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■ **Websites**: The Emerson Society: http://www.cas.sc.edu/engl/emerson/; The Margaret Fuller Society: http://mendota.english.wisc.edu/~jasteele/index.html/; The Ralph Waldo Emerson Institute: http://www.rwe.org/; The Thoreau Society: http://www.thoreausociety.org/; The Web of American Transcendentalism: http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/.

S. Morris

TRANSLATION. "Till I heard Homer speak out loud and bold": many readers know that the eighth line of John Keats's famous sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (1817) does not read this way. Why not? The legendary Gr. name fits the iambic beat as neatly as the less venerable "Chapman" that takes its place. Through this unexpected substitution, Keats calls attention to the key role that trans. plays in the transmission and creation of poetic culture. By relying on a trans., Keats admits that he cannot read the original Gr., as his university-educated precursors and contemporaries might have. He also flaunts his unorthodox taste by spurning Alexander Pope's then-standard trans. in favor of George Chapman's less favored Ren. version. He raises, moreover, the vexed issue of the translator's relationship to his or her poetic source: the poem's climactic moment comes when the speaker hears not Homer's voice but that of his latter-day translator.

The two Homers Keats presumably knew suggest other questions of poetic trans. Both Pope and Chapman employ *rhyme and *meter in transmitting the Gr. text. Chapman uses the epic *fourteener, while Pope draws on a tidier iambic *pentameter with tightly rhymed neoclassical *couplets: neither aims to reproduce the dactylic *hexameter of the original. Would the results have been more faithful if they had? Though Eng.-lang. *versification derives from cl. sources, the ling. structure of Eng. can only approximate, through *accents, the long- and short-vowel alternation that shapes ancient Gr. *prosody. The very verse structure of Eng. is, thus, an imperfect trans. of its early model: the iambs and trochees of anglophone verse would be unrecognizable to those who first used the terms.

The form Keats employs, moreover, likewise derives from foreign sources, as its Italianate name suggests: without the 14th-c. Petrarchan *sonetto*, there would be no 19th-c. Eng. *sonnet celebrating a 17th-c. trans. from the ancient Gr. Indeed, the plethora of prosodic terms, in Eng. and other langs., that owe their existence to trans., ancient and mod., points to the constant "crossbreeding and hybridization" (Osip Mandelstam) that shape the Western poetic trad. Trans. not only sustain the cultural "afterlife" of poetic works, as Walter Benjamin states in "The Task of the Translator"; they generate future incarnations: "I want Ovid . . . and Catullus to live once more and I am not satisfied with the historical Ovid . . and Catullus," Mandelstam insists in "The Word and Culture."

Translating poetry is, the adage runs, impossible. It is also, so Keats's sonnet suggests, imperative. Keats's mod. poem springs from a work available to him only through the ling. mediation of others, and such mediation, when successful, provides the immediate shock of the new that catalyzes further poetic creation. This paradox is key not just to the hist. of verse trans. but to its analysis and reception. Various theorists and practitioners have seen poetic trans. as dominated by one of three guiding principles. The translator may aspire to (1) semantic accuracy or (2) prosodic accuracy; or he or she may aim instead for the kind of (3) "creative transposition" (Jakobson), "raid" (Heaney), or "imitation" (Lowell) that relies on "the muse of translation" (Young) to generate new inspiration.

"The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase," Vladimir Nabokov insists in the intro. to his notoriously clunky trans. of Alexander Pushkin's *Evgenij Onegin*. His fellow exile and self-translator Joseph Brodsky was equally adamant on the need for "prosodic verisimilitude": the translator must endeavor to reproduce, above all, the rhyme and meter of the original poem. Robert Lowell, whose Rus. "imitations" Nabokov abhorred, freely "dropped lines, moved lines, moved stanzas and altered meter and intent" in his efforts to avoid translatorly "taxidermy." Which approach is correct? None, or all of the above. Poetic trans. can be no more "pure" than the various trads. it shapes and is shaped by: "There is no answer, there are only the choices people make," Heaney remarks pragmatically. Much discussion of poetic trans. focuses on the problems inherent in each of these three emphases and on the continuous negotiation among them that constitutes so much translatorly practice.

What is a literal trans.? Nabokov curtails all debates with brusque efficiency: "The term 'literal translation' is tautological since anything but that is not truly a translation." Poets from Pope to Paul Valéry have seen things differently. Pope deplores "servile, dull adherence to the letter" ("Preface to the *Iliad* of Homer"), while Valéry upends the old cliché (itself translated from the It.) about translators as traitors: "Where poetry is concerned, fidelity to meaning alone is a kind of

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betrayal" ("Variations on the *Eclogues*"). In "The Poetry of Grammar and the Grammar of Poetry," Jakobson insists on the inseparability of meaning and form—in both its ling. and prosodic embodiments—that marks poetic speech. "Sense in its poetic significance is not limited to meaning," as Benjamin comments. Poetic lang. transforms the very notion of literal meaning by activating semantic possibilities in places we do not ordinarily think to look for them. If one goal of poetic lang. is to shake the reader loose from the fetters of literal mindedness, then a literal rendering of a poetic text, such as Nabokov's *Onegin*, runs the risk of violating more than just the spirit in its fidelity to the letter. What is poetic lang. deprived of poetry?

It follows from Jakobson's argument that too strict a reverence for poetic form poses its own dangers. Brodsky's insistently structured trans. of his own poems often do violence not just to the virtuosic forms he borrowed in many cases from adoptive Eng. forebears from John Donne to W. H. Auden but also to the extraordinary Rus. originals. Moreover, metrical structures carry different semantic charges from lang. to lang. and culture to culture. Czesław Miłosz takes his inspiration, metrical and otherwise, from Auden's *New Year Letter* for his own—still untranslated—"Traktat moralny" (Treatise on Morals, 1947). But the familiar rhythms of Auden's iambic *tetrameter come as a shock when translated into a lang. where fixed penultimate stress lends itself far more readily to trochees.

Miłosz's acerbic take on postwar Polish intellectual life gains an additional measure of ironic distance through his use of a borrowed metrical structure, esp. when combined with his wittily polonized revamping of Auden's couplets and slant rhymes. Miłosz's prosodic virtuosity in his native Polish goes virtually unseen in the Eng. trans. he shepherded into being with the help of various cotranslators, though. Here he stood opposed to Brodsky: "good enough" was "good enough for him," since, as he told his long-time collaborator Robert Hass, "it is after all a poem in Polish, not a poem in English." His most metrically intricate work—often inspired by Anglo-Am. models—remains largely untranslated or has been translated, at Miłosz's insistence, into *free verse.

Are all poetic trans. either doomed to marginal success at best or destined for the dubious distinction of becoming "stand-alone" poems that make only passing reference to their purported originals? Are we left only with multiple embalmments, desecrations, and "Lowellizations"? Of course not. Every poem, as many critics have noted, is a complex, shifting system participating in numerous other systems—literary, ling., social, historical, political, and so on. Poetic trans. must likewise remain in constant motion if it is to do justice to each poem's distinctive "mode of signification" (Benjamin). When Valéry speaks of "the labor of approximation, with its little successes, its regrets, its conquests, and its resignations," he describes both poetic creation and its subsequent trans.

Holmes describes the translator as a decoder and reencoder of the "hierarchy of correspondences" governing the individual poetic work. The Polish poet and translator Stanisław Barańczak suggests something similar in his notion of the "semantic dominant": "The translator's decision process can be described precisely as the process of realizing what in the 'poetry' of the original is the most characteristic, important and irreplaceable; in other words, it is the process of forming for oneself a system of priorities, one valid solely within the precincts of this and not another poem."

Barańczak's own practice as translator and poet suggests ways in which creative fidelity to the forms of meaning and the meaning of forms can lead in turn to the "form creation" that Mandelstam sees as activating poetic speech. Elizabeth Bishop's famous poem "One Art" (1975) marks a creative revision of yet another poetic transplant, the *villanelle. Barańczak's Polish version retains both the original's intricate structure and, to a startling degree, the sense that this structure embodies. He cannot salvage the seemingly crucial rhyme of "master" / "disaster"; nor can he duplicate the eloquent series of rhymes and half rhymes that Bishop builds around this pairing. And it is a loss, but it is not a disaster. Even the literal meaning of the movingly imperfect rhymes he employs in the stanzas' second lines shows how closely he keeps to the original poem's sense: "foreboding," "keys," "to flee," "pang," "won't return," "in art." Most important, he sustains the villanelle's structuring patterns of continuity and slippage, repetition and change: the perfect analogue to its concern with what is lost through time and what survives.

Barańczak later took inspiration from Bishop's poem and his own trans. to create one of the most moving love lyrics in the Polish trad. In "Płakała w nocy" (She Cried at Night), he follows Bishop's lead in psychologizing the villanelle form, as repetition, recognition, and resistance intertwine to dramatize the psyche's efforts both to evade and to accept knowledge almost past bearing. The poem's power was perceived immediately by Polish critics and readers. But they took the form to be Barańczak's own invention: there is no villanelle trad. in Poland. Or rather, there was no such trad. before Barańczak's poem: the form has subsequently been taken up by a number of younger Polish writers.

"Poetry is what is lost in translation," Robert Frost infamously—and perhaps apocryphally—proclaimed. Bishop's villanelle suggests ways in which poetry itself may be conceived as "the art of losing," a mode clearly akin to "the art of loss" (Felstiner) that is poetic trans. "You can't translate a poem," Yves Bonnefoy insists in "Translating Poetry." Yet there is likewise "no poetry but that which is impossible," he comments in the same essay, and this is its bond with trans., which is "merely poetry re-begun." "Translation and creation are twin processes," Octavio Paz observes ("Translation: Literature and Letters").

Loss, impossibility, trans., and new creation: let us return in this context to mod. imaginings of ancient epics. "We have no satisfactory translation of any Greek author," Ezra Pound proclaims in "How to

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Read": "Chapman and Pope have left *Iliads* that are of interest [only] to specialists." Keats may celebrate trans. as immediate discovery, but Pound takes his reader on a different kind of voyage some hundred years later, as he journeys through layers of lang. and hist. in a work that is simultaneously a trans., a meditation on trans., and the magnificent poem that launches his lifework, the *Cantos*:

> And then went down to the ship,
> Set keel on the swart breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
> We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
> Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
> Heavy with weeping. . . .

Pound's trans. from book 11 of the *Odyssey* comes mediated through his own earlier rendition of the Eng. med. poem "The Seafarer"; Anglo-Saxon *alliteration and monosyllables shape the story of the ancient Gr. wayfarer. Pound tips his hand still further as the canto concludes:

> Lie quiet Divus. I mean that is Andreas Divus,
> In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.

Pound's Lat. was stronger than his Gr., and he relied on Andreas Divus's 16th-c. Lat. *Odyssey* in composing his own trans. cum poem. This poem does not open to the unexplored expanses uncovered by Keats's Cortez; nor does it lead him home, with the wandering Odysseus. It draws him instead into the dense, interlingual web of culture and hist. represented in the poem by trans. The romantic Keats converts mediation into immediacy, while the modernist Pound makes a virtue of inescapable mediation. Both poets point, though, to the symbiotic relationship between those two "impossibilities," poetry and poetic trans., that has shaped the Western trad.

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C. Cavanagh; Y. Lorman

TRIBRACH. In Gr. and Lat. verse, a sequence of three short syllables, almost always a resolved iamb or trochee rather than an independent *foot (see resolution). The *ictus falls on the second syllable if it replaces an iamb and on the first if it replaces a trochee.

■ Koster; West.

P. S. Costas

TRILOGY. In Gr. drama, a group of three *tragedies that treat a single myth. At the annual Great Dionysia in Athens, three poets competed, each offering three tragedies plus a satyr play, a *parody of the tragic form that employed a *chorus of satyrs; if this satyr play also deals with the same myth, then the whole is called a *tetralogy*. The origin of the custom requiring three tragedies is unknown; the addition of the satyr play occurred around 500 bce. Aeschylus is believed to have been the first playwright to connect the plays in one year's offering into a trilogy or tetralogy. In the *Oresteia*, the only extant trilogy, Aeschylus traces the problem of bloodguilt through successive generations of Agamemnon's family; *Seven against Thebes*, the final tragedy in a trilogy on the House of Laius, exhibits a similar concern with a family curse. Yet the outcomes are very different: the Theban trilogy ends in the ruin of the royal house, while *Eumenides*, which concludes the *Oresteia*, dramatizes a resolution of the guilt and the foundation of a new order of justice. The Danaid trilogy, of which the first play, *Suppliant Women*, survives, evidently climaxed in a similar celebration of the sanctity of marriage. Yet this trilogy differs in that its three tragedies dramatized a single, tightly knit event spanning only a few days rather than events separated by many years. The fragmentary evidence of other Aeschylean trilogies suggests that such *unity of plot was not uncommon. After Aeschylus, the trilogy as a genre fell into disuse. Sophocles abandoned it (the composition of his three