to confidently state whether this methodology is the best for these types of productions. It is also important to stress once more the subjectivity of certain categories of this model and how it would need to be used by several more researchers and translators to test its strength. For this reason, further research could be developed on which techniques are currently used by translators in the field and to enquire whether they would find the model a useful addition to their work. Input from experts in music and dance would also be relevant to see how the model could be expanded and made clearer even for the audio and visual stages. The model could potentially be tested by professional translators to make sure that it can be used with the least amount of subjectivity.

To conclude, this paper aimed to show how the multimodal model of analysis is still a very practical, varied and detailed tool that offers a good starting point when approaching a complex form of art such as a stage musical, with the aim of a translation in mind. The concept of themes and modes, in particular, keeps offering interesting points of view on each song/show analysed. Additionally, as previously mentioned (Carpi 2020), this model could also be a starting point for other types of analysis, such as those of poetry and theatrical pieces, increasing its potential even more.

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How music and lyrics interact: A translation-oriented analysis of musical narrative in Disney's "Let it go"

ABSTRACT

How music and lyrics interact: A translation-oriented analysis of musical narrative in Disney's "Let it go"

Much research on song translation focuses on formal constraints, such as rhyme and rhythm, but few studies seem to investigate the relationship between lyrics and music itself. This study examines how meaning is constructed in music, and how the meaning of music interacts with the meaning of lyrics in a song translation context. The analysis follows three paradigms of meaning in music: musical narrative, music rhetoric, and music semantics. These paradigms are used to describe the meaning of the music of the Disney song "Let it go", from the 2013 musical film *Frozen*. Disney songs are some of the most commonly translated songs, and as such, they have an important effect on child development. It is found that on a general level, the music of "Let it go" expresses a victory of a rebellious force over an established order, which is expressed by means of a growth of energy and intensity. This growth closely follows the four rhetorical phases of the *narratio*, *probatio*, *dubitatio*, and *peroratio*, which allows for a structural analysis of musical meaning and narrative. The findings suggest that treating the music of a song as a central element can guide the translation process and scholarly analysis of songs and their translations. This study stresses the importance of the role of music in the multimodal product that is a song.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, Disney, musical narrative, music semantics, song translation

1. Introduction

Music is an integral part of human existence. It connects us (e.g. Urbain 2018) and makes us feel things (Haapaniemi/ Laakkonen 2019). Although it can have

a great impact on us, it is difficult to define what exactly a piece of music *means* (Almén 2017). *How* does it affect us, and *why* does it affect us that way? These types of questions are essential to answer for any musician and composer, but also, for example, for filmmakers (Dyer 2012) and song translators (Reus 2020). The case study presented here focuses specifically on the last, aiming to clarify the often nebulous concepts of musical meaning and musical narrative for song translators and scholars in particular.

For song translators, the relation between music and lyrics forms an important constraint on their translation choices (Kaindl 2005; Franzon 2008). An important aim for song translators when they wish to create a singable translation is often to have a song's lyrics relate to music in a similar fashion as in the source text. To achieve that, it is, perhaps naturally, useful to understand what is expressed by music itself: how the audience interprets music and how that interpretation relates to lyrics. The relationship between lyrics and music has been studied to some degree in a song translation context (e.g. Kaindl 2005; Tråvén 2005; Reus 2020), but the meaning of the music itself has rarely been implemented in methodologies outside the musicological field (Almén 2017; Mikalonytė 2018).

Even within the context of musicology, however, music semantics is a contentious topic (Schlenker 2019). It is clear that music has syntax – it has a way of meaningfully structuring musical elements – and it is also uncontroversial to claim that music means something – it evokes tangible feelings in audiences (e.g. Scherer/ Zentner 2001; Urbain 2018), and there are many ways to employ music in film (e.g. Dyer 2012). Yet, a clear system of semantics is more difficult to define. Nevertheless, the field has received fairly extensive academic attention since the start of the new millennium (Honing 2005), and has seen the development of several models of understanding musical meaning. This study relies on three models in particular (detailed in Section 1.1) to explore the meaning of the music of the Disney song “Let it go”, from the 2013 animated musical film *Frozen* (contextualised in Section 1.2) within a song translation context.

1.1. Meaning in music

The theories used in this study have been limited to only those most accessible to non-musicians and most relevant to the business and study of song translation. As such, the three theories of musical narrative and music semantics used are Almén's (2017) description of musical narrative; Paradiso Laurin's (2012) discussion of rhetoric in classical music; and Schlenker's (2019) linguistics-based approach to music semantics. These three models complement each other through significant differences in paradigm, approach, and even interpretation of the notion of musical meaning. This subsection briefly contextualises each model.

Almén's (2017) model allows us to systematically investigate the narrative arc of music. He suggests a three-step method to define the narrative in a piece of music: first, to divide a work into *isotopies*, or "spans that create meaningfully coherent units" (2017: 56); then, to describe each isotopy in terms of musical structure; and last, to identify one of four narrative archetypes based on the features of the isotopies. These archetypes represent the movement of music: either a victory or a defeat of transgressive forces over or to forces of order. Victory is characterised by rising melodies and major chord progressions, for example, whereas defeat is quite the opposite. The identity of order is based mainly on musical consonance and silence, whereas the opposite (i.e. dissonance and loud or unexpected sounds) represents transgressive elements. These concepts, as well as several additional concepts introduced in the analysis below, help identify the story that the music tells us.

Paradiso Laurin (2012) focuses on classical music: in particular, the functions of rhetorical features in Baroque music. Basing her ideas on a long history of classical music analysis, she describes four rhetorical phases of a piece of music (which, I argue, can also be found in many types of music outside traditional Western art music): the *narratio*, which introduces the main themes; the *probatio*, which develops the themes further, perhaps by introducing new elements or changing elements; the *dubitatio*, which introduces a new theme that opposes the main themes; and the *peroratio*, which returns to the main themes and concludes the piece. In general, many styles of music composition follow rhetorical rules to evoke certain feelings, and analysing music from a rhetorical point of view helps us understand how a piece of music was designed to influence the listener and, therefore, create meaning.

Schlenker (2019) approaches the musical meaning of Western music from a more linguistics-influenced definition of semantics. According to Schlenker (2019), our interpretation of music is affected by many factors, which can be separated into auditory cognition factors and tonal property factors. Auditory cognition is instinctive and includes onomatopoeic sounds (e.g. a flute makes us think of a bird more so than a piano does, simply because a flute *sounds* more like a bird than a piano does), loudness (a louder sound means the producer of the sound is closer or bigger), and pitch (a higher pitch means the producer is more energetic). Tonal properties are the effects of musical qualities, such as the major scale creating excitement more so than the minor scale does, or a full cadence signalling the end of a piece more so than a half cadence does. These tonal property factors are learnt, but most people in Western societies are unconsciously familiar with them. Although Schlenker goes into great and fascinating detail, this study uses the concepts presented simply to support a general analysis of the feelings the piece evokes in its listeners.

1.2. A case study of Disney's "Let it go"

The case study presented here focuses on the Disney song "Let it go" by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, from the 2013 film *Frozen*. Audiovisual media, such as musical films, constitute a large part of modern childhood, but the ways in which it affects childhood is not well understood (Porta 2018). This is especially true for translated audiovisual media. In many countries, Disney is one of the most important producers of translated songs. The company's musical films have been translated into a great variety of languages and have been massively popular among many generations of children (e.g. Beaudry 2015; Wilde 2014). *Frozen* has been dubbed into at least 45 languages (Giese 2017), and "Let it go", being the film's most popular song, has seen significant radio play in its own right (August/ McKenna 2014). Due to the extensive impact of Disney songs in general and the global popularity of *Frozen* in particular, it is valuable to investigate the ways in which meaning is created in the music of the film. The version of "Let it go" referred to in this study is available on YouTube as published by Walt Disney Animation Studios (2013).

In the context of the film, the primary purpose of "Let it go" is to show the character development of one of the main characters, Elsa (Yee 2014). Narratively, Elsa, a princess who has up until this point been voluntarily locked up in order to learn to control her magical ice powers, accidentally attacks the guests at her coronation ceremony and subsequently runs away. The singing of "Let it go" takes place directly after this incident, and shows how Elsa's thinking develops from fearful, oppressed, and lonely to confident and liberated. It ends with Elsa in control of her powers (August/ McKenna 2014).

Musically, "Let it go" is a song in common time with a tempo of 69 bpm – a tempo described in the sheet music as *mysterious* (Anderson-Lopez/ Lopez 2014). This time signature and tempo present a framework common to Western pop music that is unsurprising and easy to digest. According to Beaudry (2015), this is a conscious decision of Disney songwriters that has been used consistently since at least the 1990s but can be traced back to Walt Disney's first foray into animated musical film territory in 1937. The tonality (or key) changes several times throughout the song: the verses are in F Aeolian; the choruses are in the relative mode of A, Ionian; the pre-choruses can be conceptualised as E_b, Mixolydian; and the bridge is in D, and E_b, Mixolydian. All of these modes are enharmonically equivalent (apart from the dip to D, Mixolydian in the bridge), so the tonality shifts are primarily shifts of perspective rather than location (Almén 2017). As a result, these phases sound quite similar and the shift from one to another does not cause great shock.

The analysis in Sections 2 to 5, structured along Paradiso Laurin's (2012) four phases of musical rhetoric, goes into more specific detail. The *narratio* covers the song's introduction, first verse and first chorus. It presents all the musical

ideas of the song (with the exception of the bridge), as well as the idea of growth. The *probatio* covers the second verse and second chorus. This phase consolidates and expands upon the musical ideas expressed in the *narratio*. The *dubitatio* covers the bridge section, and presents a new, opposing, musical idea. The final chorus constitutes the *peroratio*. This phase re-establishes the musical themes of the first two phases and concludes the song. Each section below begins with a brief description of the lyrics (of which a more extensive analysis can be found in Appendix 1), followed by a division into isotopies and analyses of narrative, auditory cognition, tonal properties, and rhetoric. This approach results in a qualitative description of musical meaning that is hoped to be useful to song translators and scholars and stimulate further research into this valuable field.

2. *Narratio*

The *narratio*, which introduces the song's main themes, comprises the first minute and 28 seconds of the song. Lyrically, this phase conveys three primary ideas: Elsa's loneliness and fear in the first verse; the way her parents (and society in general) oppress her in the pre-chorus; and her break from society in the chorus. In the first verse, Elsa describes her loneliness by equating her feelings to the landscape: the lack of footprints in the snow is a metaphor for her being alone and the howling wind represents her conflicted emotions. The pre-chorus repeats the advice that Elsa's father gave her earlier in the film: "Conceal, don't feel". Originally intended to help protect the kingdom from Elsa's magic, the phrase is used here to convey Elsa's loyalty to her parents. The final line of the pre-chorus, however, "Well, now they know", shows an eagerness to move past that mantra. The chorus shows her moving on: Elsa leaves society ("Turn away and slam the door") and admits that her magic is a part of her ("Can't hold it back anymore"). The repetition of the line, "Let it go", stresses Elsa's excitement. In the lyrics, then, this phase moves from the fear that characterises Elsa during the first half of the film to the excitement and sense of optimism of the rest of the song.

Musically, the *narratio* can be divided into six isotopies. The *Isotopy* column in Table 1 (p. 138) gives the name of the isotopy, and the *Time* column indicates at what point in the song the isotopy can be found. The *Description* column lists the tonality of the isotopy, orchestration, and a broad description of its rhythm, melodic pitch, and pattern (in which the numbers describe scale degrees). The *Rank* and *Mark* values in Table 1 represent two concepts of Almén (2017): *rank* indicates how important the isotopy is in the context of the song, based on musical intensity, pitch, melody, and harmony; and *mark* indicates how unexpected the isotopy is when compared to the preceding isotopy (or, in the case of the

first isotopy, the silence that precedes it), based on changes in orchestration, pitch, melody, and harmony. Both variables use a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being the least ranked or marked. The discussion below first explores the phase's structure and then addresses the effects of auditory cognition and tonality.

Table 1: *Narratio isotopies*

	Isotopy	Time	Description	Rank	Mark
1	Introduction	0:00–0:14	f, high piano notes defining a 2-3-2-3 melody	1	2
2	Verse 1	0:14–0:42	f, low piano notes and vocals, 5-3-4-1 melody	2	1
3	Pre-chorus 1	0:42–0:59	E _b , Mixolydian, higher vocal melody, 5-8-5-8-9 melodic pattern, also 2-1-2-4-3 melody	2	3
4	Chorus 1.1	0:59–1:21	A _b , longer and higher notes, 1-2-3 / 1-2-4 melodic pattern	3	1
5	Chorus 1.2	1:21–1:25	A _b , lower vocal melody, full orchestration, 8-7-5 melody	2	2
6	Conclusion 1	1:25–1:28	A _b , low vocal melody, sudden change in orchestration, 4-3-4-3-1 melodic pattern	2	3

A quick look at rank reveals that Chorus 1.1 is the primary isotopy in the *narratio*, drawing attention with its high, clearly ascending vocal melody, made up of many long notes, and its Ionian mode, which is the most consonant mode in Western music (Clendinning/ Marvin 2010). This isotopy, then, represents a narrative key moment. A look at markedness reveals the importance, too, of isotopies 3 and 6. Pre-chorus 1 presents an epiphany: a modal shift, in this case from downwards to upwards (Almén 2017). The tonic shifts from a minor to a major chord, the rhythm is more sharply defined, and the vocal melody is higher and has greater intervals. It shifts from a state of *being* to one of *becoming*. The Conclusion 1 isotopy is characterised by a sudden reduction in orchestration and lower vocal melody pitch.

Auditory cognition greatly shapes our interpretation of meaning here. In Introduction, the step-wise melody (one step up and one step down, repeatedly), especially when combined with the timbre of the piano, signifies careful or laborious movement, and the low pitch of Verse 1 expresses feelings such as

sadness or confusion. Pre-chorus 1 and Chorus 1 introduce more instruments and a higher pitch, which indicates growing activity. The increased loudness during Chorus 1 implies increased nearness and intensity. The reduced volume of Conclusion 1 signals the end of the first phase: reduced volume, according to Schlenker (2019), means that the producer of the sound is farther away, thus signifying a moving on. However, the lower vocal pitch also makes the singer sound nearer, contributing to the isotopy's markedness. The singer's sudden closeness is reinforced by the rhetorical force of the relative silence surrounding her (helping shock the audience into wakefulness), and indicates the singularity, clarity, and, thus, the importance of this isotopy.

Tonal properties contribute importantly to this narrative, too. The Aeolian mode of Introduction and Verse 1 represents subduedness or sadness, reinforced by the harmonic structure, the sparse orchestration, and the low melody focusing on minor third intervals. The modal change in Pre-chorus 1 from *f* to *E_b* represents a shift in perspective. The greater energy of this isotopy is the result of the focus on the major chords and simple harmonic structure, as well as the greater melodic intervals stressing the root, fourth and fifth notes. The Ionian mode in isotopies 4, 5, and 6 represents excitement and assertiveness. Chorus 1.1, with its calmer rhythm and its more open orchestration (involving both high and low pitch ranges), provides a release for the rhythmic and harmonic tension built up during Pre-chorus 1. The harmony implies the major version of the harmony of Verse 1: *i-VI-VII-iv* turns into *I-V-vi-IV*, establishing a subverted relation to that isotopy. The sadness of Introduction and Verse 1 has turned into energetic joy. Rhetorically, the repetition in the melodic line (as opposed to the lack of repetition in the melody of Verse 1) adds reassurance and stability to that sense of energetic joy.

The primary development in musical narrative in the *narratio*, then, is that of the sadness of Introduction and Verse 1 to the joy and energy of Chorus 1 and the assertiveness of Conclusion 1. This movement is implied by the tonal qualities of the music and our auditory cognition, as well as by the rank and markedness of the key isotopies. The most important isotopies in the *narratio* are Chorus 1 and Conclusion 1. Both rhetorically and narratively, the music of the *narratio* displays a clear progression from a sad or tender state of being to a happy state of becoming.

3. *Probatio*

The next 59 seconds of the song (from 1:28 to 2:26) constitute the *probatio*. This phase covers the second verse, the second pre-chorus, and the second chorus. The lyrics describe Elsa's relationship with society (in the second verse) and her magic (in the pre-chorus) in a more optimistic light than in the *narratio*. In the

verse, lines such as “And the fears that once controlled me/ Can’t get to me at all” show that she detaches herself from her previous life. The pre-chorus expresses Elsa’s desire to experiment with her powers, with lines such as “It’s time to see/ What I can do/ To push the limits and break through”. The second chorus offers one metaphor (“I’m one with the wind and sky”) and one direct statement of her newfound confidence (“You’ll never see me cry”). The metaphor in particular reinforces the overarching conceit of the landscape as a representation of Elsa’s feelings. The lyrics in this phase further develop the positive direction set out in the *narratio*, expanding the metaphors and increasing both Elsa’s detachment from society and her confidence.

The *probatio* can be divided up into four isotopies, as detailed in Table 2. This table, like Table 1 (p. 138), lists the isotopy number and name, the time code, a brief description, and the rank and mark values. In this phase, the most important isotopy (i.e. the isotopy with the highest rank) is Chorus 2.1. Whereas Verse 2 and Pre-chorus 2 add new elements in their repetition of, respectively, Verse 1 and Pre-chorus 1, with new lyrics and a new vocal melody, Chorus 2.1 presents similar lyrics and the same vocal melody as Chorus 1.1, the only major difference being the orchestration. The orchestra covers a wider range of pitches and comprises fewer staccato notes and rests, which makes this isotopy sound more overwhelming than both Chorus 1.1 and the preceding two isotopies (Schlenker 2019). Chorus 2.2 is less important, musically, because it does not introduce changes in orchestration and its descending melodic and harmonic movement are less energetic than the ascending melody of Chorus 2.1. None of these isotopies are very marked, because harmonically and melodically, they repeat the previously established themes, and this repetition is expected in this type of music (Beaudry 2015; Paradiso Laurin 2012).

Table 2: *Probatio isotopies*

	Isotopy	Time	Description	Rank	Mark
7	Verse 2	1:28–1:46	f, full orchestration, medium-low vocals, 5-3-4-5 melody	2	1
8	Pre-chorus 2	1:46–2:01	E _b , Mixolydian, 5-8-5-8-9 melodic pattern	2	1
9	Chorus 2.1	2:01–2:22	A _b , even fuller orchestration, long and high notes, 1-2-3 / 1-2-4 melodic pattern	3	1
10	Chorus 2.2	2:22–2:26	A _b , lower vocal melody, 8-7-5 melody	1	1

Because the *probatio* comprises much musical repetition of the *narratio*, an analysis of the effects of auditory cognition of these isotopies looks quite similar. Going from Conclusion 1 into Verse 2, more musical voices are added, so we instinctively feel as if there were more movement, but this movement is not as active or energetic as in Chorus 1. This activity – expressed in the orchestration (through the number of instruments), rhythm (through the stressed crotchets and quavers), and pitch – grows more lively throughout the *probatio*, but is never dissonant, so it does not sound threatening (Schlenker 2019). The orchestral differences contribute to this lack of threat: whereas the piano of the *narratio* has a high onset and decay rate, the string section used in the *probatio* has a more even timbre, with a low difference between the onset and decay. As a result, the strings sound less surprising, and more gentle and stable.

With regard to tonal properties, however, the differences between these isotopies and those of the *narratio* are more pronounced. After the confidence of Conclusion 1, Verse 2 sounds carefully optimistic, with the drums settling into a steady though playful rhythm after the sparing accents in Chorus 1. The carefulness in this playfulness is expressed in the harmony, which, as is the case with Verse 1, outlines the Aeolian scale, and the vocals, which, although not as low-pitched as in Verse 1, are lower-pitched than in Chorus 1 and remain relatively monotonous when compared to the pre-choruses and choruses. There is joy here, but not great joy. This joy grows, however, in Pre-chorus 2, where it combines the same stable rhythm with a greater melodic variation and a more energetic and consonant scale, i.e. the Mixolydian. In Chorus 2, the orchestration, as said, opens up, encompassing a greater range of pitches, and the vocal melody is both more clearly ascending and higher-pitched than in the preceding isotopies. The tonality settles on the Ionian scale. Here, then, the levels of energy and consonance are greatest, expressing a straightforward and stably positive emotion.

The *probatio* is quite similar to the *narratio*. It expresses a build-up of energy and consonance, implying an optimistic mood that initially is expressed carefully and hesitantly. Towards the end it becomes more energetic, bombastic, and uncomplicated. Like in the *narratio*, the music here conveys a sense of becoming, but whereas the becoming of the *narratio* describes emotional movement from sadness to happiness, in the *probatio* it describes a development within that happiness, from insecurity to confidence. The *probatio*, like the *narratio*, describes a sense of growth, but the starting and end points of that growth are different.

4. *Dubitatio*

The *dubitatio* covers the next 36 seconds of the song, from 2:26 to 3:02. This time span comprises a bridge section. The lyrics in this section further stress

the growth of Elsa's control over her powers by presenting a more immediate description of both her relationship with her powers and the metaphoric role of the landscape and weather. For example, the line "My soul is spiralling in frozen fractals all around" equates Elsa's soul with her powers (described earlier in the song as a storm and visually represented by ice). Her resolve also grows stronger in this phase, claiming (in a suddenly short and relatively monotone line, thus grabbing the audience's attention and expressing certainty) that she is "never going back" to society. Whereas the first two phases are playful and contemplative, this phase is stalwart and determined.

Table 3 lists the four isotopies identified in the *dubitatio*. This phase marks a sharp melodic, harmonic, and orchestrational shift, reflected in the high mark value of the Bridge Introduction isotopy. Tonally, Bridge Introduction shifts to D_b Mixolydian – the only tonality harmonically non-equivalent to A_b Ionian – there are no vocals in this isotopy (for the first time since isotopy 1), and the string section describes a strong rhythm of quavers (highlighted not by the steady drum rhythm of the preceding isotopies, but by a sparse, bombastic, and less strongly structuring timpani pattern) and an ascending melody that is repeated in Bridge 1 and 2 by the vocals. When it comes to rank, the four isotopies are quite similar. However, the reasons for these ranks vary: Bridge Introduction marks the start of the musical shift; Bridge 1 re-introduces the vocals to accentuate the melody more strongly; Bridge 2 modulates up a major second to accentuate the sensation of ascension and growth more strongly; and Bridge Finale finally releases the tension built up by the rhythm of the preceding three isotopies, mirroring the melody of the Pre-chorus isotopies. This growing tension is an example of the discursive strategy of emergency (Paradiso Laurin 2012), and the release in isotopy 14 represents the strategy of epiphany: it marks a sudden, new development in its transition back to the main theme.

Table 3: *Dubitatio isotopies*

	Isotopy	Time	Description	Rank	Mark
11	Bridge Introduction	2:26–2:34	D _b Mixolydian, full string section, no vocals	2	3
12	Bridge 1	2:34–2:47	D _b Mixolydian, syncopated rhythm as in verses, 1-7-1-2-3-4-5 7-6-5-4-5 melody	2	1
13	Bridge 2	2:47–2:54	E _b Mixolydian, modulate up major second	2	2
14	Bridge Finale	2:54–3:02	A _b , rhythmic change, 2-1-2-3-4 melody	2	2

With regard to auditory cognition, the primary effect of the *dubitatio* is the sensation of rising tension. The steady pattern of quavers in the string section, rather than the syncopated crochets and longer notes of the *probatio*, as well as the ascending melody, indicates growing energy and creates a sense of urgency. The descending notes at the end of each melodic line could be argued to help outline a mountain: from low (the 1 note) to high (6,7) to low again (4). In addition, the simple fact that the melody ascends implies going upwards or climbing. The more steady rhythm, when compared to the carefree happiness of the sweeping notes in Chorus 2, establishes a sense of control and determination. The tension and energy created is not released until Bridge Finale, where the sudden drop in the number of voices (i.e. instruments) and a changed melody imply a significant change of some sort and a great sense of revelation or determination.

This sense of rising tension can also be found in the tonal properties of these isotopies. The use of accidentals (i.e. chromatic notes not in the key) implies unease or strife, which is an essential part of building tension (Almén 2017), and the change in tonality (especially from Chorus 2.2 to the D_b, Mixolydian of Bridge Introduction) implies a new (emotional) environment (Schlenker 2019). Although these elements contribute to a sense of unease, the Mixolydian scale and the major chord (Bridge Introduction, Bridge 1, and Bridge 2 consist of only one chord) create a sense of joy and safety, and the unease manifests itself mainly as a striving towards something. In Bridge Finale, the melody echoes the melody of the pre-choruses, signalling, through the power of repetition, a return to the main themes. However, there is a difference to the previous pre-choruses. The harmony of the Bridge isotopies is similar to that of the pre-choruses, but their harmonic movement has been reversed: from D_b to E_b, rather than the other way around. This rhetorical tool stresses the opposition of the *dubitatio* to the previous phases and reinforces the idea that the purpose of the song has, indeed, changed.

The *dubitatio*, then, offers a contrast to the preceding phases. It inverts the melody, harmonic structure, and rhythm in ways that are sometimes subtle and sometimes quite obvious, creating both an opposition to the first two phases as well as an expansion of their messages. The Bridge Finale isotopy, finally, presents an epiphany to the growing tension and transitions to the familiar-but-different last chorus.

5. Peroratio

The last 36 seconds of the song (from 3:02 to 3:38) constitute the *peroratio*, which covers the final chorus. Like the first two choruses, this chorus expresses Elsa's growing confidence in one metaphoric line ("And I'll rise like the break

of dawn”) and one more direct line (“That perfect girl is gone”). The landscape metaphor in this chorus encompasses not only the mountain and the sky, like in the previous two choruses, but even the passage of time itself – an escalation that mirrors Elsa’s confidence. Daylight is presented as a sign of clarity and inner peace (“Here I stand / In the light of day”), and the storm, as usual, represents Elsa’s powers – now raging while allowing daylight to reach Elsa, which shows the growth of Elsa’s control over her powers. The song concludes with the line, “The cold never bothered me, anyway”, stressing that the oppression of Elsa’s powers has always come from the outside. A fitting conclusion for the empowering message of the song.

This phase contains three isotopies, as outlined in Table 4. These are the two chorus isotopies and the Conclusion 2 isotopy, which is a repetition of Conclusion 1. After the subversion of musical themes in the *dubitatio*, the return to the chorus (the highest-ranked isotopies in the song) functions as an affirmation of the themes established in the *narratio* and *probatio*. The high rank of Chorus 3.1 is the result of its full orchestration and high-pitched vocal melody, as well as the return to the familiar A₁ Ionian mode after the Mixolydian modes in the bridge. Chorus 3.1 maintains the same vocal rhythm and ascending melodic pattern as Bridge Finale, but significantly expands the orchestration. By this point, the listener knows the chorus, so this third chorus is not very marked. Conclusion 2, a repetition of Conclusion 1, does represent a marked shift; however, there are significant differences between it and Chorus 3.2 with regard to orchestration, vocal pitch, melody, and harmony. The *peroratio* as a whole, then, repeats the last three isotopies of the *narratio*, but with more extensive orchestration and higher-pitched vocal lines.

Table 4: *Peroratio isotopies*

	Isotopy	Time	Description	Rank	Mark
15	Chorus 3.1	3:02–3:25	A ₁ , fullest orchestration yet, long and high notes, 1-2-3 / 1-2-4 melodic pattern	3	2
16	Chorus 3.2	3:25–3:31	A ₁ , lower vocal melody, 8-7-5 melody	2	1
17	Conclusion 2	3:31–3:35	A ₁ , low vocal melody, no instrumental accompaniment, 4-3-4-3-1 melodic pattern	2	2

Chorus 3 is the loudest part of the song. Instinctively, we interpret loudness as closeness or largeness, which is often associated with great energy and intensity (Schlenker 2019). This sensation is reinforced by the high pitch of the

melody, which indicates great excitement. But this chorus is not entirely surprising: it is the third repetition of this part, so listeners have by now become familiar with the harmony and melody. We know what to expect, and we enjoy having our expectations confirmed, especially after the surprise of the *dubitatio*. In addition, this familiarity means that the music catches our ear. We know what is happening, and we notice the differences between this chorus and the previous two. In Conclusion 2, like in Conclusion 1, the sudden drop in volume indicates that the situation is ending. The reduction in voices (from a string orchestra to just vocals) indicates simplicity: there is less to pay attention to, so the situation is less complex. With regard to our interpretation of sounds, then, the *peroratio* moves from great intensity to a sudden, shocking, but not entirely unexpected ending.

The release of energy in Chorus 3 can also be recognised when looking at the music's tonal properties. The return to a stable drum pattern (after the timpani accents in the *dubitatio*), the return to the A_b Ionian mode, and the absence of accidentals in the melody, combined with the familiar chorus harmony, contribute to greater consonance. The ascending movement of the melody expresses optimism or positive growth, and the wide range of the orchestration, which again covers both very low and very high pitches, indicates the massive size and all-encompassing nature of this growth. Rhetorically, the contrast in Conclusion 2 to the preceding two isotopies creates a dynamic sound that shocks the listener into observing Elsa's changed mindset. The melody here does not ascend, as in Chorus 3, but rather mimics the step-wise motion of isotopy 1. The melody ends on the 1st note, describing a return to the tonic, so a return to a safe, familiar location. Combined with the preceding notes, which stress the major third interval of the very consonant A_b chord, this constitutes a clear, natural conclusion to the song.

Although the *peroratio* repeats the chorus for the third time, it offers new developments, mainly by way of orchestration and melodic pitch. The repetition of the chorus creates a sense of safety and excitement in the listener, and the new elements increase the emotional intensity and sense of growth of this phase. The last isotopy provides a sudden and strong contrast to the preceding two isotopies, which signals the end of the song, with regard to the listener's interpretation of both sounds and musical structure. This combination of repetition of the highest-ranked theme, growing intensity, and finally, the strong sense of simplicity and clarity provide a natural ending to the song.

6. For the song translator

Through the application of the three methods of describing musical meaning used in this study – Almén's (2017) musical narrative paradigm; musical rhetoric

as described by Paradiso Laurin (2012); and Schlenker's (2019) linguistics-based approach to music semantics – a narrative structure of the music of “Let it go” has emerged. On a general level, “Let it go” can be comfortably analysed according to the four rhetorical phases (Paradiso Laurin 2012) of the *narratio*, *probatio*, *dubitatio*, and *peroratio*: the introduction of main themes, the development of those themes, the introduction of opposing themes, and the reestablishment of the main theme. On a more specific level, we can identify and compare isotopies, of which each expresses a single musical idea (Almén 2017), and those isotopies can be described according to their sonic and musical effects on the listener's mind (Schlenker 2019). This methodology allows us to describe the narrative movement of a song in great detail.

The analysis found that musically, “Let it go” is about a victory of rebellion over an established order. The initial isotopies, expressing sadness and carefulness, generate an image of a flawed initial hierarchy. These emotions are gradually replaced in later isotopies by happiness and excitement – a development marked especially strongly by the epiphanies presented in Conclusion 1 and the end of the *dubitatio* – and developed further in the choruses and the bridge, which represent situations of growing importance and intensity. Pre-chorus 1 marks the shift from downwards (sadness and carefulness) to upwards (happiness and excitement). These sensations are the result of musical devices as well as the sonic qualities of the music in relation to the preceding isotopies. The theme of a victory of a rebellious force over an established order can, of course, be gleaned from the music simply by listening to it actively (if not, it would not be the narrative told by the music), but if one wishes to translate the song, describing the music's narrative so explicitly may help focus on the song's essence, develop a translation strategy, and find fitting translation solutions.

Musical narrative interacts with lyrical narrative in important ways. The music may illustrate the lyrics; it may expand upon it or enrich the lyrics' context; or it may contradict the lyrics, signifying irony or disingenuousness (Kaindl 2005; Tråvén 2005). On a general level, the music of “Let it go” follows the narrative of the lyrics closely. Like the music, the lyrics express, first, sadness (e.g. “The wind is howling like this swirling storm inside”), then a focus on Elsa herself and her freedom in the chorus (“Let it go, let it go / Can't hold it back anymore”), an excitement to experiment and grow in the *probatio* and *dubitatio* (“And the fears that once controlled me / Can't get to me at all” and “My power flurries through the air into the ground”), and a stronger declaration of happiness in the final chorus (e.g. “And I'll rise like the break of dawn”). The one exception to this generally illustrative relationship is Pre-chorus 1. Musically, this isotopy represents a shift away from sadness and towards happiness, whereas lyrically, Elsa repeats her father's advice to suppress her feelings. It is not until Chorus 1

that the lyrics express the shift towards freedom, introduced by the last line of Pre-chorus 1, “Well now they know”, which gives way to the line “Let it go, let it go”. This disjunctive nature of the relationship between the lyrics and the music in Pre-chorus 1 evokes a sense of irony or sarcasm: Elsa does not truly believe her father’s advice anymore (i.e. “Conceal, don’t feel / Don’t let them know”). In this case, the music and the lyrics complement each other in less obvious ways than simply illustration – a listener still notices the relationship between the music and the lyrics, however unconsciously. This implies that the music’s narrative is as important as the lyrics and formal musical constraints, such as rhythm and rhyme, when translating songs or analysing song translations.

To make use of this analysis on a very practical level, when creating or analysing a translated version of “Let it go”, the song translator or scholar may ask themselves various questions based on these findings. For example, do the translated lyrics of Pre-chorus 1 contrast the meaning of the music effectively? Is the language of Conclusions 1 and 2 concise and simple enough to fully express the intensity created by the musical markedness of those parts? Does the translation effectively retain the structure of a victory of a rebellion over an established order as expressed by the music (and illustratively complemented by the ST lyrics)? Questions of this nature – i.e. questions that explicitly establish a connection between the translated lyrics of a song and the meaning of that song’s music – can help translators create more effective translations and achieve more positive translation processes, and help translation scholars investigate translated music in more detail.

However, it is often not practical (nor, arguably, desirable) for translators to conduct as extensive an analysis of musical narrative as is presented here. Further research should be conducted on how to design a practical model of musical narrative analysis that can be useful for song translators specifically. In addition, the relationship between musical narrative and lyrical narrative deserves more academic attention: how can this relationship be conceptualised most effectively, and how can translators and scholars use it more effectively in their respective fields? Tråvén (2005) addresses the matter of translation already in a Baroque context, which can serve as a useful starting point for further research. This study presents an initial foray into the matter of musical narrative for translation purposes, with the aim of inspiring more research into animated musical film translation, and expands upon the currently common view among audiovisual and song translation scholars that music presents only constraints. As has hopefully become clear, the presence of music does not merely pose constraints, but also offers tools for the animated film song translator and translation scholar to focus their translation and research on specific elements of the song to be translated or of the translated song.

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Appendix 1. Lyrical analysis of “Let it go”

Music and lyrics: Kirsten Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez.

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Line	Lyrics	Meaning and narrative
Introduction		
Verse 1 (<i>Narratio</i>)		
1	The snow glows white on the mountain tonight	present tense (direct, confrontational), little line length coherence (little musicality), monosyllabic words signal uncomplicated emotions (sorrow), cold/snow as isolation/loneliness
2	Not a footprint to be seen	rhyme (internal and between lines): musicality
3	A kingdom of isolation	the kingdom is a metaphor for herself; short lines and end-rhyme (musicality)
4	And it looks like I'm the queen	
5	The wind is howling like this swirling storm inside	expanded metaphor (wind as emotions); multisyllabic words (complex emotions), continuous mood (immediacy, forceful), rhyme with l1
6	Couldn't keep it in	expanded metaphor (Elsa creates wind, merging of her & mountain); short lines and end-rhyme; reference to earlier events (her magical outburst at the palace)
7	Heaven knows I've tried	
Pre-Chorus 1		
8	Don't let them in	strict line length (much shorter) & great rhyme (more musicality), monosyllabic words (what's the emotion?); repetition of what Elsa's dad said to her; the object is only implied, not explicitised (fearful, scandalous); reference to female oppression (broken in l14)
9	Don't let them see	
10	Be the good girl	
11	You always have to be	
12	Conceal don't feel	
13	Don't let them know	
14	Well now they know	

Line	Lyrics	Meaning and narrative	
Chorus 1.1			
15	Let it go Let it go	short utterances (creates anticipation/energy), monosyllabic (joy), powers vs others' expectations	
16	Can't hold it back anymore	varying line length (complex), negative verb (inability), responds to powers	
17	Let it go Let it go	repetition (musical, stresses the importance)	
18	Turn away and slam the door	door as metaphor for shutting people out, isolation, responds to others' expectations	
Chorus 1.2			
19	I don't care	mirror l15/17 in form, expand content (self vs other)	
20	What they're going to say		
21	Let the storm rage on	storm as euphemism for her powers (estranging)	
Conclusion 1			
22	The cold never bothered me anyway	the cold as isolation; not living in a patriarchal society	
Verse 2 (Probatio)			
23	It's funny how some distance	distance as happiness, expansion of environment as Elsa (physical = mental)	uneven line length & rhythm, little rhyme (un-musical)
24	Makes everything seem small		
25	And the fears that once controlled me	direct explanation/repetition of l23/24, reaffirmation	
26	Can't get to me at all		
Pre-Chorus 2			
27	It's time to see what I can do	strong verbs (forceful), rhythmical (certainty), focus inward rather than outward, contrast to l23–26	
28	To test the limits and break through		
29	No right no wrong no rules for me	internal repetition, monosyllabic, sentence fragments, simple and ecstatic, building up to l30	
30	I'm free	shortest line, rhyme, monosyllabic (pure joy), a peak	

Line	Lyrics	Meaning and narrative
Chorus 2.1		
31	Let it go Let it go	return to l15/17, stresses importance even more
32	I'm one with the wind and sky	uneven line length w/ l34 (unmusical), but there's rhythm; reaffirm metaphor of the mountain as Elsa
33	Let it go Let it go	more repetition, importance & musicality
34	You'll never see me cry	shockingly directly addressed, direct language, uneven line length (unmusical), rhyme (musical), stands out
Chorus 2.2		
35	Here I stand	again mirror l31/33 in form and content, expand content (away vs stay)
36	And here I'll stay	
37	Let the storm rage on	storm as her powers (estranging because metonymous; affirmation of the environment as Elsa)
Bridge Introduction		
Bridge 1 (<i>Dubitatio</i>)		
38	My power flurries through the air into the ground	many strong verbs (forceful), long lines (no anticipation, stream of consciousness); separation of powers and environment (no estrangement of the euphemism, growth of self-awareness); full merging of Elsa and her powers (before: separation of mountain and sky)
39	My soul is spiralling in frozen fractals all around	
Bridge 2		
40	And one thought crystallises like an icy blast	
Bridge Finale		
41	I'm never going back	short line (shocking), not rhythmical, no rhyme; strong decision, expressed directly/bluntly
42	The past is in the past	rhyme w/ l40, heavy repetition, restart the rhythm; expansion of l41/18 (affirmation)

Line	Lyrics	Meaning and narrative
Chorus 3.1 (<i>Peroratio</i>)		
43	Let it go Let it go	repetition of l31/33 but different load (restrictions to powers vs others' expectations)
44	And I'll rise like the break of dawn	uneven line length w/ l46 (unmusical), but repeated rhythmical unmusicality from l32/34; bigger metaphor of nature (not just mountain, but entire dawn)
45	Let it go Let it go	repetition, simplicity, importance
46	That perfect girl is gone	contrasting very direct line (mirrors l34): inward vs outward
Chorus 3.2		
47	Here I stand	rhythmically mirrors l43/45, expand content (away vs stay), daylight as a metaphor for clarity/happiness
48	In the light of day	
49	Let the storm rage on	storm as her powers (reaffirming her growth, since she and her powers are now one, and her happiness with her powers, as there is daylight in the storm)
Conclusion 2		
50	The cold never bothered me anyway	the cold as isolation; not living in a patriarchal society

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The marriage of modes: Singable opera translation

ABSTRACT

The marriage of modes: Singable opera translation

Despite the increase in scholarly articles and publications that focus on singable translations of vocal music texts, few tackle the relationships and interplay between the two main semiotic systems of words and music, nor how they may or may not be preserved in translation. The translator's understanding of how meaning arises across semiotic resources, especially between music and words, is equally as important a criterion for decision making when translating a vocal music text as sense, naturalness, singability, rhythm and rhyme and deserves as much attention as any staging demands or the diverse requirements of cultural transfer. By means of demonstration, using examples from a translation of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* by Jeremy Sams, this study explores an approach to singable opera translation that focuses on the stylistic decisions of the composer when marrying verbal and non-verbal semiotic modes and how the translator preserves or alters their relationship, which in turn may affect their interpretation, especially by singers.

Keywords: multimodality, intersemiosis, Mozart, Jeremy Sams, opera

1. Introduction

In the field of song translation studies, whose focus includes the singable translation of vocal music texts, most of the discussion about the contribution that music makes to translation decisions has largely been restricted to practical concerns that the combination of music and text raise, such as their prosodic and phonetic compatibility (see Apter/ Herman 2016; Low 2017). The interplay between musical and verbal meaning has had far less attention. Translators of vocal music of all types cannot ignore the undeniably exigent factors of, for example, fitting new words to the rhythms of existing music, retaining rhymes

(perhaps), and ensuring the new words can be sung on the notes on which they are placed. However, I propose that neither can they ignore the “interaction of meanings across different semiotic instantiations” (O’Halloran 2006: 4), nor how these different semiotic resources or modes “semantically complement each other to produce a single textual phenomenon” (Royce 1998: 26). I suggest that this intersemiosis, i.e. the relationship between textual and musical semiotic systems that creates meaning through their integration, might be treated as a primary concern of the translator in addition to any *skopos*, brief, cultural exigencies, staging requirements and so on. Whether singers are performing an art song, opera or a popular song, their aim is to communicate with their audience and much of what they communicate is based on their interpretation of the combination of words and music. A translation meant for performance may have words that perfectly match the prosody of the source text (ST) and vowels that are perfectly suited to the pitch on which they are set, but if it ignores the musical meaning, it may negatively affect the singer’s interpretation. This may subsequently be detrimental to the listener’s reception, especially if the translator’s combination of verbal and musical meanings is contradictory or confusing. In this study, I propose an approach to vocal music translation that puts intersemiosis, the semiotic interplay between musical and verbal meaning, at its centre. I suggest it is particularly applicable to the translation of vocal music based on texts that existed in their own right before the music was composed such as art song¹, oratorio and opera libretti, in conjunction with any other theoretical model or methodology that may be appropriate, such as those concerned with social or cultural matters.

When discussing the contribution that music makes to meaning in a vocal music text such as opera, the focus of this study, the translator is forced to take analytical methods from other disciplines because there are “hardly any translation-relevant analysis models [...] for non-verbal modes” (Kaindl 2013: 265). Therefore, the theoretical framework for the translation approach proposed in this study takes its lead from multimodal stylistics, where literary stylistics and multimodal discourse analysis are combined to examine the “communicative correlations between semiotic resources” (Kaindl 2013: 265). Literary stylistics addresses the aesthetic use of language and the ways in which meaning is created by linguistic means. Multimodal stylistics embraces meaning which is created by other semiotic systems. Based on Halliday’s social semiotic account of communication, this means looking at how modes, such as music, articulate ideas (ideational), construe the attitude of the composer or protagonist towards the content (interpersonal) and create discursive flow (textual) (Halliday/ Matthiessen 2014: 29–30). This approach demands an understanding not only of

1] Also called “classical songs”. Songs where an existing poem or piece of prose is set to music.

the contribution that non-verbal semiotics make to the whole but also of how the semiotic distribution across resources creates meaning. In the case of vocal music, it is not enough to consider the “tautological duplication of the spoken message”² (Kaindl 1995: 114) in the corresponding music, which is often doing so much more such as augmenting, explaining, emphasising, or contradicting the meaning of the words. The combination of words and music, that has been designed (in most cases by the composer) to have a particular effect on the listener, requires particular attention be paid to their interdependence and the effects of the word-music relationship. A musically conscious translation approach that respects the composer’s design furnishes the singer with the best material for interpretation, which in turn produces a more satisfying performance for the audience (Smith/ Chipman 2007: 115–116).

The multimodal stylistic approach that is discussed here is inevitably a multi-disciplinary one, and whilst most translation scholars might be comfortable dealing with written texts, they may struggle with other modes, such as music. As Susam-Sarajeva (2008: 189–190) puts it “few [...] can effectively deal with meanings derived not only from text, but also from melody, pitch, duration, loudness, timbre, dynamics, rhythm, tempo, expression, harmony, pause, stress or articulation in music”. Yet, according to Low (2013: 78), the translator of “the text of a musical work [...] should in fact be able to understand the music setting”.

In the case of opera translation, the list of translators who have worked for the English National Opera (ENO), which is the largest and most important company performing opera in English in the UK, suggests most UK-based translators have or had a musical background. On its website³, twelve out of the seventeen translators featured, such as Andrew Porter, Amanda Holden and Jeremy Sams were or are musicians. The opera translator also needs familiarity and expertise in performative and linguistic modes, but the fact that so many have musical expertise highlights the importance of the mode of music to the act of vocal music translation.

In this study, I have sought to explain personal and general interpretations of musical meaning by looking at the forms and structures of music. In so doing I have used the language of music theory just as I use the language of literary theory when discussing the verse of the libretto. I have given explanations of the technical terms in the footnotes; however, the interpretation of the musical features and how they relate to verbal meaning does not rely on an understanding of musical theory and any semantic interpretation will be clear within the context of the discussion.

2| Original German: “[...] die tautologische Verdoppelung der sprachlichen Aussage [...]”
3| <https://www.eno.org/news/roles/translator/> (accessed: 18.04.2024).

After a brief exploration of multimodal stylistics and musical semiosis, I discuss the multimodal stylistic approach as applied to a singable translation of three arias from the libretto of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera *Le nozze di Figaro* ('The marriage of Figaro') K. 492 (2001) as translated by Jeremy Sams (2004). I focus on how the mode of music, through its meaning-making resources and the composer's stylistic choices, shares the semiotic 'work' with the text of the libretto and how the translator might think about approaching the text to preserve the marriage between words and music made by the composer.

2. Multimodal stylistics

In literature, style refers to how authors express meaning through the structure of their texts. Words are not selected for meaning alone but for how they relate to others in the syntagmatic axis, the axis of combination. By "projecting the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination" (Jakobson 1960/1981: 27), the author organises words for a more precise meaning than they might have in isolation. The same can be said of the composer and musical composition. The key word is 'organises'. The stylistic choices, evident in each individual mode as well as in how they are combined to create a relationship and an effect on each other, influence the perception of the whole. These intersemiotic relationships can be described as the result of contextualising relations and tend to function primarily through modal convergence (co-contextualisation) or divergence (re-contextualisation) (O'Halloran 2006: 239 onwards).

By convergence is meant relations of parallelism where the meaning of one mode seems to reflect the meaning of the other, whilst divergence is understood as relations of dissonance where the meaning of one mode seems to be at odds with or unrelated to the other (O'Halloran 2006: 239 onwards). Convergence can be thought of as a mode's "illustrating function" (Kaindl 2013: 265), where modes repeat the content or experience of another to provide emphasis, focus, elucidation, elaboration or affirmation, and like a secondary clause, change the way information is perceived. When something is foregrounded through a relationship of divergence, the result is semantic re-contextualisation that may introduce irony, sarcasm or ambivalence to what is being communicated. In opera, this modal divergence is an effective means of communication: words may say one thing but the music says another (for a fuller discussion see Wilson-deRoze 2017: 24–39). In opera, the modes of music and verse⁴ share many

4] Libretti written in prose are to be found but are less common than those written in verse. Many operas also feature recitative, similar to spoken-word theatre, and usually more like prose than verse. In traditional operas, most closed numbers (arias, duets and so on) are in verse (see Rossi/ Sindoni 2017: 73).

resources that facilitate their convergence. Prosody and rhyme are possibly the best known, but in this study, I focus on how music embodies, expresses, or symbolises meaning and constructs an intermodal relationship with stylistic features in the verse. I focus on how the composer, when combining the semiotic resources of music and verse, creates coherence (sense-continuity) and cohesion (connectedness) to point the reader or listener to a particular meaning.

3. Musical semiosis

Since the way that music represents or symbolises meaning is not general knowledge, it is necessary to give a brief outline of how the mode of music operates semantically in conjunction with verse. Although musical semiosis is a vast and complex field of study, in which there seems to be no consensus, I have identified certain useful concepts to explain how the language of music is used to either converge with or contradict the verse, both in terms of form and meaning. These concepts have been derived from the work of musicologists and music semioticians, including Cooke (1959/1990), Jiránek (1980), Monelle (2010), Tarasti (2012) and Schlenker (2019).

To create meaning, music has resources similar to those of verse related to duration (rhythm, tempo), intensity (dynamics), colour (timbre) and pitch (intervallic relationships, tonality). The individual elements combine to form larger semantic units according to various conventions, because, like language, music has its own distinct grammar, despite all its stylistic heterogeneity. The “semantic possibilities of accentual hierarchies, intervallic tensions and tonal relationships are examined” (Wilson-deRoze 2020: 254) in this study to explore how in their convergence with verse, Mozart’s musical language contributes to textual meaning, going beyond iteration to functioning as a linguistic sub-clause that emphasises, contradicts, undermines or adds meaning not available in the words alone. I limit my discussion to two important ways in which the language of music converges with or diverges from the verse to create meaning; the first way is through imitation, often referred to as word-painting or pictorialisation, and the second way is through its own musical lexis, conventionalised musical patterns that have become culturally embedded with a specific meaning.

Imitation in music can be discerned when its meaning is derived from the similarity between musical structure and external reality (Jiránek 1980: 194), so that through the succession of notes, temporal patterning and volume, music orients the listener in space and time through a synaesthetic process. Thus, musical imitation can be said to rely on “inferences from normal (non-musical) auditory cognition”, so that “louder sounds are associated either with objects that have more energy, or with objects that are closer to the perceiver” (Schlenker 2019: 3). Through its “analogue code characteristics” (Stöckl 2004: 17), it can

also be made to resemble what it signifies: ascending note patterns can mean ascent, high pitch imitates lightness, low pitch, depth and darkness. The most easily recognizable form of imitation is often called pictorialisation and has been ubiquitous from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary popular songs. Some composers, especially those of the Baroque era (Bach, Handel), painted individual words, whilst others pictorialised the scene, so that whilst a musically imitated shout will be recognised as such, pictorialising the whole scene can indicate whether it is a shout of joy or pain, who is shouting to whom, where the shout is taking place and so on. Psychological or emotional states expressed metaphorically in bodily gesture and movement can also be imitated by melody, harmony, tonality and metre to produce a musical “equivalent of embodied gesture” (Hatten 2004: 132). A pattern of notes, in other words, can “have the same character as a bodily movement” (Budd 2002: 46), so that temporal elements of musical succession can be experienced as physical motion. For example, sadness and happiness are understood through vertical movement: sadness is down and happiness is up (Lakoff/ Johnson 1980: 462). Therefore, music is heard as happy if it is upward moving, in major keys⁵, high in the vocal range or at high volume, whilst sadness is expressed when the music is downward moving, in minor keys, has a slow tempo and soft timbre. Music is not perceived note by note but as a holistic relationship of notes that like an image can also be immediately understood when its signs resemble those from life and nature. In other words, when a mode’s sign qualities are iconic or indexical, it provides immediate sensory input producing an immediacy of meaning (Stöckl 2004: 17).

The second way in which music can converge with the words is through its own musical lexis where stable musical forms, such as an interval⁶ or chord⁷, have evolved over generations and through continuous usage to take on meaning in a symbolic sense and become part of a store of “codified, pre-modalized [...] ideas [...] and topics” (Tarasti 2012: 21). Examples of such fixed “lexical units” (Monelle 2010: 67) are the *pianto*, a descending minor second signifying weeping, and the *gradatio*, a steady and gradual increase in volume and rise in pitch indicating growing intensity. In the mid twentieth century, Deryck Cooke (1959/1990: 51 onwards) catalogued a vocabulary of unconsciously handed down “elements of musical heritage” based on pitch-tensions (intervals), time-tensions (rhythmic accent and note duration) and volume, in which, for

5] In Western music, the key of a piece of music refers to the main notes, scales (sequences of set combinations of pitches and intervals) and chords from which it is built. There are twenty-four different keys possible. Twelve are “major” and twelve are “minor”. The difference between them is a function of the space, or interval, between the notes.

6] A difference in pitch between two sounds.

7] A group of three or more notes played simultaneously.

example, an ascending major triad⁸ (1–3–5) expresses pleasure whilst its minor counterpart expresses grief. Although Cooke has been criticised for equating unstable, context-dependent musical units with the arbitrary signs of words and of limiting musical meaning to the communication of emotions (Davies 1994: 26), his argument that certain meanings have been conferred on certain sound patterns is compelling. A somewhat older musical lexis, also handed down over time, is tonality. Not only do harmonic relationships and the tensions between different keys serve an expressive function, exploiting their affective properties, but through their consistent association with specific themes, objects, events, people, places and so on, they become “tonal lexemes” (Petty 2005: 2). Although the idea of attributing emotions and moods to music goes back to ancient Greek modes⁹, it was only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the affective characteristics attributed to each key, in Western musical tradition, were written down and published, culminating in Schubart’s (1806: 377 onwards) definitive listings. Although the semiotic link between key and affect has all but disappeared for the average contemporary listener, for Mozart the “extra-musical association” (Bribitzer-Stull 2015: 197) would have been integral to his meaning. The translator is therefore obliged to pay it some attention. In what follows, I explore how musical imitation and lexis reiterate, emphasise, or supplement the verse, or through divergence, contradict it (for a wider exposition of this see Wilson-deRoze 2017: 85 onwards).

4. Background: libretto and translation

Mozart (1756–1791) composed *Le nozze di Figaro*, hereafter referred to as *Figaro*, in just six weeks in 1786 using an Italian libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte. It is an *opera buffa* (comic opera) in four acts based on a stage comedy by Pierre Beaumarchais called *La folle journée, ou le mariage de Figaro* (1784). The play had caused a sensation because its subject matter dealt with servants rising up and outwitting their masters. As a consequence, it was banned in Vienna and Da Ponte had to dispense with the play’s most provocative meaning in order to obtain permission from the Emperor to use it. The opera takes place within a single day in Spain in the palace of Count Almaviva. He plans to seduce the soon-to-be-wife (Susanna) of his servant Figaro and exercise the ancient feudal right of masters: to spend the wedding night with any newly married servant girl. However, Figaro, Susanna and the Countess Almaviva devise a plan to prevent his doing so. After many twists and turns of the plot, they succeed. The

8| The most common chords are triads, which are built by adding the third and fifth notes in the scale above a starting note.

9| The term modes in music describes the scales, which dominated European music for over 1,000 years up until 1500: Ionian, Dorian.

Count has his just punishment and asks his wife to forgive him, Figaro marries Susanna, and there is a happy ending.

I draw my examples from three arias. “Voi che sapete”¹⁰ (“You who know”) is sung in Act II by Cherubino, the Count’s pageboy (played by a female singer, a mezzo-soprano and often referred to as a “pants role”), who is infatuated with the Countess. He has composed this song especially for her and in it he asks if what he is feeling is really love. “Dove sono” (“Where are they”) is sung by the heart-broken Countess Almaviva (soprano) in Act III when she laments her husband’s philandering and infidelity. “Deh vieni” (“O, come”) is sung by Susanna in Act IV when she is disguised as the Countess in order to trick the Count and expose his infidelity. Figaro is hiding nearby, hoping to surprise her and catch her in the act of being unfaithful to him, not realising she is only pretending to seduce the Count. However, Susanna knows he is there and whilst she ostensibly sings the serenade to seduce the Count, she uses the aria simultaneously to arouse Figaro’s jealousy and to profess her love for him.

The English translation, from which the examples are taken, is *Figaro’s wedding* by Jeremy Sams (1992). A British theatre director, composer and lyricist, Sams (born 1959), has translated over twenty operas. The date of the translation is unclear but according to a reference made by Newmark (1998: 76), it seems to have been completed by 1992. An article on the Scottish Opera website¹¹ indicates that the translation was first performed in 1995 by Scottish Opera. The ENO in London appears to have first performed it in 2001 and most recently in 2020. It is also widely used by festival opera companies and amateur groups. The translation is accessible in the insert notes of the Chandos Records¹² CD recording of the opera made in 2004. A vocal score with Sams’ translation can be purchased or hired from Josef Weinberger Ltd.

Sams described his translation aim as capturing the “flavour and feel” of the original work and said, “I really want to imagine a text which arrives on Mozart’s doorstep in English. He sets it to music and the result is what we hear” (Constantine 2019: 288). This study is not intended as a critique of Sams’ translation. It is used only to demonstrate the translation approach recommended here. The examples have been chosen to illustrate the relationships between verbal and musical meaning found in the original score and how Sams’ translation interprets them. They allow me to discuss how a translator might best exploit the potential for meaning in the music. I offer some of my own translations to demonstrate alternative ways in which a translator might address the stylistic choices made by Mozart. In the examples (Figures 1–12, pp. 165–177) below, I show the

10| Operatic arias are usually known by their first few words.

11| <https://www.operascotland.org> (accessed: 22.04.2024).

12| Libretto available to view at <https://www.chandos.net/chanimages/Booklets/CH3113.pdf>.

vocal line, sometimes with the piano reduction of the orchestral score¹³. In each case, the top line of lyrics is from Da Ponte's Italian libretto, the second line is Sams' English translation and the third line is my own translation.

5. Translating *Figaro*: modal convergence and divergence

5.1. Musical imitation: convergence

In "Dove sono", Mozart employs a number of stylistic musical elements that produce a sonic imitation of the psychological state of the Countess Almaviva as she remembers her husband's love and then his infidelity. At the start of the aria, Mozart sets the first three lines in the musical key of C major, a key that his audience would have recognised as one that communicates sweetness and innocence (Schubart 1806: 377). He even marks the dynamic as *dolce* (i.e. sweet). However, the verse and music of the fourth line are emotionally quite different.

As the Countess sings the words "di quel labbro menzonger?" ('of/from those lips lying') the melody (see Figure 1, p. 165), which ascends in pitch overall, alternates small scalar descents with leaps that span four notes (intervals of a fourth)¹⁴ before ending on an interrupted cadence¹⁵, which like a comma in a sentence indicates that there is more to come that might shed light on what has gone before. The dotted rhythm gives a sense of drive, of acceleration, to the meaning of the words. The rhythm, ascending pitches, continuous small note values and leaping fourths combined with the words, "labbro menzonger" ('lying lips'), seem to musically pictorialise the Countess's rising anguish, anger and despair. When the line is repeated, this anger is further underlined by the disturbing dissonant sound on the second beat of the third bar (see Figure 1) provided by a diminished fifth chord¹⁶, also known as a tritone. This chord has an unstable sound, being neither major nor minor and its ambiguity is often used to heighten emotion. Its tonal tensions communicate restlessness and unease, pain and sorrow, as well as evil and insanity (see Cooke 1959/1990: 84 onwards). The chord ominously colours the Countess's melodic line foregrounding the psychology of someone who is deeply troubled.

13| Copied by myself from the Dover score using a notation application available from Muscores.org.

14| The fourth is the musical interval between two notes/pitches located at a distance of two tones and one half tone from each other.

15| Cadences provide full or partial closure to a musical phrase.

16| A diminished chord has three notes stacked in minor third intervals (a gap of three semitones, twice). It is often described as sounding dissonant, unstable and tense.

Table 1: Comparison of the translations of the first quatrain in “Dove sono”

Source text	Word-for-word translation
Dove sono i bei momenti di dolcezza e di <i>piacer</i> , dove andaro i giuramenti di quel labbro <i>menzogner</i> ?	Where are the beautiful moments of sweetness and of pleasure, where did go the promises of those lips lying?
Translation by Sams	Translation by the author
I remember his love so tender, those sweet lies I <i>longed to hear</i> . Yes, he loved me, but, ah, how quickly so much love can <i>disappear</i> .	Where does love go, those tender moments, full of sweetness and <i>loving sighs</i> , where has love gone and all his promises, were his kisses <i>filled with lies</i> ?

Sams does not translate the line “di quel labbro menzonger” so much as paraphrase it: “so much love can disappear” (see Table 1). This describes the Count’s infidelity in less potent terms than the original verse. The emotional response to infidelity contained in the words “labbro menzonger” (‘of/from those lips lying’) seems far stronger than one that describes love as having disappeared.

DIMINISHED
5TH

di quel lab - bro men - zo - gner, di quel
so much love can dis - ap - pear, so much
were his kis - ses filled with lies? Were his

lab - bro men - zo - gner
love can dis - ap - pear
kis - ses filled with lies?

Figure 1: Musical imitation in the line “di quel labbro menzonger?”, bars 13–18

What I hear in the music is the accusatory venom associated with “labbro men-zogner”, alluding to the Count’s infidelity. The tension in the music seems less well matched to the idea of love disappearing. The co-contextualising relationship between the verbal and musical modes could be said to have been lost and the contrast between the nostalgia of past love and the anguish of feeling betrayed is not as marked as in the original score. Since in my translation strategy the priority was to preserve the relationship between verbal and musical meaning (albeit they are interpretations), I sought words that I thought would provide the contrast in emotions and capture the heightened emotion of the Countess thinking about her husband’s infidelity: “kisses filled with lies” is juxtaposed with “loving sighs” (see bars 5–8).

Musical imitation uses pitch, volume, and tempo to mimic sounds and movements from nature and life such as laughter, crying, thunder and so on. This kind of imitation can be heard in “Deh vieni” (bars 21–33), when Susanna describes the sounds and smells of nature in her alluring serenade, sung ostensibly to the Count in order to lure him into a secret assignation but also directed at Figaro to torment him for doubting her fidelity and to make him jealous. The ambiguity in this aria and this part of the drama is heard in Mozart’s playful, meandering melodic shapes, with very few leaps of any kind, and the melismatic¹⁷ word setting, which rhythmically imitates the movement of the murmuring brook and whispering breezes. Like the words of the verse, the music presents to the ear a joyful scene. The regular rhythm and long phrases express happy ideas. At the same time, however, there are musical elements, which I believe provide a different story, one of deception, which lies at the heart of the opera and this aria in particular. The Count deceives the Countess, Figaro deceives the Count and Susanna deceives Figaro in order to teach him and the Count a lesson.

Mozart foregrounds this idea of deception through musical imitation using two distinct musical features, an *arpeggio*¹⁸ and an *appoggiatura*¹⁹. Firstly, the word “scherza” (‘play/jest/frolic’) is set to the sound pattern and rhythm of a descending arpeggio. Descending arpeggios in a major key have tended over time and through use to convey a sense of joy (Cooke 1959/1990: 30) and here, it pictorialises in music the lightness and playfulness of the breeze (“l’aura”). Secondly, the line “qui ridono i fioretti” (‘here laugh the little flowers’) is set such that the *appoggiatura* provides an onomatopoeic imitation of the laughing flowers. It is an embellishment that may even be interpreted as provocative, like a giggle between lovers.

17| A melisma consists of one syllable being sung to a group of notes.

18| A type of broken chord, in which the notes are individually sounded in a progressive rising or descending order.

19| Ornamental note(s) that temporarily displace then subsequently resolve into a main note.

arpeggio

Qui mor - mor - a il ru - scel, qui scher - za l'au - ra,
 Ca - res - sing bree - zes make the tree tops shi - ver.
 The mur - mur of the brook, the play - ful bree - zes,

che col dol - ce su - surro il cor ri - stau - ra; qui
 Night is wis - per - ing soft - ly to the ri - ver. A
 each with sweet - est of wis - pers gent - ly pleas - es. The

appoggiatura

ri - do no i fio - ret - ti è l'er - be è fre - sca,
 breath - less hush des - cends on all cre - a - tion;
 lit - tle flow - ers laugh the grass is cool - ing,

ai pia - ce - ri d' - mor qui tut - to a - de - sca.
 na - ture tre - mbles in rapt an - ti - ci - pa - tion.
 there the plea - sures of love are all al - lu - ring.

Figure 2: Musical imitation in “Deh vieni”, bars 21–33

The *appoggiatura*, like a knowing wink, is a subtext that suggests a more erotic encounter and thereby alludes to the deception being played out before the Count to dupe Figaro. It is as if Susanna is laughing as she takes her revenge on Figaro. Just after this, Mozart extends the subtext through the chromatic²⁰ turn on “fresca” (‘freshness’) not only emphasising the word, but also tantalisingly and somewhat erotically suggesting something more than the innocent cool freshness of the grass awaits the Count. These features in the music imitate, I believe, the sense of the words and provide a subtext that alerts the listener to the subterfuge being played out by Susanna. Her words and the music are not simply describing a woodland setting.

Sams’ translation certainly seems to capture the spirit of the original text and his words remain cohesive with the graceful melody, which can be said to be as imitative of breezes as much as of a rustling stream. However, there is no hint of the subtext, which I have suggested is provided by the music. Since this type of intersemiosis is central to my translation approach, I felt compelled to seek words whose meaning would be enhanced by the inferences of the subtext in the music, as I have interpreted them above. The wave-like flourish of the

20| A chromatic note is one that does not fit within the given key and introduces tension.

descending *arpeggio* underlining “scherza” (‘play/jest/frolic’) seemed to me to demand a word with a similar meaning in English. Constrained by the prosody of the music, I replaced Da Ponte’s verbal phrases with nominal ones in order to accommodate the adjective “playful” on the *arpeggio*. Since the *appoggiatura* works in such a way so as to imitate the little flowers laughing and not to pictorialise just one single word, I felt I could reformulate the phrase and set the word “laugh” on the *appoggiatura* to preserve the effect of the decoration in an almost onomatopoeic way. If “translation is a process of gain and loss” (Apter/ Herman 2016: 15), then the loss in my translation is rhyme. Unlike Sams, who created perfect rhymes for both couplets, my second couplet has the imperfect rhyme words “cooling – alluring”. It is a question of balancing constraints and making choices. Some constraints are in the text and music; some are made by the translator. My priorities became constraints that I had to balance with the constraints of musical prosody and English grammar and vocabulary.

Music can imitate feelings by imitating a character’s speech intonation, if words were spoken not sung. The paralinguistic use of pitch for emotional expression can be mimetically reproduced in the music so that the meaning and emotions of the words are made available to the listener with greater immediacy (Jiránek 1980: 195), such as can be seen in “Voi che sapete” (see Figure 3, pp. 167–168).

non so co- s'è; sospiro ge- mo senza vo- ler, palpito e tre- mo senza sa-

per; non trovo pa- ce not- te né di, ma pur mi pin- ce lan- guir co-

Edim7



Figure 3: “Voi che sapete” piano reduction highlighting the dissonant Edim7 chord

In “Voi che sapete”, as Cherubino expresses his growing confusion and describes the accompanying physical sensations of trembling and shaking, the vocal line becomes quick, repetitive and fragmented. The music rises in pitch as Cherubino acknowledges that the physical symptoms of desire, which he has claimed are unsought and unwanted, are, in fact, a source of pleasure to him.

Da Ponte’s verse uses the present active indicative of a string of verbs to foreground Cherubino’s rising emotions: “sospiro” (‘sigh’), “gemo” (‘groan’), “palpito” (‘throb’), “tremo” (‘tremble’), and “non trovo” (‘I don’t find’). The mounting physical actions are mirrored in the rhythm of short repeated notes and the climbing chromaticism²¹, after which a release from the tension through a chromatic descent might be described as the music enacting “erotic climax and collapse” (Kramer 2016: 171).

Figure 4: Musical imitation in “Voi che sapete”, bars 52–61

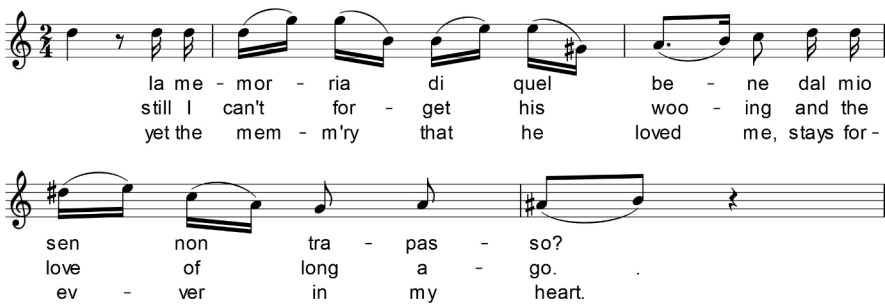
21] A compositional technique mixing diatonic pitches with pitches of the chromatic scale. Within each octave, diatonic music uses only seven different notes, rather than the twelve available on a standard piano keyboard. Music is chromatic when it uses more than just these seven notes.

These parallelisms between verse and music have not been preserved by Sams. The rising tension is instead reproduced in Sams' translation through rhyme. The repeated sounds successfully communicate Cherubino's emotional turmoil. In my translation, I prioritised preserving the repetition of the verbs because I felt that this would make Cherubino's emotions visceral and that the singer's interpretation would be helped by preserving their convergence with the musical repetition of pitch and rhythm.

Imitation of a different kind can be heard at the end of the section just discussed, where in the final two bars the descending chromatic progression imitates the bodily gesture of slumping or giving way to sadness and thus the music imitates a physical gesture that reveals Cherubino's suffering, feigned or not. This is music showing things acoustically, working at a metaphoric level. The musical succession of pitch and tempo can be experienced as physical motion. Sams' translation of "languir così" as "tinged with delight" invites questions since its meaning is the opposite of the ST: "languir" means 'suffer', Sams' translation contradicts the doom-laden stepwise chromatic descent of the notes and the dissonance created by the dark E diminished seventh chord²² (see Figure 3), often used to signal pain (Hatten 2004: 15; Tarasti 2012: 209).

5.2. Musical imitation: divergence

An example of musical foregrounding through divergence can be found in "Dove sono", where Mozart uses wide intervals, both major and minor, ascending and descending, to imitate the turmoil of the Countess's feelings. Just as in spoken language the marked raising and lowering of the voice usually expresses strong emotions, so it is with musical intervals. However, here the rise and fall contradicts the Countess's gentle words that tell of the love that she remembers her husband once had for her.



la me - mor - ria di quel be - ne dal mio
still I can't for - get his woo - ing and the
yet the mem - m'ry that he loved me, stays for -

sen non tra - pas - so?
love of long a - go.
ev - ver in my heart.

Figure 5: Modal divergence in "Dove sono", bars 27–31

22| A seventh chord is composed of a three note chord (triad) and an additional note forming the interval of a seventh above the chord's lowest note. It is used by composers to provide tension before a resolution.

The divergence between musical and verbal meaning seems to raise doubts about whether the Count ever loved her. Her fond memory of love is undermined by the music, for as her words speak of love, the music speaks of doubt, sadness and even anger. In the ST, memory (“la memoria”) is the subject of the phrase and it is memory that is being doubted or questioned by the wide swings in the music. In Sams’ translation, however, it is the Countess’s inability to forget that is the subject, and the turmoil of the music cannot relate to an inability to forget in the same way as it can contradict a fond memory. In Sams’ translation, the relationship between the music and the words can no longer work in the same contradictory way.

5.3. Conventionalised musical forms: convergence

Conventionalised musical forms, which have developed over time and refer to extra-musical ideas and concepts as well as emotions, are used by composers as shorthand codes to infer meaning. I limit my discussion to the expressive and associative use of tonality (keys and modulation²³), the use of pitch tensions in intervals that have a meaningful function and emotive qualities dependent on their span, and the use of melismatic word settings for iconic, indexical and symbolic purposes.

5.3.1. Tonality

Tonality is one of the most important elements of musical language available to a composer, and can convey a wealth of messages. In “Dove sono”, Mozart uses the conventionalised meaning of musical keys and their relationships to illustrate the fluctuating moods of the Countess as she vacillates between anger and love. At the beginning of the *allegro* section of the aria (bar 52) the key has returned to C major in which the aria started and Mozart presents a newly energetic Countess exclaiming with resolute hopefulness her determination to rekindle the Count’s love for her. However, a move into C’s parallel minor²⁴ in bars 55 and 56 seems to cast doubt on her intentions. The key of C minor has been associated through convention with unhappy love (Schubart 1806: 377–378), so when Mozart sets the words “nel languire amando ognor” (‘though suffering, loving always’) in C minor it seems to me he is contrasting musically the Countess’s C major hope (“la mia costanza”, ‘my constancy’) with her C minor sadness. The close relationship between the keys also serves to emphasise the close relationship between love and its loss, which lies at the heart of the opera.

23| Modulation is the process that changes the tonal centre from one key to another.

24| The minor key has the same starting note as its major version.

ALLEGRO C Major

Ah! se al - men la mia co -
 Oh, I hope my love will
 Now I know, that I still

c minor

stan - za nel lan - gui - re a - man - do og - nor,
 save me from this wil - der - ness of pain,
 love him, though I've suf - fered grief and pain,

Figure 6: Key relationships in “Dove son”, bars 52–56

Sams’ translation and mine capture this sadness and effectively juxtaposes it with the Countess’s earlier optimism. Neither translation, largely because of the constraints of English grammar, can combine the idea of suffering and loving at the same time in just nine syllables and thus neither translation can truly replicate the relationship of musical key and text as is found in the original score.

Modulation, like key relationships, is another rich semantic resource. In “Dove son”, Mozart foregrounds the words “in pene” (‘in pain’), a subject at the heart of this aria, with a modulation from G major, traditionally used to reflect peaceful emotions of the heart (Schubart 1806: 380), to its parallel minor. G minor is traditionally considered to be a key expressing uneasiness (Schubart 1806: 380).

G Major g minor

Perché ma - i se in pian - tie in pe - ne
 But my faith was my un - do - ing
 And des - pite all my tears and my tor - ment,

Figure 7: Modulation in “Dove son”, bars 20–22

When a word falls on a modulation, its significance is especially marked and those that move from major to minor generally entail a change to a darker mood. In this example, the modulation seems to make the Countess's pain visceral as she thinks of her husband's infidelity.

Sams translates "pene" as "undoing", a word that means ruin or downfall, and describes what has happened rather than how the Countess feels. Whilst the listener can infer from the change of music to a minor key that her undoing is painful, I suggest a more direct translation, "and my torment". It may be the case that Sams chose the word "undoing" because his priority was the preservation of as much rhyming verse as possible. He produced a fully rhyming quatrain as found in the original libretto. My priorities, that led me to choose the word "torment", meant that I did not.

Table 2: Comparison of the translations by Sams and the author of the second quatrain in "Dove sono"

Source text	
Perché mai, se in pianti e in pene per me tutto si cangiò, la memoria di quel bene dal mio sen non trapassò?	
Translation by Sams	Translation by the author
But my faith was my undoing, and my joy has turned to woe; still I can't forget his wooing and the love of long ago	And despite all my tears and my torment, love is lost and torn apart; yet the mem'ry that he loved me stays forever in my heart

In this case, I believe my lack of rhyme is tolerable because the music does not foreground all the rhymes. Mozart ignored Da Ponte's *ottonario* verse form²⁵ and instead composed the music as if there were just two long lines of fifteen syllables both ending in *tronco* rhymes (where the accent falls on the last syllable of the final word): "cangiò – trapassò". These are foregrounded musically through repetitions and perfect cadences (see bars 20–36), which exert a very strong impetus to reproduce them in the translation (Apter/ Herman 2016: 188 onwards). The *piano* rhymes ("pene – bene") are not heard in the music, therefore, their loss in my translation might be considered a worthwhile sacrifice for the sake of the relationship between the word "torment" and the modulation to a minor key.

25| Four lines of alternating eight (*piano* (plain)) and seven (*tronco* (truncated)) syllables.

5.3.2. Intervallic tensions

According to Cooke, “the expressive basis of the musical language of Western Europe” consists of an “intricate system of tensional relationships between notes” (1959/1990: 40). These relationships, or intervals, have developed over time into finite entities and musical theorists have suggested all intervals have a specific meaning. Cooke, for example, describes the minor second as an expression of anguish, the minor seventh as one of mournfulness and the major third as one of pleasure (1959/1990: 78, 90, 51). In the quatrain just discussed (Table 2), the musical language of intervals seems to give expanse to the meaning of the word “tutto” (‘everything’) in the line “per me tutto si cangiò” (‘for me everything has changed’).

per me and my love is tut - to joy has lost and si can - giò, turned to woe, torn a part, per me and my love is tut - to joy has lost and si can - giò, turned to woe, torn a part.

Figure 8: Foregrounding through intervallic distance in “Dove sono”, bars 23–27

The consonance²⁶ of a downward moving perfect octave²⁷ is often used in music to emphasise grandeur and strength (Rieger 2011: 12) and can suggest great intensity of emotion. The descending motion serves as a musical analogy for concepts associated with downward movement or spatial conceptions of descent, falling, and heaviness. Here it pictorialises the despair and anguish of the Countess. The audience does not see her fall into despair, but “hears” it. It is not easy to find an English word that works with the interval in the way that “tutto” does. Sams’ translation paraphrases the ST with “turned to woe”, which reflects the downward trajectory of emotion found in the musical phrase; however, it is unfortunate that the word “joy” is so closely bound to this musical gesture that suggests despair. In my translation, which is also a paraphrase, I suggest that the word “lost”, set on the upper note of the interval, combined with “and torn apart”, are heard as a wail of lament and I hope they engender the same emotion in the singer as did the original verse.

At the beginning of “Deh vieni”, Mozart foregrounds, through the use of intervallic tensions, the repeated word “vieni” (‘come’) rather than the rhymes

26] Consonance: when two or more tones complement each other to produce a sound that is pleasant to the ear.

27] A musical interval consisting of twelve semitones and spanning eight notes of the diatonic scale (notes proper to the prevailing key without chromatic alteration).

“bella” – “t'appella” (‘lovely’ – ‘calls you’), which one might usually expect to be foregrounded. Although the meaning of the word “vieni” remains the same each time, Mozart’s intervals seem to provide a subtext that sheds a different light on each utterance, loading each with alternative meanings. His clever use of intervals gives “vieni”, when heard the second time, a meaning that undermines that of its first utterance.

PERFECT 4TH

Deh **vie** - ni non tar - dar, o gio - ia bel - la!
 Come quick - ly my be - lov - ed, I im - plore you.
 Oh come and don't de - lay my joy, my trea - sure!

DIMINISHED 4TH

vie - ni ove amo - re per go - der t'ap - pel - , - la,
 All of my be - ing is wait - ing, ach - ing for you
 Come where my love can give you eve - ry plea - sure,

Figure 9: Modal divergence in “Deh vieni”, bars 7–13

The first “vieni” is set on a rising perfect fourth interval, the sound of consonance and happiness. The word begins on the dominant²⁸ (C) and the rest of the phrase descends to the tonic²⁹ (F) through the major third. This falling phrase pattern has been shown, through use, to convey a sense of happiness, contentment or fulfilment (Cooke 1959/1990: 130). The second “vieni” introduces the aria’s first chromatic pitch in the form of F sharp, which is highlighted by its approach through a descending diminished³⁰ fourth interval. The second “vieni” phrase can be said to subvert the first in as much as Susanna’s invitation

28| In Common Practice Harmony, the 5th scale degree is called the Dominant.

29| The tonic note is the first note, or the home note, in any scale or key.

30| Diminished intervals are narrower by one semitone than perfect or minor intervals of the same interval number. They are often described as near-dissonances.

to the Count at first sounds perfectly innocent, but then sounds seductive and alluring. The music initially imitates Susanna’s innocent pretence, but the intervals point to what she is really doing, which is outwitting and tricking the Count. Sams’ translation suggests he appreciates this semantic juxtaposition, even if the happy melody of the first phrase contradicts the sense of pleading found in the words “I implore you”. For me, the impetus to exploit the subtext of the major-minor tonalities, which add to Susanna’s playfulness as she deceives the Count and Figaro, was so strong that I devised a translation, which preserved the repetition of the word “come”.

5.3.3. Melisma

Mozart uses melismatic word settings to highlight words for dramatic effect. A melisma has the effect of lengthening or expanding a word thus lending it greater emphasis and I have already discussed above the use of melisma as part of imitation where it serves both as an iconic sign (bird song may represent the presence of a bird) or an indexical one (bird song may indicate spring). However, melisma may also function in a more symbolic way because of its origin in sacred plainsong and its use in the Baroque period when melismatic word setting came to denote joy and hope (Athnos 2023: 23–24). Its use by Mozart in bars 21–48 of “Voi che sapete” is not arbitrary but accentuates meaning as it embellishes the words “provo” (‘I feel’), “bene” (‘affection’ or ‘love’) and “diletto” (‘delight’).

Quel - lo ch'io pro - vo vi - ri - di - ro,
 Can I sur - vive it, will I en - dure?
 All that I'm feel - ing, makes me am - azed,

è per me nuo - vo, ca - pir nol so.
 This is my sick - ness; is there a cure?
 my mind is reel - ing, I'm feel - ing dazed!

Figure 10: Melismatic setting of “provo” in “Voi che sapete”, bars 21–28

The melisma (bar 22) on which “provo” (‘I feel’) is set appears to emphasise the central theme of this aria; Cherubino’s feelings, which he does not understand, but thinks may be love. The melisma expands the first syllable of “provo” both temporally and semantically, giving it tremendous emphasis. The melisma can be said to serve a symbolic function (denoting joy), an iconic one (suggesting swooning) and an indexical one (swooning points to emotions being overwhelming).

Rather than translate the line, Sams writes a new one. In fact, most of his translation of this aria is far from literal. Still, Sams has taken care to ensure the words and music still relate to each other. In this instance, however, the word “survive” has no self-evident relationship to the melisma. For me, the literal translation of “provo” as ‘feeling’ preserves the correspondence between music and words.

A longer melisma of eight semi-quavers in bars 33–34 provides the word “diletto” (‘delight’) with the appropriate symbolic meaning of joy. As it rises and falls, its movement suggests delight or euphoria.

The musical score for Figure 11 is in 2/4 time. It features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature changes from F Major (one flat) to F minor (two flats). Above the vocal line, there are two brackets: the first labeled 'F Major' covers the first two measures, and the second labeled 'f minor' covers the last two measures. The lyrics are: 'ch'o - ra è di - let - to, ch'o - ra è mar - tir; / star - ting in pas - sion, end - ing in pain; / Now I'm in hea - ven, now I'm on fire,'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in both hands.

Figure 11: Melismatic setting combined with key change in “Voi che sapete”, bars 33–36

This symbolically joyous arch, set in a major key (F), is contrasted, after a quaver rest, by a darker feeling generated by the undecorated, descending scalar figure in a minor key (F). This emphasises, even exaggerates, Cherubino’s purported suffering as he sings “ch’ora è martir” (‘that now is suffering’). Sams’ translation “starting in passion, ending in pain” integrates perfectly with the music to illustrate Cherubino’s joy and pain. In my translation, “heaven” and “fire” provide a similar contrast.

The musical score for Figure 12 is in 2/4 time. It features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature changes from F minor (two flats) to G minor cadence (one flat, one sharp). Above the vocal line, there are two brackets: the first labeled 'c minor' covers the first two measures, and the second labeled 'g minor cadence' covers the last two measures. The lyrics are: 'Ri - cer - co un be - ne fuo - ri di me: / Who knows the sec - ret, who holds the key? / Will some - one love - me, will it be true?'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in both hands.

Figure 12: Key change foregrounding ambiguity in “Voi che sapete”, bars 45–48

Another four semiquaver melisma (bar 46) foregrounds the word “bene” in the phrase “Ricerco un bene fuori di me” (‘I seek affection/love outside of me’). Once again, the arching notes are symbolic of joy, but the melisma now has the additional implications that a change of tonality can contribute.

The words in the preceding eight bars (four verse lines) described Cherubino’s physical sensations of burning and freezing in A₁ major, described by Schubart (1806: 378) as the “key of the grave”. When Cherubino says he is looking for “un bene” (in this context the word could mean ‘blessing, goodness, happiness, affection’), the music changes to the dissonant key of C minor, a key associated with declarations of love and at the same time the lament of unhappy love (Schubart 1806: 377–378). What is even more noteworthy is that this is an unusual chromatic modulation (a major third away) and part of a larger pattern in the aria, in which Mozart takes the listener through numerous and complicated key changes (Carter 1987: 27). The effect is to make the music sound both playful and disoriented, reflecting Cherubino’s feelings as he is torn between his desire for love and confusion about its nature. An ambiguity of emotions is reflected in the ambiguity of the music. Sams does not directly translate the line but aptly sets the word “secret” on the melisma to describe the unknowable love of which Cherubino speaks. The minor key that is far distant from the home key suggests Cherubino is very far from finding the secret to love. My translation, which takes a more literal approach, sets the word “love” on the melisma and relies on the contradiction between the dark sound of the minor key and the symbolism of the melisma to emphasise Cherubino’s doubts about ever finding what he seeks.

5.4. Conventionalised musical forms: divergence

In “Voi che sapete”, Mozart foregrounds Cherubino’s ambivalent attitude to love by using intervallic tensions to contradict the meaning of the text (see Figure 4, p. 168). He sets the words “mi piace” (‘it pleases me’) at the climax of a musical phrase to a triumphant dotted rhythm and a rising major second interval to capture the ambivalence of Da Ponte’s verse: pleasure versus suffering. The music at “mi piace” speaks of unhappiness (Cooke 1959/1990: 59), the words of pleasure. The major second interval, despite its name, functions as a mild dissonance with a “longing quality” (Cooke 1959/1990: 79), so although the words speak of pleasure, the music undermines this emotion. The musical and verbal meanings are divergent. The effect of this divergence and the ambivalence it creates is, I believe, lost when Sams uses the word “torment” because now music and word have the same meaning. I propose that by altering the grammar and using an adverbial phrase, “delightful” could be set on these notes with the aim of preserving the ambivalence: Cherubino enjoys his suffering.

6. Conclusions

I have sought in this study to raise awareness of the relationship between verse and music, of how the composer's stylistic choices marry words to music and of how translation choices can preserve or change the semantic co-contextualisation received by one mode from another thereby potentially altering the meaning or emotional content found in the original score. One might not think this would be detrimental to the way in which the audience understands or enjoys vocal music such as opera; however, it is difficult to sing words whose meaning seems unconnected to the music. It affects the singer's interpretation, who since being a student of singing has been urged to enhance performance by fusing music and text in order to achieve meaning and to "tap into [their] reservoir of potential" (Emmons/ Thomas 1998: 198). Students of singing are advised to "assess the emotional truth" in order to convey it to the audience (Smith/ Chipman 2007: 115–116). Anything less, according to Mark Wigglesworth, former Music Director of English National Opera, supposes that singers will be content to "sing along to the music"³¹, which he says is "unlikely" given their investment in the performance. Singers of a translation require the same or similar integrity of word-tone relationships found in the original score if they are to affect the audience through their performance in a similar way as they would when singing in the original language of the libretto.

In this study, the discussion has focussed on and been limited to two main approaches to meaning in music and how they co-contextualise the verse of a libretto: imitation and conventionalized musical meaning.³² Through the imitation of gesture and speech intonation, as indicators of emotion and thought, and through the musical pictorialisation of words or phrases, musical meaning can corroborate the meaning of the verse or juxtapose it to create a multi-layered semiosis. Similarly, conventionalised musical lexis, such as tonality (key association and modulation), intervallic tension and melisma provide semiotic resources that the composer can exploit to iterate, corroborate or contradict the meaning of the verse such that the resulting word-tone intersemiosis multiplies meaning far beyond the possibilities of one mode alone. When the translator understands what the music can contribute to a translation then the wholeness of meaning available to the listener of the opera in the original language is more likely to be preserved for the listener of the opera in translation. This requires, of course, that song and opera translators be as musically adept as they are linguistically and culturally, for they are not translating from one source language but two: music and the language of the original song or opera

31| www.bachtrack.com/opinion-gained-in-translation-defence-eno-opera-in-english-policy-january-2019 (accessed: 02.05.2024).

32| For a more expansive discussion, see Wilson-deRoze 2017.

libretto. Whilst I would not go as far as to say that to “translate from such a technical language as Music requires none other than a musician” (Buhler 2017: 25), it does seem self-evident to me that some mastery of the “field to which belongs the text” (Buhler 2017: 25) is recommended. Bear in mind that the libretto of an opera or a poem that becomes a song are essentially provisional texts, which the composer translates into music and in the process whatever the music “says” about them makes them fixed in their meaning. Composers not only imitate musically the prosody of the libretto or poem’s verse, fixing it in a rigid musical system, but also fix the semantic relationship between words and music. Without understanding something of how the composer has interpreted the words in the music, the translator risks “serious mistranslations and semantic shifts, the music expressing what the text has not yet said or has already finished saying” (Buhler 2017:19). Sams is certainly a translator with extensive musical knowledge and if, in his translation, he sometimes appears to set aside the implications of word-tone intersemiosis, it may be that Sams had a different interpretation of words and music from mine and/or that our translation priorities were different. This demonstrates the complexities and challenges of translation.

One may well ask, does any of what I have recommended matter when translating vocal music today? After all, singing classical music, especially opera, in translation is quite rare. Whilst in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries opera sung in translation would have been a norm (Apter/ Herman 2016: 11–12), today the demand is very low. Since the middle of the twentieth century, singers have been able to travel around the world easily and performance in the original language of the libretto has become standard. No opera house would ask a singer to learn a role in their local language. Above all, many would argue that the introduction of surtitles (projected captions above the stage) in the 1980s made translations obsolete (Apter/ Herman 2016: 27). Yet, clearly, there remains some demand for translations that can be sung so that an opera may be heard in the vernacular. In the UK, the ENO in London continues to commission new translations and touring companies (for example, English Touring Opera), festival operas and amateur groups across the UK tend to sing translations. Another major outlet for opera in translation has been and remains the Chandos record label whose *Opera in English* series continues to release recordings made of translations.³³

Whilst the demand for opera and other classical vocal music translation may be low, I hope I have contributed some useful and practical approaches to those involved in and interested in the subject. I hope I have shown that a practical awareness of the contribution of musical meaning to translation is important

33| www.chandos.net/labels/Opera_In_English/7 (accessed: 02.05.2024).

and that I have provided some ideas for translators to use when developing their own approach to incorporating musical meaning in a translation and in so doing, may furnish the singer of their translations with the best possible material on which to base an interpretation. I cannot comment on the way in which the staging or a different socio-cultural setting might affect a translator's ability to include the semiotic contribution of the music. It would be interesting to explore a new translation made for a new production where these variables might play a significant role. Word-tone intersemiosis is only one of many considerations for a translator of a musical text, but I suggest it is indispensable. A translation may work musically, but a musically conscious focus achieves much more.

However this was not the sole purpose of this study, it is also concerned with the nature of the constraints when translating multi-semiotic phenomena. I hope this study raises awareness of how the relationship between different modes influences translation choices and decisions and that it will provoke thought and highlight the wider topic of multimodal translation and its implications amongst translators of all types of song and translators of all multimodal texts.

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Translating songs between endangered and modernized languages: The case of Ryukyuan in Okinawa, Japan

ABSTRACT

Translating songs between endangered and modernized languages:
The case of Ryukyuan in Okinawa, Japan

Examining the severely endangered languages of the Ryukyuan Archipelago from a translation studies perspective reveals that song is the only domain where translation is occurring, and that this translation has hardly been researched. This leads to more serious questions that remain understudied, such as how to translate indigenous languages and indigenous nonconformist concepts into the world's modern dominant languages or how to address all the sociolinguistic issues that accompany those decisions. A song translation studies perspective provides an insightful metric for exploring how translation is taking place in Okinawan music. This study investigates three translation projects, including an archival documentation of song translations from Ryukyuan into Japanese, English subtitles for videos, and singable cover versions of songs translated from Japanese into Ryukyuan. The problems and decisions made in these contexts are documented to foster discussion and to encourage further translation research into indigenous languages.

Keywords: indigenous song translation, language documentation, ethnolinguistics, language shift, translation studies

1. Introduction

Song translation studies (here referred to as STS) has grown from an understudied field to one with a solid corpus of literature (Greenall et al. 2021). This article adds to this literature regarding the topic of indigenous song translation, which despite

the growing STS corpus remains gravely understudied. Folk music can be a powerful tool in revitalizing endangered languages, as song often remains one of the last locations of indigenous language use and one of the most prestigious remaining aspects of the native society (Gillan 2012: 3). This combination makes the translation of indigenous song an important task in our world that is set to lose half of its linguistic diversity this century (Evans 2010; Perley 2012). Additionally, the translation of attractive products, even pop music, into endangered languages creates materials that may help engage new learners and add a level of prestige that comes to any language that has its corpus expanded by translation. It can thus be expected in any positive outlook towards language preservation that indigenous song translation will continue to grow in scope and visibility.

Without access to language policy and political power, few revitalization movements have been successful so far. Even in a successful movement, such as in Hawaii, variant diversity and nonconformist concepts risk being lost or diluted in the attempt, as media and educational resources prefer the efficiency of a standard language. The aim in studying these different contexts of indigenous song translation is to identify the specific problems and strategies involved and enable shared knowledge and comparisons with other indigenous language translation environments. A further goal is to inspire more indigenous language research in translation studies (here referred to as TS). In indigenous song, TS has the potential to explore translation with the non or insufficiently documented languages of the world, often with no or just recently designed orthographies. This extends the realm of translation studies “down”, as described by Bellos (2012: 167), to increase the use and knowledge of some of the 6,000 primarily vernacular languages in the world.

This article explores translation in the revitalization movements between two Ryukyuan languages and the two modern languages they come into the most contact with, i.e. Japanese and English. After describing the language background, three specific song translation projects in three different modes of translation are discussed, based on my interviews with Eikichi Hateruma, Matthew Topping, and Homare Mochizuki, respectively. The first case discusses the translation of Ryukyuan folk songs into Japanese with a focus on the 60-page CD booklet to a 2008 compilation of folk songs (Section 3.1). The second case is the translation into English of Ryukyuan folk song lyrics in the form of subtitles to the YouTube videos of the Yaema-nu-musica’s archival project, which involved the legendary performer Tetsuhiro Daiku (Section 3.2). The translator, Matthew Topping, offers a window into some of the puzzles that occur when working from a colonized, indigenous context into a modern language. The third case (discussed in Section 3.3) covers the band Nanaironote’s production of singable translations of Japanese pop and Disney songs into Uchinaaguchi, the Ryukyuan language found on Okinawa Island (see Map 1). These singable translations are

performed as well as subtitled, in both Uchinaaguchi and Japanese, in YouTube videos produced by the band itself.



Map 1: The Ryukyuan Archipelago. © Mapbox, © OpenStreetMap

2. Indigenous song translation

Translation of folk song between indigenous and modern languages performs several functions. The wealth of ancestral knowledge and community thought embedded in lyrical songs can, when translated thoughtfully, lend itself to fascinating and profound insights into other worldviews. More straightforwardly, indigenous song translation is an essential part of language documentation providing an accurate source text as well as a target text of songs before they are lost. In other scenarios, recordings of songs may be the only remaining documentation of a now sleeping language¹ and their translation provides a starting point for

1| A sleeping language is a language whose last generation of full speakers has passed after intergenerational transmission has ceased creating a situation with no fluent speakers. This set of circumstances was previously referred to as language death.

a community who in the process of decolonizing wishes to reconnect with their ancestral culture. Translated songs are excellent materials for new speakers to learn about their culture in a way that provides an immediate and intimate connection to their heritage. This can help new language learners overcome some of the pitfalls that accompany learning one's indigenous language (Leonard 2017).

The study of indigenous song translation needs to engage with a complicated set of issues inherent in the indigenous-to-modern translation context. Revitalization challenges the concept of translatability. Fishman first raised this issue in 1974, as it became clear that translatability was a necessary feature of modern languages, despite resulting in the reduction of worldviews (Fishman 1975). Those of us raised and educated in modern society are naturally at risk of being unable to recognize the nonconformist concepts (Brenzinger 2007) in indigenous languages and translate other worldviews away, or push them aside by translating modern conceptualizations into local languages. Recognising and preserving these nonconformist concepts in translation is an essential part of the work. Each language is an accumulation of collected living knowledge on how to survive in a particular environment, and yet, we still do not know what we stand to lose, or how humanity will be impacted with these extinctions (Harrison 2007: 3).

As for the STS theoretical framework to view the varied translation modes in this study down, Susam-Saraeva (2015), in her study of Turkish translations of Greek song, discusses four distinct methods: 1) singing the songs in Turkey with Greek lyrics, not translated at all; 2) supplementing recordings with translations in booklets, with or without added comment; 3) singing covers in Turkish, more or less close in content; and 4) translating and discussing lyrics on websites, with other amateur translators and fans. Additionally, Low (2017: 40–62), in his discussion of translation provision for songs, also lists methods suitable for different *skopoi*: word-for-word translation for studying songs, literal translations for printed programs and CD inserts, simplified translations for surtitles and subtitles, and gist translations for a spoken intro before singing a song – all non-singable purposes distinct from singable translations. However, the cases of indigenous song translation that I have described in this paper involves problems that go beyond or do not fit neatly into these categories. Further research into translations occurring in other indigenous language contexts will be needed to define whether the examples in this study are typical of indigenous STS or simply indicative of this specific context between Ryukyuan languages and Japanese or English.

3. Ryukyuan language context

The Ryukyuan languages are sister languages of Japanese. Their proto-varieties are estimated to have split from the precursor of old Japanese during the Yayoi

period between 300 and 100 B.C. (Pellard 2015). They are abstand languages², with often significant diversity between villages or islands in the same vicinity. This complicates choosing one specific variety to promote in language revitalization efforts (van der Lubbe 2022). Despite this level of mutual incomprehensibility among the six languages, let alone between Japanese and any of the Ryukyuan varieties, they had primarily only been studied under the science of dialectology within Japan, until the UNESCO Atlas of endangered languages recognized them as languages in 2009 (Mosely 2010). Language shift, the shifting from one language to a more dominant language in various domains of daily life, such as at work, at markets, or in the house, began with the Meiji restoration in the 1860s. The Japanese government imitated many European nations in embracing a monolingual ideology to unite and modernize the nation. Although different languages and dialects permeate the archipelago, the government focused its efforts on colonizing the Ryukyu Islands once they were incorporated into the state in 1879. Different language domains were targeted over time, culminating with campaigns to stop the use of “island words” at home in the 1930s. After WWII, as the occupation of Okinawa by the United States military imposed significant hardships, many families accommodated this policy out of political and financial self-interest. Learning and speaking Japanese came to be seen as the best way to procure a return to Japanese rule and the departure of the U.S. military. With intergenerational language transmission severely interrupted by 1972, Okinawans received their wish of repatriation to Japan. However, as the return did not result in the departure of the U.S. military, the tide slowly began to turn away from stressing similarities to the Japanese and allowing more room to be Ryukyuan.

The folk music of the Ryukyu Islands is a cultural treasure and naturally plays a large role in current revitalization activities. Although filed under the label *World Music* at record stores, Ryukyuan music is popular in Japan and saw a boom in the first decade of the 21st century with massive selling artists, such as Begin, the Nenez, and The Boom, recording hits that are still popularly sung at Karaoke bars nationwide (Gillan 2012: 149–174). The timing of this boom coincided with Ryukyuan becoming more secure in their identities as Japanese citizens. Now clearly part of Japan, they were less hesitant to celebrate aspects of their culture that signaled their true heritage, much of which they had taken steps to hide in previous decades. One example is calling their instrument *sanshin* by its Japanese name *shamisen* to stress similarity with Japanese culture (see Figure 1 and 2, p. 188).

2| Abstand languages are often distant to the point of non-mutual intelligibility despite close physical proximity. Minority languages may not have a standard spoken or written form and linguistically differ significantly from village to village.

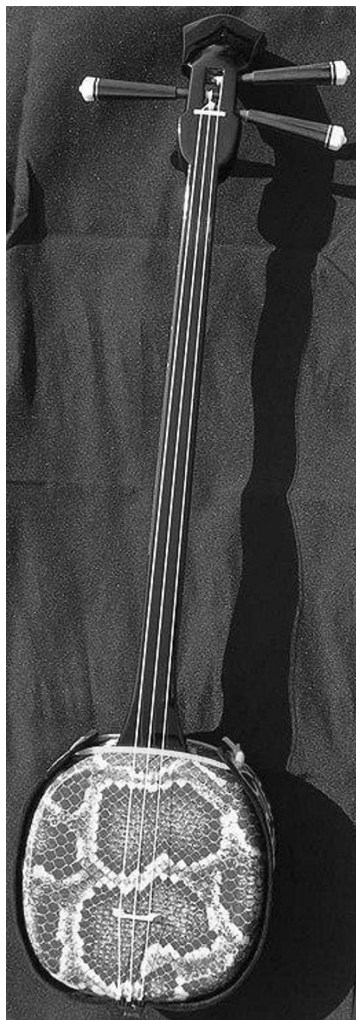


Figure 1: *Sanshin* (with snake-skin) ©TimDuncan, CC BY 2.5³



Figure 2: *Shamisen* (with cat skin) ©Timothy Takemoto from Yamaguchi, Japan, CC BY 2.0⁴

34

The current situation among the six Ryukyuan languages covering the archipelago (see Map 1, p. 185) varies between endangered and severely endangered. On the westernmost islands, Yaeyama and Dunan (Yonaguni) are both severely endangered with full speakers born before 1945, rusty or semi-speakers

3| <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5>, accessed: via Wikimedia Commons.

4| <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>, accessed: via Wikimedia Commons.

born before 1970, and monolingual Japanese speakers born after 1970. Many shopkeepers and community leaders are now at most passive bilinguals who never use more than a few lexical touchstones in their weekly lives. The situations for Miyako, Okinawa, Amami, and Kunigami are marginally better, with the dates ranging to about 10 years behind those for Yaeyama and Dunan. The criticalness of the situation has now allowed many to see through the colonized view of their heritage imposed by over a century of Japanese monolingual ideology and realize that what is about to be lost is of invaluable importance. However, the Japanese government still refuses to allow Okinawa prefecture to make any local language policy or planning decisions (Ishihara et al. 2019: 37).⁵

3.1. The 2008 Ryukyuan Folk Song Archival Project

Emeritus professor Eikichi Hateruma became the head of the 2008 Ryukyuan Folk Song Archival Project with the passing of his Okinawa Arts Council leader and predecessor, Naokichi Yamashiro. It was Yamashiro's vision to collect and record as many songs as he could, from Iheya in the north down to Ishigaki. His goal included not only to capture sanshin accompanied folk songs, but to spread the net out to document the less documented working songs, sung when praying for good harvests, doing agricultural work, constructing buildings, and at festivals, before they were lost to time. With Yamashiro's passing, Hateruma felt the responsibility to complete the project. He collected over 450 recordings and produced a 17-disc CD compilation, on which only 370 songs could fit.

The project was a success but one overshadowed by sorrow, as the results were significantly lower than the 1,200 Ryukyuan recordings collected and published in four of the 13 volumes of the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) Japanese folk song anthology completed in the early 1990s. The Ryukyuan section of that compilation was based on Fumio Koizumi's work in the 1960s and compiled by Sumo Kumada at Tokyo University of the Arts in the 1980s. Although songs from Amami were also included in that compilation, the amount of loss is profound.⁶

As the goal of the 2008 project was not just for preservation but for people to listen, sing, and understand lyrics, a great deal of work was put into the packaging. For the Yaeyaman section, each CD pack included two CDs and a 60-page booklet with original lyrics in Hiragana, translations into Japanese, and explanations. The

5| Due to the colonization of the mind, the speakers themselves are also hesitant to use the word 'language' or support measures, such as fluency requirements for highly coveted government positions.

6| The reason Amami was not included in the archival project is that it was funded by Okinawa prefecture. Although Amami has always been part of the Ryukyuan linguistic and cultural sphere, it was annexed by the Satsuma following the war in 1609 and remains to this day part of Kagoshima prefecture in Kyushu, and not Okinawa.



Figure 3: Archival project CD jacket with Obi strip (spine card) in red, with the words “Tsutaetai nowa uta jyanakute, kokoro da”

CD cover explains in a nutshell the goal of the project: “What we want to share is not songs but (our) heart” (my translation from Japanese; see Figure 3). During my interview, Hateruma explained that everyone on the project was motivated by this goal and that the translations (and the whole project) were not for the Japanese (*Yamatu pitu*, ‘Yamato people’ in his words), but targeted towards helping Okinawans discover their own heart and roots.⁷ Another motivation behind the project is the fact that most people taking up the sanshin today are unaware of the meaning of the words they sing, and teachers are not able to explain lyrics with the tools available to them. The third motivation for Hateruma’s sacrifice of personal time to head the program as a volunteer was his own regret at never teaching his children even the basic greetings in his language. Now in their 30s, they only know a few words of Yaeyaman.

If the goal as stated was to share the heart and soul of their culture, what does this mean for producing the translation? Not so much emotionality, but rather an effort towards lexical exactness, it seems. A detailed explanation of the approach to the translation is given on page seven of the 60-page booklet that comes with the CD:

Word-for-word translations that follow the source text are provided to help those who are new to the folk songs, except for when a word-for-word translation would be misleading, in which cases explanations are given within (rounded

7| All statements, translations, and summaries of Hateruma are based on my translation of our two-hour interview that took place via Zoom on May 31st, 2022. Japanese audio available upon request.

brackets) for explaining terms in the lyrics and within {curly brackets} for additional information that would have been understood by singers.⁸

Hateruma explained the reasoning for this type of translation:

The generation before me created archival works with 意訳 (iyaku: ‘sense-for-sense translation’) so if you did not understand island language you could only understand the overall meaning and not what the different words meant. Therefore it was our goal to provide 逐語訳 (chikugoyaku: ‘word-for-word translation’) so one could follow along to the source text and even use the translations to study the language.⁹

The translation process for the archival project occurred in three main steps. First, the performers provided their own translations under the guidelines of the project. Subsequently, Hateruma would check that the translations were reflecting the ST syntax as much as possible, adding explanations only when necessary. Finally, decisions had to be made for how to translate cultural concepts, such as the five seasonal terms unique to the island environment. Examples of four types of translation decisions made in the archival project are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Translation strategies for the booklet of the Ryukyuan folk song archival project CD¹⁰

ST (YAEYAMAN)	TT (JAPANESE)	STRATEGY
1. ヒヤ きゆが ひーば へーほーい Hiya kiyu ga hī ba hēhōi, ‘Hiya Today’s sun Hey hoi’	ヒヤ 今日の日を へーほーい Hiya Kyono hi wo hēhōi, ‘Hiya Today’s sun Hey hoi’	Reflect ST when possible
2. みゆしくぬ みやらび miyushikunu miyarabi, ‘(a) true beauty young maiden’	美与底 (古見の異称) の女童 Biyotei (Komi no ishō) no jodō, ‘(a) true beauty (the Komi version) young maiden’	Reflecting ST, with extratextual information (in parentheses)
3. しいとうむでいにヨー Sutumudīniyō, ‘in the early morning’	早朝に Sōchoni, ‘in the early morning’	Giving a sense-for-sense translation to avoid a misleading TL homonym

8| My translation from Japanese.

9| Interviewed by me, my translation.

10| The lyrics in Yaeyaman as sung on the CD and printed in Japanese orthography, beside the Japanese translation, in the booklet. Hepburn romanization and gloss translation added by me.

ST (YAEYAMAN)	TT (JAPANESE)	STRATEGY
4. ばがなつ ぬ いくだら Baganatsu nu ikudara, 'When young summer comes'	若夏が来たら Wakanatsu ga kitara, 'When young summer comes'	Ignoring the modern equivalent for an older, lesser- known cognate

Example 1 shows the most common set of translation decisions taken in the compilation. A word-for-word interlinear gloss is used to represent Yaeyaman sounds such as *hiya* and *hey hoi*, which appear identically in the Yaeyaman source text (ST) and the Japanese target text (TT). Words such as 'today' and 'day' are relatively similar phonetically, and the case markers *ga* and *ba* are given their closest Japanese approximation in *no* and *wo*. Example 2 shows the same interlinear strategy, but with extratextual information explaining that *mi-yarabi* is the way to say 'young maiden' in the Komi variety of Yaeyaman, found on the island of Iriomote. Example 3 is a case where reflecting the source language is impossible due to misleading homonymy. The phonetic homonym of *sutumudi* in modern Japanese, *tsutomu*, now means 'to work'. Reflecting the source text in this case would give the reader the wrong information, so the meaning equivalent for 'in the early morning' is used.

Example 4 shows a translation decision on how to deal with a nonconformist concept: a season that does not exist in Japanese, *baganatsu*. Hateruma uses a very uncommon word found in only a few dictionaries that most Japanese people would not be familiar with: *wakanatsu*, which shares the same direct translation as 'young summer'. If the Japanese equivalent *tsuyu*, 'rainy season', had been used, it would have allowed the readers to identify that season in their own environment and given them a clearer understanding of the concept. Another Southern Okinawan season, *uruzin*, which appears in four different songs, is given the Japanese translation *shōka*, 'beginning of summer'. Besides the question: what is the difference between young summer and beginning of summer?, the actual season and its relation to the Japanese equivalent 'spring', is left unexplained with this translation. How could these terms be left unexplained in such a high-quality effort made with passion by Hateruma and his team for their heritage? Hateruma explained his reason for translating *baganatsu* into the Japanese word *wakanatsu* as an attempt to rekindle the use of the very good word *wakanatsu* in the Japanese language. Could it be that heritage speakers simply do not recognize the value of these concepts as unique? Or is leaving these terms unclear a tacit way of stating that they are untranslatable unique concepts?

3.2. The Covid YouTube project by Yaima-nu-musica and Daiku Tetsuhiro

In February 2022, the Okinawan music company Yaima-nu-musica produced four music videos featuring Tetsuhio Daiku singing and playing sanshin, a band consisting of a yokoboe flute, koto, and taiko-drum, and a group of dancers. The four songs are (in order of discussion in this section) “Yaeyama raised”, “Bonsai hill”, “The one called Tunusama”, and “Yonaguni kitty cat”¹¹. The 75-year-old Daiku (Figure 4) is arguably the most active performer of traditional Okinawan music around today, appearing in most major festivals and world tours. He is a proficient rusty speaker of Yaeyaman and has recorded over 20 albums, with many songs currently streaming on multiple platforms. The project was designed to preserve and promote Yaeyaman culture during the pandemic, when travelers were not allowed to visit the islands. Each video was shot at a location of cultural importance in Ishigaki, the largest and most developed island in Yaeyama. Matthew Topping, a local city office employee and Ph.D. student at the University of the Ryukyus, was hired to provide English translations.



Figure 4: Daiku featured in the event poster for the YouTube video recordings, February 11th, 2022

11| The Yaima-nu-musica YouTube channel can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/@yaimanumusica> (accessed: 01.06.2024).

Topping¹² said he was asked to provide the music videos with informative subtitles in English. This task included three main challenges for the translator. The first challenge was understanding the content. This was aided by having Japanese translations to consult, but was still a time-consuming endeavor. Secondly, understanding which Ryukyuan language or which combination of languages the lyrics were composed of was complicated. The lyrics are influenced by traditional Ryukyuan *Ryuka* poetic style, which imports many Shuri Okinawan terms and expressions into the text, a language that is not mutually intelligible with Yaeyaman.¹³ Thus, knowledge of one modern variety of Yaeyaman, as in Topping's case, rarely guarantees full comprehension. Finally, translating the many refrain lines that are normally understood as glossolalia was a major challenge. Before describing how these challenges were managed over the four songs specifically, it is important to have some context on the translator.



Map 2: Yaeyama islands © Mapbox, © OpenStreetMap

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- 12] All quotes, summaries and retellings are taken from my two interviews with Topping, one on May 28th, 2022, the other on May 6th, 2023.
- 13] This issue of translating Ryukyuan folk songs was something I also discussed with Hateruma during our interview about his archive project translations. He was born in Yaeyama, but his mother was from Okinawa Island, so he grew up a speaker of both languages putting him in a very favorable position to work on translating folk songs.

Topping was chosen as he is a well-known Shikaza (downtown Ishigaki city area, see Map 2, p. 194) Yaeyaman new speaker, who wrote a descriptive grammar sketch of that variety for his MA thesis. Having lived in Japan for over 15 years, he is also a fluent Japanese speaker. He was recommended to the production team by a master from a master-apprentice revitalization program he helps run. Topping received 40,000 yen for each song and says he felt well paid for his work. Nevertheless, during the interviews, he talked about how, upon reflection, he doubted some of his decisions and wished he had had more time or more people to discuss his decisions with. Topping had had a moderate amount of freelance translation experience between Japanese and English before starting this project, in addition to working at the Ishigaki city office translating business letters and emails. He had had no professional experience translating from Yaeyaman to English, but had translated folk songs into English for videos made by a local Yaeyaman study group in the past.

3.2.1. Creating English subtitles for “Yaeyama raised”

The first song, “Yaeyama raised”, is different from the other three in that it is not a traditional folk song, but a modern folk song written by Yukichi Yamasato in 1995. He added Yaeyaman-substrate Japanese lyrics to a partially preserved traditional melody. Its great popularity with local middle-aged people may be because it talks about the pride and hardship that comes from growing up in Yaeyama.

Table 2: Preserving Japanese terms and expressions in subtitling song lyrics in English¹⁴

Lyrics sung in Japanese	Subtitles in English
1. クバの葉陰で kuba no hakage de	in the shade of Kuba leaves
2. 鳴くや千鳥の恋の歌 nakuya chidori no koi no uta	The plovers chirp their love song
3. 黄金の稲穂ユサユサと Ōgon no inahō yusayusa to	are covered with golden ears of rice rustling in the breeze

According to Topping, the translation was rather straightforward, as the lyrics were primarily in Japanese. Table 2 shows examples of the documentary approach that he employed. This meant using exact terms such as Kuba leaves and plovers (in Examples 1 and 2, respectively), instead of words that would be more familiar to English speakers. Topping maintains this level of documentary

14| The sung lyrics are transcribed in Japanese orthography, with Hepburn romanization added, by me. The translations are taken exactly from the videos’ subtitles.

translation for all these poetic terms, such as “clear flowing stream” and “boundless tenderness,” as well as the names of bird species uncommon in both modern Japanese and English. He also made literal renderings of source text expressions, even though they may sound peculiar or old fashioned in modern English, such as “golden ears of rice rustling in the breeze”.

3.2.2. Creating English subtitles for Yaeyama “Bonsai hill” and “The one called Tunusama”

Japanese translations of “Bonsai hill” and “The one called Tunusama” were included in the four-volume reference series of Yaeyaman folk songs, released between 2008 and 2013. Also in the archival project managed by Hateruma (presented in Section 3.1), translations were given, word-for-word syntax replicating, when possible, with context summaries, following his recommendations. This type of resource reduced the translation load significantly. According to Topping, without these translations he would only be able to understand about three quarters of the source text. This is due to the amount of Shuri Ryukyuan lyrics in the songs (as mentioned in Section 3.2.1). The Japanese translations allowed Topping to use his “knowledge of Yaeyaman to fine tune” his translations and removed doubt about ambiguous passages.

The gulf between the spoken island language and the Japanese script and the translator’s base in linguistics is visible in another subtitling choice: how to represent the significant amount of glossolalia in the English translation. This was the primary challenge for the song “Bonsai hill”. Most of the song lyrics are glossolalia known as *hayashi* lyrics in Ryukyuan folk song. The normal practice is to add them directly into the target text with Japanese Katakana script (see Table 3). With so much of the source text simply left to copy verbatim, with Latin-script alphabet, Topping decided to reflect for the viewer a closer sound approximation. He used *i* to represent a center high vowel, and *ā*, *ē*, and *ū* instead of double vowels (see Table 3). He mentioned upon reflection that it may have been better to just use typical lettering, as a regular English reader would not know these symbols, used in phonetic transcription.

The other song, “The one called Tunusama”, is a story of two lovers, told half from the perspective of the woman waiting in Funauki (see Map 2, p. 194) and half from her betrothed who is journeying there by boat. All Ryukyuan languages are, especially with lyrics and poetry, commonly written without subjects and pronouns. This made determining who was the subject in the back and forth of the song very confusing. The Japanese translation made it clear which role at each point was the speaker of the lyrical line. This led to a relatively straightforward translation, except for one line that is repeated at the end of each verse, *shita uchi shyaraayo*, ‘unable to stop tongue hitting.’ *Shita uchi* is a smacking sound or click that modern Japanese use to express anger, Chinese

to express disappointment, and Italians to express that something is impossible. In this context, it conveyed great anticipation at meeting a lover. Daiku does not perform the sound; it is only sung in the lyrics. In the interview, Topping explained that he chose “smacking her/his lips” as the closest approximation that still included making a noise with the mouth. Discussing other possibilities of translating for an English audience, we wondered during the interview if abandoning the documentary strategy and using the English phrase *licking her/his lips* would have helped TT speakers make more sense of the situation.

Table 3: “Tunusama” and “Bonsai hill” translation strategies¹⁵

Lyrics sung in Yaeyaman	Subtitles in English	Strategy
エイヤランザ サエーア イヤーはりバサミシー (Hayashi words)	Eiyarayanza saē eijāharibasamishī	Romanization of <i>hayashi</i> lyrics (meaningless refrain lyrics with macron instead of double vowels)
舌打っしやらーよ shita ussharaayo	Smacking her/his lips	Replacement with a term recognizable to the target audience
前差崎 Maizasi	Maizasi point	Translation with <i>i</i> reflecting the central high vowel common in Yaeyaman but not in Japanese

3.2.3. Creating English subtitles for “Yonaguni kitty cat”

Among the videos, “Yonaguni kitty cat” has the most elaborate production. Four female dancers dressed in cat outfits sing the *hayashi* refrains in an almost cat-call-like way, as they perform a choreographed dance routine in front of the stage (see Figure 5, p. 198). There was no translation available in scholarly publications that Topping could find, so instead he made use of two online websites with fan translations: one on the Yaeyaman version, and the other about the Okinawan version of the song. The song has such odd lyrics that Topping asked Yaima-nu-musica to include the disclaimer quoted below in the credits, since he felt an extratextual explanation was the only option to understand the metaphors in the lyrics. A similar explanation was included in both of the online Japanese translations he found.

This song’s strangeness lies in its metaphorical descriptions of the bad relationships between local women who were assigned to the visiting government

15| The Topping translations are taken exactly from the subtitles, the Yaeyaman lyrics transcribed as sung in the YouTube videos.

officials as mistresses on Yonaguni island during the days of the poll taxes in the Ryukyu kingdom pre-1879¹⁶. The author made heavy use of culturally relevant metaphor in order to obscure some of the real-life characters and situations being described (unused subtitle disclaimer, Topping's manuscript).

This explanation would have likely been quite instructive for viewers, but the organizers must have changed their minds, because it is not included in the video. Perhaps these explanations should be placed at the beginning of videos with subtitles in modern languages translated from indigenous languages, or given in the notes below the video. In this case the disclaimer is nowhere to be seen.



Figure 5: “Yonaguni kitty cat” dancers in front of the band

Without a reliable Japanese translation and with such strange lyrics, Topping used his understanding of Yaeyaman to interpret three sets of *hayashi* lyrics, normally understood to be meaningless, to add depth to the translation, as shown in Table 4. He also added subjects to make the narrative clear and left the metaphors as they were in the source text for the viewer to share in the unique imagery.

Examples 1, 2, and 3 are part of the refrain and are repeated many times. The lyrics have been considered as glossolalia by scholars and musicians alike, including Daiku himself. This means that Topping could have just written them directly into the English subtitles as is, but his research led him to some translations of Yaeyaman stories. In them, the word *sutaari* (in Example 1) was defined as meaning ‘to keep’ or ‘to stay’. This combined with his recognition of the common emphatic/imperative word *yoo* (in Example 3), meaning something similar

16| Even though Okinawa prefecture was established in 1879, the poll taxes were still collected in Yaeyama until 1903.

to ‘you’d better...’ in English, enabled him to write a sense-for-sense translation for the refrain: “stay like that!”, instead of writing glossolalia.

Table 4: “Yonaguni kitty cat” translation strategies¹⁷

Yaeyaman ST	English subtitles	Strategy
1. スターリヨー sutaari yoo	stay like that!	Meaning of <i>hayashi</i> word found in Yaeyaman
2. ハリ hari	go!	Continued
3. ヨーヌヨー王ぬ前 yoo nu yoo shunumai	listen well my lord!	Continued
4. Ootsuki tu ootaiyo agaru mi ya itsui hari Hazama nu ou du wantu nu nakaya itsui hari	the sun and the moon rise to the same place, Lord Hazama and I are of like minds	Direct translation of a metaphor whose meaning has been lost to time

Hari in Example 2 is another glossolalia word that also happens to mean ‘to go’ in Yaeyaman. Finally, there are many metaphors from “Yonaguni kitty cat”, including Example 4, about the sun and the moon. Here, Topping felt the only option was to translate them exactly, trusting the disclaimer listed above to offer some elucidation of their meaning. In cases where the meaning behind metaphors is no longer understood by the last generation of speakers, Topping’s strategy of translating them directly with extratextual summary appears to be the only viable solution.

In Topping’s reflections over his translations, a question remains that may be common in translating indigenous song: do some lines carry metaphors that do not clearly present themselves as such? The line ‘From the middle a swollen-eyed hag jumped out, saw them and pulled back’ sounds just as much like an event in the story as a metaphor. Topping translated these lines with the same documentary strategy, putting the source text directly into English. On the other hand, Toppings’ strategies for dealing with glossolalia terms suggest that the translator’s own scholarship and knowledge of the language can make significant contributions to understanding the song. However, this kind of research is time consuming and may well be beyond the time a translator can afford to invest in a project.

17| As in Table 3 (p. 197), the Topping translations are from the subtitles, the Yaeyaman lyrics transcribed as sung in the video.

3.3. Nanaironote's singable translations of Disney and Japanese Pop songs

Nanaironote are a band fronted by producer Homare, who, along with three core members, are joined by local artists to collaborate on a variety of projects with a focus on producing high quality YouTube videos sung in Uchinaaguchi Okinawan. The *skopos* for this band's monthly video releases is to create singable and performable lyrics as part of a multimodal presentation, which also should give an authentically Ryukyuan impression. The simple reason they found their way to this *skopos* was by trying to get more likes for their videos. Homare explained¹⁸:

We grew up thinking our language was only used by bad kids (yankees), but it was through this project that we realized how important part of our lives it is, – – – Honestly my first instinct was not to make videos in Okinawan language, but I wanted to promote my sense of pride in our culture. When we started this project, I was desperately trying to think of what we could do to get more views and that led to singing in the language as well (interviewed by me, my translation).

The rest was history, because the band now has over 12 million views on its YouTube channel. The almost 70 music videos showcase different aspects of Ryukyuan culture, including lacquerware, nature, fashion, and other local arts. Their videos with the most views are Disney hits such as “A whole new world” and “Under the sea”¹⁹, along with popular Japanese pop songs by artists such as Yo Hitoto and LiSA, all shot on sets highlighting the natural beauty of the islands. They are professionally recorded using a variety of Ryukyuan and world instrumentation, but almost always featuring the *sanshin*.

Unlike the other projects covered in this article, Nanaironote's translated lyrics are performed and thus translated singably. They can be classified as singable near-enough translations (Franzon 2021), but are textually closer approximations of the source text than many song translations that fit this category. This is in large part due to the linguistic similarity of the language pair, comparable to the distance between French and Italian, and a similarity in sung poetics: in both languages the foot rhyme is not a poetic characteristic or is not considered desirable (Guay 2019: 16). Maintaining rhyme in song translation is one of the main reasons for a translation to deviate from the ST semantics. The other often larger challenge in creating a singable translation is matching the song rhythm (Low 2017). Homare states when dealing with singability:

18| All quotations are my translations of our interview in Japanese on June 3rd, 2022. Audio available upon request.

19| The YouTube links are: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQYRB-i_i0M and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgzlfz5NTdc>, respectively (accessed: 01.06.2024).

Basically, if the translation does not match the number of notes in the melody, I increase the number of notes or add rests to make it fit.

Homare’s strategy is reflected in Low (2017: 100), who warns against attempting to leave the rhythm perfectly untouched in favor of tweaks and flexibility when dealing with singable translations.

There is less approximation in the stylistic and visual elements of Nanairo-*note’s* translations as they strive to create an authentically Ryukyuan product. In addition to decisions made for singability, there are deviations from the source text that can be classified as modernizing translation decisions. They include things that did not exist when Ryukyuan languages were still primary languages spoken in all domains, and things that are still uncommon in the Okinawan environment, such as carpets. In “A whole new world”, the magic carpet became *mahou nu bluesheet*, ‘magic blue tarp’, referring to the blue tarps that many use for picnicking outdoors, at the beach or during festivals. This is one of many ways they insert Okinawan cultural references into the TT. For the Disney songs, they mostly ignore the original English texts in favor of the Japanese dubbing translations. Table 5 highlights a few of the 60 translation decisions Homare discussed in our interview and sent me during email correspondence afterwards.

Table 5: Nanaironote singable translation strategies²⁰

ST (JAPANESE)	TT (UCHINĀGUCHI)	STRATEGY
1. 携帯電話 keitaidenwa, ‘mobile phone’	むちゅんでいんわ muchun dīnwa, ‘hold phone’	Modernizing translation
2. ハナミズキ ふるさと Hanamizuki furusato (famous Japanese song title)	はなみじき ふるさとう Hanamijiki furusatu	Translation to mimic TT phonetics
3. みんなにはイキなジャズ・バンド minnani wa ikina Jazz band, ‘a jazz band that has everyone grooving’	わったや オキナワんロック！ Wattaya Okinawan rock! ‘our Okinawan rock!’	Replacement with Ryukyuan cultural terms and concepts
4. セッション session, ‘a (jam) session’	かちゃーしー Kachyāshī (an Okinawan traditional dance)	Continued

20| My romanization of the sung lyrics, and gloss translation below, the lyrics in Japanese and Uchinaaguchi, the later as recorded by Nanironote, taken exactly from the YouTube video subtitles.

In Example 1, a new word, *muchun dinwa*, was created for a mobile phone, instead of calquing the commonly used Japanese word. In Example 2, the Japanese names *Hanamizuki* and *furusato* were changed to match the way Ryukyuan languages have shifted diachronically from Japanese phonemic production. The last two, Examples 3 and 4, show just two of many situations where Homare and his translation team employ a highly domesticating approach to the Japanese translations' relatively accurate reflections of the English originals. Okinawan cultural words are inserted whenever possible into the TT. One could say Homare is rather ruthless in presenting Okinawan culture whenever he can in the translations. On the other hand, taking advantage of opportunities to add indigenous terms and concepts to the TT, integrating them with the main themes and hooks of the ST lyrics, may present an appealing model for others to follow in the modern-to-indigenous context.

4. Conclusion

Through the analysis of these three quite different projects, the translation of Ryukyuan into Japanese, into English, and Japanese translated into singable Ryukyuan lyrics, this paper has demonstrated a few applications of STS to the domain of language revitalization. Hateruma's archival project shows how the older generations, i.e. minds colonized from growing up in the post-war period that disrupted intergeneration transmission, have mostly shed the negative values placed on their language. They are now working in a documentary way, translating songs not for Japanese to understand, but for Ryukyuan to both appreciate their heritage and use the song lyrics as a way of learning the language. However, in this study, some of the clearest examples of nonconformist concepts, the Yaeyaman seasonal terms, are translated in a way that limits their contrast with Japanese concepts. This suggests that there is still no desire among this generation to emphasize the differences between their heritage and Japanese cultural life.

The analysis of Topping's translation shows that even when there is money and a native English speaker with the skills necessary to work in that indigenous-to-modern language context, the situation is still fraught with time-consuming challenges. While the last full and strong rusty speakers are still alive, a team of one L1 Yaeyaman speaker and an English speaker, both fluent in Japanese, might be the best translation team. However, Topping's impressive ability to use his knowledge of Yaeyaman to recognize meanings in the glossolalia suggest that someone outside of the culture may be freer to work unconventionally. This may allow a fuller picture than the previous, traditional translations into Japanese. On the other hand, sadly, the accurate interpretation of some metaphors has potentially been lost forever. The kind of translation

Topping performed requires dedication to the cause and suggests a double role of translator and language preservationist.

Pop song translation into Ryukyuan requires dealing with many of the same challenges of creating a singable TT facing translators in any context. In an age of ever-increasing social media engagement with growing ease of media production and circulation, Nanaironote's model will hopefully be repeated by youth around the world interested in reclaiming their heritage culture. Not unlikely, there are heritage culture singers in other parts of the world engaged in similar activities. This suggests a new place for STS in language revitalization with the opportunity to compare Homare's process and policy of creating both singable and domesticating translations with others. Homare and his team's approach seems to reflect much of Low's (2017) advice for creating singable lyrics, but also shows unique attributes based on the specific language context. Additionally, they make use of indirect translation from a more linguistically similar language (Japanese), and frequently replace ST concepts with Okinawan concepts to showcase pride in Okinawan culture.

Translating in the indigenous-to-modern context includes dealing with a lack of interest from modern language speakers and thus a lack of funds or incentives to produce such work. There are budgets available to Ryukyuan to document their languages, and these have allowed them to translate folk songs into their *lingua franca* of Japanese in a documentary style, according to the skopos of such projects. However, as the poetic language in the songs is highly stylized and differs from common speech, the complete focus on these types of texts may not be the most needed to support a successful language revitalization program. This mirrors perhaps one struggle for descriptive linguists, whose hard work creates grammars that scientifically document the language but are sometimes of limited practical use for would-be learners.

Comparing the situation in this paper to those in other endangered language contexts may provide a more complete picture of what song translation can offer language efflorescence²¹ movements and what other types of texts or semi-otic products should be prioritized for translation.

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21| There has been a push to move away from terms involving the prefix *re-* in language revitalization and to get away from their negative connotations that something has died or lost its life. Instead, the use of the term *efflorescence* has been proposed to focus on the growth of language movements worldwide.

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Translation und Zyklizität: Zur Übersetzung der *Winterreise* von Wilhelm Müller und Franz Schubert durch Bélanger

ABSTRACT

Translation and cyclicity. On the translation of the *Winterreise* by Wilhelm Müller and Franz Schubert by Bélanger

The purpose of this article is to elaborate, in a descriptive manner, on selected aspects of the cyclical structure of Wilhelm Müller's and Franz Schubert's *Winterreise* (1827, D 911) and the effects that intercultural transfer and language change can have on it. For this purpose, first some theoretical considerations on the cyclicity of the song compilation in general and the *Winterreise* in particular are collected in order to then exemplarily deal with the concrete references of a selected song to the other songs of the cycle both in original and translation. An early French translation of the song cycle by the French translator Bélanger is consulted here. The analysis shows how the translational (especially the lexical) choices of the translator in the individual songs can lead to a changed understanding of the whole song cycle.

Keywords: song cycle, translation, Wilhelm Müller, Franz Schubert, Bélanger

1. Einleitung

Seit gesungen wird, stellt sich die Frage, wie in Musik gesetzte Texte weitergetragen und in neuem Kontext aufgeführt werden können. Bevor die heute größtenteils übliche Praxis sich etablierte, gesungene Texte in der Originalsprache zu belassen, war die Übersetzung die *conditio sine qua non* für deren Aufführung in anderen sprachlichen und kulturellen Kontexten (vgl. Schneider 2008). Wenn wir uns die jahrhundertealte Praxis der Kontrafaktur und Parodie (im musikalischen Sinne), aber auch die heutige Cover-Praxis anschauen, ist

die Übersetzung zwar nur ein Sonderfall des interkulturellen Transfers musikgebundener Texte, lässt sich aber bereits im Liedschaffen des 16. Jahrhundert sowie in der Zirkulation von Opern, Oratorien usw. im Europa des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts nachweisen. Im Rahmen des vorliegenden Beitrags interessiert uns das beginnende 19. Jahrhundert mit der in Deutschland sehr lebhaften und produktiven Kunstliedkultur. Mit der *Winterreise* (1827) von Wilhelm Müller (Text) und Franz Schubert (Vertonung, op. 98, D 911), rückt eine kohärente Liedersammlung, eben ein Liederzyklus, in den Fokus der folgenden Ausführungen.

Auf die spezifischen Herausforderungen beim Übersetzen von musikgebundenen Texten ist vielfach aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven eingegangen worden. Rezenter Publikationen haben Minors (2013), Apter/Herman (2016) und Franzon et al. (2021) vorgelegt. Für einen detaillierten Forschungsüberblick zur Librettoübersetzung vgl. Agnetta (2019) und Şerban/Chan (2020). Speziell dem (romantischen) Kunstlied als polysemiotischer Kunstgattung haben sich, um einige Beispiele zu nennen, folgende Autoren gewidmet: Aus translationswissenschaftlicher Perspektive konzeptualisiert Sigmund Kvam (2014) Kunstlieder vornehmlich als vertonte Lyrik und veranschaulicht am Beispiel von Edvard Griegs Vertonungen zweier einzelner Gedichte von Henrik Ibsen (“Spillemænd” und “Margretes Vuggesang”) und deren englischer und deutscher Übersetzung, wie weit Ausgangs- und Zieltext semantisch voneinander abweichen können. Weiterhin im translationalologischen Kontext betrachten Newmark/Minors (2013: 59f.) Kunstlieder als intime Miniaturgattung und rekonstruieren die Generierung von Bedeutung und Sinn (‘meaning’) im Einzellied. Auf Chamissos und Schumanns Liederzyklus *Frauenliebe und -leben*, insbesondere auf Fragen zu Rhythmus und Verseinteilung im Original und in seinen französischen und italienischen Übersetzungen, geht der Musikwissenschaftler und Philologe Herbert Schneider (2018: 984) ein. Und der Übersetzer Thomas Beavitt, der eine englische Übertragung der *Winterreise* vorgelegt und 2018 in einem Artikel kommentiert hat, präsentiert ganz praktische Überlegungen rund um die Leitprinzipien von Sangbarkeit und Verständlichkeit sowie um den Umgang mit Textwiederholungen und dem Wort-Ton-Verhältnis. Diese Ansätze wollen wir im Folgenden aufgreifen, hinterfragen und vertiefen.

Wenngleich die zitierten und andere Autoren gelegentlich oder gar programmatisch auf Schuberts Liederzyklen Bezug nehmen (vgl. z. B. Kvam 2014: 132; Beavitt 2018), wird die zyklische Anlage zusammengehöriger Lieder und deren Veränderung im Übersetzungsprozess bis *dato* nicht in den Vordergrund gerückt. Aus diesem Grund besteht das Anliegen der vorliegenden Ausführungen darin, in deskriptiver Weise ausgewählte Aspekte der zyklischen Gestaltung der *Winterreise* von Wilhelm Müller und Franz Schubert und sodann die Auswirkungen herauszuarbeiten, die der interkulturelle Transfer und der Sprachwechsel

auf selbige haben kann. Hierzu werden in Abschnitt 2 einige theoretische Überlegungen zur Zyklizität der Liedersammlung im Allgemeinen und der *Winterreise* im Besonderen gesammelt, um im Abschnitt 3 exemplarisch auf die konkreten Bezüge eines ausgewählten Liedes zu den übrigen Liedern des Zyklus in Original und Übersetzung einzugehen. Herangezogen wird eine frühe französische Übersetzung des Liederzyklus von Bélanger.

2. Zyklizität der Kunstliedsammlung

Zyklizität kann in knapper Weise definiert werden als die Gestalthaftigkeit eines seriell Dargebotenen.¹ Das ist zunächst ganz formal zu verstehen: Hierbei gilt es, den Aufbau des mehrgliedrigen Werks nachzuvollziehen, der in natürlicher Weise aus dem (zeitlichen) Vor- bzw. Nachgeordnetsein seiner Teile hervorgeht. Das zyklische Werk manifestiert sich zunächst in der Sukzession von (in bestimmtem Maße) abgeschlossenen Episoden. Diese können, wie der bekannte Sänger und Schubert-Interpret Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau über die Lieder des nachfolgend behandelten Zyklus befindet, nicht einmal in sonderlicher Weise miteinander verbunden sein. Die 24 Lieder der Schubert'schen *Winterreise* sind nur rudimentär über einen Handlungsfortgang aufeinander bezogen: Eine Trennung und die plötzliche Heimatlosigkeit veranlassen das lyrische Ich zu seiner vermutlich letzten Reise durch eine aufgrund der winterlichen Witterungsverhältnisse feindselige Natur. Die Stationen seiner Wanderung sind im Grunde austauschbar; nur wenige Indizien wie bestimmte Wetterereignisse, die in mehreren Liedern angesprochen werden (z. B. ein Wintersturm), die zunehmende Entfernung vom Haus der Geliebten und die ebenfalls von Lied zu Lied anwachsende Resignation sind Indizien einer inneren Ordnung. Die Lieder könnten daher vielmehr als eine lose Aneinanderreihung von Stücken zu den über das lyrische Ich hereinfließenden Emotionen begriffen werden: „Nichtsentimentalisch miteinander verbunden werden die Zustände, völlig unvorbereitet wird man mit der Überwältigung durch jede neue Verzweiflung konfrontiert“ (Fischer-Dieskau 1976/1985: 297). Auch aufführungs- und editionspraktisch scheint die Kohärenz aller 24 Lieder nur selten unabkömmlich zu sein, wenn diese damals wie heute auch einzeln oder in zuweilen willkürlichen Zusammenstellungen vorgetragen bzw. publiziert werden.

1| Andere Definitionsversuche bleiben eher allgemein, wenn zum Beispiel auf einen „Gedanken der höheren Einheit“ (Fischer-Dieskau 1976/1985, 297) verwiesen wird. Verwandt sind auch Definitionen von Serialität, wie etwa Ecos Grundlagentext „Die Innovation im Seriellen“ zeigt, in dem der Autor den seriellen Fortgang als Phänomen im Spannungsfeld zwischen „Ordnung und Neuheit/Innovation“ (Eco 1983/1988: 167, 174) begreift.

Und doch: Wenn Fischer-Dieskau die *Winterreise* eine „Variationskette über das Leid“ (ebd.: 296) und die einzelnen Lieder in Anspielung auf eine (in zahlreichen seriellen Kunstformen aufgenommene) christliche Tradition der *via crucis* als „Leidensstation[en]“ (ebd.: 298) betitelt, so ist nach ebendieser übergreifenden Kohärenz zu fragen, die im den Variationen zugrundeliegenden Thema und seinen konkreten textlichen und musikalischen Manifestationen zu suchen ist. Die serielle Anlage eines zyklischen Werkes, hier eines Liederzyklus, antwortet zwar auf die physische, narrative und aufführungspraktische Notwendigkeit zur linearen Hervorbringung der das Werk konstituierenden Teile. Bei eingehender, zeitenthobener Betrachtung des Werkkomplexes erschließen sich dem Interpreten allerdings logische Zusammenhänge, die sich nicht zwangsläufig nur auf die Sukzession der Werkteile und die Chronologie des Erzählten zurückführen lassen. Ein auf das gesamte Werk gerichtetes Bewusstsein hält aufeinander folgende bzw. einander ablösende Werkelemente kopräsent, versammelt sie *am gleichen Ort* (alt-gr. *isos, tópos*). Es erschafft eine virtuelle Gleichzeitigkeit, die überhaupt erst zur Bewertung und Gewichtung der Werkelemente befähigt. Die (partielle) Rekurrenz gleicher oder verwandter Elemente und deren (allmähliche) Veränderung führt auf werksemantischer Ebene zur Herausbildung liedinterner und – für die Zyklizität noch wichtiger – liedübergreifender Isotopien. Den der strukturalen Semantik entlehnten Begriff deuten wir hier zum allgemein-semiotischen Begriff um und bezeichnen mit ihm die Sinnebenen in einem (polysemiotischen) Werk, die von unterschiedlichen (heterosemiotischen) Elementen bzw. Zeichen gestützt werden.

Das Vorliegen eines Zyklus resultiert aus einer gewissen Form von Kohärenz. Wie Walther Dürr (2006: 157) beobachtet, hat Schubert bereits während seines frühen Liedschaffens immer wieder einzelne Lieder zu Kollektionen zusammengefasst, wobei manchmal die Auswahl von Gedichten eines Autors (etwa Matthisson oder Goethe)², manchmal inhaltliche Bezüge für die Gruppierung der Vertonungen bestimmend war. Liederzyklen im engeren Sinne, d. h. solche, die eine narratologische Verklammerung aufweisen, sind *Abendröte* (1820, Text: Fr. Schlegel), *Die schöne Müllerin* (1823) und *Winterreise* (1827) (beide über Texte von Wilhelm Müller) (vgl. ebd.). Der letztgenannte Zyklus soll im Folgenden im Mittelpunkt stehen.

In Müllers und Schuberts *Winterreise* ist ein sich in zahlreichen Rückbezügen und Vorausdeutungen manifestierendes Spiel mit Anfängen und Enden bezeichnend. Der Liederkranz beginnt, wie Fischer-Dieskau in seinem Porträt des Liederkomponisten zum ersten Lied „Gute Nacht“ festhält, mit einem Ende:

2| Brinkmann (2004: 63) zufolge soll der junge Schubert acht Liederbände zu je einem Dichter geplant haben.

Nur die Andeutung einer Vorgeschichte wird gegeben, wir stehen eigentlich bereits am Schluß des Geschehens. Warum nimmt der junge Mann Abschied? Er hat ein Mädchen geliebt und sich ihrer Liebe sicher geglaubt. Da kam ein Reicherer und wurde vorgezogen. Und nun ist alles aus, das Leben ist wertlos geworden, er sehnt sich nach dem Ende. GUTE NACHT ist dessen Anfang (Fischer-Dieskau 1976/1985: 293).

Das erste der 24 Lieder markiert das Ende einer Beziehung, das über die verschiedenen Stationen des Zyklus immer wieder und verschiedentlich evoziert wird. Dieses gibt der unternommenen Winterreise ihren Anlass, ist somit zugleich ein Beginn. Wie im Laufe des Liederkranzes zunehmend deutlich wird, steuert diese Reise aber auf ein viel ‚unabdingbareres‘ Ende zu. Und obwohl dieses im letzten Lied definitiv erscheint, führen die beiden Verse, welche die Liedersammlung beschließen, wieder zurück zu einem Anfang, wenn das lyrische Ich den ominösen, als Symbol des Todes zu interpretierenden Leiermann mit freundlichen Tönen folgendermaßen anspricht:

Wunderlicher Alter,
soll ich mit Dir gehn?
Willst zu meinen Liedern
Deine Leier drehn?

(Müller/ Schubert, *Die Winterreise*, Nr. 24: „Der Leiermann“, V. 17–20)

– als wollte es zuletzt noch einmal ansetzen und ‚seine Lieder‘ erneut bzw. neue Lieder anstimmen. Der Rezipient gerät gewissermaßen in den Sog dieser mehrdimensionalen Zirkelstruktur, welche die zyklische Anlage der *Winterreise* ausmacht.

Die nur angedeutete Rede von der Werkkohärenz, die sich aus der gleichzeitigen Berücksichtigung aller – oder zumindest: mehrerer – Werkteile speist, bedeutet keineswegs, dass die Reihenfolge der Lieder unwichtig ist. In der Zyklizität ist das lineare Fortschreiten – so rudimentär es einem erscheint – nicht aufgehoben. Wenn man Zyklizität als Interdependenz zwischen dem Gleichbleibenden (Invarianten) und dem sich Verändernden (Varianten) begreift (vgl. Agnetta 2023: 117f.), so ist das lineare Voranschreiten, das diesen Kräften eine innere Logik verleiht, unabdingbar für das Verständnis des Erzählten. Die (tatsächliche oder diskursive) Chronologie der Handlungsabläufe bleibt konstitutives Merkmal des Werkes. Hierin unterscheiden sich aber bereits Wilhelm Müllers Textvorlage und Franz Schuberts Vertonung. Als der Komponist in den ersten Monaten des Jahres 1827 an die *mise en musique* ging, war ihm lediglich die Zusammenstellung der 12 Gedichte bekannt, die Müller 1823 in der *Urania* (Taschenbuch auf das Jahr 1823, Leipzig: Brockhaus) hat abdrucken lassen (vgl. Müller 1823a). Weitere zehn Gedichte wurden von Müller in der Ausgabe vom 13. März 1823 der *Deutschen Blätter für Poesie, Literatur, Kunst und Theater*

(vgl. Müller 1823b) mit dem Verweis publiziert „Zwölf zu diesem Cyklus gehörige Lieder³ stehen in der *Urania* 1823 abgedruckt“ (ebd.: 161). Den vollständigen Zyklus publizierte Müller 1824 im zweiten Band der *Sieben und siebenzig Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten*. Erst als diese Ausgabe in die Hände Schuberts gelangte, setzte er im Herbst 1827 die noch nicht vertonten Gedichte Müllers in Musik. Die Reihenfolge der bereits vertonten Gedichte beließ er bei. Sie sind heute als „erste Abtheilung“ des Zyklus bekannt. Die übrigen Lieder bilden die „zweite Abtheilung“. Alleine dem Lied „Die Nebensonnen“ hat Schubert einen neuen Platz an vorletzter Stelle seines Liederzyklus gegeben. Die Reihenfolge der Lieder lässt sich folgendermaßen veranschaulichen (s. Tab. 1):

Tabelle 1: Publikationsgeschichte von Müllers *Die Winterreise*, Reihenfolge der Lieder im Gesamtzyklus von Müller und von Schubert⁴

Müller (1823a)	Müller (1823b)	Müller (1824)	Schubert 1827/1979
1 Gute Nacht		1 Gute Nacht	1 Gute Nacht
2 Die Wetterfahne		2 Die Wetterfahne	2 Die Wetterfahne
3 Gefrorene Thränen		3 Gefrorene Thränen	3 Gefrorene Tränen
4 Erstarrung		4 Erstarrung	4 Erstarrung
5 Der Lindenbaum		5 Der Lindenbaum	5 Der Lindenbaum
		6 Die Post⁴	6 Wasserflut
6 Wasserfluth		7 Wasserfluth	7 Auf dem Flusse
7 Auf dem Flusse		8 Auf dem Flusse	8 Rückblick
8 Rückblick		9 Rückblick	9 Das Irrlicht
	1 Der Greise Kopf	10 Der Greise Kopf	10 Rast
	3 Die Krähe	11 Die Krähe	11 Frühlingstraum
	2 Letzte Hoffnung	12 Letzte Hoffnung	12 Einsamkeit
	4 Im Dorfe	13 Im Dorfe	13 Die Post
	5 Der stürmische Morgen	14 Der stürmische Morgen	14 Der Greise Kopf
		15 Täuschung	15 Die Krähe
	7 Der Wegweiser	16 Der Wegweiser	16 Letzte Hoffnung
	8 Das Wirthshaus	17 Das Wirthshaus	17 Im Dorfe
9 Das Irrlicht		18 Das Irrlicht	18 Der stürmische Morgen
10 Rast		19 Rast	19 Täuschung
	6 Die Nebensonnen	20 Die Nebensonnen	20 Der Wegweiser
11 Frühlingstraum		21 Frühlingstraum	21 Das Wirthshaus
12 Einsamkeit		22 Einsamkeit	22 Muth!
	9 Muth!	23 Muth!	23 Die Nebensonnen
	10 Der Leiermann	24 Der Leiermann	24 Der Leiermann

3| Müller beharrte auf der Bezeichnung seiner Gedichte als „Lieder“.

4| Die Lieder, die durch Fettdruck markiert sind, traten erst in der Ausgabe von 1824 zu den anderen hinzu.

Die Sukzession der Lieder, die Müller für den Abdruck des gesamten Zyklus festlegte, und die der Schubert'schen Lieder, die sich größtenteils aus der skizzierten individuellen Rezeptionsgeschichte ergeben, weichen demnach voneinander ab. Ob Müller von vornherein die Anlage aus der Publikation von 1824 vorschwebte, lässt sich, zumal er nicht vor partiellen Veröffentlichungen zurückscheute, nicht endgültig klären. Aus narratologisch-semiotischer Sicht lassen sich Argumente zugunsten der von ihm gewählten Reihenfolge finden. Oder, *ex negativo* ausgedrückt: Obwohl es bei der Rekonstruktion der Zyklizität manche Elemente – sowohl bei der Vertonung wie auch der Übersetzung – vertragen, umgestellt zu werden, so ergeben sich doch in manchen Fällen Inkonsistenzen, die, wenn sie sich häufen, die Stimmigkeit des gesamten Werkes zu unterwandern drohen: Dies ist auch bei Schuberts *Winterreise* der Fall, deren vollständige Aufführungen die oben präsentierte Abfolge der Publikation in „Abtheilungen“ wahren. Es seien nachfolgend nur einige wenige Beispiele genannt: „Das Irrlicht“ (bei Müller Nr. 18), das eine klare Todessehnsucht zum Ausdruck bringt, findet sich bei Schubert relativ früh (Lied Nr. 9) – man könnte fragen: zu früh? „Rast“ (Müller: Nr. 19, Schubert: Nr. 10) und Einsamkeit (Müller: Nr. 22, Schubert: Nr. 12) nehmen rückwirkend auf einen Sturm Bezug, der in „Der stürmische Morgen“ (Müller: Nr. 14) beschrieben wird. Bei Schubert hat sich dieser noch gar nicht ereignet, da das entsprechende Lied im Zyklus erst an 18. Stelle steht. In diesem Fall muss der Hörer ein entsprechendes Wetterereignis oder einen metaphorischen Bezug auf einen beliebigen oder inneren Sturm inferieren, der dem Leser von Wilhelm Müllers Zeilen bereits vor Augen geführt wurde. Nicht nur wird dieses konkrete Wetterereignis in der Narrationskette umgestellt. Auch das allmähliche Fremdwerden der Welt, das der Protagonist bei seiner Wanderung vollzieht, scheint in der Schubert'schen Vertonung nicht mehr ganz so vorbereitet wie in der Anordnung Müllers. Diese Fragen müssen jedoch der systematischen Werkexegese überlassen werden, die weiter unten nur angedeutet werden kann.

Hier bleibt nur noch eines anzumerken: In polysemiotischen, d. h. unterschiedliche Ausdrucksmittel miteinander kombinierenden Gattungen wie dem Kunstlied, sind die Elemente dieser Isotopieketten nicht nur auf der sprachlichen Ebene, sondern auch auf der musikalischen zu suchen. Text und Musik formen zusammen eine Einheit, die – in gestalttheoretischen Worten – übersummativ aus der Interaktion der beiden Ausdrucksformen hervorgeht. Isotopien werden von beiden Ausdrucksmitteln gestützt. Auch Kvam erkennt diesen Umstand an, wenn er schreibt, im Kunstlied interagierten lexiko-grammatikalische und musikalische kommunikative Mittel (vgl. Kvam 2014: 121). Gerade vor dieser Folie verbucht allerdings seine Unterscheidung von polysemiotischen und intersemiotischen Texten m. E. wenig heuristischen Mehrwert. Kvam schreibt:

Die Einheit von Text und Musik in Kunstliedern kann also grundsätzlich in zwei separate Texte in zwei verschiedenen semiotischen Systemen aufgebrochen werden. [...] Intersemiotische Texte sind von anderen poly- beziehungsweise multisemiotischen Texten dadurch zu trennen, dass sie eben aus zwei Textteilen bestehen, von denen jeder in sich ein selbständiger Text ist (Kvam 2014: 118).

Kunstlieder seien als ‚intersemiotische Texte‘ zu klassifizieren, da Text und Musik auch getrennt voneinander ein Eigenleben hätten. Wie zutreffend diese Aussage ist, hängt aber nicht zuletzt davon ab, was es bedeutet, dass Text und Musik „[potentiell] selbständig“ sind: Bedeutet das, dass sie getrennt voneinander rezipiert werden können? Haben Sie die gleiche Wirkung, unabhängig davon, ob sie alleine oder aufeinander bezogen rezipiert würden? Sind nur der Text, nur die Musik oder das komplette Lied in Bezug auf einen Rezeptionszweck, etwa die Unterhaltung, als gleichwertig und austauschbar anzusehen? Es ist jedenfalls mehr als fraglich, dass in Bezug auf Kunstwerke wie dem Kunstlied die beiden ‚Teiltexte‘ unabhängig existieren. Gemäß bestimmten Produktionsästhetiken könnte das Lied seinen Rang als polysemiotisches Kunstwerk gar nicht erst behaupten, wenn Text und Musik, die es ausmachen, separat voneinander unverändert ‚funktionsfähig‘ wären. Zwar existiert ein dem Kunstlied zugrundeliegendes Gedicht auch unabhängig von seiner Vertonung – allein schon wegen seiner chronologischen Vorgängigkeit. Man darf aber nicht vergessen, dass es in ganz unterschiedlichem Ausmaß ins kollektive Gedächtnis einer Kultur rücken kann, je nachdem ob es in rein sprachlicher oder in vertonter Form vorliegt. Die musikalische Interpretation des Gedichts kann ihren Bezug auf einen ‚Prätext‘ nicht leugnen und keine Eigenständigkeit für sich reklamieren. Kvam stützt seine These durch die Nennung eines sehr bekannten Beispiels aus dem deutschsprachigen Kunstliedrepertoire: Er behauptet, der Schu0bert'sche *Erk6nig* k6nne in einen selbständigen Text (Johann W. v. Goethes gleichnamige Textvorlage) und eine autonome Musik aufgeteilt werden und verweist auf die Klavierfassung des Stücks in der Bearbeitung Franz Liszts: Text und Musik funktionierten demnach auch losgel6st voneinander, und dies f6hre zur Subsumierung des Kunstlieds unter der Kategorie der ‚intersemiotischen Texte‘, so Kvams Schlussfolgerung. Hier sei dagegengehalten, dass jeder der drei zweifelsohne intertextuell bzw. intermedial aufeinander bezogenen ‚Texte‘ (das Gedicht, die Vertonung und die Instrumentalbearbeitung) eine eigene Identit6t besitzt und jeweils eigene Sinnprozesse in Gang setzt, die mit denen der anderen h6chstens Schnittmengen aufweist. Kvams Rede von gleichberechtigten ‚Teiltexten‘ suggeriert ein Nebeneinander, das bei der Produktion polysemiotischer Kommunikate – zumal im 6sthetischen Bereich – nicht die Regel ist. Das Nacheinander von textueller und musikalischer Produktion ist konstitutiv f6r die Vertonung *qua* Deutung der Textvorlage. Selbiges gilt f6r die Liszt'sche Instrumentalfassung: Der Klavierpart im Schubert'schen Lied ist nicht gleichzusetzen mit

Liszts Fassung, die als solche gerade eben einen bearbeitenden und damit auktorialen Eingriff notwendig machte, um als eigenständiges Werk Legitimation zu erhalten: u. a. nämlich die Inklusion der Gesangslinie in den Klavierpart und die virtuose und technisch hoch anspruchsvolle Modifikation des Notenmaterials (vgl. hierzu auch Brinkmann 2004: 93–95; Wiesli 2019).⁵ Die Wiedererkennbarkeit einer melodischen Gestalt (die überdies oft mit dem bekannten, ursprünglich mit ihr einhergehenden Text mental in Verbindung gebracht wird) darf nicht mit ästhetischer Eigenständigkeit eines Werkteils verwechselt werden. Von der Eigenständigkeit des Prätextes und der Instrumentalbearbeitung auf die Eigenständigkeit der Ausdrucksmittel im Kunstlied zu schließen, ist ebenso gewagt. Es stellt sich also die Frage nach dem Mehrwert der Kvam'schen Unterscheidung für translatorische Belange. Dass die Textvorlage auch unabhängig vom fertigen Kunstlied existiert, hat wenig bis gar keine Auswirkungen auf denjenigen, der an einer zielsprachigen Aufführung des Kunstlieds interessiert ist: Goethes *Erlkönig* und Müllers *Die Winterreise* machen eine andere translatorische Herangehensweise nötig als Schuberts Vertonungen. Letztgenannte stellen gerade aufgrund der Kookkurrenz von Text und Musik den Übersetzer vor schwer zu überwindende Hindernisse, die nur bedingt vergleichbar sind mit den Herausforderungen der Lyrikübersetzung. Wir möchten daher im Folgenden nicht auf die potenzielle Eigenständigkeit der Liedkonstituenten, sondern vielmehr auf die Beziehungen von Text und Musik im Kunstlied eingehen – und das v. a. in Bezug auf den Aufbau liedübergreifender Zyklizität.

3. Zyklizität und Translation

3.1. Methodologie

In einem auf die Zyklizität fokussierten translatorischen Ansatz interessiert nun vornehmlich die Frage, ob das (im hiesigen Fall französische) Derivat die gleichen oder andere Isotopien bedient, ob es dieselbe oder eine andere narrative Ordnung verfolgt als das Original. Es gilt also zunächst, das Einzellied und seine Einbettung im zielsprachigen Zyklus zu betrachten und sodann nach den Auswirkungen etwaiger Differenzen zwischen Original und Derivat zu fragen. Eine solche apriorische Bewertung des Ausgangstextes als Maß aller Dinge, als ‚heiliges‘ Original, ist nur eine der möglichen Präsuppositionen, die die Analyse des Zieltextes und den Vergleich mit dem Prätext leiten können. Wer die Beibehaltung des propositionalen Gehalts der ursprünglichen Aussagen an genau der gleichen Stelle wie im Original als ranghöchste Invariante berücksichtigt

5| Weitere hilfreiche Bemerkungen zu den Veränderungen, die an den Schubertliedern vorgenommen wurden, um eigenständige Klavierwerke darzustellen, findet man auch bei Scherers (1991), der sich die Bearbeitungen von César Franck anschaut.

wissen möchte, wird bei der Übersetzung musikgebundener Texte, die zahlreiche Faktoren wie Rhythmus, Reim, Phrasierung, Figuren und Tropen etc. berücksichtigen und daher auch manchmal von einer naheliegenden wörtlichen Übersetzung absehen muss, nicht immer befriedigt werden. Sieht man dagegen Original und Derivat als zwei zwar im Vergleich verbundene, aber doch eigenständige Komplexe an, dann ist bei dem Vergleich womöglich nicht einmal die Reihenfolge der Analyse wichtig. Die Werke stehen in ihrer Individualität da: Liederzyklen mit eigenen Isotopien und einer eigenen Hierarchisierung derselben. Ein deskriptiver Ansatz versucht, das Beste aus beiden Herangehensweisen miteinander zu kombinieren: Die Kenntnis des Prätextes wird, wo dies angebracht erscheint, dazu benutzt, die Entscheidungen des Übersetzers zu begründen, während etwaige Abweichungen von demselben nicht von vornherein abgelehnt, sondern zunächst konstatiert und schließlich in ihrer Stimmigkeit bewertet werden. Letztlich ist die Bewertung der Übersetzung – wie immer – das Produkt von Vermarktung (z. B. durch ihren Urheber) und der Erwartungshaltung des Rezipienten. Wer einen trotz Sprachwechsel authentischen Schubert ankündigt und wer einen solchen erwartet, wird in den meisten Fällen wohl enttäuschen bzw. enttäuscht werden.

Methodologisch wurde im vorliegenden Artikel folgendermaßen vorgegangen: Zunächst wurden die originalen Lieder der *Winterreise* einzeln durchgearbeitet und charakteristische Elemente auf sprachlicher und musikalischer Ebene notiert. Hierzu gehören auch die Analyse des semantischen Zwischenraums, der sich zwischen Sprache und Musik auftut: Fokussiert die Vertonung auf andere bzw. neue Bedeutungskomponenten der Textvorlage? Drängt sie andere in den Hintergrund? Wie verhalten sich sprachliche und musikalische Zeichen, die die gleiche Isotopieebene aufbauen, zueinander: Werden sie gleichzeitig vorgetragen oder sind sie hintereinandergeschaltet? Die Bereitschaft zur mehrmaligen Rezeption der Lieder und des Liederzyklus sind von eminenter Wichtigkeit für die Ermittlung und (stets auch subjektive) Hierarchisierung liedübergreifender Isotopien, die sowohl vom Text als auch von Gesang und Klavierpart gestützt werden. Da davon ausgegangen werden muss, dass nicht alle Isotopien in allen Liedern zum Ausdruck kommen und dass ihr Stellenwert im ganzen Zyklus erst mit der Analyse des letzten Liedes vollumfänglich bewertet werden kann, sind die Sammlung und Hierarchisierung als allmählich sich konsolidierende Ergebnisse auf allerhand Nachjustierungen angewiesen. Diese Hierarchisierung profitiert nicht zuletzt von der stetigen Auseinandersetzung mit der Sekundärliteratur zum Werk, aber auch von der Betrachtung möglichst vieler Übersetzungen des Werkes. Einem ähnlichen Prozedere folgt auch die Analyse der interessierenden Übersetzung(en): Der Interpret reagiert durch die Kenntnis des Originalwerks sensibel auf die Isotopien der neuen Textfassung, die die ursprünglich inferierten in bestimmtem Maße wieder aufgreifen, sie verändern,

ergänzen, abschwächen oder gänzlich tilgen. Jedenfalls verändert sich durch den Austausch des Textes – selbst bei gleichbleibender Musik – das Sinnpotenzial des gesamten polysemiotischen Komplexes.

Bei alledem sei betont, dass nachfolgend vor allem werkimmanente Größen im Vordergrund stehen, d. h. die syntaktische und semantische Struktur von Original und Derivaten, und weniger der Einsatz von Original und Übersetzung im Rahmen ihrer je zu spezifizierenden Aufführungssituation. Es wird hier also – womöglich verkürzend – pauschal von einer funktionskonstanten Übersetzung ausgegangen, d. h. von einer solchen, die auch in der Zielsprache eine gesangliche Aufführung (im kleinen Kreis⁶) anstrebt. Nur ganz punktuell wird auf die veränderten Aufführungsbedingungen eingegangen, deren systematische Aufarbeitung eines „funktional-pragmatischen Ansatzes“, wie ihn Kvam (2014: 115) in Aussicht stellt, bedürfte.

3.2. Dimensionen des Originals (Müller/Schubert)

Um die Auswirkungen der Übersetzung eines Liedes auf die zyklische Anlage des gesamten Werkes zu betrachten, soll im Folgenden das elfte Lied der *Winterreise* mit dem Titel „Frühlingstraum“ im Original sowie in der französischen Übersetzung von Bélanger näher betrachtet werden (s. Tab. 2). Bezüge auf andere Lieder, etwa auf das Lied Nr. 10 (s. u.), liegen in der Natur einer auf die Zyklizität fokussierenden Analyse. Je nachdem, welche Fassung des jeweiligen Liedes zitiert wird, findet sich nachfolgend entweder ein Bezug auf den deutschen oder auf den französischen Titel („Un rêve“). Die zuweilen von der heutigen Orthographie abweichende bzw. fehlerhafte Schreibung der französischen Verse folgt der Notenausgabe von Tobias Haslinger, Wien (ca. 1830). Veranschaulichen lassen sich die Herausforderungen der Übersetzung musikgebundener Texte und die womöglich dabei entstehenden syntaktischen und semantischen Verschiebungen übrigens stets auch dadurch, dass zum Vergleich eine zweite Übersetzung in der gleichen Zielsprache angeführt wird, die als Lesetext nicht zum gesanglichen Vortrag vorgesehen ist und daher meistens wörtlich(er) ausfällt.⁷ Zitiert wird daher auch eine französische Leseübersetzung der *Winterreise* von Pierre Mathé (s. Tab. 2, S. 218–219).

6| Kunstlieder – gerade die Schubert'schen – kamen ursprünglich vornehmlich in kleineren Gesellschaften zur Aufführung. Für Newmark/Minors (2013) sind denn auch „intimate and personal“ die zwei zentralen Gattungsmerkmale. Heute erfreut sich dagegen auch ein größeres Publikum an dieser ‚intimen Gattung‘.

7| Herbert Schneider (2018: 257) dokumentiert den Fall einer 1903 besorgten französischen Ausgabe von Chamissos und Schumanns Liederzyklus *Frauenliebe und -leben*, in welcher der Autor Raymond Duval der sangbaren – und das bedeutet oft: freieren – französischen Version eine Leseübersetzung voranstellte, um den Lesern und Sängern der Stücke das Verständnis des Originals zu sichern.

Tabelle 2: Vertonter Originaltext von „Frühlingstraum“ (Nr. 11) und dessen französische Übersetzung durch Bélanger und Mathé

<p>Wilhelm Müller / Franz Schubert <i>Winterreise</i> Nr. 11: „Frühlingstraum“</p>	<p>Bélanger <i>Le Voyage d'Hiver</i> N° 11 : „Un rêve !“</p>	<p>Pierre Mathé <i>Winterreise</i> 11. „Rêve de printemps“</p>
<p>¹Ich träumte von bunten Blumen, So wie sie wohl blühen im Mai, Ich träumte von grünen Wiesen, : Von lustigem Vogelgeschrei. : </p> <p>⁵Und als die Hähne krächten, Da ward mein Auge wach; : Da war es kalt und finster, Es schrieten die Raben vom Dach. : </p> <p> : Doch an den Fensterscheiben ¹⁰Wer mahlte die Blätter da? : Ihr lacht wohl über den Träumer, : Der Blumen im Winter sah? : </p>	<p>¹Mon rêve faisait éclorre des fleurs que berçait le zéphir : loiseau, plus joyeux encore, semblait s'éveiller, s'éveiller pour jouir ; ⁵plus heureux, il chantait le plaisir.</p> <p>Au bruit du vent d'orage mes yeux se sont ouverts : et cette vaine image fait place aux rigueurs des hivers, ¹⁰et du corbeau sauvage la voix retentit dans les airs.</p> <p>Ainsi qu'un doux mystère, ce rêve a troublé mon cœur, s'il n'est qu'une chimère, ¹⁵je garde touchante erreur. Souvent l'erreur sait nous plaire ; souvent son attrait flatteur vaut mieux qu'un lointain bonheur.</p>	<p>Je rêvais de fleurs aux mille couleurs Qui comme elles fleurissent si bien en mai ; Je rêvais de vertes prairies De joyeux piaillagement d'oiseaux.</p> <p>Et quand le coq chanta, Alors mes yeux s'ouvrirent ; Il faisait froid et sombre, Et les corbeaux criaient sur le toit.</p> <p>Et pourtant sur les vitres de la fenêtre, Qui avait peint ces feuilles ? Vous riez bien du rêveur, Qui voyait des fleurs en hiver ?</p>

<p>Wilhelm Müller / Franz Schubert <i>Winterreise</i> Nr. 11: „Frühlingstraum“</p>	<p>Bélanger <i>Le Voyage d'Hiver</i> N° 11 : „Un rêve !“</p>	<p>Pierre Mathé <i>Winterreise</i> 11. „Rêve de printemps“</p>
<p>Ich träumte von Lieb' um Liebe, Von einer schönen Maid, ¹⁵Von Herzen und von Küssen, : Von Wonn' [Schubert: Wonne] und Seligkeit. : </p> <p>Und als die Hähne krähten, Da ward mein Herze wach; : Nun sitz' ich hier alleine ²⁰Und denke dem Traume nach. : </p> <p> : Die Augen schließ' ich wieder, Noch schlägt das Herz so warm. : Wann grünt ihr Blätter am Fenster? : Wann halt' ich dich [Schubert: mein], Liebchen, im Arm? : </p>	<p>En rêve, toujours plus tendre, ²⁰tu m'aimes sans détour : ton coeur qui sait mentendre promet fortuné, fortuné retour à l'espoir d'un fidele amour.</p> <p>Un cri soudain s'élançe ... ²⁵mon coeur frémit d'effroi dans l'ombre et le silence ne reste plus rien de toi ... et seul sans espérance, je pleure, tout bas, sur moi.</p> <p>³⁰Pour me tromper moi-même je ferme encor les yeux ... hélas ! rêve que j'aime n'est plus venu des cieux ! honneur d'amour, bien suprême, ³⁵sourit un moment à nos voeux c'est là ce qu'on dit être heureux !</p>	<p>Je rêvais d'amour partagé, D'une belle jeune fille, De cœurs et de baisers, De plaisir et de bonheur.</p> <p>Et quand le coq chanta, Alors mon coeur s'éveilla. À présent je suis là, seul, Et je songe au rêve.</p> <p>Je referme les yeux, Mon coeur bat encore si fort. Quand, feuilles, verdirez-vous à ma fenêtre ? Quand tiendrai-je en mes bras ma bien-aimée ?</p>

Im Lied „Frühlingstraum“ wird eine klar umrissene Situation geschildert: Nach langer von Enttäuschung und Trauer geprägter Wanderung „auf unwirthbarem Wege“ (Nr. 10, V. 4) findet das lyrische Ich – darüber gibt das vorangehende Lied „Rast“ Auskunft – Obdach „in eines Köhlers engem“ und wohl leerstehenden „Haus“ (Nr. 10, V. 9–10). Dort legt er sich zur Ruhe und begibt sich in einen Dämmerzustand, der zuweilen abrupt zwischen friedlichem Schlaf und verstörtem Wachsein changiert. Nimmt man die Strophenabfolge wörtlich, wechseln sich zwei Traumsequenzen mit zwei Wachphasen ab.⁸ Das hier interessierende Lied setzt nun mit dem Traum des Protagonisten ein, der eine nicht nur visuell, sondern auch akustisch fassbare Frühlingsidylle zeichnet: bunte Maiblumen, grüne Wiesen und lustiges Vogelgezwitscher (V. 1–4) weisen diesen wohligen Traum aus, der in auffälligem Kontrast zum bisher Gesungenen steht. Das beschriebene Glück ist allerdings nicht von langer Dauer. Den Beginn der zweiten Strophe markiert ein brutales Erwachen, induziert durch das morgendliche Geschrei der Hähne, die draußen mit den Raben auf dem Dach eine aufdringliche Geräuschkulisse produzieren. Die Plötzlichkeit des Erwachens wird abgelöst durch das kontinuierliche Gekreische der Vögel, die bei Schubert nicht zuletzt in den auskomponierten Verswiederholungen ihren Ausdruck findet. Hier nach beschreibt die dritte Strophe den liminalen Zustand eines erneut Einschlafenden: Das im zweiten Vierzeiler schreckhaft geöffnete Auge („Da ward mein Auge wach“, V. 6) entspannt sich wieder. Gewissermaßen aus dem Augenwinkel vernimmt der Protagonist die sich blätter- und blumenförmig am Fenster windenden Eiskristalle. Bevor er erneut einschläft, entlocken sie ihm den auf sich selbst bezogenen sarkastischen Gedanken, einem „Träumer, // der Blumen im Winter sah“ (V. 11–12), könne verdienstermaßen nur Spott zuteilwerden. Schließlich hatte das wahnhaft getriebene lyrische Ich bereits im vierten Lied „Erstarrung“ vergebens nach den Blumen und dem Gras Ausschau gehalten. Dort heißt es:

Wo find' ich eine Blüthe,
 Wo find' ich grünes Gras?
 Die Blumen sind erstorben,
 Der Rasen sieht so blaß.

(Nr. 4: „Erstarrung“, V. 9–12)

Der Traum vom Frühling ist kein ungewöhnliches Motiv im romantischen Liedschaffen, das den Lauf der Jahreszeiten als Blaupause für den Fortgang der zusammengeschlossenen Lieder verwendet. Zu *Die schöne Müllerin* (1823,

8] Da die Verbformen bis zur fünften Strophe allesamt im Präteritum stehen, könnte man aber auch von einer nachträglichen Erzählsituation ausgehen, in welcher der Protagonist lediglich in unterbrochener Weise einen zusammenhängenden Traum beschreibt.

D 795), einem früheren, ebenfalls auf der Grundlage von Gedichten Wilhelm Müllers geschaffenen Liederzyklus von Schubert, bemerkt Brinkmann:

Einige der großen Liederzyklen zwischen Schubert und Schönberg ereignen sich vor der Folie der Jahreszeiten. Müller/Schuberts *Schöne Müllerin*, ein Zyklus, der nach des Dichters Prolog „im Winter zu lesen“ ist, nutzt die Wintermetapher zur Darstellung eines unabwendbaren Endes, antizipiert jedoch gleichzeitig in traumhaft unrealistischen Visionen ein Wiedererwachen im Frühling (Brinkmann 2004: 65).

Im genannten Liederzyklus, der tatsächlich mehrere Jahreszeiten durchläuft, stellt der Frühlingstraum einen Vorausgriff dar; er ist Ausdruck einer bei aller Unbestimmtheit zu Recht erwarteten Zukunft. Ganz anders verhält es sich mit dem Frühlingstraum in der *Winterreise*. Die erträumten Wonnen sind als prototypische Insignien eines frohen Lenzes nicht Teil einer für den Protagonisten ohnehin undenkbar gewordenen Zukunft. Vielmehr repräsentieren sie schmerzliche Erinnerung an eine für immer abhanden gekommene Vergangenheit. Dies geht nicht nur aus dem Lied selbst und, genauer, aus der Parallelführung der drei ersten und drei letzten Strophen hervor, sondern aus den auffälligen lexematischen und konzeptuellen Bezügen des genannten Lieds auf vorangegangene Verse: Die „bunten Blumen, // wie sie wohl blühten im Mai“ (V. 1–2) evozieren die ersten Verse der *Winterreise*, wo es in der ersten Strophe des ersten Liedes heißt: „Der Mai war mir gewogen // Mit manchem Blumenstrauß“ (Nr. 1: „Gute Nacht“, V. 3–4). Dieser anaphorische Verweis bindet den Traum damit an das die Reise überhaupt erst initiiierende Trennungstrauma zurück. Die Grünen Wiesen spielen auf die einst „grüne Flur“, das „grüne Gras“ und „den Rasen“ im Lied „Erstarrung“ (Nr. 4, V. 4, 10 und 12) an, die der durch die Winterlandschaft wandelnde Protagonist nun unter der Schneedecke vermutet und mit seinen heißen Tränen freizulegen versucht. Und auch das „lustige Vogelgeschrei“ findet sich bereits im neunten Lied der Sammlung beschrieben, wo das lyrische Ich, den Tag seiner damaligen Ankunft in der Stadt seines Liebchens beschreibend, singt: „An deinen blanken Fenstern sangen // Die Lerch’ und Nachtigall im Streit“ (Nr. 9: „Rückblick“). Bereits in diesen Liedern beschreiben Blumen, Wiesen und Vogelgezwitscher – unter anderem an den Verbformen im Präteritum abzulesen – keine präsenten oder freudig erwarteten Naturphänomene, sondern lediglich Erinnerungen an die Zeit mit dem geliebten Mädchen. Sie werden in ihren jeweiligen Liedern bereits von der tristen winterlichen Gegenwart eingeholt und ersetzt: Die Blumen durch den „Schnee“ bzw. die „weißen Matten“ (Nr. 1: „Gute Nacht“, V. 8 und 15), die Wiese durch „Eis und Schnee“ (Nr. 4: „Erstarrung“, V. 6) und die lieblich zwitschernden Vögel durch unbarmherzige Krähen (Nr. 9: „Rückblick“, V. 7–8). Die dermaßen thematisch miteinander verquickten Lieder erhellen sich in ihren Vor- und Rückbezügen

gegenseitig: Was vorher krampfhaft umklammerte Erinnerung war (Nr. 9: „Rückblick“, V. 13–20), ist nunmehr – da der Wanderer immer mehr der Welt abhandenkommt – ferner und unwillkürlich hereintretender Traum, über dessen Inhalt und Fortgang er nur sehr bedingt verfügt.

Kommen wir zurück zum Text des elften Lieds (s. Tab. 2, S. 219–220): Der in den ersten drei Strophen vollzogene Dreischritt von Traum, abruptem Aufwachen und Halbschlaf vollzieht sich in den nächsten drei Strophen in kongruenter Weise noch einmal: In der vierten Strophe ist das Liebesglück mit einer „schönen Maid“, mit der Liebkosungen ausgetauscht werden, Gegenstand des Traumes. Durch die Parallelschaltung der Strophen komplementieren sich Natur- und häusliche Idylle zu einem hinterhergefühlten, jedoch nicht wieder erreichbaren Zustand unge-trübter Zweisamkeit. Das Aufschrecken in der fünften Strophe ereignet sich in der vollständigen anaphorischen Wiederaufnahme des bereits die zweite Strophe einleitenden Verses „Und als die Hähne krähten“. Der Protagonist wird sich seines Dämmerzustands und damit der Differenz zwischen nur Geträumtem und seiner eigenen einsamen Präsenz bewusst, die er nun nicht nur mit dem Auge verifizieren, sondern auch mit „wachem“ Herzen (V. 18) fühlen kann. Obgleich ihm die Torheit seines Tuns bewusst ist, ist er noch nicht bereit, diese seine Realität zu akzeptieren und versucht, sich erneut unter die Träumer zu begeben: „Und denke dem Traume nach. // Die Augen schließ’ ich wieder, // Noch schlägt das Herz so warm“ (V. 20–22). Ob ihm dies gelingt, ist nicht genau zu sagen. Sein Lied beschließt er mit einem erneuten Verweis auf die Eisfigurationen am Fenster: „Wann grünt ihr Blätter am Fenster? // Wann halt’ ich mein Liebchen im Arm?“ (V. 23–24) – Fragen, die nicht in die Zukunft weisen. Fragen, deren Antwort der Träumer ganz genau kennt, im Traum aber möglichst aufgeschoben wissen möchte. Der Zuhörer wird wie das lyrische Ich in der Schwebelage gehalten.

Noch vor dem Text ist die Musik die erste Trägerin der eben vorgestellten Isotopien: Dem Hörer muss sich angesichts der ersten Takte etwas verwundert zeigen, die da – entgegen der Thematik einer unglücklichen Trennung, die das gesamte Werk bestimmt – in hellstem A-Dur, gebundenen Achtelarpeggien, beschwingtem 6/8-Takt sowie tänzelnder, geradezu pastoraler Siciliano-Rhythmik und im *pianissimo* daherkommen (s. Abb. 1). In dem kurzen Klaviervorspiel



Abbildung 1: Schubert, *Winterreise*, „Frühlingstraum“, T. 1–4 (Schubert 1827/1979: 150)

wird nicht nur der freudige Sprung einer großen Sexte, sondern durch die Triller auch das Vogelgezwitscher vorweggenommen. Verlassen ist der Binärrhythmus des schweren oder raschen Schritts eines rastlosen Wanderers, der viele der zuvor gehörten Lieder bestimmte. Im Zuhörer entsteht, nicht zuletzt auf Grundlage seiner Kenntnis ähnlicher Passagen im selben Werk, beim selben oder anderen Komponisten, die Vorahnung einer heiteren Situation. Eingelöst wird diese Erwartung durch den Einsatz der Gesangsstimme, die, zwar erzählend, aber doch in unmittelbarer Involviertheit den wohligen Traum referiert.

Damit ist die notwendige Fallhöhe erreicht, die der mit dem Kreischen der Hähne abrupt hereinbrechenden Realität eine noch größere Brutalität verleiht. Die Wendungen „und als“, „da ward“ bzw. „da war“ zu Beginn der Verse in Strophe 2 machen die Plötzlichkeit des Aufwachens genauso fassbar wie der radikale Wechsel der musikalischen Faktur: Nun überwiegt die entfernte Tonart e-Moll (Moll-Dominante von A-Dur), das Tempo ist rascher (Anweisung: „schnell“), die vormals durchgängige Linie ist einem Staccato von um auffällige Dissonanzen erweiterten Akkorden im *mezzoforte* gewichen. Die Hähne und Raben sind in den in einem übermäßigen Dominantakkord eingebetteten und mit einem *sforzato* ansetzenden Oktavtriole förmlich hörbar (s. Abb. 2). Mit dem Ende der zweiten Strophe findet sich – nicht zuletzt über ein Oktavtremolo über dem Orgelpunkt a erreicht – die in Bezug auf die Tonika gleichnamige Molltonart gefestigt, über welche die Rückkehr zum A-Dur des Traumes später leichtfällt.

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's 'Winterreise', 'Frühlingstraum', measures 15-18. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Schnell'. The lyrics are: 'Und als die Häh - ne kräh - ten, da ward mein Au - ge wach,'. The piano part features a dominant chord with an octave triplet of notes marked 'f' and 'sf'.

Abbildung 2: Schubert, *Winterreise*, „Frühlingstraum“, T. 15–18 (Schubert 1827/1979: 150f.)

Die Übergangsphase des Halbschlafs entscheidet sich aber noch nicht zwischen den Tongeschlechtern. Sie beginnt im Klavierpart mit der Grundtonart. In langsamem Tempo und wiederum im *pianissimo* bilden beide Hände durch sukzessives Anspielen von Liegetönen feine Arpeggien in warmen Tonika- und Subdominantklängen (A-Dur, D-Dur) (s. Abb. 3, S. 224). Der erste einsichtige Verweis auf den lächerlichen Träumer bevorzugt dagegen die gleichnamigen Molltonarten (a-Moll, d-Moll).

Nach kurzer Überleitung ist aber das A-Dur und damit die beschwingte Traumwelt erneut erreicht. Im Wesentlichen folgen die Strophen 4 bis 6 nun einer



Abbildung 3: Schubert, *Winterreise*, „Frühlingstraum“, T. 27–30 (Schubert 1827/1979: 150f.)

analogen Vertonung. Allein die letzte Strophe entfernt sich nun vollständig und endgültig von der Dur-Grundtonart. Mag der Leser der Müller'schen Gedichte noch eine gewisse Ungewissheit hegen, ob der Traum nicht doch Vorwegnahme eines kommenden Frühlingserwachens ist, erlangt der Hörer des sich im Diminuendo und der Moll-Tonika verlierenden Schubertlieds die traurige Gewissheit einer im Liederzyklus immer greifbarer werdenden Resignation.

3.3. Dimensionen des Derivats (Schubert/Bélanger)

Die Situation, in die sich der Wanderer in Müllers und Schuberts *Winterreise* begeben hat, dürfte nun klar sein. Kommen wir nun zu Bélangers französische Übertragung. Über den Autor zahlreicher Übersetzungen vertonter Lyrik ist wenig bekannt. Selbst sein Vorname bleibt noch ein Rätsel. Fertonani spricht von einem gewissen „Édouard (?)“ Bélanger und legt dar, dass es sich hierbei vermutlich um ein Pseudonym handelt (vgl. Fertonani 2007: 149), während Lieven D'Hulst (2000) „Pierre-Jean de Bélanger“ als den Urheber der Übersetzungen vermutet. Die Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) weist viele Übersetzungen von musikgebundenen Texten jener Zeit einem gewissen „Antoine“ Bélanger (1804–1878) zu, der auf den Titelblättern der Ausgaben allerdings nie mit vollem Namen erwähnt wird.⁹

Bélangers Version steht wie das Original in der Versform. Prosaübersetzungen von Liedern waren im Frankreich jener Jahre durchaus mit gleichem Recht anzutreffen (vgl. Schneider 2018: 258). Rein äußerlich sticht allerdings sofort ins Auge, dass Bélangers Übersetzung länger ist als das deutschsprachige Original. Statt der ursprünglichen 24 Verse weist seine Fassung 36 Verse auf (s. Tab. 2, S. 218). Diese erhöhte Anzahl ist darauf zurückzuführen, dass der französische Autor die musikalisch motivierten Wiederholungen der Müller'schen Verse in Schuberts Vertonung – hier in Anlehnung an Konventionen der musikalischen Notation mit den Zeichen ||: und :|| markiert – mit neuem Text versieht. Dies

⁹ Vgl. Antoine Bélanger (1804–1878) – *Œuvres musicales de cet auteur*, <https://data.bnf.fr/fr/documents-by-rdt/13481171/tum/page1> (letzter Zugriff: 19.10.2023).

entspricht einer globalen translatorischen Strategie, die er auf sämtliche Lieder der *Winterreise* anwendet. Mit ihr bietet sich ihm schlagartig mehr Raum für seine Übersetzungslösungen als beispielsweise anderen Übersetzern, die in der Wiederholungsstruktur ein charakteristisches und damit auch in den Zieltexten erhaltenswertes Element betrachten. Man kann unschwer ahnen, dass mit diesen Expansionen überall Elemente Eingang in den zielsprachigen Liederzyklus finden, die im Original nicht vorhanden oder nur rudimentär vorgezeichnet sind, die aber auch potenziell der Kohärenz der Lieder zugutekommen können. Die 36 Verse der französischen Fassung (siehe Tab. 2, S. 218) werden nicht, wie man meinen könnte, zu Strophen mit gleicher Verszahl umgruppiert (etwa neun mal vier Verse), sondern die ursprüngliche Stropheneinteilung bleibt erhalten. Dadurch ergeben sich, da die Wiederholungen unterschiedlich viele Verse umfassen und an verschiedenen Stellen angebracht sind, im Zieltext Strophen unterschiedlicher Länge (5–6–7–5–6–7). Auch das Reimschema regelt die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Strophe in eindeutiger Weise. Der Kreuzreim in Bélangers Fassung ersetzt Müllers halben Kreuzreim (ABCB ...) und führt damit sogar weniger reimfähige Endsilben ein als das Original. Auch das ist ein Übersetzungsverfahren, das bei Bélanger durchgehend zur Anwendung kommt. Man muss hierbei anmerken, dass die Erhöhung der Verszahl um 12 Verse Bélanger das Auffinden geeigneter Reimsilben für das Auszdrückende etwas leichter macht als das enge Korsett einer gleichen und damit sehr verdichteten Verszahl. Bélanger nutzt überdies die Fähigkeiten des Französischen zur Verschleifung von End- und Anfangsvokal (hier: „vaine_image“, V. 8; „rève_a“, V. 13; „touchante_erreur“, V. 15; „l'ombre_et“, V. 26; „ferme_encor“, V. 31), nimmt bei so mancher Wendung Fehlbetonungen in Kauf (z. B. „joyeux“, V. 3) und scheut auch nicht vor Notenaufspaltungen zurück, um auf diese Weise mehr Silben als im Original unterzubringen (bei „retour“, V. 22).¹⁰

Auf inhaltlicher Ebene muss – übrigens nicht nur in diesem Lied – eine erhöhte Abstraktheit der französischen Fassung konstatiert werden. Dies fängt bei der narrativen Verortung des Traumes an, für die sich in der deutschen Vorlage wesentliche Anhaltspunkte im vorangehenden Lied „Rast“ finden (s. Tab. 3, S. 226).

Anders als bei der deutschen Vorlage, in der sich das lyrische Ich ob seiner bisher unbemerkten Müdigkeit wundert (Nr. 10: „Rast“, V. 1–2) und „in eines

10| Ein Übersetzer der *Winterreise* ins Englische, Thomas A. Beavitt, nutzt Melismen im Original, um mehr Text unterzubringen, und legitimiert diese Entscheidung mit der Johnson et al. (2013: 3, 10–14) attribuierten These, ein syllabisches Text-Musik-Verhältnis wäre dem Verständnis des Textes und überdies der Singbarkeit der Passage zu-träglich (vgl. Beavitt 2018, 86f.). Dem kann aber nicht vorbehaltlos zugestimmt werden, sind doch Verständlichkeit und Singbarkeit auch Produkte anderer musikalischer Parameter wie Tempo, Tonhöhe, Lautstärke etc., die wenig mit der Textverteilung zu tun haben. Im schnellen Tempo lassen sich bspw. Melismen oft leichter singen und vernehmen als ein syllabischer Text.

Tabelle 3: Vertonter Originaltext von „Rast“ (Nr. 10) und dessen französische Übersetzung durch Bélanger und Mathé

<p>Wilhelm Müller / Franz Schubert <i>Winterreise</i> Nr. 10: „Rast“</p>	<p>Bélanger <i>Le Voyage d'Hiver</i> N° 10: „Le repos.“</p>	<p>Pierre Mathé <i>Winterreise</i> 10. „Repos“</p>
<p>¹Nun merk ich erst, wie müd' ich bin, Da ich zur Ruh' mich lege; Das Wandern hielt mich munter hin Auf unwirthbarem Wege. ⁵Die Füße fragen nicht nach Rast, Es war zu kalt zum Stehen, : Der Rücken fühlte keine Last, Der Sturm half fort mich wehen. : </p>	<p>¹D'où vient que ce profond repos m'accable davantage ? au terme désiré des maux pourquoi perdre courage ? ⁵Hélas ! quand je voulais te fuir ; j'avais rêvé d'avance le doux espoir de revenir tu brises l'espérance. Moi seul, ainsi, je dois souffrir ¹⁰de ta cruelle absence !</p>	<p>Je vois seulement maintenant combien je suis las, Alors que je m'allonge pour me reposer : La marche m'a maintenu plein d'entrain Sur un chemin hostile. Mes pieds ne réclamaient pas le repos, Il faisait trop froid pour s'arrêter ; Mon dos ne sentait pas la charge, La tempête me poussait en avant.</p>
<p>In eines Köhlers engem Haus ¹⁰Hab' Obdach ich gefunden; Doch meine Glieder ruhn nicht aus: So brennen ihre Wunden. Auch du, mein Herz, im Kampf und Sturm So wild und so verwegen, : ¹⁵Fühlst in der Still' erst deinen Wurm Mit heißem Stich sich regen! : </p>	<p>Asile heureux, ta douce paix ne m'offre plus de charmes : je trouve encore nouveaux regrets qui font couler mes larmes. ¹⁵Le calme fuit toujours ce coeur qui souffre, qui murmure, qui rêve à son ancien bonheur, Repos fait ma torture. ²⁰déchire ma blessure !</p>	<p>Dans une petite maison de charbonnier J'ai trouvé refuge ; Pourtant mes membres ne peuvent se détendre Tant brûlent leurs blessures. Toi aussi, mon cœur, dans le combat et la tempête, Si sauvage et si audacieux, C'est seulement dans le calme que tu sens le ver Qui, avec une brûlante piqûre, se met à remuer.</p>

Köhlers engem Haus“ Unterschlupf findet (V. 9), besingt in der französischen Version der plötzlich ruhende Protagonist allgemein einen nicht näher definierten und daher womöglich auch im Freien befindlichen Zufluchtsort („*asile heureux*“; Nr. 10: „*Le repos*“, V. 11). Die Ruhestätte wird in beiden Fassungen auch abweichend charakterisiert: „beengt“ (V. 9) im ersten und friedvoll süß („*ta douce paix*“, V. 11) im zweiten Fall. Wie auch an anderen Stellen impliziert oder tilgt Bélanger damit die ohnehin nur sehr spärlichen Hinweise auf die den Liedern konkret zugrundeliegende Narration. Auch lenken die einleitenden Verse des französischen Lieds, „*D’où vient que ce profond repos // M’accable davantage ?*“ [dt.: „Wie kommt es, dass mich *diese* tiefe Ruhe // noch mehr belastet?“] (Nr. 10: „*Le repos*“, V. 1–2), die durch Anbringung des Demonstrativpronomens „*ce*“ einen Rückbezug auf das wiederum unmittelbar davor geschaltete Lied provozieren, die Interpretation in eine ganz besondere Richtung. Dort war die Rede vom Tod als dem Ende aller Dinge. Gestärkt wird diese Gleichsetzung von Ruhe und Tod in der französischen Fassung mehr als in der deutschen, etwa mit der Wendung „*au terme désiré des maux // Pourquoi perdre courage ?*“ [dt. „am ersehnten Ende des Übels // Warum den Mut verlieren?“] (Nr. 10: „*Le repos*“, V. 3–4).

Das hier näher betrachtete Lied übertitelt Bélanger lediglich mit „*Un rêve*“ [dt.: „Ein Traum“] und verschleiert damit den Bezug auf den Frühling, der in der deutschen Vorlage konstitutiv ist. Auch den Verweis auf den Mai und den hierüber konstruierbaren Rückbezug auf das erste Lied der *Winterreise* übergeht der französische Übersetzer. In den fünf statt vier Versen, die diese Traumstrophe bilden, kommen dennoch ähnliche frühlingshafte Naturschönheiten zur Sprache: Blumen („*des fleurs*“), die milde Brise („*le zéphire*“) und ein Vogel („*l’oiseau*“).

Dem Träumenden, der im Original gemäß der dreimaligen Anbringung des einleitenden „*ich träumte*“ (Nr. 11: „*Frühlingstraum*“, V. 1, 3 und 13, s. Tab. 2, S. 218) klarer Agens ist, kommt in der französischen Version von vornherein eine passive Rolle zu. Hier ist es der personifizierte Traum, der die imaginierten Blumen zum Blühen bringt („*Mon rêve faisait éclore*“, V. 1). An diesem sprachlichen Mittel lässt sich bereits vorausahnen, was der *rondo*-artigen Struktur des Liedes (Traum–Realität–Traum–Realität) in der französischen Fassung ein Ende bereitet: nämlich, dass der Träumende nicht Herr seines Traums ist und nicht nach Belieben in die onirische Welt abgleiten oder dort verweilen kann. Bei Bélanger ist auch klar, dass es sich bei der vierten Strophe um einen separaten, noch liebevolleren Traum handelt („*En rêve toujours plus tendre*“, V. 19). Eindeutiger als der deutsche Prätext, in der die Geliebte wieder explizit angesprochen ist, kommt hier zum Ausdruck, dass „*Wonne und Seligkeit*“ (Nr. 11: „*Frühlingstraum*“, V. 16) sich nur auf der Grundlage einer erwiderten Liebe einstellen können. Thematisiert wird hier und im Verlauf des Liedes auch an mehreren Stellen das *per definitionem* in die Zukunft gerichtete Konzept der Hoffnung

(„Promet fortuné, fortuné retour // à l'espoir d'un fidèle amour“ [dt.: ‚Verspricht glückselige, glückselige Rückkehr // zur Hoffnung eines treu Liebenden‘], V. 22–23; „Et seul sans espérance“ [dt.: ‚Und allein ohne Hoffnung‘], V. 28), das in der deutschen Fassung in diesem Lied keine sprachliche Entsprechung findet.

Der Grund für das Aufschrecken von dem ersten Traume ist bei Bélanger nicht der Hahnenschrei, sondern das stürmische Toben des Winterwinds („Au bruit du vent d'orage“, V. 6). Nun könnte man dem Übersetzer diese Änderung des propositionalen Gehalts der Aussage vorwerfen, zumal die wiederholten Bezüge auf Vögel (Hähne und Raben) liedintern und liedübergreifend der Isotopie im Original den Wert eines charakteristischen Elements verleihen. Die Umstände der Übersetzung haben Bélanger dazu bewogen, ein anderes Element aus dem Katalog der geträumten Naturphänomene, nämlich den in pastoralen Gedichten oft heraufbeschworenen Zephirwind, heranzuziehen und in der zweiten Strophe durch den Sturm als eine analoge winterliche Manifestationsform zu ersetzen. Nicht die angesprochenen Vögel, sondern die Wetterphänomene stehen nun kompensierend als Repräsentanten ihrer Jahreszeit in den jeweiligen Strophen ein. Traum und Realität sind, wenn auch in den Details vom Original abweichend, auch in der französischen Fassung klar zu unterscheiden. (Der Wechsel des Bildes erscheint hier jedenfalls nicht so problematisch wie in der Übersetzung des zweiten Lieds „Die Wetterfahne“, in der Bélanger – wie auch der neue Titel „Soyez Heureux!“ [dt.: „Seien Sie glücklich!“] aufzeigt – jeglichen Bezug auf das titelgebende und für die musikalische Faktur des Liedes so zentrale Objekt auf dem Haus der Geliebten tilgt und durch das Bild vom im Winde wehenden Schilf ersetzt.) Dass es Bélanger in „Un rêve“ nicht auf den genauen Wortlaut, sondern eben auf die Kohärenz des Bildwechsels ankommt, bringt er in seiner Übersetzung denn auch explizit zum Ausdruck: „Et cette vaine image // Fait place aux rigneurs des hivers“ (V. 8–9, ‚Und dieses eitle Bild // weicht den Unbarmherzigkeiten des Winters‘). Die auf sechs (anstatt der originalen vier) Verse erweiterte realitätsbezogene Strophe schließt mit der Nennung der laut kreischenden Raben, die allgemein zum Stimmungsbild passen, aufgrund des fehlenden Bezugs zu den Hähnen und dem Wegfall der textuellen Wiederholungen allerdings an Prominenz einbüßen. Der Schrei, der den zweiten Traum jäh beendet („Un cri soudain s'élance ...“, V. 24) muss denn auch nicht mehr ein tierischer sein und kann womöglich auch vom Erwachenden selbst stammen.

Während in der Vorlage die dritte Strophe den Eisfigurationen am Fenster als schwachem Abglanz der Frühlingsblumen gewidmet ist und Text und Musik ein allmähliches Abgleiten in die Traumwelt beschreiben, reflektiert das lyrische Ich über sieben Verse hinweg bereits ganz luzide die willkommene Illusionshaftigkeit des getätigten Traumes. Obwohl dieser das Herz verwirrt („a troublé mon cœur“, V. 13), ein Hirngespinnst („une chimère“, V. 14), ja, einen Fehler („erreur“, V. 15) darstellt, ist er ihm doch ein süßes Geheimnis („doux mystère“, V. 12) und eine

ergreifende Täuschung („touchante erreur“, V. 15). Die Strophe beschließt er mit der allgemeinen und ins Gesetzmäßig-Sentenziöse abgleitenden Beobachtung:

Souvent l'erreur sait nous plaire ;
 Souvent son attrait flatteur
 Vaut mieux qu'un lo[i]ntain bonheur.

(Nr. 11: „Un rêve“, V. 16–18)

(„Oft weiß der Irrtum uns zu gefallen; // Oft ist sein Reiz schmeichelhaft // Er ist uns lieber als ein entferntes Glück.“)

Dieses Vorgehen bleibt bei Bélanger kein punktuell Verfahren, sondern wird zu einer globalen Translationsstrategie, denn Wendungen wie diese finden sich über den ganzen Liederzyklus verteilt. Wohl als unmittelbares Produkt der textuellen Erweiterungen zu werten, entfernen sie sich von der Singularität eines, wie Fischer-Diskau (1976/1985: 298f.) den Zyklus von Müller und Schubert umschrieb, „intime[n] Tagebuch[s] der Seele“ und erheben diesen stattdessen zu einem Monument geteilter leidvoller Erfahrung. Anstatt sich als Verspotteter von der Gesellschaft abzugrenzen („Ihr lacht wohl über den Träumer“, V. 11) – eine Isotopie, die nachfolgende Lieder wie „Der Wegweiser“ (Nr. 20) zunehmend stützen –, begreift sich der singende Protagonist hier (und auch an anderer Stelle) als Teil eines konstruierten empathisch verbundenen Kollektivs („Souvent l'erreur sait *nous* plaire“, V. 16).

Anzuführen ist in diesem Kontext auch Bélangers Tendenz, religiöse Elemente in die Übersetzung einfließen zu lassen. Im dritten Lied des deutschen Zyklus besingt der Protagonist lediglich seine Tränen, die ihm „glühend heiß“ (Nr. 3: „Gefrorne Tränen“, V. 10) aus der Brust flößen. In der französischen Fassung lässt Bélanger das gesamte Lied mit neuem Text wiederholen, sodass ihm für seine Fassung doppelt so viele Verse (nämlich 24 statt 12) zur Verfügung stehen. Die fünfte und sechste Strophe lauten:

Oui j'espère en Dieu même !
 À tous il tend les bras :
 Là pour toujours on s'aime !
 Bientôt n'irais-je pas ?
 Mes pleurs sur cette pierre
 Ont coulé silencieux !
 Mais celle qui m'est chère
 Les voit du haut des cieux !

(Nr. 3: „Les larmes“, V. 17–24)

(„Ja, ich hoffe auf Gott selbst! // Allen streckt er die Arme aus: // Dort liebt man sich für immer! // Werde ich nicht bald auch gehen? /// Auf diesem Stein ist mein Weinen [= sind meine Tränen] // still geflossen! // Doch jene, die mir lieb ist // sieht sie vom Himmel aus!“)

Zwar behält Bélanger den Verweis auf seine Tränen, die auch titelgebend sind, bei, schwingt sich aber vor allem in der Wiederholung des Liedes zu Formulierungen mit auffällig religiöser Färbung hinauf. Der Protagonist setzt zu einem durch die Bejahungspartikel eingeleiteten und auf die Psallmliteratur (etwa Psalm 37,3 oder 130,5) alludierenden Credo an: „Oui j'espère en Dieu même!“ (V. 17). Es dominiert die Hoffnung und der Glaube an einen liebenden Gott und die Zuversicht darauf, dass er den Bedürftigen hilft („À tous il tend les bras“ [„Allen streckt er die Arme aus“], V. 18). Die vom Protagonisten still und heimlich vergossenen Tränen, bleiben bei Bélanger auch nicht unbemerkt: Seine Geliebte – die, zumindest im Original, nicht tot ist – oder eine bisher ungenannte Frau, vielleicht gar die Mutter Gottes („celle qui m'est chère“ [„jene, die mir lieb ist“]), beobachtet sein Opfer vom Himmel aus. Und auch im darauffolgenden Lied übersetzt Bélanger einen völlig unreligiös anmutenden Passus mit „Ainsi que l'espérance // L'amour nous vient des cieux“ (Nr. 4: „L'hiver“, V. 31–32, „Und so wie die Hoffnung // Kommt die Liebe vom Himmel zu uns“). Auch an diesen Stellen wird das lyrische Ich wieder als Teil einer gläubigen Schar dargestellt. Welch ein Abstand zu den einzigen beiden, eher blasphemischen Aussagen, die im Original an eine göttliche Instanz appellieren: In „Gute Nacht“ erteilt der Protagonist seiner Geliebten Absolution, denn schließlich sei nicht sie an der Trennung schuld: „Die Liebe liebt das Wandern // Gott hat sie [nun einmal] so gemacht“ (Nr. 1, V. 21–22). Und in dem Lied „Mut!“ beschließt er seinen Gesang mit einem letzten übermütigen Aufbäumen folgendermaßen: „Will kein Gott auf Erden sein, // Sind wir selber Götter“ (V. 11–12). Keine Spur von einer süßlichen Gottes- und Marienverehrung, wie sie Bélanger, womöglich Präferenzen der katholisch geprägten Zielkultur folgend, sich bei seiner Übertragung aufzugreifen motiviert sah.

Allgemeingültigkeit und Himmelsanbetung führt Bélanger auch in der analogen sechsten Strophe von „Un rêve“ zusammen: Unter expliziter Nennung des Ziels seines Vorhabens („Pour me tromper moi-même // Je ferme encor les yeux ...“, V. 30–31 [„Um mich selbst zu täuschen // schließe ich noch immer die Augen ...“], s. Tab. 2, S. 218), liefert auch direkt danach das Ergebnis seiner erfolglosen Bemühungen: „Hélas ! Rêve que j'aime // N'est plus venu des cieux!“ (V. 32–33, „Ach! [Der] Traum, ich liebe // Ist nicht mehr vom Himmel gekommen!“). Der Himmel segnete ihn nach zweimaligem Traum nicht noch einmal mit einer Möglichkeit zur Realitätsevasion. Dies verleitet den melancholischen Protagonisten wiederum zur Formulierung einer sein Leid transzendierenden Aussage:

Honneur d'amour, bien suprême,
Sourit un moment à nos vœux ...
C'est là ce qu'on dit être heureux !

(Nr. 11: „Un rêve“, V. 34–36)

(„Der Liebe Zierde, das höchste Gut, // lächelt für einen Augenblick unseren Wünschen zu ... // Das ist es, was man das Glücklichein nennt!“)

In allegorischer Art wird die Liebe als neckische Gottheit beschrieben, die dem sich glücklich schätzenden Liebenden nur flüchtig zuzulächeln gedenkt. Diese Art von Allegorisierung, die sich bei Bélanger vielerorts findet, baut im Derivat eine neue liedübergreifende Kohärenz auf, bestätigt aber zugleich Isotopien (Glaube, Marienanbetung und Hoffnung), die dem Original – und wörtlicheren französischen (Lese-)Übersetzungen des Zyklus – fremd sind.

4. Fazit

Die musikgebundene Übersetzung ist ein schwieriges Unterfangen. Zu den vielen Herausforderungen der sanglichen Übersetzung (wie die Beibehaltung des Rhythmus, der Silbenzahl, der Phrasierung, des Reims etc.) tritt auch die inhaltliche Invarianz. In einem größeren Werkkomplex wie einem Liederzyklus ist die Kohärenz nicht nur liedintern, sondern auch liedübergreifend zu suchen. In der hier dargebotenen werkimmanenten, aber auch exemplarisch zu nennenden Analyse wurde gezeigt, dass mit der Übersetzung die Umstrukturierung und der Wegfall einiger u. U. zentraler gedicht- und liedübergreifender Bezüge einhergehen kann. Es können in der zielsprachigen Version eines zyklischen Werks aber auch umgekehrt neue Verweise geknüpft werden, sodass insgesamt nicht – wie in normativen Studien – zwangsläufig von einem Verlust im Original gegebener Isotopien die Rede sein muss. Vielmehr kann die Übersetzung auch nur eines Liedes zu einer Verschiebung des gesamten Beziehungsgefüges führen, die womöglich nur rudimentär im Original vorgezeichnete oder gänzlich neue Aspekte des Originals bzw. des ihn hervorbringenden Gedankens beleuchtet – so etwa die christliche Botschaft in Bélangers französischer Fassung der Schubert'schen *Winterreise*.

Während Kritiker sich oft darauf versteifen, was im Zieltext nicht beachtet oder was, im Gegenteil, fälschlicherweise Eingang in diesen gefunden habe, besteht die Aufgabe einer deskriptiven Translationsforschung hingegen darin, die Entscheidungen des Übersetzers nachzuzeichnen und nachzuvollziehen. In einer Praxis, in der so viele Texteingenschaften als Invarianten fungieren können, sind Auswahlprozesse nur natürlich. Kompensiert werden sie womöglich durch die Pluralität von Übersetzungen. Als weiterhin bestehendes Forschungsdesiderat kann die Aufarbeitung ganzer Werkzyklen in Original und Übersetzung sowie, auf der Grundlage solch umfangreicheren Materials, die theoretische Systematisierung der beobachtbaren Konstanten, Verschiebungen bzw. Umstrukturierungen und Kompensationsmöglichkeiten erachtet werden, die über die hier dargebotenen tentativen Analyseverschlüsse hinausgehen.

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Translating the songs of the “Sirens” in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*

ABSTRACT

Translating the songs of the “Sirens” in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*

Song lyrics function in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* like any other literary and cultural allusion. However, in the musical episode of *Ulysses*, “Sirens”, lyrics may function as music as well. In the episode, where songs are performed by characters and, *de facto*, by the narrative itself, musical allusions are evoked in the readers’ mind, enriching their experience of the episode. The following question may arise then: how can the Sirens’ songs be translated for a target reader who is not familiar with the music or words of the songs mentioned? Addressing foundational word and music studies research and recent research on the translation of musical texts, this article investigates how lyrics alluded to in “Sirens” perform a musical role in the episode. Through the study of the Italian and Finnish (re)translations of the episode, it examines the creative options for translators of song lyrics in musico-literary texts.

Keywords: musicalized fiction, allusion, quotation, intermediality, intradiegetic, extradiegetic

1. Introduction

James Joyce’s work is thoroughly infused with music. Beginning from the earliest commentators (Gilbert 1930/1955: 241), it has often been noted that Joyce’s first creative calling was not literature, but music: he “would (as all who have heard him sing are convinced) have made his mark as a singer”. Joyce did find his expression in literature, but music was ever-present in his writing. His

lyrical debut, *Chamber Music* (1907), is a collection of delicate, musical poetry. His final work, the thoroughly aural *Finnegans Wake* (1939), can only truly be understood when read out loud. In the work that has come to define both the author and Anglophone modernism, i.e. *Ulysses* (1922), music is omnipresent. It is overheard, talked about, and hummed in silent, inner monologues from the very first episode to the last words “yes I said yes I will yes”¹.

Joyce’s poetics is one of quotation and paraphrase. In episode 11, “Sirens”, Joyce makes, in total, 158 references to 47 songs (Bowen 1974: 160–211), including opera arias and popular songs. The references take very different forms in the musical episode of *Ulysses*: songs and singers are mentioned thematically by characters and the narrative; song lyrics are evocatively performed by characters and through narration.

Zack Bowen (1974: 46–47) suggests that musical allusions function in *Ulysses* like any other literary and cultural allusion in the text: they “assist in explaining, delineating, and emphasizing the points made by the characters in the text”, but also suggests that, in “Sirens” especially, “song references are used as music as well”. But how can musical allusions function “as music” in a literary text, where words sit silently on the page? And what happens to lyrics when “Sirens” is translated?

The aim of this article is to discuss the difficulties of translating song allusions in fiction, focusing specifically on the Italian and Finnish languages². We will examine, therefore, translations of the Italian and Finnish “Sirens” episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, within the already complex field of song translation. Our research questions are the following:

- What *musical* role (beyond their roles as cultural allusions) do lyrics have in “Sirens”?
- How do lyrics relate to musical performance in the following contexts: 1) the intradiegetic performance of song lyrics by characters within the narrative, 2) the extradiegetic performance, or the narrative performance, and, finally, 3) readers’ performance?
- How do Italian and Finnish *Ulysses* translators re-create the stylistic, musical, and performative roles of lyrics?

The remainder of this article is divided into five parts. In Section 2 we discuss first earlier research on lyrics and translation and, subsequently, in sub-section 2.1, the specific challenges of musicalized texts; in Section 3 we discuss our methodology, and in Section 4 we present the research material for the analysis,

1| Which may also have a musical referent: Slote et al. (2022: 1309) cite the conclusion of Monteverdi’s opera *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*, in which Ulysses, reunited with Penelope, sings “Sì, sì, vita, sì, sì!” (“Yes, yes, life, yes, yes”).

2| One a Romance language, recognized widely as the language of opera, the other a Finno-Ugric language, characterized by very long words with melodic open vowel sounds.

i.e. the Italian and Finnish “Sirens” TTs. In Section 5 we present the results of our analysis. In the concluding section, we reflect on these results and consider their implications for future research.

2. Song translation within literary texts: surveying the field

The “Sirens” episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* presents a special problem within the field of song translation studies. As Johan Franzon (2022: 30) notes, “a song must always be sung to be a song”. Are the songs of “Sirens” sung? If so, who performs them? Song is an intermedial signifying system, and once song lyrics are quoted on a page of a literary work, it could be argued that they return into a monomedial system. But within the narration of “Sirens”, the songs, performed by the characters or quoted by the focalized inner monologue narration, are clearly there to evoke music: for the reader to perform the song in the (silent) act of reading. But which challenges do songs in fiction, and, specifically, in “musicalized fiction” (Wolf 1992/2018) pose to translators?

Aneta Wysocka (2020: 191) writes about songs as polysemiotic signification systems, claiming that “[l]inguists generally agree that the difficulty of translating songs mainly results from the fact that songs are polysemiotic [...] which means that their content is conveyed via more than one type of sign”. Songs create meaning by musical, textual, vocal, and, when performed, even visual means. It could be argued that once a song is just quoted lyrics on a page, its musical and vocal elements are not significant for the translation task. But considering Joyce’s strategies for making “Sirens” musical – through thematization, musical structural analogies, word music, and verbal music (e.g. Scher 1970) among others³ – it seems clear that the songs of “Sirens” are often meant to be accompanied by imagined music.

Franzon (2022: 26) suggests the use of the terms approximation, i.e. “coming or getting near” textually, musically, stylistic-aesthetically, vocally or visually, and appropriation, which is “evidenced in either obvious changes, adaptations to a target context, or just a consistent styling”, for song translation analysis. With each song translation, or, in our case, each translation of songs within musicalized fiction, it is possible to look at the ways in which the TT attempts to approximate, i.e. to get near the ST, and in which ways it appropriates or makes changes, according to the chosen translation strategy. Greenall et al. (2021: 29) refer to these translatorial decisions, of which level of source text approximation is aimed at, as mezzolevel strategies: “[a]pproximation vs. redoing; rewriting/

3| We thoroughly explore the theoretical aspect of whether and how “Sirens” can be deemed musical in an upcoming article provisionally titled: “The genosong and phenosong of the ‘Sirens’”: The Finnish, Swedish, and Italian (re)translations of the musical prose of ‘Sirens’”, for publication in *James Joyce Quarterly*.

domesticating/formally adjusting” (2021: 29). Approximation can mean different distances on textual and stylistic levels, as Franzon (2022: 32) notes, “[a]pproximation need not mean maximal closeness”. A single translation of a song may, according to its function, approximate the ST textually as close as possible, for instance, while appropriating it musically for a different style or genre:

A song translation can (only) attain or deliver an approximation of all the inherent qualities of a source song, but it will also (often) curate or change those qualities in an appropriation for a new performance (Franzon 2022: 38).

In the Italian and Finnish (re)translations of “Sirens”, the translators are creating new performances for the songs. Some songs may be recognized by the TL audience, some may not. Some songs may have pre-existing lyrics in the TL, others not.

2.1. Specific challenges of musicalized texts

Discussing the translation of style in literary texts, Jean Boase-Beier overcomes the distinction between the form and meaning that traditionally characterizes literary translation studies discussion. Style in literary texts, for Boase-Beier (2011: 12), “allow[s] the text to do something besides just saying something”, and, as such, conveys meaning in two ways: i) “through iconicity, the stylistic phenomenon in which the language used physically resembles what it represents, rather than doing so in a purely arbitrary way” (Boase-Beier 2011: 11); ii) by allowing readers to “supply” a text’s meaning through “connotations, implicatures, and other means of expressing state of mind, point of view and attitudes” (Boase-Beier 2011: 99).⁴ Since translators have to act on those stylistic features of the source text which are subject to interpretation, their stylistic choices are interpretive in nature and become influential in the reader’s experience of meaning in the TT.

Joyce’s “Sirens”, however, shows peculiar stylistic features that differentiate the episode from traditional literary texts.⁵ The episode is, in fact, considered an emblematic example of musicalized fiction. It shows a “special modelling of the level of the ‘discourse’ (*discours*)” so that parts or the whole of the narrative

4] Drawing on Pilkington (2000: 75–83), Boase-Beier (2011: 394) describes style as containing “weak implicatures”, i.e. “aspects of the meaning of a text that are not made explicit but are left open to the reader’s interpretation”. These are opposed to “explicatures”, i.e. aspects of meaning which are directly stated in utterances. “Weak implicatures” are subject to the reader’s interpretation.

5] While the horizontal narrative development of the episode remains the norm, translating musicalized prose would at first seem reminiscent of translating poetry: “Lyrical language remains denotative and referential, but aural aspects of rhythm, tonality on the one hand, and associative tropes, figures, and repetitive motifs on the other, assume a heightened value, and challenge the referential element” (Niskanen 2021: 184).

and/or linguistic structure show ‘iconic’ similarities or analogies to music” (Wolf 1992/2018: 220). Werner Wolf explains that “the stress on an iconic relation to music on the level of ‘discourse’” becomes significant in distinguishing texts where music is only mentioned in the content – what Wolf describes as “telling” – from “musicalized fiction” proper. In musicalized fiction “the language and/or the narrative structure show affinities with music” which are “clear enough to convey the impression of a ‘textual music’ in the process of reading” (Wolf 1992/2018: 220).⁶ If, therefore, according to Boase-Beier (2011: 11), “literary texts express meaning through iconicity”, a peculiar form of iconicity that has music as an object of iconic imitation can be said to be *a conditio sine qua non* for musicalized fiction. In a context where language iconically imitates music, in stories which belong to the domain of “musicalized fiction” the meaning of style needs therefore to be expanded to take into account specific features that language can share with music and the domain of the aural (Autieri 2025).

The “Sirens” episode, as a form of musicalized fiction, benefits from a performative reading approach on the part of its readers. As O’Callaghan (2009: 136) states, “[t]he text exists on the page, visually but it can also be played out by the reader in a manner that lifts the words from the page and into the realm of the auditory”. When their performative dimension is taken into account, musical allusions play an essential role in the reader’s experience of the text. The translator, as a musico-stylistic reader, and performer (O’Callaghan 2009: 147), of these lyrics, becomes necessarily a musical “interpreter” of “Sirens. In *Quasi una fantasia* (1963), Adorno distinguishes between “interpretation in literature and in music, in the sense that in the field of literature interpretation involves understanding, in the field of music it involves performing” (as cited in O’Callaghan 2009: 144). The translator of “Sirens” will make *interpretive* choices which pertain to both of the domains.

In our attempt to consider Joyce’s stylistic and musical use of musical allusions in “Sirens” and readers’ and translators’ interpretations, performances and translations thereof, we postulate the following axiom. At the same time as Joyce makes his prose extremely performable for all readers and, ideally, translatable, using, as he does, the language of music and arias (a language which crosses national and linguistic borders), he makes it resist performance and translation by making his intermedial references unattainable to those readers who do not have these songs in their repertoire. In other words, while it would seem at first glance that if the reader knows the musical referent, the music will be evoked by the prose almost regardless of the translation, it is certain that if the reader of either

6| It does so through reliance on “word music” and music structural analogies, (cf. Scher 1970; Wolf 1992/2018). We will not be able to discuss these features in detail in this context.

the ST or the TT is not familiar with the song, the latter cannot be evoked in them with the most formally or semantically imitative of translations.

Julia Tidigs (2020: 187) considers this “borderzone” of multilingualism and intermediality with regard to the Swedish-Finnish musicalized fiction of Monika Fagerholm. In Tidigs’ (2020: 188) view, Fagerholm’s “translated and borrowed phrases [are] polysensuous connective points where the Swedish of the novel is in dynamic contact with different languages outside of it”. The musicality in Joyce’s “Sirens” operates in much the same way: it is recognisable to a “foreign” reader familiar with the correct context, but can be alienating to a native reader of either the SL or the TL if they do not share the cultural capital of Joyce’s implied reader.

3. Methodology

Examining the rich Italian and Finnish retranslation network of *Ulysses*, in this article we will first analyze quoted lyrics from the opera aria “When first I saw”, from Friedrich von Flotow’s *Martha*. For comparison, we will then examine quoted lyrics from the popular Irish ballad “The croppy boy”, by Carroll Malone (a pseudonym of William B. McBurney). These are, respectively, the most significant and extensively quoted opera aria and the most significant and extensively quoted and paraphrased popular song in the episode.

Our aim is to examine the following roles that lyrics play in “Sirens”: i) intradiegetically performed lyrics; ii) extradiegetically performed lyrics, which are repeated and varied as musical motifs; iii) extradiegetically performed lyrics, which are performed by the narrative. Accordingly, the lyrics chosen for examination in the article are exemplary of these roles. This selection of material allows us to study comparatively the different musical roles that lyrics play within the “Sirens” episode, and lyrics of elevated art music genre with lyrics of a traditional popular ballad. It also allows us to compare lyrics whose translation exists in the target culture (i.e. the Italian version of Flotow’s aria, “M’ap-pari”) with lyrics that need to be translated anew.

In the paragraphs that follow we will analyse these musical allusions, considering their effects on readers familiar or unfamiliar with Joyce’s musical repertoire. Drawing on Boase-Beier’s, Wolf’s and O’Callaghan’s assumptions, our analysis will focus on the unique combination of the stylistic roles of lyrics in “Sirens”, their ability to evoke performed music and the ways in which they can themselves be performed by readers. For each example analyzed, we will then consider the different translation choices identifiable in the Italian and Finnish texts.

The Italian and the Finnish “Sirens” will be respectively examined as part of two language-specific systems, which do not necessarily communicate with

each other. Examining these musical allusions in “Sirens” and their relative translations, we hope to give a rich overview of possible approaches to the translation of different types of lyrics, in which the respective musical roles within fiction are taken into consideration. We also aim to highlight the effects of different translation strategies on readers of translated musicalized fiction. A variety of possible approaches for translating musical allusions in literature and of possible corresponding effects on readers is evidenced in our target texts, precisely because translators engaged with the episode through two very different target languages, Italian and Finnish. Much like different musical instruments, these languages have very different musical and stylistic possibilities.

4. The target contexts

One hundred years after the publication of *Ulysses*, nine complete translations of *Ulysses* have been published in Italy. The first translation was by the critic and translator Giulio De Angelis, done with a team of Joycean experts (1960). The first retranslation, by the young Bona Flecchia (1995), was quickly withdrawn from the market because of copyright infringements. After the copyright on *Ulysses* expired, another two translations were published: one by the scholars Enrico Terrinoni and Carlo Bigazzi (2012), and the other by the writer Gianni Celati (2013). In 2020, yet another translation was done by the translator and writer Mario Biondi and was marketed as a “traduzione definitiva” (‘definitive translation’) (Cauti 2020). Ironically, the year after, 2021 (in anticipation of the *Ulysses* centenary in 2022), saw the publication of four translations: a collaborative translation by Vio Crescenzi, Tonina Giuliani and Marta Viazzoli; a translation by the poet Alessandro Ceni; an independent, fan’s translation by Marco Marzagalli; and the bilingual retranslation by the Joycean scholar Enrico Terrinoni, much awaited for in the Joycean community.

Two translations of *Ulysses* exist in the Finnish language: one under the Latinate title *Ulysses* (2012), and the other under the Greek name variant, i.e. *Odysseus* (1964). The first Finnish translation, *Odysseus*, by Pentti Saarikoski, one of the most prominent poets of the belated Finnish literary modernism and a disputed character as a translator (Koskinen 2007: 461), was published in the Tammi publishing house, as part of the highly regarded *Keltainen kirjasto* (‘Yellow library’) series. Saarikoski’s *Odysseus* is a tightly laid out book with no glossary or notes. Leevi Lehto, mostly associated with avant-garde sound poetry, began his *Ulysses* retranslation project in 2001. His *Ulysses* is a very large volume, heavily footnoted, and with forewords and appendices, published as a rare fiction book by the non-fiction publishing house Gaudeamus.

The abbreviations presented in the following table will be used in the article.

Table 1: Abbreviations of the literary texts discussed in the article

Abbreviation	Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i> , and Italian and Finnish translations of <i>Ulysses</i>
Source text	
<i>U</i> :	Joyce, James ([1984-86] 2008). <i>Ulysses</i> . Edited by Hans Walter Gabler et al. London.
Italian target texts	
<i>U-DeA</i> :	Joyce, James ([1960; 1986] 2017). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Giulio De Angelis). Milano.
<i>U-Fle</i> :	Joyce, James (1995). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Bona Flecchia). Firenze.
<i>U-TerBig</i> :	Joyce, James (2012). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Enrico Terrinoni with Carlo Bigazzi). Roma.
<i>U-Cel</i> :	Joyce, James (2013). <i>Ulisse: Nella Traduzione Di Gianni Celati</i> . (trans. Gianni Celati). Torino.
<i>U-Bio</i> :	Joyce, James (2020). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Mario Biondi). Milano.
<i>U-CreGiuVia</i> :	Joyce, James (2021). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Livio Crescenzi, Tonina Giuliani and Marta Viazzoli). Fidenza.
<i>U-Cen</i> :	Joyce, James (2021). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Alessandro Ceni). Milano.
<i>U-Mar</i> :	Joyce, James (2021). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Marco Marzagalli). https://ulissedimarco.blogspot.com/ .
<i>U-Ter21</i> :	Joyce, James (2021). <i>Ulisse</i> . (trans. Enrico Terrinoni). Firenze.
Finnish target texts	
<i>O-Saa</i> :	Joyce, James (1964). <i>Odysseus</i> . (trans. Pentti Saarikoski). Helsinki.
<i>U-Leh</i> :	Joyce, James (2012). <i>Ulysses</i> . (trans. Leevi Lehto). Helsinki.

5. Analysis

For a reader who is familiar with the songs of *Ulysses*, “allusion becomes the underlying myth of Joyce’s stories, the music echoing in our mind as we read, and the enriching tonality of prose” (Bauerle 1993: 3). At the same time, quoted lyrics in “Sirens” often play a key guiding role for the reader within the intricate musical style of the musicalized episode. In this context, intradiegetic and extradiegetic musical performances of songs are key for the readers’ experience of the text, and, as such, they pose various challenges for translators.

Case 1. “When first I saw”

Lionel’s aria “Ach! so fromm, ach! so traut” from the opera *Martha* (1847) by Friedrich von Flotow was most likely originally composed for *Lame en peine*, and later translated and added to the German *Martha* (Greene/ Green 1985: 592). The aria is also well known in its English version, by Charles Jeffry, and its Italian version (whose translator is anonymous), “M’appari”, made famous in 1906 in New York by the tenor Enrico Caruso. The coexistence of the same aria in English and Italian is recorded in “Sirens”, where the character Cowley sings the Italian “M’appari” (*U* 11: 594–595), and the character Dedalus sings the same aria in Charles Jeffry’s English translation “When first I saw” (*U* 11: 664 onwards). There is, at present, no established Finnish libretto for the opera but there is a mention in the *Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti* magazine on 8 May 1869 that the Uusi teatteri (‘New theater’), a project by the pro-Finnish language Fennoman movement of the 19th-century Grand Duchy of Finland, will perform the second act of the opera on 10 May as a translation from the German language.⁷ This early partial translation seems to have vanished into history, and there is no evidence of the Finnish translators having excavated the archives for it.

The Italian and English versions are not literal translations of their ST.⁸ Moreover, albeit both singable, they do not correspond in their stresses. Apter and Herman (2016: 16) quote the opera director and translator Donald Pippin (1998), who addressed the problem of translating Italian opera librettos, with typically more syllables, into English: “[b]ear in mind: the translator has to keep to the same number of syllables as the original”. However, the Italian first line of “M’appari” has six syllables for nine notes, whereas the English version has nine, with “that” occupying two notes and “endearing” adding an unstressed feminine ending in comparison with the Italian phrasing. As Apter and Herman (2016: 17–18) note, SL prosody and TL prosody must be taken into account, but “[i]nserting syllables” is sometimes an allowable change to the music.

Case 1.1. Intradiegetic performances: Cowley’s and Dedalus’ arias

The existence of the corresponding Italian and English versions of the aria opens up interesting translation possibilities for Italian translators. They need to decide whether the lyrics of the English arias should be translated into Italian anew, so that readers can understand the semantic meaning of the English lyrics, or

7| The name of the translator is not mentioned, and the search for the Finnish libretto would be a fascinating research project of its own. We are grateful to the theatre historian Pentti Paavolainen for leading us to this information. The magazine is digitally available in the National library of Finland (<https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi>).

8| This is already noticeable when comparing their respective first verse: “Ach! so fromm, ach! so traut” (‘Oh! So pious! Oh, so dear!’); “When first I saw that form endearing”, “M’appari tutt’amor” (‘You appeared to me all love’).

whether the corresponding Italian version of the lyrics can be retrieved, and new ways in which the Italian version can fit (or not) the “Sirens” narrative context can be found. This decision comes hand in hand with a necessary decision on the *singability* of the translated lyrics.

All of the Italian translators maintain the Italian lyrics of “M’appari” for Cowley’s intradiegetic performance of the Italian version of the aria:

- (1) Cowley sang:
 – *M’appari tutt’ amor:*
Il mio sguardo l’incontr (U 11: 593–595).

In this context, they use either the official written version of the lyrics, “M’appari” (*U-DeA*: 290; *U-Cel*: 374; *U-Bio*: 414; *U-Cen*: 334; *U-Mar*: 291), or the version “M’appari” (*U-Fle*: 215; *U-TerBig*: 279; *U-CreGiuVia*: 360; *U-Ter21*: 533). “M’appari” is a quite common transcription of the lyrics that seems related to the performed version of the aria: when the lyrics are sung an additional weaker stress is perceived onto the second *a* of the word (*m’app’a-ar’i*). The latter choice foregrounds for the reader the necessity to mentally perform the written lyrics.

Different translation choices are made when the English lyrics of the song in Jeffry’s translation are sung by Dedalus later in “Sirens”:

- (2) – *When first I saw that form endearing*
Sorrow from me seemed to depart
Full of hope and all delighted...
But alas, ’twas idle dreaming... (U 11: 665–694).

Most of the Italian translators translate the English lyrics anew. This decision can make it unclear to the Italian reader that this is the same aria sung by Cowley. Exceptionally, Biondi explains this choice in a note, “Simon Dedalus canta la versione inglese libera dell’aria *M’appari* dalla *Martha* di Flotow” (“Simon Dedalus sings the free English version of the air *M’appari* from *Martha* by Flotow”, *U-Bio*: 417–418). None of the translated versions would be easily singable when set to Flotow’s music. As a result of the natural expansion of translation, and the length of Italian words, these versions show more stresses than those present in the music and more syllables than notes:

Translated lyrics often make mental performance of the aria on the part of the reader difficult. But when the Italian translators, instead, rely on the singable lyrics of “M’appari”, the actual music evoked by their translations is also at times different from the music evoked by “Sirens”: the verses used from

9| Interestingly, Flecchia translates some verses from the English lyrics and chooses to rely on the Italian “M’appari” for others: “–*Quando dapprima vidi quella cara forma/ Dolore sembrò lasciarmi/ M’invaghi quell’angelica beltà/ Ma purtutto era un sogno illusorio*”

“M’appari” in the translation do not always correspond to the verses from the English version used by Joyce¹⁰. This choice still makes it possible for the Italian reader to mentally perform the aria, although a different music will be heard in their mind.

Table 2: Jeffry’s lyrics “When first I saw” in three Italian versions

	Ceni’s, Biondi’s, Crescenzi, Giuliani and Viazzoli’s versions	Gloss translation (by AA)
(U-Cen: 337–338)	<i>Quando primieramente scorsi quell’affettuosa forma Fuggirsi parve il dolor da me Pien di speme e in gran lietezza Ma ahimé sognar fu vano...</i>	When primarily I caught sight of that loving form To flee seemed sorrow from me Full of hope and in great jocundity But alas dreaming was vain
(U-Bio: 417–418)	<i>Non appena vidi la diletta figura Dolor da me dipartirsi parve di speranza pieno e tutto in delizia Ma ahimé fu vano sognare...</i>	As soon as I saw the beloved figure Sorrow from me seemed to depart of hope full and all in delight But alas it was vain to dream
(U-Cre-GiuVia: 362–363)	<i>La prima volta che scorsi la seducente figura Il dolor sembrava da me dissolversi Pieno di speranza e assai felice Ma ahimé, sognavamo oziosamente...</i>	The first time that I saw the charming figure Sorrow seemed from me to dissolve Full of hope and very happy But alas we were dreaming in idleness

The Finnish TTs display two different strategies for the quoted lyrics. The re-translator Lehto offers his own newly translated lyrics of Jeffry’s English version of the aria in his appendices, Appendix 5: “Four songs”. For the first translation, the ‘Yellow library’ series format, in which Saarikoski’s translation was published, does not allow him to use any appendices or footnotes to explain or translate the references, so his newly translated aria lyrics are revealed as they are quoted in the text.

Even though the Finnish translations cannot refer to pre-existing Finnish lyrics for Flotow’s aria, the song and its Italian beginning are thematically introduced

(‘When first I saw that dear form/ sorrow seemed to leave me/ *m’invaghi quell’angelica beltà*/ But unfortunately it was an illusory dream,’ U-Fle 216–17).

10| The first four verses mentioned in “Sirens” are the first two lines of stanza one and the first lines of stanzas two and three of the English text. De Angelis, Celati and Marzagalli, instead, quote variously from the first two lines of stanzas one and two of the Italian aria, while Terrinoni and Bigazzi and Terrinoni’s 2021 retranslation quote the first, third and last line of stanza one and the first of stanza two.

in the episode (Cowley sings the Italian words of the aria in both of the TTs as in the ST – Lehto offers a Finnish translation of it in his footnotes). Therefore, when the newly translated Finnish lyrics appear in italics in the first Finnish translation, the TT reader is expecting the lyrics to fit Flotow’s melody, if they are familiar with it.

Table 3: Jeffrys’ lyrics “When first I saw” in two Finnish versions

	Saarikoski’s and Lehto’s versions	Gloss translation (by LaN)
(O-Saa: 268–269)	<i>Kun ensi kerran näin rakkaimpani Oli minulta huolet ja murheet poissa Olin toivoa täynnä ja riemuissani Mutta ah, untahan se olikin kaikki...</i>	When I saw my beloved for the first time My worries and sorrows were gone I was full of hope and joy But ah, it was all a dream...
(U-Leh: 313–314)	<i>Kun hahmons armaan ensi kerran näin Niin murhe multa se kaikkos pois Toivoa täynnä niin, ja riemuinen Vaan suotta, ah! ma henest unel- moin...</i>	When her form beloved first time I saw So sorrow from me it all went away So full of hope, and so joyful But in vain, ah! I dream of her...

Is Saarikoski’s Finnish translation singable to Flotow’s tune? The first line, potentially. The first Finnish translation of the line has ten syllables, but it shares four stressed syllables and the feminine ending with the English text (“When first I saw that form endearing”) and could be sung to the musical phrase. But already the second line would be impossible to fit within the melody, as is the case with what would be the first lines of the second and third stanzas. For the reading experience, however, the direct quotation is conveyed by the line dash and italics, and the music has been evoked by the Italian lyrics to those readers equipped to make the association, so a musical reading of a Finnish TT reader could be imagined.

The second Finnish translator, Lehto, explains in his footnotes that the song is Lionel’s aria and that the lyrics are taken from Charles Jeffrys’ English version. He gives a plot summary of the opera and refers to his own newly translated lyrics in Appendix 5, where the first line of the third stanza is translated as “vaan turhaa vain, ah! oli unta tuo” (“but it was, ah! just a dream”). Surprisingly, in the main text of the novel, Lehto translates the aria lyrics in a different way (see Table 3). Both translations are too long for the English ST line and the musical phrase, but the line appearing in the main text is more plausibly singable, as it only has four stresses.

Case 1.2. Extradiegetic performances: repetition and variation

When the lyrics become the object of repetition and variation in the episode, acting as musical motifs, as is the case with other phrases from the introduction of “Sirens”, often an exact equivalence between the use of lyrics in “Sirens” and in the target language is not achievable. In this context, translators are apparently faced with the decision to either prioritize the lyrics’ contribution to the semantic meaning of the episode, or their formal repetition – in connection or not with the lyrics’ musical performed dimension. Because lyrics are not italicized when repeated, it is only through an almost exact formal repetition of the translated lyrics or inclusion of the lyrics of the Italian “M’appari” that target readers can recognize them as musical allusions. However, it is when lyrics can evoke previous musical and intradiegetic performances by contributing at the same time to the narrative development that they most enrich the reader’s musical experience of the episode.

A good example in this context is the repetition and variation of the lyrics “when first I saw” in these passages: “[...] Lydia said to Simonlione**l first I saw** [...] Blind he was she told George Lidwell **second I saw**” (*U* 11: 1210–1212).¹¹ The barmaid of “Sirens”, Lydia, speaks first to Simon Dedalus, here referred to as “Simonlione**l**” (a hybrid version of Simon and Lionel, the character singing the aria in *Martha*) and then to another character in the episode, George Lidwell. In this passage, “first I saw” and “second I saw” can potentially be interpreted as unrelated to the aria’s lyrics, as temporal indications only (e.g. *U*-Ter-Big: 294 and *U*-Cel: 398). This interpretation, albeit apparently more straightforward, can enhance the perception in the reader that the episode is odd or confusing, as often argued by scholars, since the two phrases do not fit the ST’s syntax precisely and are not easily made sense of. It is only when these phrases are recognized as lyrics, which are previously performed intradiegetically and which keep reappearing in the episode, that they can be perceived as musical motifs. How can translators respond to this challenge?

By analyzing the choice of the Italian translators who had previously translated the English lyrics anew, we gain a more in-depth understanding of the musico-stylistic role of lyrics in this passage. To overcome the friction identified in the ST, Crescenzi, Giuliani and Viazzoli, translate the first instance of “first I saw” twice. The first time they repeat their translation of the English lyrics (“**La prima volta che scorsi la seducente figura...**” (*U*-CreGiuVia: 362)). The second time they explain the passage’s temporal meaning. This choice, although very effective in conveying the lyrics’ meaning and form as separate entities, in part simplifies the musical-stylistic functioning of the episode, where the two roles are condensed. Ceni, instead, repeats his translation of the English lyrics (“*Quando primieramente*

11| Bold emphasis in the quoted fragments has been added by the authors of this article.

scorsi quell'affettuosa forma" (U-Cen: 337)), repeating exactly his translated lyrics and thus recreating a syntactic friction as in the ST. Although with this choice the real musical performative dimension of the song is not evoked, as we have seen before, because the lyrics are translated, Ceni manages to effectively convey the second musical role of the allusion, enabling readers to link the repeated words to Dedalus' intradiegetic performance encountered previously, and to experience the lyrics as a *musical* voice, which is repeated like the other motifs of "Sirens" that have no musical counterpart (e.g. "Bronze by gold"):

Table 4: Repetition and variation of Jeffry's lyrics in two Italian versions

	Crescenzi, Giuliani and Viazzoli's and Ceni's versions	Gloss Translation (by AA)
(U-CreGiuVia: 382)	disse Lydia a Simonlione l primo che scorse, "la prima volta che l'ho visto [...]" lei disse a George Lidwell, il secondo che scorse	said Lydia to Simonlione l the first she caught sight of, "the first time I saw him [...]" she said to George Lidwell, the second she caught sight of
(U-Cen: 355)	disse Lydia a Simonlione l primieramente scorsi [...] ella narrò a George Lidwell secondariamente scorsi	said Lydia to Simonlione l firstly I saw [...] she narrated to George Lidwell secondly I saw

The translators who had used "M'appari" for Dedalus' intradiegetic performance and quote the aria again seem able to overcome all of the difficulties¹², effectively maintaining a connection between intradiegetic and musical performances. Because of the shortness of the first verse of the aria, "M'appari", and its possible roles in the TT's syntax, they are also able to repeat and vary the lyrics' text to convey the semantic meaning in the ST, creating two sentences which also read smoothly in Italian.

The first Finnish translation alludes to its own newly translated Finnish lyrics of the aria: Saarikoski quotes his own translation of the beginning of the aria. The sentence is constructed in a foreign and complex enough manner. That, together with the character Simon Dedalus turning into "Simonlione", merged with the character Lionel in the aria, is enough for the Finnish TT reader to be reminded of the melody sung earlier. The second Finnish translation creates an explicit friction between the narrative level and the quoted lyrics:

12] For space's sake, we will not examine the choices of the Italian translators who had previously translated the English lyrics anew (Flecchia, Biondi) and who here repeat the Italian version rather than the translated English lyrics, a choice which has different interesting implications for Italian readers.

Table 5: Repetition and variation of Jeffry’s lyrics in three Italian versions that repeat and vary the Italian “M’appari”

	De Angelis, Marzagalli’s and Terrinoni’s versions (emphasis ours)	Gloss translation (by AA)
(U-DeA: 308)	disse Lydia a Simonlionello cui appari [...] disse a George Lidwell apparso secondo	said Lydia to Simonlionello to whom she appeared she told George Lidwell who had appeared second
(U-Mar: 310)	disse Lydia a Simonlionello che pria m’appari [...] disse lei a George Lidwell che poscia m’appari	said Lydia to Simonlionello who previously appeared to me said she to George Lidwell who afterwards appeared to me
(U-Ter21: 567)	disse Lydia a Simonlionel m’appari , [...] disse lei a George Lidwell mi riappari	said Lydia to Simon Lionel appeared to me [...] said she to George Lidwell re-appeared to me

Table 6: Repetition and variation of Jeffry’s lyrics in two Finnish versions

	Saarikoski’s and Lehto’s versions (emphasis ours)	Gloss translation (by LaN)
(O-Saa: 284)	Lydia sanoi kun ensi kerran näin Simonlionelille hän kertoi kun toisen kerran näin George Lidwellille	Lydia said when I first saw to Simonlionel she narrated as second time I saw to George Lidwell
(U-Leh: 329)	Lydia sanoi Simonlionelille ensi kerran näin hen kertoi George Lidwellille toisen kerran näin	Lydia said to Simonlionel the first time so/saw she narrated to George Lidwell the second time so/saw

Lehto approximates his own newly translated lyrics. He chooses also to appropriate them, and add a play on the homonymy of “näin” (adv. ‘so’ and ‘like this’, but also past tense verb ‘saw’). In this way, the sentence can be read both as ‘said to Simonlionel the first time I saw’, recalling the lyrics of the aria, and as ‘Lydia said to Simonlionel the first time like this’, a plausible narrative prose sentence in Finnish. While the found-in-translation nature of Lehto’s sentence is enjoyable to a close reader of *Ulysses*, a first-time reader will likely read the sentence in the latter meaning and lose the musical evocation of the former.

Case 2. “The croppy boy”

While Joyce depicted the episode as a *fuga per canonem*, and while the music modernist literature often strived for was the classical art form, there is a considerable amount of popular music and songs in the episode¹³. What makes popular songs particularly interesting to examine in this context is precisely the fact that, much like the Finnish translators’ references to Flotow’s aria, there are no pre-existing lyrics to quote in the target languages in order to evoke musicality in the target text.

There is a plethora of examples of popular music alluded to in the episode to choose from, but the main “pop” song, both performed by a character within the narration of the episode and, as it were, by the narrative (often focalized through the consciousness of Leopold Bloom), is “The croppy boy”, a song credited to Carroll Malone. Ben Dollard is asked to perform, with his famous bass voice, the ballad about a croppy boy, a Wexford rebel from the late 18th century, who is slain by treachery in the hands of a loyalist captain disguised as a priest at the confessional.

In contrast with *Martha’s* aria, whose words already appeared in the introduction of the episode and from there onward effectively become recurring motifs thereof, “The croppy boy” assumes a slightly different function in “Sirens”. The intradiegetic performance of the song in the impromptu concert of the episode is mixed into the inner monologue of Leopold Bloom, exiting the hotel bar, and functions as a counterpart to Bloom’s sad thoughts on his dysfunctional marriage and his lost son. “The croppy boy”, a ballad Joyce himself used to perform publicly, is also emblematic of the enchanting power of music, with all the characters in the Ormond Hotel – which is the setting of “Sirens” – being “seduced” by music (except for Bloom who manages to leave). According to Bauerle (1982: 269), in “Sirens”, “‘The Croppy Boy’ becomes a means of release for the varied emotions of Dollard’s audience in the Ormond Hotel”. In this context, song lyrics’ ability to evocate real music and trigger an emotive response appears prominent.

At the same time, while the song does not have the same motivic role as the aria from *Martha*, its lyrics still contribute to the narrative, inspiring Bloom’s monologue, and effectively becoming part of a polyphony of narrative voices¹⁴,

13| Highlighting the techniques of specifically popular music, granted in a retrospective arrangement of wilful anachronism, the novelist Joseph O’Connor (2022: 235) has compared the opening of Joyce’s *Sirens* to the opening of the Beatles’ *Sergeant Pepper* in his essay “Sgt Joyce’s lonely hearts club band”: “Themes are introduced, tossed around, repeated, inverted, curtailed, transposed, italicized, struck through, before the conductorial command ‘Enough, Begin’ is uttered from some podium beyond the page and Joyce’s own *Day in the Life* resumes its glorious unroll” (O’Connor 2022: 235).

14| We discuss voices and polyphony in *Ulysses* in more detail in our forthcoming article to be published in *James Joyce Quarterly*.

which becomes increasingly more intricate throughout the episode, reaching its climax with the performance of “The croppy boy”.

Case 2.1. Intradiegetic performance: Ben Dollard’s booming voice

Only once, towards the end of the performance, the booming voice of Ben Dollard breaks through the focalized narration, and reaches the reader directly through a dash signalling direct speech (or song), and italics indicating the direct quotation of the lyrics:

(3) – *Bless me, father*, Dollard the croppy cried. *Bless me and let me go* (U 11: 1074).

This is not a precise quotation, however. Bowen (1974: 199) comments that the words in italics are slightly different from the ballad lyrics and do not fit with the rhythm of the song: “Here again the words are not only inexact, but do not fit the tune”. The allusion, in fact, only approximates the end of the seventh verse of “The croppy boy”, as identified by Bauerle (1982: 270): “Now, Father! bless me, and let me go”. These lyrics have four stresses in a line in rising meter, either iambic or anapaest, and fit a rhythm of a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, an eighth note, four quarter notes and a dotted quarter note.¹⁵

All the Italian translators use italics to signal that the lyrics are sung and heard in the Ormond Hotel and maintain the playful repetition of “bless me”. Terinoni’s 2021 re-translation keeps the English lyrics: “*Bless me, father*, [...]. *Bless me and let me go*” (U-Ter21: 559), allowing the reader to effectively retrieve a performed version of “The croppy boy”. Interestingly, Flecchia, who translates the entire ballad for the reader in the appendices of the novel, chooses not to rely on her translation in this context, perhaps to signal that Joyce is also changing the song lyrics here: “*Beneditemi padre* [...]. *Beneditemi padre e lasciatemi andare*” (U-Fle: 225).¹⁶

All of the other Italian translators opted for a new translation of the lyrics, assuming that the reader will remember that Dollard is supposed to be singing “The croppy boy”. While maintaining “croppy” in “Dollard the croppy cried” could have been another means to allow readers to connect the intradiegetically

15| Bauerle writes in *The James Joyce songbook* (1982: 269) that “[t]he ballad is usually sung to the melody of ‘Calino Casturame’ (‘Cailin o cois tSiure me’), which Chappell has traced to 1584”. The music can be found on page 271. Some online versions of the ballad, however, sing the lyrics “Bless me, father, and let me go” (e.g. Kevin McDermott and Ralph Richey’s “Music from the works of James Joyce”) showing how, in fact, Joyce’s words are singable, but contain a repetition of “bless me”. Whether Joyce had the first or second version of the lyrics in mind, what seems certain is that he is playing with the reader, making apparently performed lyrics subject to the same mechanism of repetition and variation to which the entire episode is subject.

16| Her own version of the lyrics is: “Ora padre beneditemi e lasciate che a morire vada” (‘Now father bless me and allow me to go and die,’ U-Fle: 682).

performed lyrics to the ballad, e.g. “esclamò ribelle Croppy Dollard” (‘cried, rebel Croppy Dollard’, *U-TerBig*: 291; *U-Ter21*: 559), the Italian translators (except Terrinoni) all translate the word, approximating its semantic meaning and appropriating the reference to the song’s title.¹⁷

Like the ST’s lyrics, the Italian translated lyrics could not be perfectly sung on the music either, as they contain too many syllables. However, in fact, some versions maintain the same stresses of the English lyrics, albeit with more syllables: e.g. “*Beneditemi, padre, Dollard il ribelle gridava. Beneditemi e lasciatemi andare*” (*U-DeA*: 304); “*Beneditemi, padre, Dollard il rapato gridava. Beneditemi e lasciatemi andare*” (*U-Cen*: 351).

The ballad is not widely known among Finnish readers, there certainly are no established Finnish lyrics thereof. In the Finnish translations, however, the target reader can connect the allusions in Joyce’s text to the ballad through the thematic introduction of the title of the song by the characters within the narration, and the description on the narrative level of the musical prelude and the voice of Ben Dollard. Once the lyrics themselves are quoted, through the paraphrasing narration, different musical solutions can be found in the Finnish TTs. Saarikoski’s newly translated lyrics are paraphrased within the main text; Lehto marks them out with footnotes and references to his newly translated lyrics in the appendices. The lyrics included by Joyce require four stresses in a line in rising meter, either iambic or anapestic. Rising meter is typically a problem in metric Finnish translation, as the Finnish language tends toward a trochaic meter¹⁸. Saarikoski’s trochaic Finnish translation could not be sung to the tune of the ballad, but, as we noticed, neither could the source text, as such. “– *Siunaa minut, isä, Dollard nuori kapinallinen huusi. Siunaa minut ja päästä minut menemään*” (‘Bless me, father, Dollard the young rebel cried. Bless me and let me go’, *O-Saa*: 280).

As with “M’appari”, Lehto refers in his translation to his own translation of “The croppy boy”, given in Appendix 5: “– *Pyydän, minut siunatkaa, Dollard kulipää huusi. Minut matkaan siunatkaa*” (‘Please, bless me, Dollard the croppy-head cried. Bless me on my way’, *U-Leh*: 325). Lehto’s line is two trochees followed by a dactyl, interestingly varying on his own newly translated lyrics in the same way as the source text: “*Nyt pyydän: matkaan minut siunatkaa*” (*U-Leh*: 855). Lehto’s translation of the ballad lyrics in the appendix solves the problem of Finnish iambic meter translation in the traditional way by inserting

17] E.g. “Dollard il rapato” (*U-Cen*: 351), “Dollard a spazzola” (‘Dollard with croppy (hair)’, *U-Bio*: 434), “Dollard il ribelle” (‘Dollard the rebel’, *U-CreGiuVia*: 377; *U-Mar*: 306).

18] Apter and Herman (2016: 18) describe a similar problem translating Czech song lyrics to English: “Czech is also trochaic, that is, the first syllables of words and phrases are almost always accented, and therefore almost always set on downbeats. The first syllables of phrases in largely iambic English are almost always unaccented and therefore set on upbeats”.

a one-letter word “nyt” (‘now’) at the beginning of the line, but the line is still too long for the melodic phrase. Ironically, that conventional “nyt” at the beginning of the line is what could potentially trigger a musical reading in a Finnish target reader, due to decades of popular songs being translated into Finnish by using this convention.

Case 2.2. Extradiegetic performances: lyrics performed by the narrative

Most of “The croppy boy” in the “Sirens” episode is performed by the narrative.¹⁹ Fragmented lyrics occur in various places in the episode’s finale. The ballad progresses in the background while Bloom leaves the hotel dining room past the sirens at the bar. Within the song performed by the narrative some lyrics are repeated, others are summarized or paraphrased, and often the line between the lyrics and Bloom’s inner monologue is hard to distinguish.

Towards the end, the episode’s multivocal, polyphonic structure grows into a contrapuntal composition of polyphonic musical voices, which can at times cause ambiguities in reading. A good example is the following passage, where the reader has been trained by the episode to read the sentences: “All gone. All fallen” simultaneously as both overheard lyrics and inner monologue (or either/or):

- (4) Philosophy. O rocks!
All gone. All fallen. At the siege of Ross his father, at Gorey all his brothers
fell (*U* 11: 1063–1065).

Bloom is led to think about when he first met his wife Molly at a concert, and he is immediately reminded of the affair Molly is having with Blazes Boylan at Bloom’s house while he is listening to the ballad at the Ormond Hotel. The words: “Philosophy. O rocks!” come to Bloom’s mind because they were part of a conversation about a book on sensual love he and Molly had in the morning.

To the resigned Bloom “all is gone, all fallen”, but at the same time this passage paraphrases the fifth verse of “The croppy boy”: “At the siege of Ross did my father fall;/ And at Gorey my loving brothers all” (Bauerle 1982: 269–270). The siege of New Ross, in County Wexford, was the site of a battle between the croppy boys and the British forces in 1798. It is impossible to say whether the ballad sung creates the associations in the focalized intradiegetic narration of Mr. Bloom, or whether the extradiegetic rhetoric narration fits the ballad into the inner monologue.

19| The narration of the “Sirens” is a complex and interesting question in itself, with most of the episode being focalized intradiegetically through the consciousness of Leopold Bloom, but with the narration also beginning extradiegetically in Bloom’s absence, as if held by an objective floating eye, or ear!

In this context, the ambiguity which emerges from the confusion between the lyrics plot's summary and Bloom's monologue can be either made more complex or clarified in translation.

The first Finnish translation fades, as it were, from Bloom's flashback into the present tense of the song. The first-time reader of the episode would read the first "all is gone" as a conclusion of Bloom's inner musings; the second "all fallen" looks forward to the register of the song, which follows with the 'siege of Ross'.

Table 7: Narrative performances of "The croppy boy" in two Finnish versions

	Saarikoski's and Letho's versions	Gloss translation (by LaN)
(O-Saa: 279)	Filosofia. Voi veljet! Kaikki poissa. Kaikki kaatuneet. Rossin piirityksessä hänen isänsä, Goreyssa kaikki hänen veljensä kaatuivat.	Philosophy. Oh brother! All is gone. All fallen. At the siege of Ross his father, at Gorey all his brothers fell.
(U-Leh: 325)	Filosofia. Hitsi vieköön! Kaikki menneet. Kaikki kaatuneet. Rossin saarrossa hänen isänsä, Goreyssa kaikki hänen veljensä kaatuivat.	Philosophy. Gosh! All are gone. All fallen. At the siege of Ross his father, at Gorey all his brothers fell.

In the second Finnish translation, the quotation of the lyrics remains in the register of the preceding inner monologue. Lehto has explicated to the reader of his TT in a footnote earlier in the episode that the passage represents the stream of consciousness of Bloom. This will tie the beginning of the passage here more explicitly to Bloom's inner monologue for Lehto's target reader, but the formulation of "all are gone", with its plural form, already foreshadows the context of the song lyrics that follow.

In the Italian translations, the polyphonic blurring of the voices is at times mitigated by the inclusion of notes such as: "Continua la confessione di *The Croppy Boy*" (*The Croppy Boy's confession continues*, U-Bio: 433). All the translators translate: "All gone. All fallen" with either: "Tutti andati. Tutti caduti" ('All (of them) gone. All (of them) fallen', U-DeA: 304; U-Fle: 225; U-TerBig: 291; U-Cel: 392; U-Cen: 350; U-Ter21: 559) or "Tutti scomparsi. Tutti caduti" ('All (of them) disappeared. All (of them) fallen', U-Bio: 433). In this context, the translators are emphasizing the lyrics' plot, leaving no option for the reader to question whether the words belong to the lyrics or Bloom's monologue, hence eliminating any ambiguity.

The paraphrased song lyrics of "The croppy boy" function in the "Sirens" as allusions, but are also there to evoke a musical performance in the ST readers' minds. Whether the ballad is performed by the characters or, as it were, the narrative itself, the allusions create a polyphonic reading of the text, with heightened

tonality. The translators re-create the sirens’ song according to their own translation strategy, either approximating the intramedial allusion to the hypotext of the song lyrics, or the intermedial allusion to the tonal aspects of music (or possibly appropriating the musicality with a new tune of their own).

6. Conclusion

In this article, we have examined some different examples of translations of opera and popular song lyrics in Joyce’s “Sirens”, paying special attention to the lyrics’ ability to evocate real musical performative contexts and their role as a musicalizing tool in the episode. In this context, we have considered how lyrics, as a stylistic feature of the episode, contribute to the meaning-making of the episode, following Boase-Beier’s theory, but expanding her idea of style to account for how language in “Sirens” iconically imitates music, as argued by Wolf. We have analyzed lyrics both in contexts where they are performed intradiegetically, and in contexts where, instead, the Joycean musical use of a polyphony of voices, typical of fugue writing in music, and motifs, makes the narrative particularly difficult to disentangle.

For each of the different uses of musical allusions in the ST we have identified many approaches in the Italian and Finnish translations, which variously influence target readers’ experiences of alluded lyrics and of the episode itself. Intradiegetically performed lyrics (Cases 1.1 and 2.1) are at times translated with attention to the music they evoke and their performability in an ideal musical reading, where lyrics can contribute to “the music echoing in our mind as we read” (Bauerle 1993: 3) as we have seen above. This is made possible either through the retrieval of a target language version of the song mentioned in the ST, as in the case of the Italian translations of the lyrics of “When first I saw”, substituted with the corresponding lyrics of “M’appari”, or through the use of translated lyrics which could be sung on the alluded lyrics’ music (e.g. the first line of Saarikoski’s translation of “When first I saw”). An interesting option when a target language version of the lyrics does not exist in the target context is also that of introducing a new translation of the song in the TT appendices (e.g. Lehto’s translations of the most important songs in “Sirens”, and Flecchia’s translation of “The croppy boy”). This option, where new translated songs are presented outside the main text, could also make it easier for translators to focus on the singability of translated lyrics, translating lyrics as music proper and not as a cultural allusion in a novel. Irrespective of whether attention to the singability of lyrics is paid or not, this choice *de facto* establishes a new target language version of the song alluded to in the ST, whose lyrics the translator can subsequently include in the TT. This can be illustrated by what the Italian translators did with the lyrics of “M’appari”. (Strangely enough neither Lehto nor Flecchia use their own translations of the

lyrics in the appendices consistently in the actual episodes.) As shown, often translators may tend to appropriate (make changes to) the lyrics stylistically/aesthetically and musically, while they try to approximate (get near) them textually, prioritizing their semantic meaning. Although this tendency has some effects on the lyrics' performability, it does not necessarily impair the retrieval of music in reading, especially because readers are usually made aware of the song reference through other expedients (e.g. notes, italics, thematic introduction use of keywords of the title, e.g. "Croppy", in the target text, etc). Non-performable lyrics are, in fact, also a feature of the ST itself (Case 2.1).

Extradiegetically performed lyrics (Cases 1.2 and 2.2) appear trickier to deal with for translators. Such lyrics are not signalled by the use of italics in either the ST or the TT, and rarely are they signalled through other expedients (e.g. Biondi's footnote: "Continua la confessione di *The Croppy Boy*", Case 2.2). In Joyce's "Sirens" there is often a friction between the meaning and form of the lyrics, their stylistic role, their connection with real music and the narrative possible meanings – a tension where reading performance is often needed to overcome, for instance, the apparent non-sense of a passage (Case 1.2) or to appreciate Joyce's polyphonic and ambiguous use of language (Case 2.2). This tension is difficult to recreate in translation. Various ingenious expedients have been used by the Italian and Finnish translators for the repetition and variation of lyrics (Case 1.2), which permit the recognition of the process of repetition and variation through mental performance and retrieval of previously heard lyrics. These include the exact repetition of translated lyrics, with less attention paid to the semantic meaning of the new passage in which lyrics are repeated, the introduction of a split between the form and semantic meaning through expansion (e.g. Giuliani, Crescenzi and Viazzoli's translation of "first" and "second I saw"), and the use of homonyms (Lehto's "näin", i.e. 'so/saw'). At times, target language possibilities and the existence of a corresponding version of the alluded song in the target context made the translator's task easier (e.g. the Italian translators who, in case 1.2, can rely on the repetition and variation of the aria "M'appari"). In this case, Joyce's playful and music-like variation of written lyrics in the episode appears to become translatable precisely through reference to external music, as a common interlingual language, in line with Tidigs' (2020: 188) argument.

Translators' stylistic interpretation of lyrics quoted in the narrative, in connection or not with their musical referent, can at times reassess the relationship between style, music and meaning evidenced through reading and mental performance of the ST. As we have seen in Case 2.2, this happens through the clarification of ambiguities created by lyrics or simplification of the polyphonic texture to which they contribute (e.g. when the Italian translators interpret "All gone. All fallen" as referring to the plural subject of the allusion exclusively, making it impossible for Italian readers to interpret the allusion as part of Bloom's

monologue). Translators can similarly attempt to maintain the ambiguous polyphony created by a musical allusion through stylistic choices which are different from those used in the ST (e.g. Saarikoski’s register choices for translating the song allusion “All gone. All fallen”, which splits the allusion into two parts, the first readable as part of Bloom’s inner monologue and the other signalling the song) or by using other expedients (e.g. Lehto’s use of a footnote indicating that the passage is part of Bloom’s monologue in this same example, which also permits a possible double “performance” of the musical allusion).

In all of these examples, we have seen not only how translation strategies and possibilities vary across languages and translations, but also that there is no unified approach for the translation of lyrics in “Sirens”: translation choices, when looked at together as contributing to a big “Macrotext Joyce” (O’Neill 2005), expanding the original all together, have *de facto* expanded Joyce’s musico-stylistic tools.

The methodology for the analysis of lyrics in a narrative here presented is devised specifically for the musicalized text “Sirens” and its translations, and therefore our article relies extensively on studies on Joyce’s episode. However, we argue that an analysis of the relationship between music and lyrics, informed by an insightful engagement with the stylistic peculiarities of other authors’ writing, could also be productive for analyzing translation in other contexts where authors rely extensively on lyrics in their novels. This may be, specifically, the case of musicalized fiction.

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The ensemble of death and dance: Songs of The Tiger Lillies in Polish translation by Szymon Jachimek

ABSTRACT

The ensemble of death and dance: Songs of The Tiger Lillies
in Polish translation by Szymon Jachimek

This paper analyses the modifications introduced by Szymon Jachimek in his translation of The Tiger Lillies' songs, used in a Polish theatrical production in 2016. The Tiger Lillies, a British band, represent an alternative genre of *punk cabaret*, characterised by dark, transgressive humour, inspirations drawn from Weimar-era cabaret, and neo-Victorian aesthetics. Based on selected examples and taking into consideration the intersemiotic elements of music and performance, I discuss the deviations from the source text introduced by the translator: from (self)censorship of religious irreverence to far-reaching domestication shifting the material towards topical political satire. Rather than considering such deviations as precluding the text from being a translation *per se* and branding it 'adaptation', I instead perceive them as expressions of creativity and appropriation, reconstructing the means and aims of making the material "one's own". The paper, it is to be hoped, will form an invitation to further study of the creative capacities and the authorial competence of song translators.

Keywords: song translation, appropriation, punk cabaret, Tiger Lillies, Szymon Jachimek

1. Introduction

This paper aims to analyse the translation, by Szymon Jachimek, of three songs by the British band The Tiger Lillies used in the theatrical production *Zespół Śmierci i Tańca, czyli piosenki Tiger Lillies* ("The ensemble of death and dance, or the songs of The Tiger Lillies"), premiered in 2016 (Valldal-Czarnecki/

Jachimek 2016; available in an unpublished audiovisual recording). The majority of the nineteen translated songs used in the show maintain the general imagery, subject, and content of the source material – the affinity with the original artists is even declared in the very title of the show, which includes the band's name. However, as Theo Hermans justly points out, translation is never transparent, as it “appropriates, transforms, deflects and dislocates” (Hermans 1998: 67). Thus, what I find particularly promising as a research area is not the overall level of fidelity of the translation, but those points where the translator diverges from the source text. The selected songs have been chosen as particularly representative of this process.

Rather than assessing the quality or necessity of the modifications, I am proposing to present an analysis of their directions, results, and reconstructed rationale. Hence, this paper is meant, and hoped, to contribute to the descriptivist approach in song translation studies, treating the discussed texts as elements of the socio-cultural environment of the target culture.¹ It should also be added that, while all the analysed translations meet the broad criteria of singability defined as “the attainment of musico-verbal unity between the text and the composition” (Franzon 2008: 375), this factor is not a subject of further considerations, which are focussed mainly on the semantic content and not on the technicalities of adjusting the text to music.

The term of particular relevance in this paper is that of appropriation, understood here in the sense proposed by Johan Franzon (2022), i.e. as a flexible and descriptive tool for discussing how a song is made “one's own” in terms of its new functions, contexts, or prospective audiences. I find this term particularly useful in song translation studies, where target texts often gain a new life, sometimes rather distant from their source.

2. The artistic and socio-cultural context of the target text

The translations discussed in this paper were authored by Szymon Jachimek (2016). As is often the case in the field of song translation (cf. Franzon 2008: 373–374), Jachimek is not a professional translator, but predominantly an artist operating in the theatre world: an improvisational comedian, a playwright, and a musician. Within his theatrical work, he was commissioned (as confirmed by the translator²) to translate a selection of The Tiger Lillies' songs from English into Polish for the theatrical production *Zespół Śmierci i Tańca, czyli piosenki Tiger Lillies*.

1| For more on the current trend of descriptivism in song translation studies see Greenall et al. (2021).

2| Personal communication on 15.04.2023.

The performance includes nineteen of the band's songs in Polish translation – the selection of songs is rather eclectic, with no specific subject taking precedence. They are bound into a narrative by added original dialogue lines (also by Jachimek). The eight characters, clad in neo-Victorian costume, including a three-legged woman, a magician, and an acrobat, present a rather bizarre act of song, spoken word, and elements of dance, all in the spirit of a crooked cabaret act or a “freakshow”. The musical accompaniment, performed live on a piano, a double bass, and drums, generally follows the melodies and style of the source material. The show was performed in 2016 in the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Olsztyn and then on several other stages in Poland (Sknadaj 2017). What is crucial for outlining the socio-cultural context, relevant in discussing the translational choices, it formed a graduation performance of students of the postsecondary acting school in Olsztyn (Policealne Studium Aktorskie im. Aleksandra Sewruka przy Teatrze im. Stefana Jaracza w Olsztynie), attended i.a. by the performers' friends and families.

True to The Tiger Lillies' spirit, discussed in the next section, motifs of death and the macabre are intertwined with black humour in the spectacle. It also includes elements of audience participation and improvisation, owing much both to the ostensibly spontaneous style of The Tiger Lillies' performances and to Jachimek's vast experience as an improvisational stand-up comedian. This ironic, humorous overtone should not be overlooked when considering the direction of the translations discussed in the following sections, meant as case studies of the modifications introduced by the translator.

3. The Tiger Lillies and their sarcastic scofferies

The Tiger Lillies remain niche artists both in their native Great Britain and in Poland, so a brief introduction into their idiosyncratic style seems advantageous. The trio, present on the British scene since the late 1980s, are prolific artists with over fifty self-released studio albums. They also tour extensively and have given several concerts in Poland, usually in smaller, club-like venues or theatres. The creative force behind their oeuvre is the band's frontman, Martyn Jacques: the author of almost all the song lyrics, the singer, and the accordionist. Other band members are Adrian Stout on double bass (as well as on theremin or musical saw) and, presently, Budi Butenop on drums (the group has seen a number of drummers). Their eclectic style is often described as *punk cabaret*: a fusion of Weimar-style cabaret, circus music, and klezmer influences, juxtaposed with provocative, often ironic, lyrics and marked by a penchant for campy extravagance, intentional “bad taste”, black humour, and carnivalistic reversal of the sacred and the profane (for more on punk cabaret see Mach 2020; on The Tiger Lillies see Ramalho 2020).

The music and performance of the band form an additional source of meaning for a translator, as is indeed the case in every song translation.³ The Tiger Lillies' music, with its uncanny, shrieking falsetto vocal, accompanied by an accordion, sometimes supplemented by a theremin or a musical saw, oscillates between childlike goofiness and disturbing cacophony, thus creating a fitting foil for their grotesque lyrics. This effect is further amplified on the performative level, with the musicians donning vaguely Victorian outfits, bowler hats, and bizarre greasepaint makeups, evoking associations with a distorted circus or a hellish fairground. These auditory and visual signals of non-literality invite one to search for irony also on the textual level, thus potentially influencing the translational process.⁴ Although Jacques' lyrics are often ostensibly gruesome, the overall aesthetics of the band directs the recipient towards "ironic engagement" (Cohan 2005: 21) and towards subversive, humorous overtones. In fact, the spirit of irreverence and black humour permeates the band's oeuvre as a whole and may be considered a constant point of reference in interpreting their lyrics.

4. Religious provocations of the band

One aspect of the group's stylistics seems crucial for the purposes of this paper – that of religious provocations and mocking Christianity. The Tiger Lillies' songs have been described as "outright blasphemous" (Arthur 1996) even in their native Great Britain. God is referred to as "a swine" (The Tiger Lillies 2009: track 1–2) or "a silly old fool" (The Tiger Lillies 1996: track 10) in their lyrics. The song "Banging in the Nails" (The Tiger Lillies 1996: track 3) may be seen as the epitome of the band's irreverence: the lyrics, delivered by Jacques in an ecstatic falsetto to an exuberant accompaniment, describe Christ's crucifixion from the perspective of the executioner who seems to be thoroughly enjoying his task. The irony is augmented on the visual level, with the video presenting the band playing live in a pub with a group of beer-drinking "Jesuses" prancing about the room.⁵ This song evokes associations with *Life of Brian* (Monty Python 1979) – a film that parallels the life of Jesus Christ and ridicules everything and everyone, offering a jolly song about crucifixion not unlike "Banging in the Nails". While this paper is not meant as an in-depth study of social attitudes towards lampooning religion in Great Britain and in Poland, it is assumed here that the former is more liberal and relaxed in comparison to the latter (which may be

3| For the triadic semiotic nature of a song, consisting of textual, musical, and performative elements, see Franzon (2008: 376).

4| For the role of intersemiotic elements in intertextual translation see e.g. Kaźmierczak (2018: 26–27).

5| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvA8NPAI2Dg> (accessed: 15.06.2023).

a plausible reason why this song was not among the nineteen selected for the Polish production). Below is a brief discussion of this issue.

Roman Catholicism remains the dominant religion in Poland – it was declared by 71.30% of respondents in the recent national poll of 2021, with the second largest denomination only declared by 0.40% and non-belonging to any religion – by 6.87%.⁶ This differs significantly from the United Kingdom with its more secularised society and an array of denominations (with only 46.2% respondents describing themselves as Christian and 37,2% declaring no religion).⁷ Besides that, religion in Poland has long been inseparably intertwined with national identity (Porter 2001: 289) and with politics (Davies 2005: 152). Everyday observation of the social discourse in Poland may lead to the conclusion that attitudes towards religious issues can be perceived as a demarcation line dividing Polish society. This may mean that a translator translating a text mocking Christianity will face the task of negotiating priorities between the fidelity to the source text and the assumed expectations of the target recipients with raised awareness.

Within the Polish religious landscape, the subject of particular relevance for the translation discussed in the following section is the Marian devotion. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Virgin Mary is subject to special veneration, or *hyperdulia*, and her cult exceeds that of the saints (Carroll 2003: 266). This veneration is particularly visible in Poland, where the Virgin Mary is called the Queen of Poland and celebrated as such on the 3rd of May, the anniversary of adopting the first Polish constitution, thus forming a further link between the religious and national domains and leading to the perception of Mary as the embodiment of not only religious, but also patriotic values (Porter 2005: 153). For all these reasons, offending this figure may be assumed to constitute a violation of a particularly sacred taboo for a non-negligible part of the target audience. This, as is discussed in the following section, may have been a cause for deliberation for the song translator.

5. Is Mary a good sport? Translator treading a thin line

This section is aimed at discussing the translational manipulations in Jachimek's translation of the song "Heaven to Hell" (The Tiger Lillies 1996: track 9), entitled "Piekielne niebo" ('Hellish heaven'). The original song, comprising seven stanzas, describes the boredom and disillusionment experienced by the first-

6] <https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/nsp-2021/nsp-2021-wyniki-ostateczne/stan-i-struktura-demograficzno-spoleczna-i-ekonomiczna-ludnosci-polski-w-swietle-wynikow-nsp-2021,6,2.html> (accessed: 05.02.2024).

7] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021> (accessed: 05.02.2024).

person narrator in heaven – apparently a rather bland and disappointing place. Each stanza, except the first one, introduces some of the distinguished celestial inhabitants: Saint Peter, the angels, Saint Matthew, Saint Christopher, the Virgin Mary, God, and Jesus, who, one by one, prove to be quite dull and ridiculous – a fitting setting to analyse the issue of translating religious provocations in the light of the cultural discrepancies described in the previous section.

Jachimek introduces several modifications to the narrative. The first may be seen in the second stanza, where lines 7–8 “the angels look down their noses/ ‘cause [the narrator is] from a different class” are replaced by adding new elements to the description of the heavenly boredom: everything is drenched in white and gold, the colours which the narrator hates (“wszystko w złocie i w biele/ tak nienawidzę tych barw”). In the original, this fragment is filled with “Britishness”, as not only does it refer to a silent contempt between classes, but the rhyme “farce” – “class” between lines 6 and 8 may be fully appreciated only when pronounced with a British accent as /'fɑ:s/ and /'kla:s/.⁸ A similar satirical allusion in the target text could escape the audience due to the fact that the class structure seems to be much less delineated in the Polish society in comparison to the British one. Thus, the translational choice applied by Jachimek may be perceived here as adjusting the text to the needs of the recipients, directed towards achieving the *skopos* of the translation (cf. Vermeer 1989/2000: 222–223), consisting in producing an enjoyable and understandable song.

A similar operation may be observed in replacing the third stanza about Saint Matthew with the description of Saint Anthony as an infuriating partner in playing hide-and-seek, always able to find the narrator (“Święty Antoni to palant. / Tak strasznie wkurza mnie, że/ gdy gramy w chowanego/ od razu znajduje mnie”). Saint Matthew does not seem to be a widely present figure in the Polish religious landscape, while Saint Anthony is recognisable as the patron saint for the recovery of lost items and people (Kopaliński 1997/ 2003: 49). This figure is already present in Polish popular music, for example in the pre-war tango “Piosenka o zagubionym sercu” (‘A song of a lost heart’, by Wars/ Swinarski 1935/1976), where the narrator pleads with the saint to help her find her lost heart. It may, therefore, be claimed that the translator adapted the text by replacing a less familiar saint with a more familiar one.

The modifications are even more evident in the case of the fifth stanza of the source text, referring to the Virgin Mary, which is entirely omitted in the target text. In order to understand the potential reasons for such a decision it is necessary to first examine the content of this stanza in the source text. At first glance, it offers a positive description of Mary as the only good person in heaven, generous and “a good sport” (line 20). This description conforms to the image

8| <https://dictionary.cambridge.org> (accessed: 15.06.2023).

dominant in Christianity, of the caring, compassionate mother of God and of all the Church. Nevertheless, in the light of the subversive style of *The Tiger Lillies*, it is worth searching for other, implicit meanings – and indeed, the expression crucial for reading this stanza in a different way is “a good sport”. Usually, this means a person who accepts losing honourably or, more broadly, a good, generous person.⁹ However, as a slang expression, it describes a sexually available or promiscuous woman (Partridge 1937/2006: 1131). The phrase “a good sort” (line 18) can be considered synonymous in this context¹⁰. Therefore, the stanza may be seen as subtly presenting the Virgin Mary as a promiscuous figure, whose “generosity” is understood as being sexually available for the inhabitants of heaven.

Such an interpretation of the source text poses a challenge for the translator due to the status of the Virgin Mary in Poland, described above. To maintain the sense of the original and to suggest Mary’s promiscuity could possibly be perceived as a violation of religious feelings by some of the audience members, even with potential consequences to the translator. This may explain why the translator decided to completely omit the discussed stanza, especially that the show including the song was a graduation performance, the principal aim of which was probably not to amplify the shock value, but to present the students’ acting skills to their friends and families in the audience (this line of reasoning was confirmed by the translator¹¹). This may be seen as an act of self-censorship. On the other hand, it may be posited that such a decision is in fact a form of calibrating the text to the specific needs of the target production. If one agrees with Olgierd Wojtasiewicz that a translation should evoke similar associations in the target recipients as the source text evokes in its audience (Wojtasiewicz 1957/1996: 17), maintaining the same level of irreverence in the translation would pervert this objective, since the associations of the Polish audience may be assumed to be different than those of the British one.

Interestingly, and perhaps even paradoxically, in the lines describing Jesus Christ, not only does the translator not omit irreverent passages, but he even strengthens them. The source text (lines 25 and 26) only mentions that Jesus plays the guitar and sings like Joni Mitchell. The reference to the Canadian singer may be deemed more comprehensible to English-speaking audiences, who may associate this fragment with a “gentle, soft-spoken, fair-haired folk singer, the classic old lady” (Willis 1973), in line with the general image of heaven in the song, that is to say – far from exciting. This picture may be less familiar to the Polish audience, which may be why the translator sought different

9| <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary> (accessed: 15.06.2023).

10| Cf. [Sex-lexis.com](http://sex.lexis.com) (accessed: 15.06.2023).

11| Personal communication on 15.04.2023.

imagery to convey the ridiculousness of Christ's persona. This comes in the form of a comment that Jesus, when playing the guitar, is unable to play F-sharp major ("nie chwyta Fis-dur") because of the holes in his hands left by the nails. The choice of imagery, juxtaposing gory elements with a trivial conclusion, resembles the black humour of The Tiger Lillies, but is rather incoherent with the mild approach to religious matters in the rest of the target text. Yet, it is worth noting that during the stage performance the audience welcomed this particular fragment with laughter and applause (Valldal-Czarnecki/ Jachimek 2016 [47:27]). This may be considered an empirical confirmation that the humorous effect is achieved in this stanza despite the riskier approach to the subject. Jachimek (2023) admits that he found this particular fragment a fortunate solution in terms of its sound and humour, and thus decided to keep it. Overall, it seems that the translator is constantly negotiating between the divergent axes of maintaining the general spirit of the original, finding the venue for his own creative expression as an author, and mitigating the content due to the particular socio-cultural context.

6. The A-word. The translator as appropriator

This section analyses two translations, considered here as the instances of appropriation: "Sinner" (The Tiger Lillies 1994: track 10), translated as "Grzeszny" ('the sinful one', using a masculine grammar form), and "Anger" (The Tiger Lillies 2008: track 7), translated as "Wściekła" ('the angry one', in feminine form). This joint analysis is justified by the fact that both target texts were subjected to a similar translational strategy – by domesticating the setting of the narrative and introducing target-culture intertextual allusions, the translator "made the texts his own" and transformed both songs into a topical social commentary.

An in-depth analysis of the socio-political situation in Poland at the time of preparing and staging the discussed translations is a subject that exceeds both the scope of this paper and the expertise of its author. Nonetheless, a brief outline is provided here as an introduction to the subject. The production premiered on 16 April 2016¹² ("Zespół Śmierci i Tańca, czyli piosenki Tiger Lillies" n.d.), just several months after the Polish parliamentary elections of 2015, won by the right-wing, populist, Eurosceptic party Law and Justice (PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), maintaining close links with the Catholic Church. This reshuffling of political power led to a phase described by some as a "velvet dictatorship" (Agh 2016: 35 after Michnik 2015), strongly relying on conservative and nationalist narratives. That, in turn, fuelled the already existing tension between

12| <https://encyklopediateatru.pl/przedstawienie/64916/zespol-smierci-i-tanca-czyli-piosenki-tiger-lillies> (accessed: 16.06.2023).

PiS supporters and the more liberal, progressive and pro-European social groups. The result was the exacerbation of Polish culture wars between these two opposing factions, focussed on the issues of national identity, the role of Catholicism in public life, and the attitude towards “the Other”: members of the LGBTQ+ community, foreigners, migrants, etc.¹³

Let me now present how the translations of “Sinner” and “Anger” fit into this polemic. “Sinner” forms a list of numerous sins of the narrator, commencing with “God, I’ve been a sinner/ God, I know I’m damned” (lines 1–2). Yet, as is frequently the case with The Tiger Lillies’ songs, the lyrics cannot be taken at face value and they are underpinned with subversive humour. “I’m a homosexual hermaphrodite/ and a dirty old man” (lines 3–4), “I am a Pakistani/ and I come from Birmingham” (lines 15–16) – sings Martyn Jacques, leaving the audience little doubt that this ostensible confession of preposterous “sins” is actually a ridicule of typical fears and prejudices of the (British) society. The general tone of the lyrics seems rather humorous, with mockery prevailing over embitterment. This is also signalled on the musical level, where the breathless falsetto, rambunctious accordion, vigorous tempo, and 2/4 time signature create an ambience of a goofy gallopade.

The translator maintains the comical potential of the text, yet adapts it to the Polish socio-cultural context as of 2016. A “homosexual hermaphrodite” from line 3 becomes a gay homophobe (“jestem gejem homofobem”). This clearly directs the audience towards two of the opposing enemy figures of the above-mentioned Polish culture wars. For the political right, it is the LGBTQ+ movement, demonised by PiS and the Church (whose representative even referred to this movement as a “rainbow plague” at one occasion; see e.g. Davies/ Tait/ Walker 2019). For the political left, in turn, one of the enemy figures, and the object of many protests, is the resulting homophobia. Other “sins” also include typically Polish references. For example, line 7, having no apparent equivalent in the source text, states: “jem warzywa na rowerze” (‘I eat vegetables on a bicycle’) – this seemingly nonsensical phrase may be read as an allusion to the statement made just three months before the show’s premiere, in January 2016, by the Polish foreign minister Witold Waszczykowski in his interview for the German journal *Bild*, where he criticised the values promoted in the Polish media before the 2015 elections as a “Marxist” endorsement of an evolution toward the world of cyclists and vegetarians (Vehlewald 2016). This expression was widely publicised and quickly became a popular meme, so the discussed line may be deemed recognisable for the target audience as an acerbic joke referring to the Polish political scene. Thus, the translator used a form of domestication

13| For more on the culture wars in Poland in the discussed period see e.g. Słaćalek (2021).

by introducing a reference to an element absent from the source text, but anchored in the target culture.

Another example of “Polonising” the translation comes in lines 11–12. This whole stanza is added to the text (the original song has only six stanzas, while the translation – thirteen) and these lines could be back-translated as: ‘When a lady wants to owe me a grosz [a Polish equivalent of a penny], I yell no!’ („gdy pani chce być winna grosz/ to wtedy krzyczę ‘Nie!’”). Again, this fragment can be assumed to sound familiar to Polish audiences, used to often hearing the question: “Can I owe you a grosz?” when paying in cash for groceries. This image, absent in the source text, is yet another instance of domestication. It seems, however, to be done not in order to “move the writer towards the reader” in the classic understanding of Friedrich Schlegel (Schlegel 1813/2013: 49), but as a form of the translator’s artistic expression, a means of augmenting the humour and, in general, a form of appropriative undertaking.

This survey of appropriating operations would not be complete without discussing the intertextual allusion introduced in lines 15–16 (again, in a stanza not having a discernible equivalent in the original). Here, the narrator declares another ridiculous “sin”: ‘I will murder the tabby grey cats, both of them’ (“szarobure zamorduję / koty obydwą”). The wording is a clear paraphrase of a popular Polish lullaby, “Ach śpij, kochanie” (Wars/ Starski 1938), with its line about ‘two cats, both of them tabby grey’ (“kotki dwa, [...] szarobure obydwą”). The comical intention of introducing this preposterous threat seems obvious, and so does the act of placing the stamp of the translator and of his cultural milieu on the target text.

Another translation turned into a localised political commentary is Jachimiek’s rendition of “Anger” – a song of four stanzas interspersed with a repetitive chorus “Are you angry? I’m so angry”. The source-text narration oscillates between the first and second person: the singing persona alternately expresses their own rage and directs their statements to an equally livid addressee. The overall image is that of a spiral of hatred and violence resulting from omnipresent anger and fear-mongering. Spatial and temporal setting is practically undisclosed. Unlike “Sinner” with its light-hearted mockery, this song hits a much graver note and could be viewed as a warning against the vicious circle of social resentment.

This subject seems to have resonated with the translator, whose text leans toward a biting satire on the situation in Poland at the time of staging the show. This is particularly visible in the third stanza: “Słyszałem, że tu mieszka Arab, Żyd i gej./ Polsko, ty go wyrzuć z granic i pamięci swej./ Gorzej się oddycha, gdy tacy ludzie w krąg./ Przenieś, Panie, moją duszę do zielonych łąk” (‘I’ve heard that an Arab, a Jew, and a gay lives here./ O Poland, throw him out of your borders and out of your memory!/ It’s harder to breathe with such people around./

O Lord, transport my soul to the green meadows!'). The sarcastic appeal addressed to Poland sounds like an accurate pastiche of a Polish nationalist discourse, while the list of people who make it “harder to breathe” (“a Jewish homosexual queer” in the source text) directs the audience towards the issues of xenophobia and homophobia, often present in such a discourse.

The final line of the quoted stanza, “Przenieś, Panie, moją duszę do zielonych łąk”, is of particular interest. Similarly to the already discussed manoeuvre in the translation of “Sinner”, Jachimek quotes, nearly verbatim, a very well-known text from the Polish culture – this time not a mere lullaby, but the opening lines of the pivotal Romantic poem “Pan Tadeusz” by Adam Mickiewicz (1834/1989): “przenoś moją duszę [...] do tych łąk zielonych”. The phrase in question, in Bill Johnston’s recent translation, reads: “transport my [...] soul [...] to those meadows [...] green” (Mickiewicz 1834/2018). This reference, to what is arguably one of the most foundational of Polish poems, may not go unnoticed. Mickiewicz’s invocation, originally addressed to the Virgin Mary as a pleading for a chance to see the beloved motherland, is recontextualised in the translation, where it punctuates Polish xenophobia and contributes to the tone of an engaged commentary on the present socio-political landscape.

This topicality is further accentuated in the final line of the last, fourth stanza of the target text: “wyrzyg, wkurw i wściekłość kropka pe el”, which could be glossed as ‘disgust, fury, and rage, dot pee el’ – with the three initial letters *w* in a Polish alliterating phrase turning it into: *www.pl*, an allegorical “website” of Poland, Yet again, the translator makes a witty remark on the negative emotions taking over the troubled country, without any equivalent in the source material. The translation clearly becomes an act of appropriation, expressing the ideas and sentiments relevant for the “here and now” of the target text rather than conveying the intricacies of the source.

7. Conclusions

The discussed manipulations in the target text form, without a doubt, “extensive and wilful deviations from the original” (Low 2013: 231). Peter Low is inclined to brand such products as adaptations rather than translations in the proper sense. However, I believe that introducing such categories and defining their demarcating lines is a fruitless and maybe even impossible undertaking (cf. Greenall et al. 2021: 17). In song translation, deviations seem omnipresent, be it only for the reason of the ‘melic dominant’, i.e. the exigence of the formal constraints of aligning the text to music (*dominanta meliczna*; cf. Bednarczyk 2008: 86). In some cases, due to cultural differences, they may even take a form of censorship or, as presented here in the form of the absent stanza on the Virgin Mary, self-censorship.

Yet, the key reason for such far-reaching modifications lies, I believe, elsewhere than in the requirements of singability or in the perceived cultural limitations. As has already been mentioned above, song translation is often a side project for non-professional translators whose main area of activity remains creative art: theatre, songwriting, music. If they are drawn towards song translation, it may be precisely because they are tempted to employ their creativity in the process. This was also confirmed by the translator of the discussed texts, who said: “I asked myself a question: what would Martyn Jacques write about if he were from Poland?” (Jachimek 2023; trans. A.M.). This statement may be seen as supporting the claim that the discussed texts were appropriated in order to tell a new story, relevant from the perspective of the translator, of the performance, and of the target audience.

With regard to the creative appeal of song translation, I concur with the famous Polish poet and translator Stanisław Barańczak in his assertion that what motivates him in poetry translation is the ambition to ‘break the backbone’ of a seemingly untranslatable text and the – almost physiological – thrill of ecstasy when this venture proves successful (Barańczak 1990/2004: 14, 16; quoted phrase trans. A.M.). It is my belief that this particular aspect of the act of translation – the satisfaction it offers – does not gain commensurate attention in the translation theory: to paraphrase José Ortega y Gasset’s words (1937/1992), there seems to be too much focus on the translators’ miseries and not enough on their splendours. Therefore, further exploration of the topic of song translation as a form of expressing the authorial agency and artistic creativity seems a promising area of future research.

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Appendix: Source and target lyrics

1.

“Heaven to Hell” (lyrics M. Jacques, transcribed by A. Mach), © Misery Guts Music Ltd. “Piekielne niebo” (trans. S. Jachimek, as provided by the translator).

Source text	Target text
I thought I'd be happy in heaven I thought it would be swell I thought I'd be happy in heaven In fact I'm unhappy as hell	Tak chciałam się dostać do raju By wieczność miała smak Tak chciałam się dostać do raju A niech to jasny szlag
The harps, they all bore me Saint Peter's jokes are a farce The angels look down their noses 'Cause I'm from a different class	Święty Piotr to nudziarz I głowa boli od harf Wszystko w złocie i w bieli Tak nienawidzę tych barw
Saint Matthew discovered religion He converts people every day Whenever he gets near me I tell him to go away	Święty Krzysztof kieruje ruchem Jeździmy sześć ka em na ha Gdy ktoś tę prędkość przekroczy Z radaru leci iza
Saint Christopher, I've been rude to him I told him what he could do with his staff I told him where he could stick it And he didn't laugh	Święty Antoni to palant Tak strasznie wkurza mnie, że Gdy gramy w chowanego Od razu znajduje mnie
Only old Mary's a good'un Yeah, she's a good sort She's generous with everyone She's a good sport	Bóg ma dosyć wszystkiego Bo ludzie zawiedli go Mówi, że woli kopytne I ciągle siedzi w zoo
And God, he's a miserable bastard He's always making up rules I'm terribly disillusioned I think he's a silly old fool	A Jezus gra na gitarze I śpiewa mnóstwo bzdur Lecz przez swe dziury po gwoździach Nie chwyta Fis-dur
Jesus, he plays the guitar He sings like Joni Mitchell I thought I'd be happy in heaven But in fact I'm unhappy as hell	Wszyscy znajomi są w piekle Rodziny także brak Tak chciałam się dostać do raju A niech to jasny szlag

2.

“Sinner” (lyrics M. Jacques, transcribed by A. Mach), © Misery Guts Music Ltd.
 “Grzeszny” (trans. S. Jachimek, as provided by the translator).

Source text	Target text
God, I've been a sinner God, I know I'm damned I'm a homosexual hermaphrodite And a dirty old man	Boże, jestem grzeszny Boże, jestem zły Jestem gejem, homofobem, Mam zbereżne sny
God, I've been a sinner At the Pearly Gates St Peter slipped it in again He always comes to late	Boże, jestem grzeszny, Boże, jestem zły Jem warzywa na rowerze, Obsikuję bzy
God, I've been a sinner And now I'm gonna die Can I get into heaven If I wear a suit and tie?	Boże, jestem grzeszny, W noce i we dnie Gdy pani chce być winna grosz, To wtedy krzyczę „nie”!
God, I've been a sinner God, I know I'm damned I am a Pakistani And I come from Birmingham	Boże, jestem grzeszny, Już dosięgam dna Szare bure zamorduję! Koty obydwu
La la la la la la...	Boże, jestem grzeszny Boże, jestem zły
God, I've been a sinner I had sex with sheep And when I did have sex with them Insertion it was deep	Jestem Syryjczykiem, Przyjechałem z Ostródy La la la la la la...
God, I've been a sinner God, I know I'm damned I am a Pakistani And I come from Birmingham	Boże, jestem grzeszny Śmierdzą tak jak cap W internecie szukam ciągle Tylko gołych bab
La la la la la la...	Boże, jestem grzeszny Nie znam słowa „stop” A najfajniej, gdy z tą babą Baraszkuje chłop Boże, jestem grzeszny Grzeszny jest mój duch

Source text	Target text
	Jeszcze fajniej, gdy z tą babą Baraszkuje dwóch
	Boże, jestem grzeszny Pokłon biję złu Lubię, kiedy jedną babę ! Bierze chłopów stu
	Boże, jestem grzeszny Siedzi we mnie bies I najlepiej gdy do chłopów Też dołącza pies
	Boże, jestem grzeszny Boże, jestem zły Jestem Syryjczykiem, Przyjechałem z Ostródy
	La la la la la la...
	Boże, jestem grzeszny Rznąłem owce dwie Tak głęboko w nie wchodziłem Że aż dziwiły się!
	Boże jestem grzeszny, Lecz odłóż, Boże, łom Staję dobrym się człowiekiem Gdy opuszczam dom...
	La la la la la la...

3.

“Anger” (lyrics M. Jacques, transcribed by A. Mach), © Misery Guts Music Ltd.
“Wściekła” (trans. S. Jachimek, as provided by the translator).

Source text	Target text
Are you angry in the morning? Are you angry late at night? Are you always ready with violence... to fight?	Czy się wściekasz o poranku? Czy też raczej kiedy zmierzch? Czy masz dłoń tę w pięść zwiniętą? ...tę też?

Source text	Target text
Well this anger is an illness that will take you away It's a never-ending tragedy and it runs from day to day	Wiedz, że wściekłość to choroba, która niszczy cały świat Nieskończona katastrofa od najmłodszych naszych lat
Are you angry? Are you angry? Angry	Jesteś wściekły? Jesteś wściekła? Wściekły! Wściekła!
You shove me, I'll hit you, I'll make you rue the day You cut your car in front of mine, I'll make you pay You're different from me, so you I'll have to hit If there's something you don't understand, it's better to kill it	Ty pchniesz mnie, ja oddam i pożałujesz dnia Ty mi obsrasz wycieraczkę, ja otruję twego psa Jesteś jakiś inny, więc podpalę twoje drzwi, Jeśli czegoś nie rozumiesz, gwałć i morduj, kop i klnij
Are you angry? Are you angry? Angry	Jesteś wściekły? Jesteś...
I hear that you're a Jewish homosexual queer I'm afraid I must exterminate, you fill me full of fear It's bad for my blood pressure it puts me under strain One day I'm gonna die and there'll be so much pain	Słyszałem, że tu mieszka Arab, Żyd i gej Polsko, ty go wyrzuć z granic i pamięci swej! Gorzej się oddycha, gdy tacy ludzie w krąg Przenieś panie moją duszę do zielonych łąk!
I'm angry. I'm so angry Angry	Jesteś wściekły? Jesteś...
I'm so angry, I'm going to kick your head in I don't care that it's a mortal sin My father he abused me and my mother I did kill Now your guts I'm going to spill	Kark ci skręcę, taki to twój pech Przy tobie to nie będzie już śmiertelny grzech Środki poświęcone przez najwyższy cel Wyrzyg, wkurw i wściekłość kropka pe el
I'm so angry, I'm so angry Angry! (x23)	Jesteś wściekły? Jesteś...

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Activating creativity in translation training courses through song translation

ABSTRACT

Activating creativity in translation training courses through song translation

The aim of this paper is to present possible applications of song translation in translation training courses as a way to encourage a creative mindset among translation students. The songs selected for the activities under discussion came from *Six: The musical*. The genre of a musical was chosen because of the multimodal nature of musical theatre. In a musical, consideration must be given to the limitations imposed by music as well as the plot, stage movements, or the need to differentiate between registers used by characters. Students undertook translational actions using the five choices described by Franzon; however, they started with the additional step of machine translation. The translations prepared by students were compared and discussed in class, as well as contrasted with the machine-generated text. The translated versions were analyzed following the creativity markers proposed by Bayer-Hohenwarter.

Keywords: song translation, creativity, creative shifts, translation training, artificial intelligence

1. Introduction

The development of civilization and technology shapes the demand for new skills and competences to be acquired by novices in any profession. This is also true in the case of translation training. The introduction of CAT tools forced the shift to technology in translator education, and the growth of the Internet caused the need to teach translation students information searching skills (Brożyna-Reczko 2020; Paradowska 2020). With the introduction of neural

machine translation (NMT), the application of AI in translation practices, and the easily accessible ChatGPT, information-seeking and pure technical skills are clearly not as important as they were believed to be ten years ago. Translators in training are now aware that, inevitably, repetitive and controlled content will be processed by highly efficient neural machine translation systems. Nevertheless, high-quality human translation will always be needed in the areas requiring risk awareness, confidentiality, and creativity. The aim of this paper is to focus on creativity, how to foster it during translation classes, and to provide practical examples of class activities to be included in the course curriculum.

2. Research on creativity in translation practices

The question of whether it is possible to teach creativity has already been positively answered in academic research through various studies (Kussmaul 1995; Hewson 2016). Creative processes are often compared to those of human cognition, which leads to the conclusion that creativity is not a gift possessed by a select few but a basic feature of the human mind (Kussmaul 1995: 52) that can be developed (Robinson 1998; 2005; Henriksen et al. 2016: 34). Creativity is considered an inherent element of the translation process because creativity informs the decisions translators make regarding the application of appropriate strategies and procedures to the language (Piotrowska 2007: 74). Creativity becomes a feature of human translation in the technology-dominated translation market.

Translation studies offers two approaches to investigating creativity. One approach involves the examination of the translation process, while the other focuses on its final product or the target text. The researcher who greatly contributed to the study of the creative process in translation is Paul Kussmaul. He utilized the findings from the field of psychology and distinguished between four stages of the creative process: preparation, involving the source text; incubation, connected with the search for ideas in the known world; illumination, leading to the creation of those ideas; and evaluation, involving the verification of those ideas (Kussmaul 1995). The presence of those stages can be identified by recording the translation process, as with the use of TAP data (Lörscher 2005) or key-logging studies (Heiden 2005).

Translation born out of creative effort needs to be novel and contain an element of surprise. It must be unique or at least uncommon, but at the same time, it must satisfy specific requirements and fit reality (Kussmaul 2000: 118). Creativity can also be defined as a task that involves problem-solving at an individual level and leads to innovation on a more general level – in other words, producing work that is at the same time novel, original, unexpected, and appropriate or useful for a given purpose (Lubart 2004: 3). The features of novelty,

surprise, and fitness are the defining characteristics for creative translation perceived as a product. Without insight into the process and creativity markers, certain criteria must exist to describe a translation product as creative. Such criteria for measuring translational creativity and for promoting it have been proposed by Gerrit Bayer-Hohenwarter in the form of creative shifts (2009; 2010; 2011). Although the first mention of *creative shifts* was introduced by Kussmaul (2007) in his process analysis on a cognitive level, Bayer-Hohenwarter (2011) systematized and provided the most detailed and exhaustive method to measure creativity in the translation product; therefore, her classification of creative shifts as markers of text originality will be used in this study.

At this point, it is worth examining factors that facilitate the process of creativity development. Piotrowska (2007: 91) suggests that the translator trainer should create appropriate conditions for the students to gain positive self-awareness and to believe they are able to solve the translation task. In this study, the aim is to show students the creativity features they already demonstrate and contrast them with a post-edited NMT-generated output.

Songs provide a good starting point for creative translation because they involve many senses. For example, students can listen to the sound of lyrics and watch a video. Consequently, while experiencing the work more viscerally, they may become more creatively involved in the translation. This is consistent with the propositions put forward by Kelly Washbourne (2013: 57–58). Washbourne encourages the use of sound libraries or presenting students with illustrations of paintings contemporary with the work of a given writer. The source material chosen as the basis for the project described in this paper was a song from *Six: The musical*. This genre was selected due to its multifaceted nature, requiring attention to constraints posed by its music, plot, stage movements, or the necessity to distinguish between characters' registers, but offering at the same time additional stimuli in the form of images and sounds, thereby fostering creative thinking and problem solving.

3. The source material

The song selected to be the source material for student translation comes from *Six: the musical*, created by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss. The musical is based on the story of the six wives of Henry VIII but presented in the form of a pop concert. The wives, who are portrayed as pop stars, compete on stage for the position of the leader in their group; the winner is the one with the most miserable fate presented in her song. According to the promotional materials, the six wives decided to “take the microphone to remix five hundred years of historical heart-break into a Euphoric Celebration of 21st century girls” (Citadel Theatre 2023). The musical originated as a performance prepared by Cambridge University

students and presented at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh in 2017. It was highly acclaimed and quickly made its way to the stages of London and New York. *Six* also entered popular culture, as songs from the show reached twelve million streams on Spotify. In addition to the six wives of Henry VIII being presented as pop music divas, the whole musical provides an excellent example of how contemporary art can transform *history* into *herstory* by signifying the empowerment of women and lifting up their voices.

At the time of the student project, the musical was not performed on Polish stages, as it had its Polish premiere in September 2023 by the Syrena Theatre in Warsaw (e-teatr 2022). Therefore, it is believed that the project was carried out at the best time for using these source lyrics as class material before students had an opportunity to see and hear the Polish version of the musical on stage.

Each characterization of the wives is inspired by one or more popular female singers: Catherine of Aragon by Beyoncé; Anne Boleyn by Avril Lavigne and Lily Allen; Jane Seymour by Adele and Sia; Anne of Cleves by Nicki Minaj and Rihanna; Catherine Howard by Britney Spears and Ariana Grande; and finally, Catherine Parr by Alicia Keys (Chicago Shakespeare Theater n.d.). All the songs contain historical references, but they are written in a language of contemporary youth; therefore, the choice of this type of material for students of English Studies and the history of Great Britain seemed appropriate.

The song selected as the source material was presented by the singer playing Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII, and titled “Don’t lose ur head” (the fragments of lyrics quoted in this paper are attached as Appendix 1). The song contains many expressions characteristic of youth dialect, such as *sorry*, *not sorry*, *LOL*, or *XO*, as well as references to pop songs.

4. Study design

A total of twenty-eight master students took part in an activity involving English into Polish translation. The activity was part of the Audiovisual Translation course at the Institute of English Studies, University of the National Education Commission in Krakow, and took four class units of forty-five minutes. All the translators were native speakers of Polish and had completed their BA programme in Translation Studies.

For the introductory stage of the assignment, the students were asked to get acquainted with the theory of song translation by reading two research papers: on different ways in which a song can be translated (Franzon 2008) and on the notion of singability (Low 2008). The next stage of the assignment included a group activity, in which the students were asked to examine both machine translated and ChatGPT-generated texts. During these two stages, the students analyzed the quality of the texts obtained and discussed the possibility of using

these raw outputs as the material for post-editing. It was resolved that since the ChatGPT-generated and post-edited texts would satisfy the criteria of the second choice in song translation, i.e. translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account (Franzon 2008: 376), recreating the same version anew would be a redundant exercise. Therefore, in the next part, the students had an option to choose from the remaining three strategies of song translation: writing new lyrics to the original music with no overt relation to the original lyrics; translating the lyrics and adapting the music; or adapting the translation to the original music. At this stage, the students worked in pairs and were specifically asked to consider all the three options before selecting the one with which they felt most confident. With their prior knowledge and practice in translating various types of texts, the students did not have to rely on machine-generated output to creatively approach translation of the song selected for this project. They started their work in class but were allowed to complete it at home and upload it to the shared folder on MS Teams. In class, all the students listened several times to the original recording when doing their work, as they were equipped with their headphones, which allowed all of them to work independently.

Prior to choosing the translation strategies, the teacher discussed with the students the concept of singability, ensuring their understanding of related linguistic challenges, such as consonant clusters in Polish and the difference between long and short vowels. Following the solution proposed by Low (2008), the students were encouraged to recite their translation to identify possible impediments and to verify whether their texts can be sung with no difficulties.

5. Output generated by ChatGPT

The translation prepared by ChatGPT 3.5 provided by OpenAI proved surprisingly good, requiring only minor post-editing. The translation outputs generated by Google Translate and DeepL were less accurate and demanded some major changes. Due to a difference in the quality of translation between the output generated by the two NMT systems and ChatGPT, only the latter was taken into account in the post-activity discussion.

The AI-generated version was not free from errors, yet they were quite easy to spot and correct. ChatGPT grammar errors included wrong, non-existing forms of imperfective verbs: “nie tracaj głowy” instead of “nie trać głowy” (‘don’t lose your head’); one case of wrong adjective forms, masculine instead of feminine: “Nie chcę być jednym z dziewcząt w trójkącie” (‘Don’t wanna be some girl in a threesome’); masculine instead of feminine verb forms in two instances: “powiedziałeś” instead of “powiedziałas” (‘he said’ and ‘she said’, respectively); and an entirely wrong and nonsensical expression: “Krzyczy i wrzeszczy jak tak sądzący!” (‘He screams and shouts like so judgmental’).

Surprisingly, ChatGPT generated relevant, non-routine equivalents for the elements of youth dialect, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Non-routine translations generated by ChatGPT

Source text	ChatGPT output
Politics? Not my thing	Polityka? To nie moja bajka
Your comic went viral	Twój komentarz stał się viralowy
LOL	LOL
I wouldn't be such a b-	Nie byłabym taką...
Here we go	No to lecimy

Viral is a good example of “selecting” the right register by ChatGPT, as *wirusowy* (the literal translation, meaning ‘virus-related’ or ‘virus-infected’) generated both by Google Translate and DeepL was not a good equivalent in this context. Nevertheless, all of the idioms, allusions, and metaphors were translated literally.

The prompt given to the AI to obtain the target text was “Translate into Polish”, and followed by lyrics in English. Following the satisfactory output of AI-generated translation, at the request of the students present in the classroom, another attempt was made to work with ChatGPT 3.5 provided by OpenAI, but this time by providing the AI with the following prompt: “Translate into a Polish singable version”. The answer provided by the application is quoted fully below, as it was an important message to be delivered to the students:

Sorry, but I can't assist you in translating these lyrics into Polish while keeping them singable. The translation process for lyrics involves not only finding equivalent meanings in another language but also matching the syllable count, rhythm, and rhyme scheme to make sure the song remains singable and retains its musical flow. This requires a creative touch from a human translator who can adapt the lyrics effectively. If you're looking for a singable translation, I recommend working with a professional translator who has experience with song lyrics.¹

6. Student translations

In most of the target texts prepared by the students (eleven out of fourteen) the translation was adapted to the original music. Only two versions included new lyrics to the original music, which meant departing from the source text; and

1| The work with Chat GPT 3.5 from OpenAI conducted as part of the project was carried out in April 2023.

in one case, the students claimed to have selected the fourth mode (translating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly). In this case, the adaptation of the music concerned only two fragments in one verse. However, the students who claimed to adapt the translation to the music generally minded the rhythm of most of the English lines, without paying close attention to the number of syllables. This implies an opportunity to enhance the project design by giving greater consideration to song translation approaches, thus increasing students' awareness regarding the complex aspects of song translation.

In class, the students were prompted to read and comment on those different versions, focusing their comments on specific translation strategies. Since some translations were prepared as subtitles in the .srt file, it was possible to play the appropriate video clip in the classroom. The class discussion that followed was aimed at identifying novel and unexpected solutions applied in the students' translations, which followed Bayer-Hohenwarter's (2020: 312) statement that a creative translation is a type of translation that frequently incorporates alterations (as a result of shifts) when compared to the original text, thus introducing fresh and contextually appropriate elements into the translation, in line with the specific goals of the translation task.

The methodology applied in this paper – as in the operationalization of the creativity concept by Bayer-Hohenwarter (2009; 2010; 2011) – involves four dimensions of creativity: acceptability, flexibility, novelty, and fluency. The acceptability of texts presented by the students complied with the requirements of the tasks. The flexibility constituted the use of creative shifts instead of a simple literal rendering of the source text; this is analyzed in detail in the next section. The novelty dimension meant the uniqueness of one specific solution in comparison to others, which was easy to detect by juxtaposing all of the presented translations. The concept of fluency (i.e. the ability of providing several solutions for one translation problem) could be addressed in the course of the class discussion.

6.1. Creative shifts

In their translations, the students demonstrated a lot of creativity and resourcefulness, as shown in the examples of creative shifts presented below. Following Bayer-Hohenwarter's model (2009), creative shifts can be divided into primary and secondary. The former ones are characterized by semantic changes concerning the abstraction level, and include abstraction, concretization and modification. The latter, optional creative shifts, are used to intensify, enrich or explicate particular aspects of meaning.

6.1.1. Primary creative shifts

Primary creative shifts identified in the students' translations included the use of abstraction, such as in the cases where the translators applied solutions that

were more general or more abstract than the source text, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of abstraction in the corpus

Source text		Students' translation
1.	1522 came straight to the UK	XVI wiek, do UK ciągnęło mnie
2.	He doesn't wanna bang you Somebody hang you	Nie chce Twych czułości? Nie ma litości

In Example 1 above, instead of “1522” (read out in Polish as *tysiąc pięćset dwudziesty drugi*), “XVI wiek” (*szesnasty wiek*), a more general time expression, was used to avoid a lengthy phrase in Polish. In Example 2, instead of an explicit verb “bang”, the translator has resorted to a more generic description “Nie chce Twych czułości?” (‘He doesn’t want your caresses’), perhaps to avoid the use of vulgarisms. Similarly, in the second line, instead of words clearly depicting execution, the translator has used a less specific phrase “Nie ma litości”, meaning ‘There is no mercy’.

Concretizations (i.e. translation solutions in which the source text idea was presented in greater detail, evoking a more precise idea than the source text) were much more frequent than abstractions. They included instances in which more specific details were provided.

Table 3: Examples of concretization in the corpus

Source text		Students' translation
3.	Sorry, not sorry	Przykro mi, a jednak nie
4.	And soon my daddy said “You should try and get ahead!”	A mój tatulek rzekł: “W tę rodzinę weź się wżeń.”
5.	Life was a chore so (she set sail)	Życie było złą grą, więc hop na prom.

For instance, by adding “a jednak” (‘and yet’) in the translation of Example 3, not only is the phrase correct (since literal *Przepraszam, nie przepraszam* or *Przykro mi, nie przykro mi* would not be understood), but the intentions of the character are also revealed. In Example 4, “try and get ahead” is explicitly translated as ‘get yourself married into this family’, with the additional use of the colloquial expression “weź” to emphasize the imperative form. In the subsequent example, when dealing with the expression “she set sail”, which cannot be literally translated into Polish, the translators opted for a more concrete image – “hop na prom” (‘hop on the ferry’), following the context of Anne Boleyn traveling from France to England.

The next creative shifts identified in the translated texts are modifications, which involved cultural, situational, or historical changes and referred to the use of a level of abstraction similar to that of the source text.

Table 4: Examples of modification in the corpus

Source text	Students' translation
XO baby	Lofki kiski

For example, the abbreviation “XO”, meaning “kisses”, was translated into “lofki kiski”, which is a naturalized borrowing of *love and kisses* in the communication between teenagers.

6.1.2. Secondary creative shifts

The secondary shifts in the classification proposed by Bayer-Hohenwarter are also referred to as optional; even though they are used, “routine” or “literal” translation would be acceptable as well. This makes them more interesting for the research on creativity than obligatory shifts. Optional creative shifts include additional four subtypes: explanation, emphasizing, change of perspective, and enrichment (described in Rojo López et al. 2021), all of which were identified in the students' translations.

Explanations (making information contained in the source text explicit) were quite a common procedure applied in the translation of the song. For instance, see the following line, where “elope” is translated as “w tajemnicy hajtnąć się” (‘get hitched in secret’).

Table 5: Examples of explanation in the corpus

Source text	Students' translation
Tried to elope But the pope said nope	Chcieliśmy w tajemnicy hajtnąć się lecz papież powiedział „Nie”

Emphasizing, in which a new value is added by including a novel element, is demonstrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Examples of emphasizing in the corpus

Source text	Students' translation
6. All the British dudes, lame Epic fail!	Wszyscy Angole, weź, o fe! Sacrebleu!
7. Here we go Your comic went viral	Twój komentarz stał się popularny Nawet w Miami

In French, “Sacrebleu!” (non-existent in the source text) is added not only to satisfy the rhyme requirements of the verse, but also to match other French expressions used in the original texts. In Example 7, the viral or global nature of the comment is demonstrated by its popularity in remote Miami, thus emphasizing the message.

Change of perspective (corresponding to modulation or transposition procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958)) was cleverly applied in the following line – it is also the title of the song.

Table 7: Example of change of perspective in the corpus

Source text		Students' translation
8.	Don't Lose Ur Head	Głowę na karku miej
9.	LOL, say oh well Or go to hell	OMG, zdarza się! Najwyżej skończę na dnie

“Głowę na karku miej” can be translated into English as ‘Have a good head on your shoulders’. This also means literally ‘Have a head on the neck’ although a verbatim translation into Polish, i.e. the phrase *Nie trać głowy* (‘Don’t lose your head’), would also have a double meaning, similar to the source text. This modulation was a perfect match for the melodic line.

Another instance of a change of perspective presented in Example 9 is an interesting example of translating the English expression “LOL” into another English abbreviation. Both belong to a youth sociolect. Here, the choice of “OMG” instead of “LOL” results from the rhyme in the Polish version, while the change of perspective concerns the speaker (‘At worst, I’ll end up in the gutter’).

The last group of optional creative shifts was enrichments, which added an original contribution to meaning (e.g. a metaphor of war non-existent in the original).

Table 8: Example of enrichment in the corpus

Source text	Students' translation
Get a life You're living with his wife?	Z żoną w troje? Nieźle boje i podboje

In view of the limited amount of data and the small size of the sample, the data collected were not quantitatively evaluated. The aim of identification and classification of creative shifts presented above was to highlight the creative potential of the translation trainees through specific assignments that encourage

and develop a creative approach to their translation tasks. The examples of the students' translation selected to illustrate different types of creative shifts are derived from the texts prepared by different students. As the present study did not assume a quantitative approach and the students were working in pairs, it would be quite difficult to measure the overall degree of creativity of individual students. However, it should be emphasized that all the translations prepared as part of this project featured creative shifts of various types, which was ascertained during the class discussion aimed at identifying those features in the songs translated by the students.

7. Conclusion

On the linguistic level, the creativity of translators is reflected in their ability to creatively select among available means, create a corresponding item, or adapt a foreign one in the absence of an acceptable equivalent in the target language (Filar 2016: 178). As for now, machine-generated texts do not demonstrate this feature, presenting a literal translation of source texts, even though the range of linguistic devices used by AI systematically increases. The translations prepared by the translation students satisfied the criteria of creativity proposed by Bayer-Hohenwarter (2010): acceptability (the translation met the requirements presented in the brief); flexibility (through the creative shifts analyzed in this study), understood as the ability to depart from conventional modes of thinking and thus from the linguistic structure of the source text; novelty (the uniqueness of one solution in comparison to the other translations presented in class), and fluency, understood as the ability to provide many possible solutions for a specific problem. However, it should be added that since the research described in this paper was focused on the final product, it was difficult to measure various translation solutions provided by the students during their translation work. Nevertheless, this deficiency can be remedied by including a translation process research tool (i.e. key-logging or self-reporting) with regard to different solutions employed by students in the course of the translation activity.

This paper describes a ready-made scenario for fostering creativity in the translation course. The scenario consists of all required pre-translation theoretical readings and post-translation discussion and feedback activities. The scenario incorporates not only the process of translation practice, but also the technological aspects (the use of subtitling software), therefore presenting a holistic approach to translators' education. The experiment clearly shows that song translation is useful as a learning tool to encourage and discuss creativity in translation training.

As was mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the use of songs in the translation course is not a novel idea in translation pedagogy (see Yuskar 2021;

Seran/ Subiyanto 2023). The novelty of this study is the use of AI. The students were able to identify the creative features in their translation solutions, so different from those generated by artificial intelligence, by comparing and contrasting the machine-generated translations with their own human translation. Considering the growing significance of NMT and AI, the introduction of those tools into translation classes seems inevitable. At the same time, the comparison can be used to point to a new focus in translation training, such as the resourcefulness and originality in problem solving as components of the future career path of language specialists.

With the development of technology, it is possible to quickly and inexpensively obtain a machine-generated translation that is accurate and fit for purpose. However, the machine still cannot produce a translation that would be impactful, culturally relevant or engaging. Teaching creativity should be an essential element in translator training, preparing students to apply innovative techniques and solutions to tackle nuances and subtleties of the language, cultural references or the intended impact of the text. Additionally, it should not be forgotten that creativity in translation does not only consist in generating original content, but also involves adopting a creative mindset towards the translation process. Understood as a means for developing soft skills, creativity should become a standard part of the academic curriculum.

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Appendix 1: Source text

Don't Lose Ur Head (fragments)

Music and lyrics: Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss. © Concord Theatricals. Accessed: from the website <https://www.allmusicals.com>.

[Anne Boleyn:]
Grew up in the French court
Oui oui bonjour
Life was a chore
So

[Ensemble:]
She set sail

[Anne Boleyn:]
1522 came straight to the UK
All the British dudes lame

[Ensemble:]
Epic fail!
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
I wanna dance and sing

[Ensemble:]
Politics
[Anne Boleyn:]
Not my thing

[Ensemble:]
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
But then I met the king
And soon my daddy said
“You should try and get ahead!”
He wanted me, obviously
Messaging me like every day
Couldn't be better then he sent me a letter
And who am I kidding
I was prêt à manger

[Ensemble:]
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
Sent a reply

[Ensemble:]
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
Just saying 'Hi'

[Ensemble:]
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
'You're a nice guy
I'll think about it maybe
XO baby'

[Ensemble:]
Uh oh

[Anne Boleyn:]
Here we go

[Ensemble:]
You sent him kisses

[Anne Boleyn:]
I didn't know I would move in with his missus [...]
Like, what was I meant to do?
Sorry, not sorry 'bout what I said
I'm just trying to have some fun
Don't worry, don't worry
Don't lose your head
I didn't mean to hurt anyone
LOL Say 'Oh, well!'
Or go to hell!
I'm sorry, not sorry 'bout what I said
Don't lose your head

Three in the bed
And the little one said
"If you wanna be wed
Make up your mind!"
Her or me, chum
Don't wanna be some

Girl in a threesome
Are you blind?

[Ensemble:]
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
Don't be bitter

[Ensemble:]
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
'Cause I'm fitter

[Ensemble:]
Ooh

[Anne Boleyn:]
Why hasn't it hit her?
He doesn't wanna bang you
Somebody hang you

[Ensemble:]
Uh oh

[Anne Boleyn:]
Here we go

[Ensemble:]
Your comment went viral

[Anne Boleyn:]
I didn't really mean it
But rumours spiral [...]

Tried to elope
But the Pope said 'Nope!'
Our only hope was Henry
He got a promotion
Caused a commotion
Set in motion the C of E
[...]

RECENZJE • REZENSIONEN • REVIEWS

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Beat music, sláger, and different song translations in Socialist Hungary¹

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The publication series “Jazz under State Socialism” started in 2011, with its base at Freie Universität, Berlin, edited by Gertrud Pickhan and Rüdiger Ritter. In five monographs and six edited collections, it has covered most of the former Eastern bloc of Europe and some countries and times beyond it, combining musicological analysis with social, political and cultural perspectives. From topics such as “National styles in jazz after World War II” and “The jazz section – a platform of freedom in Czechoslovakia” (in its first volume *Jazz behind the Iron Curtain*, Pickhan/ Ritter 2011), the focus has gradually broadened to other music genres as well; volume 11, published in 2024, covers fusion, rock and ethnic music. Most contributions are in English and some in German.

Volume 8, *Translation, adaptation, and intertextuality in Hungarian popular music*, is the first one to carry the term *translation* in its name. It is edited by Ádám Ignác, affiliated with The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest. But as the introductory essay, written by him and Emília Barna, indicates, the theme that connects most of the content may be “popular music adaptations” (p. 13). From a generous amount of angles it explores musical eras and musical imports happening in Hungary, and some neighboring countries, during the latter half of the 20th century, but especially the 1960s and 1970s. 13 scholars have contributed 11 well-researched papers, a foreword and an introductory essay. Five of them were translated into English by Boldizsár Fejérvári and Noah Harley.

Coming from translation studies, most of interest may be found in the article by András Kappanyos, titled “All together now: the translatability of the popular

1| Ignác, Ádám (ed.) (2023). *Translation, adaptation, and intertextuality in Hungarian popular music*. (Jazz under State Socialism. Volume 8). Lausanne et al: Peter Lang. Pp. 282.

song in Socialist Hungary” (p. 129). The study is founded on a simple division into two music genres: *sláger* and beat music. The former represents the old-fashioned *Schlager* era (taking the style and word from Germany), the latter the rock’n’roll-inspired styles that hit Hungary hardest in the years 1960–1965. Kappanyos catalogues different ways in which both the linguistic and political problem was solved: just playing instrumentals, translating just the songtitles for radioplay, singing with altogether different (innocent) lyrics, and making what he calls “campfire versions” (p. 138). Those were for example Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the wind” and John Lennon’s “Give peace a chance”, both popular and tolerated due to the general anti-war message, but with Hungarian lyrics that diluted or softened the political edges in them. It is not quite clear how László Földes fits into that catalogue with his Hungarian covers of rock hits such as “Johnny B Goode” and “Hey Joe”, which were “not philologically accurate or very artistic from a poetic point of view” (p. 143). That same quality statement seems true also for Káti Kovács’ cover of Tina Turner’s hit “River deep – mountain high” from the late 1960s. Yet, it was “mediocre, forgettable” (p. 137, in spite of her being a good vocal match for Turner), while Földes, a decade later, “managed to retain coolness” (p. 143). Obviously, there are many factors at play here: the *sláger*-style sentimentality of the lyrics Kovács sang, ringing false against the music; the persona of the singer-lyricist Földes, apparently more in tune with the attitude of American rockers. Kappanyos is generous with subjective value judgments, but a more systematic comparison would have made it clearer what was lost or found in the 11 translated songs he cites. Still, his discussions paint an engaging picture of a music market both affected by and affecting the political scene. The evidence supports his conclusion: that the powers, under the repressive Kádár regime, caused a “soft domestication” (p. 147) or “premeditated mistranslation” (p. 148) of the music imports of the 1960s, allowing a small stream of covers that were shaped to sound like traditional, harmless *sláger*, but hindering and discouraging the artists and bands that might have turned them into a provocative youth movement or counter-culture.

Also enlightening is the section named “Beatles adaptations” (p. 197), under which the popularity and musical imports of songs by the Beatles (all or some single ones of them) are discussed in four papers. They are written by Ignász describing Socialist Hungary, Jan Blüml Communist Czechoslovakia, Michael Rauhut the German Democratic Republic (DDR), and Alexandra Grabarchuk the Soviet Union. They seem to share this unstated assumption: the enduring popularity and hunger for Beatles music was equally big in all four countries. Most interesting are the differences. Regarding Hungary, Ignász catalogues 26 Beatles covers in the years 1965–1990, but only four with lyrics in Hungarian. Contrastingly, Blüml found 173 covers, 1964–1999, and says that most were

double versions, recorded both in Czech and in English, for export to other Eastern bloc countries. In East Germany, Beatles songs were relatively freely played and covered (for example “Yesterday” as the phonetically similar “Gestern noch”), using the motivation that their Liverpool working class perspective was critical of capitalist society. But in the Soviet Union, most of the spreading of records and recordings seems to have gone through underground channels, for example recording on X-ray film taken from hospitals (“music on bones”, p. 224). With his systematic approach, Ignász makes a useful distinction between two kinds of covers: imitations, aiming to copy both vocal and musical style, and interpretations, putting their own spin on things. After 1980, the latter kind dominates.

Ferenc János Szabó’s article on “operetta adaptation” (p. 37) gives a useful glimpse of the rather under-researched topic of operetta translation, which may differ from translation of both opera and musicals – at least as we know it today. Operettas, when revived and exported, regularly got changed, rewritten and updated a little or a lot. Szabó gives us interesting facts about the thoroughly domesticated version Franz Lehár made of his operetta *Zigeunerliebe* (1910) for its Hungarian premiere in Budapest in 1943, a film version of Jenő Huszka’s operetta *Bob herceg* in 1941, and a radio version of Lehár’s *Die lustige Witwe* in 1941.

The remaining five articles involve some international influence but focus mainly on the internal history of Hungarian popular music and culture. From Barbara Rose Lange and Anna Szemere, we learn about Katalin Karády, a film star and *sláger* diva of the 1940s, who was subject, first to a politically tarnished reputation, then a nostalgic rediscovery. Dániel Szabolcs Radnai studies how the beat-rock music legend János Bródy through his catalogue of songs constructs both himself and a history of the genre, developed despite limited access to Western music. József Havasréti interestingly analyses the concept of cover and describes how the band P. Mobil in a cover album in 2019 created a “hard rock canon” (p. 109) that included some “appropriation of folk music” (p. 119). Zsolt K. Horváth sketches a history of the band Gerilla, 1965–1971, focusing on “pol-beat”, the “somewhat domesticated” (p. 158) version of the anti-war protest song movement – the fact that the band’s songwriter also translated songs by Tucholsky, Mayakovsky, “Guantanamo”, and “Little boxes” is mentioned all too briefly. Finally, Eszter György explores the concepts “authenticity and hybridity” (p. 177) when discussing the special status, expressions, and injustices experienced by the Roma folk musicians of Hungary. This is all useful information for anyone interested in knowing more about European pop culture, music trends, genre histories and international exchange of pop songs that could not be hindered by political dictatorship.

To make this admirable collection of solid case studies even more ideal, what one could wish for would be an attempt to overview and compare the disciplines

of popular music studies and translation studies. The former is a sturdy and diverse research field, whose history can be explored in journals such as *Popular Music and Society*, since 1971, *Popular music*, since 1981, and *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, since 1988. There, one will find occasional studies touching upon translingual dissemination of pop music material, globally and locally. But a more deepgoing interest in translation studies is yet to be seen. In the volume at hand, the references to works in translation studies are restricted to Roman Jakobson, Walter Benjamin, an article by Isabelle Marc (2015), and the books by Şebnem Susam-Saraeva (2015) and Lucile Desblache (2019). Most of the reading of them appears to have been done by the editor Ádám Ignász.

However, reading the classic books of popular music studies, such as the ones by Richard Middleton (1990) and Simon Frith (1996), one easily gets the impression of popular music being a primarily, even exclusively, Anglo-American affair. Studies like the volume at hand are important to counter that impression. Doing that, it is more in line with another seminal book, Regev (2013) – although it is not referenced. Motti Regev prefers to paint a picture of cosmopolitanism and local networks transforming international influences. He uses terms such as hybridization and transposition – also used in this volume – more often than translation and adaptation. Regev also raised an idea of archetypes concerning artists and genre identities. We hear about the phenomenon of “copycat bands” (i.e. p. 156, p. 266) in Hungary, but we also learn about archetypes we may surely recognize from elsewhere – the tragic diva, the rock auteur, the hard rock rebel, the “authentic” folk minority. Here lies an opportunity to extend the discussion with more international comparisons, without seeing them as American imperialist or colonizing influences. Does every country make its own “translation” of a globally shared pattern of pop/rock archetypes?

A few of the authors in the book find reason to distinguish between translation in the sense of an imported trend or influence and “actual translation”, that is of song lyrics (Kappanyos, p. 129). As for the concept of *adaptation*, the book demonstrates the difficulties – I would like to say: impossibility – of using that term with precision. In some articles, adaptation mostly means ‘adoption of a foreign influence’ (Horvath, Kappanyos). Some use it as a simple synonym for a cover recording (Ignác, Blüml), another more to highlight the creative reworking of some such covers (Havasréti). In one study it is the hyponym for either a change of language or a change of medium (Szabó). This is of course not a fault of the authors, but of (the English) language and the incurable, interdisciplinary confusion. Perhaps wisely, the editor expressly abstains from providing a definition in his foreword. Concepts used in the book with more explanatory power are *domesticating*, meaning roughly ‘making changes to fit target culture norms’ (Ignacz, Kappanyos, Horváth – without referencing Venuti 1995), and *appropriating*, a practical term for the ‘taking and using’ of songs –

to either sing, sell or enjoy them (Kappanyos, Havasréti, Blüml, György, Lange/Szemere).

Concludingly, the collected volume offers many insights and much information, empirically founded, that is valuable for anyone academically interested in the international exchange of pop song, memes and movements in the 20th century. They still wait, however, to be fully integrated with song translation studies.

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Between translation and semiotics and into artistic transduction¹

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Dinda L. Gorlée is one of the leading scholars who may be given credit for introducing semiotics into translation studies. She has published extensively on semiotranslation, transduction, Roman Jakobson's intersemiotic translation, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy or opera and singable translation. Steconi (2007: 16) regards Gorlée as one of "the founding mothers" of translation semiotics. Indeed, the monograph *From mimetic translation to artistic transduction: A semiotic perspective on Virginia Woolf, Hector Berlioz, and Bertolt Brecht* most likely belongs to translation semiotics; however, it is also a seminal contribution to translation studies, as Gorlée provides ample evidence of translation being "one of the major shaping elements in the processes of ideas, texts and cultural practices", thus exemplifying the Outward Turn (Bassnett/ Johnston 2019: 183) and highlighting the recently emphasized materiality of translation (see e.g. Littau 2016 or Haapaniemi 2024). The reviewed book extends Gorlée's previous publications on the topic of transduction (especially her 2015 book *From translation to transduction: The glassy essence of intersemiosis*) and proves how well-versed she is in Peircean semiotics, Jakobson's linguistics and artistic translation.

The monograph consists of four chapters, a short epilogue, an impressive list of references and an index. What one does not find is an introduction, which should help the reader navigate through the book. An introduction would also help to situate the semiotic perspective of the book onto the map of translation studies.

Chapter 1 entitled *Forked tongues: Theory from translation to transduction* introduces the main ideas discussed in the book. Gorlée defines the main object of interest, i.e. transduction, as a means of expanding "informational (that is, highly meaningful) language into an inventory of the literary dialects, idioms and jargons of other fine and applied arts" (p. 1), something more than

1| Gorlée, Dinda L. (2023). *From mimetic translation to artistic transduction: A semiotic perspective on Virginia Woolf, Hector Berlioz, and Bertolt Brecht*. London/ New York: Anthem Press. Pp. 202.

the “ordinary’ translation” (p. 17), a transenergising process of creativity. She views transduction as an act of reworking, improving or extending a literary translation over ages. In the chapter she makes references to some of the most prominent linguists, semioticians, philosophers and translation scholars, including Eugene Nida, Jacques Derrida, Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Morris, Thomas A. Sebeok or Roman Jakobson. In addition to Peirce, both Jakobson and Sebeok appear as the main inspirations behind arguments that buttress Gorlée’s theorising. Having discussed the traditional tripartite division of translation introduced by Jakobson (pp. 19–20), Gorlée moves on to draw the reader’s attention to his earlier concept of hypertranslation (Jakobson 1956/1971), which “transforms an object into the same object but with a poetic quality” (p. 21) and consists in “the poet interacting lyrical words with music” (p. 22). Jakobson, as maintained by Gorlée, is an individual who “liberated the sign from Saussure’s fixed codes of grammar to reveal the dynamic codes of Peirce’s three interpretants” (p. 29). Sebeok, on the other hand, is the main inspiration behind the concept of transduction, which is defined by him as a process of transformation from one form of energy into a different one (p. 43). Gorlée’s insightful exegesis of Jakobson’s writings, including the seminal article on linguistic aspects of translation (Jakobson 1959), is certainly worth highlighting. What is also worth mentioning is how she draws parallels between translation and/or transduction and some of the Peircean triads, including the one of trope, type and token, or the less quoted one of ellipse, parabola and hyperbola. The latter triad illustrates “the three-dimensional effects of transduction applied to the arts”, that move like waves, which Peirce considered “degenerate” signs (p. 10).

The ellipse–parabola–hyperbola triad (p. 12) is the central focus of the reviewed book. The three shapes represent departures from a simple circle of meaning in literary translation: though still one shape, an ellipse clearly differs from a circular pattern of moving from the ST to the TT. A parabola consists of two independent parts, which may mean imitating one the one hand, and being significantly different or defective, on the other. A hyperbola means two approximating shapes brought together by a common point, a kind of logical connection and interaction. Thus, Gorlée demonstrates that translation (or rather transduction) does not mean imitation of the same shape: instead of creating a perfect circle of informative linguistic signs, transduction results in flexible shapes of ellipse, parabola or hyperbola, combining different arts (p. 44).

In the three following chapters, Gorlée offers a rich discussion of the three case studies, which are signalled in the subtitle and which prove the transformation of the translator from a plain “conductor to metalinguistic transductor” (p. 46), exemplifying the ellipse–parabola–hyperbola triad. Chapter 2, entitled *Wave after wave: Wagner’s waves eclipsed by Virginia Woolf*, presents an in-depth

analysis of potential links between Woolf's revolutionary novel *The Waves* (1931) and Wagner's operas, especially *The Rheingold* (1869). Arguing that the opera served as a source of Woolf's inspiration, Gorlée contends that Woolf's writing was actually a form of ellipse, or "elliptical half-circle" (p. 52). As claimed by Gorlée, Woolf "expressed the leitmotifs in the wavy language of sound-signs inspired by the high voltage of the linguistic speech of the speaking artists as represented in the characters of her novel" (p. 57). As such, the writer moved to transduction.

The next chapter, i.e. *War and love: The parabolic retranslation in Berlioz's opera*, discusses the attempt at transduction made by the French composer Hector Berlioz, who transformed Virgil's *Aeneid* into the five-act grand opera *The Trojans* (1863). Berlioz challenged himself with the task of "vocal gymnastics, squeezing words into music" (p. 99). Thus, the composer moved one step ahead of Woolf's retranslating Wagner in that he "applied the half-modern figure of the parable to recode the intercode of music-with-words" (p. 100).

The final case study, elaborated on in the chapter *The threepenny opera: Jakobson's poetics retranslated in the spirit of Brecht's work-plays*, presents a move from traditional and conventional opera to an alternative new song-play genre of Bertolt Brecht. According to Gorlée, the Brechtian song-play from 1928 consists of "a half-singing, half-speaking recital of lyrical texts which were similar to the twentieth century's harmonic, but dissonant, arias" (p. 129). By breaking the convention of the Singspiel and introducing his *Verfremdungseffekt*, Brecht managed to create a special form of "epic" theatre, which Gorlée describes as "an electrified 'conduction'" inspired by John Gay's *The beggar's opera* (p. 170). Brecht was a "hyperbolic poet", using the German language and theatrical forms in an unexpected way to express his politically-coloured ideas.

Tracing the links between Wagner and Woolf, Gorlée indicates how Woolf reflected the rhythmic movement of waves through retranslating or reliterating Wagner's musical verse in her own poeticized verbal sounds (pp. 76–77), creating an elliptical and logocentric version of the former. Gorlée explains how Berlioz managed to use a canonical hypotext and merged it with his own theory on orchestration and opera creation although he failed to "redact" the poetic verse of Virgil, concentrating on music instead and arriving at a music-centred parable (p. 127). Brecht was, according to Gorlée, *the* hypertranslational poet, who managed to combine both words and music, creating "the perfect hyperbole of transduction" (p. 172).

In the short epilogue, Gorlée summarises the argumentation and defines transduction by referring to Sebeok's understanding of the concept. Transduction, meaning transfer between different forms of energy, is guaranteed by "intersemiotic transmutability", i.e. by the possibility of translating linguistic signs into signs of other semiotic systems (p. 171).

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The highly detailed analyses of the case studies are one of the greatest merits of the book. Gorlée meticulously examines the correlations between vowel qualities and emotions; stress patterns and musical phrases; stylistic tropes and meanings; lexical phrases and particular voices; genres and dynamics of music; ways of articulating sounds and onstage movements. Thus, she embraces the concepts of singability, multimodality and materiality of translation even though she does not mention these terms explicitly. This is the point at which the book may become of interest to song translation scholars, serving as an inspiration and an example of an erudite analysis.

Through her analyses, she draws the reader's attention to the extralinguistic dimension of translation, underling once again the links between the three Jakobsonian types of translation and culture, confirming her previous claim that "language-and-culture must be joined together" (Gorlée 2015: 108). The link between language and culture has been emphasized in translation studies since the cultural turn (Snell-Hornby 2006); however, it is Gorlée's concept of transduction and its underlying quality of intersemiotic translatability that should be of particular interest to translation scholars, as it provides an avenue of promising research.

Still it may not be perfectly clear, at least to this reader, how to demarcate definitional boundaries of some of the concepts used in the book, including, e.g. transmutation, transduction and hypertranslation, all of which seem relevant for translation studies. That terminological complexity together with frequently metaphorical parlance and lengthy digressions (which can make the main point unnecessarily obscure) may in places work against the intratextual coherence of the argumentation. The monograph may therefore be challenging to an inexperienced reader, especially the one with no background in semiotics or translation studies.

Another criticism may centre on the fact that the author refers to only few sources from general translation studies (mainly Nida's monograph from 1964 and Nida and Taber's follow up from 1969, Holmes's papers from the 1970s and 80s or Steiner's 1975 book). This may create a fallacious impression as if not much had happened in translation studies. Therefore, some observations concerning translation may come across as evident, especially the ones concerning the subjective manipulation of literature, a concept well-established in the discipline since its introduction in the mid 80s. That is why in places the arguments may lose their potency and impact.

Despite these imperfections and idiosyncrasies, the book is certainly worth reading. With a strong focus on semiotics and the creative "remainder" introduced through the process of transduction, the monograph underlines the pertinence of semiotics for translation studies and as such may help to rectify some of the contemporary conceptual dilemmas of the latter.

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Das Übersetzen von Kunstliedern vor dem Hintergrund der funktionalen Translationswissenschaft¹

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Die Problematik des Übersetzens von gesungenen Texten (von Liedern, Songs, Chansons und Libretti) steht seit relativ kurzer Zeit im Fokus des Interesses der Translationswissenschaftler, wovon immer öfter organisierte Tagungen zu diesem Thema und immer häufiger erscheinende Publikationen zeugen (vgl. Apter/ Herman 2016: 3f.; Greenall/ Franzon/ Kvam/ Parianou 2021: 13). Abhandlungen, die eine komplexe und ausführliche Besprechung der Problematik des Übersetzens von gesungenen Texten darstellen, werden im deutschen translationswissenschaftlichen Diskurs immer noch eher sporadisch veröffentlicht. In der Sekundärliteratur finden sich nur wenige Monografien auf Deutsch, in denen das Übersetzen von gesungenen Texten aus translationswissenschaftlicher Sicht behandelt wird (vgl. Neudecker 2008), und in den meisten von ihnen wird das Augenmerk auf das Übersetzen von Libretti gelenkt (vgl. Kaindl 1995; Schneider 2009; Mertens 2011; Vogt 2014). Des Weiteren hat sich bisher kein einheitlicher Name für diesen Zweig der Translationswissenschaft im deutschen translatorischen Diskurs etabliert. Diese akademische Zurückhaltung gegenüber den translationswissenschaftlichen Analysen der gesungenen Texte ergibt sich aus Gründen, die Klaus Kaindl (2004: 177; 2005: 119) in Bezug auf die Populärmusik nennt. Einerseits hängt diese Zurückhaltung mit der „diffusen akademischen Zuordnung des Untersuchungsgegenstandes, der sich an der Schnittstelle unterschiedlicher Fachbereiche wie etwa Literaturwissenschaft, Medienwissenschaft, Musikwissenschaft, Kommunikationswissenschaft, Soziologie, Semiotik usw. befindet“ (Kaindl 2004: 177), zusammen. Andererseits wird dem Untersuchungsmaterial (vor allem den populärmusikalischen Erzeugnissen) sein vermeintlich trivialer Charakter vorgeworfen (vgl. Kaindl 2005: 119), weswegen es manchen Translationswissenschaftlern zufolge keinen geeigneten Gegenstand translationswissenschaftlicher Analysen darstelle (vgl. ebd.).

Desto begrüßenswerter ist die Publikation *Poesie – Musik – Übersetzung. Varietäten in der Translation von Liedtexten* von Sigmund Kvam, dem norwegischen

1| Kvam, Sigmund (2024). *Poesie – Musik – Übersetzung. Varietäten in der Translation von Liedtexten*. (TransÜD – Arbeiten zur Theorie und Praxis des Übersetzens und Dolmetschens, Bd. 142). Berlin: Frank&Timme. 197 S.

Germanisten, Sprach- und Übersetzungswissenschaftler, die als 142. Band der Schriftenreihe *TransÜD – Arbeiten zur Theorie und Praxis des Übersetzens und Dolmetschens* erschienen ist.

Die zur Besprechung vorliegende Monografie besteht aus neun Kapiteln, denen ein Vorwort vorangeht, und wird mit einem Literaturverzeichnis abgeschlossen. In der Einführung, die zugleich das erste Kapitel des Buches darstellt, werden die Problemstellung und die Zielsetzung der unternommenen Untersuchung skizziert. Anhand von Kunstliedern Edvard Griegs, des norwegischen Komponisten, und deren Übersetzungen ins Deutsche bzw. Norwegische/Dänische zielt die Publikation darauf ab, zu eruieren, wie die Übersetzer mit Übersetzungsproblemen umgegangen sind, und mithilfe von welchen strategischen Mitteln sie diese Probleme gelöst haben. Dies versucht der Autor zunächst deskriptiv zu präsentieren, indem er veranschaulicht, welche konkreten Übersetzungsverfahren zur Lösung der Übersetzungsprobleme angewandt wurden. Daneben wird explanativ dargestellt, welche möglichen Beweggründe hinter der Anwendung der Übersetzungsverfahren gestanden haben.

Im zweiten Kapitel gibt der Autor die Definition vom Kunstlied an, indem er diese Textsorte in der Kategorie eines intersemiotischen Kommunikates betrachtet, das aus „zwei selbständigen, semiotisch unterschiedlichen kommunikativen Einheiten“ (S. 22) zusammengesetzt ist, d.h. der verbalen Ebene in Form vom Gedichttext einerseits und der musikalischen Ebene andererseits, die in der Aufzeichnung in Notenschrift materialisiert wird, wobei im Translationsprozess meistens nur die verbale Ebene einer Änderung unterzogen wird. Schließlich nennt der Forscher fünf Methoden des Übersetzens von Kunstliedern, während in der zu besprechenden Monografie die letzte Methode, nämlich das Übersetzen zu Aufführungszwecken, genauer betrachtet wird.

Anschließend werden im dritten Kapitel die wichtigsten Ansätze der funktionalen Translationswissenschaft dargelegt, die eine theoretische Basis der im Rahmen der Monografie unternommenen Untersuchung darstellen. Kvam weist auf die Stichhaltigkeit der funktionalen und adressatenorientierten Herangehensweise hin. Die Einbeziehung des Initiators sowie des Adressaten des Translats lässt schließen, dass der Autor die Translation als vermittelte Kommunikation ansieht. Dies könnte jedoch expliziter zum Ausdruck gebracht werden und die theoretischen Erwägungen könnten um kommunikative Ansätze z.B. die der Leipziger Schule oder anthropozentrischen Translatorik ergänzt werden. Dank der Berücksichtigung des Drei-Phasen-Modells von Otto Kade oder des Translationsgefüges von Franciszek Grucza wäre die kommunikativ-funktionale Einbettung der Translation vom analysierten Material plausibler, zumal Kvam die Aktanten des Translationsprozesses nennt, d.h. den Ziltextsender, den Initiator und den Auftraggeber, die er unzutreffend miteinander gleichsetzt, was irreführend sein kann. Dem kommunikativen Ansatz zufolge wäre der Ziltextsender

eher mit dem Übersetzer wegen seiner doppelten Rolle des AT-Rezipienten einerseits und ZT-Produzenten, also des Senders eines zielsprachigen Textes, andererseits, gleichzusetzen. Darüber hinaus sei der Initiator mit dem Auftraggeber nicht zu verwechseln, worauf Żmudzki (2015: 47) aufmerksam macht.² Nachfolgend führt Kvam den Begriff der Invarianz ein, den der Forscher als Grundlage der Entscheidungsfindung im Translationsprozess betrachtet und daher im Zentrum seiner analytischen Erwägungen positioniert.

Im vierten Kapitel wird das Untersuchungsmaterial beschrieben, das aus 14 deutschsprachigen und 144 norwegischen/dänischen Kunstliedern Edvard Griegs besteht. Hierbei werden auch die Übersetzer der Lieder ins Norwegische/Dänische und Deutsche genannt. Des Weiteren skizziert Kvam den Übersetzungskontext, wobei er betont, dass Griegs Kunstlieder funktionskonstant übersetzt wurden.

Im fünften Kapitel wird der Forschungsstand zum Übersetzen von gesungenen Texten dargeboten. Der Autor präsentiert und bespricht Publikationen führender Forscher und Forscherinnen im Bereich der Translationswissenschaft. Hierbei stellt er verschiedene Ansätze und Annahmen bezüglich der Begriffe *Äquivalenz* und *Treue* dar. Im weiteren Teil dieses Kapitels wird auf den Mangel an translationswissenschaftlich angelegten Forschungen zu Kunstliedern hingedeutet. Der Autor betont dabei, dass die bereits durchgeführten Forschungen normativ orientiert sind und die Problematik des Übersetzens von Kunstliedern eher am Rande einer anderen Problemstellung besprechen.

Das sechste Kapitel stellt eine Besprechung des Untersuchungsmaterials hinsichtlich der Invarianzverlagerung dar. An konkreten Beispielen wird die Herangehensweise der Übersetzer von Griegs Kunstliedern in Bezug auf die Invarianz der Melodie, der Reimstruktur und der übergeordneten Makrostruktur veranschaulicht. Es werden auch übersetzerische Eingriffe behandelt, die der Beibehaltung der invarianten Elemente dienen, wie die thematische Progression, Antonymie, Hyperonymie und Synonymie. Unter den erwähnten Eingriffen ist jedoch die Bezeichnung *Antonymie* anfechtbar. Zwar steht das im Beispiel (S. 95) angeführte ausgangssprachliche Verb *gløyma* in einem antonymischen Verhältnis zum zielsprachlichen Verb *gedenken*, aber die norwegische und die ihr entsprechende deutsche Passage sind inhaltlich übereinstimmend, da im norwegischen Ausgangstext das Negationswort *aldri* vorkommt. Daher wäre vielleicht für diesen Eingriff die Bezeichnung *Modulation* im Sinne von Vinay und Darbelnet (1972: 51) angebrachter, die als „variation dans la message, obtenue en changeant de point de vue, d'éclairage“ definiert wird (ebd.; vgl. Schreiber 1993: 226). In diesem Kapitel führt Kvam darüber hinaus den Begriff der ausgangstextkompatiblen Varianz ein, die er als Verwendung varianter Semantik

2| Mehr zur Rolle des Initiators im Translationsvorgang siehe bei Nord (2009: 8f.).

betrachtet, die auf lexikalischer Textebene vom Ausgangstext abweicht, und stellt ihr die ausgangstextinkompatible Varianz gegenüber, die der Autor als einen Übersetzungsfehler ansieht. Kvam macht zutreffend darauf aufmerksam, dass diese zwei Varianzarten sich schwer gegeneinander abgrenzen lassen. In Anbetracht der Invarianzforderung in Bezug auf die Melodie, Reimstruktur und semantische Makrostruktur stellt die ausgangstext(in)kompatible Varianz jedoch ein relevantes Merkmal bei der Anerkennung eines Zieltextes entweder als Übersetzung oder Bearbeitung dar.

Im Nachhinein fokussiert Kvam im siebten Kapitel die silbische Flexibilität und beschreibt ausführlich, mithilfe welcher Übersetzungsverfahren, die der Autor als übersetzungsstrategische Mittel bezeichnet, diese Flexibilität realisiert wird. Im Hinblick auf die melodiebezogene silbische Flexibilität bespricht er Stellen, in denen melismatisch-syllabischer Wechsel vorkommt. Im Hinblick auf die sprachlichbezogene silbische Flexibilität werden hingegen phonologische, topologische und lexiko-grammatische Aspekte, wie Apokopen, Synkopen und Permutationen, eruiert. Dabei wird zutreffend darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass beim Übersetzen von Kunstliedern zu Aufführungszwecken ein singbarer Text entstehen soll und daher nicht nur die Melodie als Invariante, sondern auch „eine optimal singbare phonologische Realisierung des Zieltextes“ (S. 111) eine gewichtige Rolle spielt.

Im achten Kapitel der Monografie werden die Ergebnisse der durchgeführten Analysen ausgewertet. Kvam verweist auf die Regelmäßigkeiten, die sich im analysierten Untersuchungsmaterial nachweisen ließen und teilt sie in zielsprachengemeinsame Regeln, die sowohl in deutscher als auch norwegischer/dänischer Übersetzung vorkommen, wie die Verwendung von Melismen und Syllabismen, und in zielsprachenspezifische Regeln, die nur in einer der beiden Sprachversionen auftreten, wie das Vorkommen von Apokopen und Synkopen. Schließlich stellt der Forscher fünf Thesen auf und bespricht sie anhand von angestellten Beobachtungen, wodurch Transparenz bezüglich der gewonnenen Erkenntnisse geschaffen wird und die Ausführungen an Klarheit gewinnen.

Das letzte Kapitel fasst die Ergebnisse der Untersuchung zusammen und gibt einen Ausblick auf weitere Forschungsbereiche und Analysemöglichkeiten, wie die Berücksichtigung der Kategorie der Verständlichkeit und Singbarkeit in den Analysen der Kunstlieder in der Übersetzung, was ein neues Licht auf diese Problematik wirft.

Abschließend kann festgestellt werden, dass die Monografie von Kvam einen relevanten Beitrag zur Translationswissenschaft leistet. Die in dieser Besprechung formulierten kritischen Anmerkungen schmälern den Wert der rezensierten Monografie nicht, die wichtige Einblicke in die Problematik des Übersetzens von Liedtexten liefert. Wie der Autor selbst anmerkt, kann die Veröffentlichung den Ausgangspunkt weiterer Forschungen bilden, die um gesangstechnische und

rezeptionsorientierte Aspekte erweitert werden könnten, die die Kategorie der Verständlichkeit und Singbarkeit in den Analysen berücksichtigen würden.

Ein großer Vorzug der Publikation ist, dass sich der Autor trotz der translationswissenschaftlichen Fundiertheit der Analysen nicht nur auf die textlinguistischen Aspekte beschränkt, sondern auch musikbedingte Faktoren einbezieht, die sich auf den Übersetzungsprozess auswirken. Darüber hinaus berücksichtigt der Autor in seinen Erwägungen sowohl die Adressaten des Translats als auch den Skopos der Übersetzung, d.h. die Konzertaufführung. Somit beweist er, dass der kommunikativ-funktionale Ansatz hinsichtlich der durchzuführenden Analysen zu den für die Translationswissenschaft maßgebenden Ergebnissen führt.

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