A TRANSLATION OF ELEVEN POEMS BY JOHN KEATS
AND AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is composed of two parts. Part one is an essay on the theoretical aspects of translation, and part two is a translation into German of the following poems by John Keats: Ode to Apollo; Ode to Pan; Ode; Ode to Fanny; To--; Ode to Psyche; Ode on a Grecian Urn; Ode on Indolence; Ode on Melancholy; Ode to a Nightingale; To Autumn.

The essay discusses the act, process and function of translation from both a general and a particular point of view. It states that translation is a subjective act which can have no definite guidelines. Its closeness to, or deviation from, the original depends on how the translator perceives his responsibility. His sense of responsibility will be determined by his notion as to the priorities of content and form which he acknowledges as the outward manifestation of an inner essence which he wishes to capture. Whatever his priorities or compromises may be, he must be free to choose as he pleases. For the sake of true communication, there is a need and place for every type of translation. For the sake of creativity, there is his need for personal discovery and growth. In the process of translating, he penetrates to a level of consciousness where his and the author's identities touch. There he receives the gift of 'essence' and brings back from their common meeting ground an intuition thereof. But the atmosphere through which he must pass--his subjectivity--colours the translation with its particular light. The translation can be only a personal
and subjective rendering of the original. His subjectivity should be accepted as inevitable. In his function, the translator is a communicator of ideas and beauty, and indirectly he is an interpreter and a man of letters. By becoming aware of literary and linguistic differences, he comes in touch with more universal questions which may lead him into other fields of inquiry. He is a practicing comparatist, and if he has the power and understanding, he may do much to integrate knowledge and contribute to its advancement. Primarily, however, he is a man of action. He learns to do by doing what he learns to do; but as a man of contemplation he also learns to know by learning how to think about his doings: the act, process and function of his actions.
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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
The Action of Translation:
an Act, Process, and Function.
To call this piece of writing an 'introduction' is to misname it. It is really an afterthought. It is an attempt to bring to consciousness those processes of thought and action which determine the choices one makes when translating from one language into another. Such an attempt is, in fact, another process of learning, since forming thought, according to Carl Jung, is but allowing the image of knowledge to rise from the depth of the unconscious: knowing is remembering.

In the endeavour to learn about the act, process and function of translation, it may be useful to listen to the memories of 'ancient' and 'modern' poets and writers who talk about their experiences. Most of them agree that translations are works of compromise, but they dispute over the nature of this compromise:

Poetry, says one, should be translated into prose. No, says a second, it should be translated into verse, for in prose its very essence is lost. By all means into verse, and into the form of the original, argues a third. Verse into verse, fair enough, says a fourth, but God save us from Homer in English hexameters.1

The compromise, if ever possible, rises from a sense of confusion and a sense of defeat. Translators know from the beginning that they are doomed to fail, but also that they may have the opportunity to "fail in a manner that has its own splendor and its own promise", at least
for the optimist. Such an optimistic disposition may not only console but also encourage the translator because, after all, "if one sort of poetry gets left out, another is sometimes added; and occasionally, it seems to be true that what a translation adds to its original is, precisely, poetry." 3 The pessimist would predict that poetry is untranslatable since "poetry is the thing that, when a poem is translated, gets left out," 4 an attitude which counsels the reader to approach a translations with the caution of "an attractive heiress tempted by the wooings of an oily-tongued flatterer," 5 or to acknowledge ultimate defeat:

What is translation? On a platter
A poet's pale and glaring head,
A parrot's screech, a monkey's chatter
And profanation of the dead.
(Vladimir Nabokov)

Optimistic or pessimistic, naive or cynical, these views, though important to the critic, have to be ignored by the translator or else his services would no longer be required. Translation would neither be an act, nor process, nor function. The translator has to face and accept in good humour his 'fallen' state. Since translation will, by nature, differ from the original, it is a 'falling' away from the original, no matter how 'close' it is to the original, how good it may be, or even how much better or different it may seem as a poem in its own right. A remark like Richard Bentley's on Pope's translation of The Iliad:—"It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer"—has little meaning since only Homer can be like Homer. What Mr. Bentley rather wished to say was
that his own subjective sense of Homer differs from Pope's. In the
defense of translation and "irritated by the buzz of theory," it can
be said that it "has the immense advantage of abundant, vulgar fact." With pens dipped in 'original sin', let us accept, then, our
'fallen' state and embrace compromise with the freshness and origi­
nality of the child who in good faith merely wishes to play well at
the game of translation.

Every child who play-acts assumes the role of a new personality,
and every translator assumes, however, unconsciously, the identity
of the writer whom he translates and "raises before the reader,
in lieu of the original work, a façade." The façade is an illusion
of the original poem and the original poem is an illusion erected
by the poet around what may be called a 'supra-poem' within his
own consciousness. This undefinable 'supra-poem', which elicits
sensations, vague excitements, glimpses of truths and recognitions,
is what is intuited as the 'essence' or the fire of the poem.
This 'essence' is the thing which is the most satisfying to reach
and to convey, but is also most easily destroyed:

It is not to be doubted that the fire of the poem is what
a translator should principally regard, as it is most
likely to expire in his managing.

The 'essence' may express itself through numerous channels like
sounds, rhythms, diction, verse, sentiments, images, fables,
allegories (almost any verbal and non-verbal component of literary
structure), just as the 'essence' of any 'person' may be expressed
by a hat or a glove, a glance or a word by the child who acts these
roles. To Pope, the essence of Homer, for instance, lies more in what Homer says than in how he says it. Therefore, Pope can write:

It is the first grand duty of an interpreter to give his author entire and unalloyed [no omission or contraction of fables, manners, sentiments]; and for the rest, the diction and versification only are his proper province; since these must be his own, but the others he is to take as he finds them.10

An unimaginative transliteration is as offensive to Pope as is a "rash paraphrase":

... and I will venture to say, there have not been more men misled in former times by a servile dull adherence to the letter, than have been deluded in ours by a chimerical insolent hope of raising and improving their author.12

Pope is concerned with translating what he perceives to be the essential quality, or message, of Homer, while he leaves the former to his own judgement.

Dryden also knows about the unavoidable inadequacy inherent in any attempt to translate from one language into another. In translating The Georgics, he observes that "the Sweetness and Rusticity of a 'Pastoral' cannot be so well expressed in any other Tongue as in the Greek"; yet, he is confident that an undefinably essential quality could be communicated. When talking about the proper style for the English version of The Georgics, he says that "the poet must lay out all his strength, that his words may be warm and glowing, and that every thing he describes may immediately present itself, and rise up to the Reader's view." Such a
statement does not give any definite rules or guidelines as to how translating could be done. Dryden is even more vague on the subject than is Pope, and his judgement more strongly based on personal intuition.

In comparison to Pope's and Dryden's vagueness, Matthew Arnold suggests that, instead of relying on personal judgement, the translator should test his translation against the judgement of the well-educated classical reader. If the translation evokes in the reader the same powerful emotional response as does the original, then the translation could be considered successful. Matthew Arnold's view, however, is based on the assumption that there exists a consensus of response in classical scholars. This is, of course, a fallacy which Arnold himself acknowledges indirectly in his own writing. He advises against the use of archaic diction which, in his opinion, is "alien to the simplicity of Homer"; yet, archaic diction seems the very essence of Homer for Hayman, whom Arnold criticises in his essay.

Alexander Fraser-Tytler takes a more methodic approach on the subject of translating and lays down three basic rules:

1.) That the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.

2.) That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.

3.) That the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.

These three rules, however, are just as vague and nebulous and fade at closer inspection. First, the difficulty in translating
'ideas' is that some ideas may be expressed and understood in one language only, but not in another. An 'idea' can only be communicated when there is some basis for recognition and understanding rooted in a particular experience of a culture. The second rule advises that the style and manner of writing should be identical with the one of the original. Unfortunately, since two languages are never identical, such a rule remains merely wishful thinking, especially in the realm of poetry:

No verse form in any one language can be entirely identical with a verse form in any other however similar their nomenclatures and however cognate their languages.18

Poetry is a very condensed form of language within the tightest possible frame, as the German word "dichten" so well illustrates. To adopt an equally tight frame (form) for the translation which has to use a language of a different kind of density is like trying on a wrong pair of shoes. By wanting to fit the foot into the form of the glass slipper original, the translator finds himself either chopping off toes or padding uncomfortable hollows, because the foot that matches the slipper exists only in fairy tales. But in the process, he may become aware of the wider implications with regards to linguistic and cultural differences which his difficulties reveal. To the third rule, that the translation should have the ease of the original composition, one can only nod in agreement whilst searching with baffled bewilderment for the 'ease' in the original and the means by which to express such 'ease' easily. Ease of expression is easiest when
coming from a sense of spontaneity, a type of freedom which allows poetry to take shape through the medium of the original language in a natural, organic way. The 'natural' ease of the original, however, means artful labour for the translation; a labour in which spontaneity is only too often put into the strait jacket of conscious craftsmanship and into the limiting linguistic possibilities of the new language. Any 'ease' which may evolve from such tight restraints, depends on the translator's own poetic or creative processes. Thwarted 'ease', a stilted style—"Translationese"—is often the more frequent development.

The art of translating can never really abide by any abstract rules because it is basically an act of sympathy in which the translator identifies with the poet. The translator, in sympathy with the poet, keeps his tools sharp until possibly "the great job, the great moment [the writing of his own poetry], comes along:"

The writer who can project himself into the exaltation of another learns more than the craft of words. He learns the stuff of poetry. It is not just the prosody he keeps alert, it is his heart.

The act of translating, since it is an act of sympathy, operates through a paradox by which "the translation cannot be poetry in its own right unless it has been subdued to the imaginative process of its original; nor can it be a faithful translation unless it is in some sense an original poem." It is through such paradoxes that translation evolves.

Translating is, thus, primarily, a sympathetic probing into the original, allowing images, words, phrases, rhythms, the 'essence'
to emerge almost spontaneously by contact with the deeper level of
communication between the author and translator during the process
of re-creation. The impressionistic intuition from which translation
springs will lead him to the 'essential' quality of the particular
work. Though a word-by-word transliteration can also be a useful
guide into the poem, it is merely a 'dictionary' device, while
the re-creation through impressionistically 'conveying', tries to
capture and express that which seems the most poetically 'Homeric'
or 'Keatsian' within the work as experienced and understood by
the individual translator. Translating is clearly a game in
which subjectivity is the rule, and a translation should be judged
by these rules, by the critic as well as by the readers. No
abstract guidelights illuminate the paths to a good translation,
neither in the past nor in the present. One simply learns to do
by doing what one learns to do with sympathy and care.

For the purpose of establishing some order in the large field
of approaches to translation, basically three categories of trans­
lations have been assumed to exist: the 'literal', the 'equivalent'
and the 'free' translation. It is understood, however, that these
are merely theoretical categories and that within each category
there are variations and gradations which may well show characteris­
tics of the other categories. In practice, the field of trans­
lation is more complex than it is in theory and often the three
categories flow into one another in an almost imperceptible way. 
Even though these categories should not be understood to represent
rigid pigeonholes, each translation exhibits, in my view, a
tendency toward one or the other category. By the same token,
there is also no translator who could be called a 'literal', 'equivalent' or 'free' translator in an absolute way. Translators, too, often mingle all three approaches; maybe not within the same translation but within the body of their composite work. For the purpose of this paper, then, and in order to make a discussion of this large topic easier, I have, with a sense of reservation, accepted and made use of these three theoretical approaches to the act of translation.

II

Even though the act of translation is a subjective endeavour, it is possible to discuss it from a more objective point of view. Although the final grasping of the 'essence' of a particular poem may be an intuitive act, the understanding of what 'essence' means falls into the realm of objective consideration. The reaching for a particular essence may be "an exercise ... potentially 23 unending," an "intuitive thrust into the center," the concept of 'essence', however, is amenable to more tangible discussion. Essence in a poem is that quality of thought and feeling which a particular unity of meaning and form tends to evoke. And since it aims at the individual mind, the effect that 'essence' has on it can also never be the same:

No two human beings share an identical associative context. Because such a context is made up of the totality of an individual existence, because it comprehends not only the
sum of personal memory and experience but also the reservoir of the particular subconscious, it will differ from person to person. There are no facsimiles of sensibility, no twin psyches.24

How the individual experiences 'essence' and the way he 'knows' it, is through the filter of his own consciousness which is made up of his personal and his cultural past, present and future.

"A poem, said Bradley in 1901, is the succession of experiences—sounds, images, thoughts, emotions—through which we pass when reading or listening impressionably and exerting our imaginations in the act of re-creations." There is passivity and activity, sense impression and re-creation. Here already do we meet the unavoidable presence of the subjective. When supposedly passively listening to the poem, there are only certain sounds, images, thoughts and emotions we experience, namely those which we are capable of experiencing at that particular time. Others, not conducive to our momentary state of awareness, we fail to register, filter out or forget. In the second stage of experiencing a poem, namely the recreation of it in our mind, on both an intellectual and an emotional level, is thus based on 'false', i.e. subjective, premises. It too must be 'false', in the sense of being different or 'other' in comparison with that intended by the poet or experienced by other readers. The re-created construct is 'other' than the original.

'Essence', then, can only be a subjective construct, but while we are unaware of the subjective filter through which we experience 'essence' we are, in retrospect—that is, after the experience has made its initial impact—aware of the two major manifestations of
'essence': namely content and form. The one (content) stimulates our intellect which needs to understand what has been said, the other stimulates our aesthetic sensibility. Both are experienced subjectively and the evaluation given to them is based on the 'colour' of the filter through which we perceived them originally and the 'colour' of our learning which we bring to bear on them. The translator who has accepted his 'fallen' state, his own unavoidable subjectivity, has still to make an objective decision, namely whether in his translation he is going to favour content or form, whichever way he may perceive them, simply because to give absolute justice to both is impossible when dealing with two different languages. That decision, too, may be based on subjective consideration, namely whether his concerns lie with understanding or with feeling, with intellectual or with sense experience. It may also be based on outside considerations, the need or pressure of his society, the Zeitgeist of the epoch in which he lives. This in turn may either favour intellectual understanding or intuitive feeling. The translation of 'essence' may be done in a 'literal', 'equivalent', or 'free' mode. It may embrace word-by-word transliteration, 'adequate equivalence', 'essential trans-conveyance', or any area in between, and the choice hinges precisely on how 'essence' is best served, where it is found: in the words themselves, the meaning behind the words, the symbols or the silences. Is the 'essence' essentially in the content or is it in the form, and when captured by the new language, is it best conveyed through content, feeling, both, or neither?
Assuming, for the sake of the argument, that the essence of a text lies predominantly in its content (the intellectual idea of the work), and that understanding it from an intellectual point of view is more important than its aesthetic appreciation or the feeling which such an appreciation evokes, a decision still has to be made between the three modes of translation: literal, equivalent, free. The choice depends entirely on which mode can best serve to keep intellectual content whole. The literal translation fulfills its purpose when the two cultures and the two languages are so similar that no possible misunderstanding can arise (an unrealistic assumption), or for the sake of scholastic or linguistic curiosity. It is not necessarily true that literalness is "the refuge of the unlearned, as well as the stronghold of the scrupulous." The literal translation is important to a scientific mind which wishes to investigate the relationship of the language to the mind and the perception of those who use it now or at a previous time in the same or a different culture. All kinds of linguistic, sociological and philosophical data may be deduced from this type of translation or interpretation. Other than that, however, there is no merit in a literal translation and for most translators the choice is one between 'adequate equivalence' and 'free translation', whichever one of the two can best carry content into the new language.

Those who tend toward approximation via an adequate equivalence, make the silent presupposition that the content can best be conveyed by sticking closely to the symbols and imagery found in the original. And often this is the case, particularly when the two languages involved share common roots or a similar cultural
experience, as English and German do, for instance. Accepting the fact that, even when using the same symbols, an identical suggestion of meaning can never be accomplished due to the factor of individual subjectivity, an approximation can be achieved in spite of that and despite the cultural subjectivity that the new language necessarily embraces. The translator silently trusts that, in spite of that subjectivity, a commonly understood presence of meaning exists in the two different semantic systems. Although he brings forth many arguments against a definite graspable meaning, Steiner seems to feel that meaning still exists as a separate entity, an object apart from the subject, and that, without that trust, no translations could ever be made. Those who are trusting in this respect, and feel the gap of meaning not widening when comparing equivalent symbols of two languages, will choose to do a translation as close as possible to the original, leaving intact the arrangement and function of various images, symbols and metaphors. As stated before, this is only possible if the roots of both languages are intertwined and the contemporary usage suggests indeed an equivalent content or idea, and, in the case of poetry, suggests a set of equivalent connotations through which one may perceive that idea. When the two semantic structures, the two cultural fields of experience, however, separate either spatially or temporally (i.e. when they are removed from one another in place or in time), meaning may no longer be capable of being conveyed by the mere translation of the original constructs of symbols.

If the Bible had just been discovered, for instance, its many references to, and symbolic usages of, 'shepherds' and 'sheep'
and 'vines' and 'vineyards', would obscure its very meaning. It is not that we no longer know that there once existed an agrarian culture which spoke of its world in terms of the things which it saw as a part of itself, but rather that the impact and the immediate understanding of these symbols is largely lost to people like ourselves who no longer experience them. The many interpretations of the Bible over which bloody wars had been fought, testify to the lack of definitive original meaning, or rather to the incapacity of succeeding cultures to make up their minds as to what that meaning may consist of. Is it not justified in such a case to translate very freely? Where the 'idea' is all-important, particularly when it comes from the mouth of God, poetic licence is almost unlimited. The translator's duty is, in fact, to 'falsify'. His 'dishonesty' has the purpose of making the idea more tangible, more comprehensible. Yet, is he not at the same time twisting the words of God? Can the translation still be considered to issue from God's own mouth? Is it not sacrilegious to 'clarify' the idea by a liberal translation? Is it not rather obscuring it? Is it not taking one too many 'liberties'? One can easily see the contradictory situation in which the translator may find himself. Whether he tends toward one pole of this contradiction or toward the other, will depend on his individual sense of moral obligation which, whatever it may be, can never be considered to be either absolutely right or wrong. For this reason, and in full innocence, Nida and Taber, can write a whole handbook on the principles of Bible translations. They quite unabashedly admit the need to be very free with one's translations, to elevate the idea (whatever
they understand by it) above all other considerations and aspects of the original text. They not only, with great optimism and with missionary zeal, "trust in the coherence of the world" and the "presence of meaning" (Steiner), but believe also that anything can be expressed in another language and be so understood. For them it is entirely possible to be objective:

Unless one is completely objective [which they believe they are in choosing content above everything else] in his handling of the message, it is easy for misconceptions about the nature of language, the task of the translator, and the ultimate purpose of the translation, to skew the results. 28

My own feeling is less certain in this respect. Translation can never be more than a modest approximation, an approaching of the idea. The attempt to create the least possibly misunderstanding, is all that can be hoped for. Misunderstanding (misinterpretation, mistranslation) occurs because of the subjective filter, called the individual or cultural mind which can only understand approximately. I would tend to sympathise with those who wish to leave it up to the translator to decide whether such an approximation of content can best be achieved by a 'close' translation or a 'free' one. If content takes precedence, and intellectual understanding is paramount, then I see no reason to jeopardise it in favour of the demands of 'formality'. The translator should then be free to be 'free':

We need our twentieth century version of The Iliad and the Divine Comedy and the Bible even if, and perhaps just because, our own original literature is alien to
the very ideal of an *Iliad* or *Divine Comedy* ... One ought to bring them into a living dialectic with our inescapable contemporary values and existence.29

As long as this type of translation fulfills a need, the translator can do no wrong. Whether he is right or wrong, morally speaking, or whether he puts himself outside the realms of ethical consideration, is ultimately an unanswerable question, and an opinion favouring one over the other, is again tinged by subjectivity.

Just as it is possible to choose content over form, so is it possible to elevate form above content. Those who do so, see the 'essence' of the work primarily in the form. They are the aesthetically conscious, who either prize the aesthetic experience above all else or have found that the aesthetic character of the work is also its content. Such a content is less intellectually graspable, but nevertheless can be understood on the level of feeling and intuition. Both mind and senses are capable of leading one to understanding. They are but two separate channels leading to knowledge. Preference of one over the other depends as much on the character of the perceived as on that of the perceiver. Those who wish to translate aesthetic form also find themselves facing the same decision as do those who want to translate content. The 'literalists' want to preserve the original form because it either still affects them, still speaks to them with a living voice, or else they want to preserve something which is 'quaint', much like the collector of curiosities or antiques. The 'free' translator feels that the original impact to his senses would be lost, were he to translate literally or approximately,
and he searches for a new way, or a way permissible by the new language which he struggles with, in order to convey the same immediacy upon his senses which he experiences when reading the original. Both approaches have undoubtedly some merit. The translation of those who closely stick to the original form, keeping the original sensory impression as much as possible intact, may well, together with those who stick to a literal or approximate content (conveyed by imagery and symbols), be accused of creating translations which read like translations. And this may well be a desirable thing. L. Forster compares the literal or approximate translation to a coloured piece of glass through which the reader sees the original:

The coloured glass is a translation which aims at communicating the exotic quality of the original, its remoteness from us either in time or in spirit or in cultural setting. The 'clear glass' ('free' translation) ought to convey the impression that the text we are reading was thought and expressed directly in our own contemporary language and uses the normal resources of that language for dealing with matters remote from us in time or place. If this aim is not achieved, we are apt to say derogatorily that the book 'reads like a translation'. The 'coloured glass' version is intended to 'read like a translation'; the reader must not be allowed to forget that what he is reading is foreign in origin and that that is one of its essential qualities.

The 'clear glass' translation aims then at presenting us the foreign work in all the freshness of a new contemporary work. If it is in fact contemporary, no harm is done. But if it is an ancient classic, what then? Part of its quality for us is the patina it has acquired in its passage down the ages. The translator who aims at conveying the impression Dante made on his contemporaries, not the impressions he makes on cultivated Italians today, is discounting six hundred years of human activity.
In translating aesthetic form freely, the translator thrusts toward an 'aesthetic' center—experienced on the level of intuition—just as readily as does the one who tries to convey the original form. Both seek to express an 'essence', but their views as to how this is best done differ. One, the approximator, cannot separate the form from his aesthetic impression while the other, the free translator, feels distinctly that there is indeed a difference between those aspects of the work which affect his senses, and the sensory experience itself. Consequently, he would feel that an entirely new form (one of his invention) may well be as good a vehicle to express his experience as the original form itself. And, of course, the new language may simply not allow the same formalistic rendering and still create the same or similar sensory effect, in which case he would have no other choice but to render the original form within the limits of his own discretion. "Every good translator is aware of the limits of his licence to make changes in the poetic text" says B. Ilek, and even though he would only allow "motivated changes" which are the outcome of "sufficient interpretation", he leaves us to guess what kind of motivations would justify a change. Obviously, different people are motivated by different considerations and consequently perceive their responsibilities in different ways. Some are concerned with understanding, others with aesthetic experience. The difficulties in perceiving and expressing what seems the most 'essential' qualities of the work, rise from the subjective differences which lie embedded not only within the people involved but within the languages themselves:
all natural language is private... all communication, interpretation [translation] between privacies.\textsuperscript{32}

and abide, hence, within the cultures to which these languages give expression.

From an objective point of view, there is merit to be found in both modes of translation, 'close' and 'free'. The one which wishes to preserve the old as it is, has to be appreciated as much as the one which wishes "with a bit of insight and freshness to cut through the guff."\textsuperscript{33} The merit of the free translation lies in its immediacy; that is, it can be understood more easily since it is expressed in our contemporary language sparking contemporary connotations. It speaks to us because it grows from the living soil of our language which has its roots in our immediate world as we experience, feel, and know it now. Since the experience is more immediate and more easily understood, the effect on our mind is fresh and capable of making a strong impact. We are made aware of the values, thoughts and sensibilities of another mind, and if these mean anything to us now—removed from their originator in either space, or time, or both—then the purpose of having created them in the first place may well have been served. Language and the consciousness of man simply changes over the passage of time. Whether one change precedes the other (language influencing an altered consciousness or vice versa) is an interesting question but as unanswerable as the one which asks whether the egg hatched the chicken or the chicken the egg. It can easily be understood how and why 'free' translation lends itself so well to 'propaganda' purposes; and this is not meant in any derogatory
way. Some issues on an ethical or aesthetic level, deserve to be reiterated since they concern all of us at all times wherever we may be. Some universal considerations, which basically ask in many different disguises the same question over and over again 'what is that thing called man?', should not be forgotten amidst all the distractions and the fluctuations of opposing worldviews.

What is thus an advantage to the free translation, namely that it attempts to promote understanding, is also its disadvantage, because this way, we can only understand through the mind of the translator who has interpreted values, thoughts and sensibilities for us:

"Si le traducteur ne veut pas être seulement un reproducteur, mais—bien plus—un partenaire de plein pouvoir et collaborateur des valeurs nouvelles dans la littérature du pays, il oppose à l'original son invention propre: esprit révélateur ou esprit inventif."34

The translator has become a screen made up of his inventions and creations through which we perceive the original, and the screen may offer a more distorting view than our own subjectivity. The trust extended in such a reading may well be foolish, considering the liberties taken in the past with texts which did not conform to the moral standards of the translator as pointed out by G.H. McWilliam in his introduction to Boccaccio's *Decameron*, for instance. How, then, can those who cannot read the original and therefore must reach for the translation or who may not be so well acquainted with the cultural background from which the
original springs act in such a dilemma? Whom should one trust? What translations or what translators should one select? Perhaps an eclectic approach may serve us well. Perhaps one should savour several 'free' and several 'close' translations in order to get a more representative overview and finally come closer to the 'essence' of the original. Then, perhaps, one may choose a favourite, one which fits one's own personality at one particular time in one's life.

In comparison, one may find a 'close' translation to be incomprehensible, particularly when one is culturally, linguistically, psychologically too far removed from the original text. One may consider it a mere curiosity, fascinating because of its 'exotic' quality but ultimately uninteresting, outdated and of little value. However, a 'close' translation, even when it risks misunderstanding, has a purpose to fulfil, namely to preserve the 'flavour', the "patina" of the original. This is not only important to those who like to feel the original pulsate through the translation, but also to those who wish to preserve the original culture, and the various manifestations thereof, in the hope that one day the value in them may again be perceived. It is an attempt to protect the past so that it may one day live again. The advocates of 'close' translations try to recapture the historical moment. They exhibit the same spirit as those who wish to preserve such manifestations of cultural activity as classical ballet, opera or even a treasured recipe from grandma's kitchen. They hope that one day their flavours will again delight mankind. And that may well be so. It is said
that all things are in flux and yet remain the same. Languages, cultures, art, man, also undergo a constant change and yet within that change one cannot fail but observe a perpetual cycle, a forgetting and remembering, death and resurrection of all that is within the reach of the spirit of man and nature.

Whether one chooses a 'free' or a 'close' approach, the difficulties in translation of poetry are compounded in comparison to any other genre since the unity of content and form is the major characteristic of poetry. These two are quite inflexibly linked with one another:

In a poem meaning and form are as indissoluble as soul and body, and the form cannot be reproduced. The effect of poetry is a compound of music and suggestion; this music and this suggestion are intermingled in words, to alter which is to alter the effect,

or in Bradley's words:

a poem is the succession of experiences, sounds, images, thoughts, emotions through which we pass when reading or listening impressionably and exerting our imaginations in the act of re-creations. In such poetic experience 'meaning' and 'form' are not apprehended separately but operate together.

To elevate one above the other—content above form or vice versa—means to do violence to the poem in one way or another. The sacrifices made through tearing them apart are great. Yet, the principles of purpose, need and viewpoint (as discussed earlier), and the notion of relativity developed therefrom, ought also to
apply to the translation of poetry since poetry, too, is communication. However, they do not or, at least, not to such a degree. Content alone can never assume omnipotence and neither can form, otherwise the poem, when translated, can no longer be experienced as a poem. This may, or may not, be important. It may be possible to transcend genre, perhaps even discipline, in order to move toward that deeper center which, according to Steiner, can only be intuited. It is conceivable, for instance, that not only words lose their meaning as time progresses, but also language per se. What form would a translation of Ode "To Autumn" need to take in a wordless, visually oriented era as predicted by Marshall McLuhan? We would then only be capable of grasping the meaning and essence through visual and auditory effects. In other words, the Ode could be 'translated' only into an audio-visual form if it were going to continue to live. Would that mean it would cease to exist? Obviously, the original form and the particular sensory and aesthetic experience which accompanies it would have to be totally abolished. Whether this 'translation' could still be called a translation is disputable, but words—the naming of things—by that time, may anyhow signify nothing. My understanding is that one has to work out of the matrix of one's culture as it exists at one particular time, that one has to choose from among the many compromises possible (the various gradations on the continuum between content and form) those which correspond to one's own personality and worldview grown out of a particular cultural Zeitgeist. There are no ultimate rules. The translator is a mediator, an arbiter between "two privacies" on both a personal and cultural level. He needs to be flexible, but only within the
limits which the two cultural settings and their respective languages allow at that particular time. He will need to trust his own intuition which will allow him to recognise whether he must, or how far, he may deviate from the original. The amount of tact and sensitivity used in such an endeavour will determine his success not only as a translator but as a person of integrity who tries to contribute to the process of human understanding.

Every translation will wear the translator's personal fingerprints and will testify to the translator's integrity and his right to make his own decisions. And in this integrity, however widely it may vary from person to person, he must seek his fulfillment and be content with it. There is no right or wrong approach to translation. There is no right or wrong translator, only good or bad translations. These ought to be judged as independent works as well as translations in the light of the decisions, the particular compromise which the translator has deliberately chosen. One may disagree with his approach but one should not pass judgement on the strength of one's own biases. The translator ought to be, perhaps, just like the reader, eclectic in his approach switching from 'literal' to 'close' to 'free' whenever he feels the need to do so. He should have as much freedom as he feels necessary to have. He should enjoy as much 'licence' as the poet, provided he keeps some loyalty to the latter. Only then can the translator be spontaneous. Only then can the 'ease' of translation which Alexander Fraser-Tytler envisions be achieved. There will always be need for many different types of translations. Perhaps some
great literary works deserve—even need—to be translated over and over again. Let the translator be not only an arbiter but a diplomat, not only an informer but a teacher, not only a teacher but a creator and his own needs as well as those of the original poet will, thus, best be served.

III

Accepting then the fact of a necessity for 'subjectivity', let me investigate by self-consciously reflecting on my own personal way of translating—by observing the semi-conscious process of re-creation—how this subjectivity operates in making the translator aware of the original and how it shapes his creative response. Taking for granted that "the very texture of what he sees is a composite of what he has been taught to want to see and to be afraid of seeing," how then does he become aware of the original? How does he come to see the intricacies and the essence of the work to be translated? Steiner speaks of "Einfühlung", of "aggression", "penetration", "incorporation" when he tries to explain how the translator dives into the 'center' and re-emerges with a translation in his hands. Undoubtedly these are all present. Or, better still, they are the aspects or stages of a form of hypnosis under which the translator's own creative energies are released. The original work serves as an impetus which extinguishes the boundaries between the sensibilities of the original author and oneself. In that sense it can be said that both come to share
the same space, the same center, the same consciousness. They have come to an intimate understanding. The only objectivity rests in that center. Whether it is called Einfühlung, or aggression, or penetration, or incorporation, one is absorbed by the other for but the brief span of time which is necessary to kindle the translator's own creative torch. The common center upon which one touches, however, can only be felt, whatever 'essence' therein, grasped only intuitively:

The complete penetrative grasp of a text... is an act whose realization can be precisely felt but is nearly impossible to paraphrase or systematize.\(^\text{40}\)

and the 'supra poem' which begins to take shape at that point, on the level of vague sensations, feelings, flashes of visual images, is already one step out of this center and begins again to assume the colouring of one's own subjectivity.

There are two movements then: the thrust toward the center and the re-emergence from it. The thrust is one which requires Einfühlung, which is both an act of aggression but also of submission:

There is a strain of femininity in the great interpreter, a submission, made active by intensity of response, to the creative presence. ...'inscape' (Einfühlung) is both a linguistic and an emotive act.\(^\text{41}\)

It is an act of penetration and also incorporation, and it is achieved through some form of hypnotic interaction. In translating poetry,
this process of hypnosis can be most readily felt and the translator is not the only one who is affected by it. Any reader of the original who feels moved by what he reads has come under the hypnotic spell (or suggestion) of what he has read. It is merely a question of degree. The translator allows himself simply to let the work play upon his nervous system more thoroughly, to drift deeper into a form of hypnotic trance, and possibly reach further down than the average reader. That does not mean that he, therefore, understands the work better on the intellectual level, i.e. "comes up" with a better analysis (although this may sometimes be the case), but that he has felt the 'essence' of the work stir 'sympathetically' his very being. He wants to become like the author whom he translates. The first step in translating, then, is to read the work over and over again, to allow it to take over the imagination until it has become a part of oneself and one has become a part of it, or in H. Belloc's words:

first, to read your original until you have thoroughly got inside it, until you are part of it, as it were, or at least clothed with it.42

No concentration is required at this time, merely a letting go, an emptying of the mind, so that the sounds and rhythms and images may affect one deeply. Poetry is a better 'hypnotiser' than prose, but is not as good or as fast as music or the sounds of nature (the surging of the sea, the rippling of water, the rustling of leaves). It is this incantatory effect created by the repetitive
arrangements of sounds and rhythms (meter, rhyme, assonances, alliterations, regular pauses, etc.) which exert this hypnotic pressure. Sounds and silences follow one another in a repetitive rhythmic pattern, affect the mind and the sensibilities and force breathing and heartbeat from their neutral and relaxed paths into a new realm of consciousness:

Speech rhythms obviously punctuate our sensation of time-flow and may well have synchronic relations with other nervous and somatic beats. Speech which is deliberately metrical, and even the slackest prose has elements of syncopation, will play with or against this temporal matrix. Physiologically and mentally a new order has been achieved. We experience the excitement which this new order elicits, as the magical effect of the poem. The more 'regular' the pulsebeat of the poem, the more hypnotic the effect will be, and the faster the listener will succumb to the power or magic of the poem. The hypnotic effect prepares the mind for the message which it is about to receive. The listener, or the translator, does not actually breathe in accordance with the rhythm of the poem (although musicians have been found to do so when playing music) but he is forced into the same situation as the spectator who watches the dancer and finds himself tapping the floor. The urge to join the dance, the power which music and poetry have over the body, may manifest itself by the tapping of the foot, the nodding of the head, or an unobservable inner rhythmic surging. In all cases there is a readiness—a dance within—which stirs the impulses to respond to what one sees and hears and to yield to the influence of what is beyond
oneself. It is for this reason that any ritual, whether religious, political or private, uses steady repetitive rhythm in its ceremony, either through the medium of the spoken word, the sound of music, the steady gait, or the stylised movement. Felt rhythmical repetition, whether man-made or natural, tends to evoke the need to yield to and incorporate these rhythms as part of the act of becoming one with the all, or yielding to an all-encompassing power, whether it is God, Self, a cosmic consciousness, or merely the consciousness of the original writer.

This hypnosis by the work usually leads to a 'sympathetic' self-identification with the writer. Often it does this on a subtle, semi-conscious level. The translator may say that 'the translation writes itself', or that he feels himself to be 'taken over by the original writer', or that he has become 'possessed by the spirit of the original', 'obsessed and possessed' by it. All these are part of the process of diving into the center. It may not just be on a sensory level that hypnosis takes place. The more intellectual reader will search into the background of the writer whom he translates, will want to know about his life, his personality, his friends, his society and his culture in general. The idea of acquainting himself with all of the poet's work, and his life, and the period in which he lived, serves not only the purpose of understanding and hence facilitating a more 'correct' translation, but primarily helps the translator in his necessary process of self-identification. It is hypnosis via the intellect. The choice of road, whether sensory or intellectual, or both, depends on the type of work and on the personality of the translator. Only he himself
knows how he can be inspired, and inspiration comes at no other
time than at the moment of mental relaxation, under the hypnotic
effect of the original.

After the initial act of hypnosis which is essentially passive--
though sometimes, when busily gathering research data, appears to
be active--the active part, the task of concentration, begins.
It is at this time, namely when the deepest level of hypnosis is
achieved that

the text in the other language has become almost materially
thinner, the light seems to pass unhindered through its
loosened fibres. For a spell, the density of hostile or
seductive 'otherness' is dissipated.44

At that precise moment the 'supra-poem' makes its appearance. From
then on, a new state of mind, namely concentration, takes over.
The mind is no longer entirely passive since now it is required to
focus on that new image which presents itself out of nowhere as it
seems, in the form of vague sensations, excitements, feelings,
snatches of dreamlike images which rise and fall. It is as if one
tried to remember the face of a long lost friend. One recognises a
hazy outline but the features remain indistinct. Concentration
helps to crystallise that image and let it take its own shape at
its own time. One sits and merely waits with one's mind focused
on the yet undefined sense of the supra-poem until the sensations
manifest themselves in definite visual or auditory images and a
word or sentence presents itself to express that image. This
process is like the gradual crumbling of a wall behind which a new
scenery reveals itself. It is as if a veil were, for one brief moment, removed from one's eyes. Then, gradually, a more definable shape emerges into the open, into consciousness. One is able to hold on to it for a longer period, grasp its details and write them down, and test the words over and over again against that image until they match exactly, that is, evoke exactly, the same sensations and feelings felt at the primary recognition. It is a continual merging and re-emerging, a grasping and alternate letting go, as if the mind were incapable of seeing and being aware of seeing at the same time. One scuttles back and forth between the vague sensation of seeing and the more definite awareness of seeing. At that level, it can be said that a creative process is taking place. From where these images come is a mystery. They simply appear by themselves. When the image has taken its most vivid shape—and it may at this point either be firmly grasped by memory or written down so that it can no longer slip back—one feels utterly elated, satisfied, but also very tired. One may not have lifted one finger, but is drained of all energy.

Even though the emerging images come from a strange and unknown land, one can see that they wear the costumes of one's own making. They will be coloured by all that one has at one time experienced, known, and felt. Since they are entirely of one's own making (even though a total 'possession' by the original writer, a total self-identification, will do much to submerge or obliterate one's own personality), they can be said to be subjective. They depend on a myriad of past experiences and associations between
them which have helped to shape the individual. Every word which rises from that pool of memory, has a poetic quality and triggers associations of private sensations and feelings. Steiner gives this example of associative subjectivity:

In his self-analysis, *L'Age d'Homme*, Michael Leiris observes that the "s" in "suicide" retains for him the precise shape and whistling sibilance of a Kris (the serpentine dagger of the Malays). The "ui" sound stands for the hiss of the flame; "cide" signifies "acidity" and corrosive penetration. A picture of oriental immolation in a magazine had fixed and interwoven these associations in the child's mind.\(^45\)

He goes on to say that

no dictionary could include them, no grammar formalize the process of collocation. Yet this is precisely the way in which all of us put meaning into meaning. The difference is that, more often than not, the active sources of connotation remain subconscious or outside the reach of memory.\(^46\)

Under the inspiration, or hypnotic suggestion of the original writer, the translator stirs his own memory, touches these active sources and fashions from them his newly re-created images. The stronger the personality of the translator, the more subjective these images will be and the more inclined he will be toward a 'free' translation. There is, I believe, a distinct difference, psychologically speaking, between the translator who prefers 'free' translation and the one who favours a 'close' one. The 'free' translator becomes possessed by the original writer in a different way. He absorbs the writer, while the 'close' translator lets
himself be absorbed by him. The former obliterates the personality of the writer and the character of his work and incorporates them into his own consciousness, while the latter obliterates his own individuality and that of his own work and merges with that of his model. It is said that the translator is a frustrated poet merely waiting until "the great job, the great moment [the writing of his own poetry], comes along" but in truth, the translator is a poet who has nothing to say. It seems that the 'free' translator has a greater urge than the 'close' translator to be a poet, but has not yet found his own inner voice. In the meantime, he uses that of another writer, but speaks with his own tongue. He steals his ideas and hides them in his own words. He is essentially a plagiarist. The 'close' translator, by comparison, has hardly any ambitions to be a poet in his own right. He is merely at play, playing with the original poem, sharpening and testing his sensibilities together with his linguistic tools, carving, shaping, and re-shaping images and meanings, and enjoying the patterns which he may invent in imitation of the original. He is primarily a craftsman.

Nevertheless, there seems to exist the notion that a translator ought to be also an artist (poet):

the true translator of lyric poetry must be an active poet. Without this, the transplantation of the specific and frail plant from a foreign atmosphere and soil into his own will be a failure, for the transplantation will not be made gently and sensitively but coldly and rationally, and the result will be as if the plant had been put into a bottle of spirit. The shape would remain, and perhaps the colour, too, but the plant would die, become a mere lifeless replica of the original.
along with the opposite view that a great poet can never be a good translator:

but in the case of such great poets as these [Heine, Goethe] there is an obvious danger that their powerful embrace will destroy the object of it, even as Jupiter's love destroyed Semele.49

Both views hold some truth some of the time. If the translator is also an active poet his tools will be sharpened with continual use. He may become a superb craftsman at his job. But if his own ego is too strong and gets between the original and the translation, his craftsmanship may merely serve to cut the original to pieces. What gets into the way in translating is his strong sense of identity, his ego with all its own obsessions, wishes and powers which exerts itself over the text and personality which it is meant to incorporate or yield to. Stefan George's translations of Shakespeare's Sonnets, for instance, bear hardly any resemblance to the originals:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime, But you shall shine more bright in these contents Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time. When wasteful war shall statues overturn, And broils root out the work of masonry, Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn The living record of your memory. 'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room Even in the eyes of all posterity That wear this world out to the ending doom. So, till the judgement that yourself arise, You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes. (Sonnet 55)
Nicht marmor lebt und nicht vergoldet mal
Solang als diese mächtigen melodien—
Nicht scheint so hell als dieser reihen zahl
Der schmutzige stein von ekler zeit bespien.

Wenn grimmiger krieg die säulen überrennt
Und streit das werk stürzt das der maurer schuf:
Nicht schwert des Mars—nicht kriegesfeuer brennt
Deines gedächtnisses lebendigen ruf.

Durch tod und allvergessenden verdruss
Gehst du hindurch .. dein preis bleibt noch bestellt
Im auge aller künftigen die die welt
Aufbrauchen bis zu dem verhängten schluss.

So lebst du— bis du aufstehst beim gericht—
Hierin und in der liebenden gesicht.

The content is presented only very vaguely and the style is
definitely George's. The original has lost its Elizabethan
flavour and taken on George's twentieth century mode of expression
and starkness of style that he is known for. In other words,
the great poet cannot let go of his own consciousness. He is
quite inflexible. The original may serve as a stimulus but
it will mainly trigger his own ideas which will eventually win
out at the expense of the original work. He resembles the
'free' translator because he, too, is stimulated into action by
the original. But while the 'free' translator does not violate
the idea or 'meaning'—however loosely he may perceive it—but
only the shape of form, the great creative poet also wants to
obliterate the meaning. His own poem may become a brilliant
comment on, or an articulate answer to, the original, but it
will no longer be a translation. He will have taken the life
of the original and given it to his new poem. Great poets do
not always overpower what they love as, (Rilke's translations
of Valery do not f.i.), but the urge to do so is there because their sense as artists takes precedence over their sense as craftsmen.

There is, then, a distinct psychological difference found amongst the two types of translators and the creative poet as they go about the business of translation. The 'close' translator gives himself up to the original writer, the 'free' translator incorporates him into himself, the creative artist does neither. The first dissolves his ego, his own subjectivity, in the subjectivity of the 'other'; the second changes his ego and his subjectivity to incorporate the subjectivity of the 'other'; and the third repels any attack on his own ego-subjectivity. These psychological dispositions elicit three different types of translation or even three entirely different processes of creation. As a consequence, the translators, after diving into the very center of 'essence' and out through their particular field of subjectivity, emerge all with different translations. They surface with different treasures: some with pearls, some with empty shells. In their own way they enrich and adorn experience with what they have found, and their freedom to do so becomes a celebration of life itself.

IV

The translator, however, is not only a creator concerned with the unfolding of his own receptivity, perception and linguistic
power, but he has many other functions. He is a communicator promoting cross-inspiration and cross-fertilisation between cultures. He is also an interpreter. His skills of interpretation grow quite naturally out of his activity as a translator. Since no-one else comes 'physically' closer to the work than he does, his intimacy allows him to see and perceive subtleties that may escape other literary critics. The translator develops also his skills as a stylist:

it is no very startling discovery to announce that back-and-forth translation from tongue to tongue is the best and very likely the only proper school of stylistics. For many years, into-and-out-of translation was the core of all humane academic training.

and learns to appreciate the linguistic difficulties inherent in his task. He becomes aware of the differences in the two languages. The training which translation thus provides is one which broadens the scope of the translator's understanding, first in his own discipline, then in a wider ranging literary-linguistic field. He becomes a practising comparatist as well as a conveyer and interpreter of ideas and of beauty. The knowledge which he may gain as a comparatist, may finally even enable him to draw from it insights only obliquely related to his field. By being in such close contact with the original language, for instance, noticing how difficult it may be to express even the simplest idea in another language, may make him realise that this difficulty signifies an important fact, namely that people experience themselves differently in different cultures. Language is no artificial
tool. It is not created, moulded or manipulated for no apparent reason. Language is the perception of man, not only just an expression of it. A particular language is rooted in a particular consciousness. It is the state of perception of one culture at a particular moment in time. By becoming aware of language, the translator thus becomes aware of the particular perception he is translating from, and, by comparison, he becomes aware of his own.

The unfolding of his broader vision may then lead him quite naturally into the fields of history, psychology, social science or anthropology depending on whether the two languages he is dealing with are related to, or removed from, one another in space or time. He may well expand his scope since the possibilities for synthetic scholastic activity and speculations present themselves to him. He will have the opportunity (if he has the power to use his knowledge) to become a man who is not only a translator, not only a scholar preoccupied with the details of his task, but a man capable of vision on a wide scale. George Steiner is such a man. By becoming aware of the linguistic differences and noticing that civilisations are "imprisoned in a linguistic contour", the questions as to why they are and why they change with the passage of time present themselves to him and beg to be answered. Steiner observes:

New words enter as old words lapse. Grammatical conventions are changed under pressure of idiomatic use or by cultural ordinance. The spectrum of permissible expressions as against that which is taboo shifts perpetually. At a deeper level, the relative dimensions and intensities of the spoken and the unspoken alter.
and the conclusions which he draws are endeavours to say something new and revealing about how man in general perceives his world and how he communicates his knowledge. The translator may notice more acutely than the literary critic that, for instance, people have a different sense of orientation in time and space to one another:

Spatialisation, and the space-time matrix in which we locate our lives, are made manifest in and by every element of grammar.

or that some languages are more susceptible to metaphor. Such observations lead Steiner directly into speculations about the concepts of time and space, imagination, and the nature of the mind, concepts which have intrigued every thinking man since the beginning of his waking consciousness. Steiner touches, thus, not only on the fields of psychology but also philosophy. The translator, as the comparatist, then, has the rare opportunity to play many roles. He may also be a historian, a psychologist, an anthropologist or a philosopher. Ideally his understanding widens around him in concentric circles encompassing larger and larger areas of knowledge.

Not only do translators have this chance to use their own 'data' for the advancement of knowledge, but the study of translations from a critical point of view also provides the same kind of opportunity. The critic of translations is also basically a comparatist. When comparing translations, he is in the same
position as the translator if he is perceptive of the differences in translation. And there are many differences, not only on an individual level, but on a historical level. "Translations age as rapidly as originals" says Adams. The reason for this is that language and the sensibilities which it represents, change over the passage of time:

Because translations consist so largely of proposed equivalents, they tell us in striking detail, how men saw themselves by showing us how they saw, or refused to see, others.

Not only do they tell us how they saw themselves in relation to others, but also how they saw. The things which they choose to emphasise, or leave out, manipulate, indicate their particular set of values, their biases, their particular sense of identity in their worlds. Translations betray the translators' subjectivity and it is precisely through that subjectivity that we get a glimpse at their world. That glimpse is not only important from a psychological, anthropological or historical point of view but, most significantly, opens our eyes toward our own world. The sense of relativity, and yet purposefulness, one discovers from such a glimpse, the sense of diversity, and yet unity, expand consciousness.

The function of the translator and his translations, as I see it, is, thus, not just primarily tied to communication (whether on an aesthetic or intellectual level), not just a useful occupation in the service of cross-fertilisation between
cultures, but tied to his potential role as a comparatist who may give impetus to the evolution of knowledge. As an action, translation is communication of beauty and ideas, as a contemplation on the action, it is knowledge. It is a many-faceted mirror. Each facet reflects one corner of reality, but together they show a vision of the world.

V

Thus, one learns not only by doing, but by thinking about what one is doing. The doing, however, still remains the primary action. The best way to talk about that action, the making of translations, is to show how it is done and what kind of decisions have to be made. One begins by accepting one's limitations. Translating an English poem, like Keats' Odes, for instance, is like trying to copy a garment without enough available cloth. No matter how one stretches and pulls at the cloth, it does not cover all. The new creation is always, at least, two numbers too small. Alas, the 'Muse' who inspires translators weaves her linguistic tapestries with two different kinds of thread. The German thread (language) favours in its choice of rhythm usually a dactylic meter, simply because German has a great variety of multi-syllabic and compound words which are stressed in this way in every-day language. My first translation of Keat's Ode "To Autumn", for instance, seemed to translate itself almost automatically into dactylic meter. A dactylic rhythm,
when used in poetry or music, suggests liveliness and motion.
The dactylic three-quarter stress ('--') of the waltz, for instance, carries the dancers into the cycle of perpetual motion. In this cycle, the dancers experience the illusion of being rhythmically swept on and upward. The waltz is a dance of perpetual life, a rhythmical and stilised ritual of courtship, in which the dancers sweep upward with a sense of weightlessness which defies earth-bound gravity. The dactyl is the rhythm in which motion wins over stasis, life over death. The principle is really very simple. The time devoted to stress and unstress is 1:2. The dancer is 'up in the air' twice as long as he is on the 'ground'. When dancing the waltz, the first 'stressed' step is taken with the weight of the whole foot, while the following two 'unstressed' steps are taken on the toes. When the dancers are 'up' on their toes, the turning occurs, since the relative weightlessness permits a radical change in direction. The dactylic rhythm, whether in dance or poetry, will thus always re-create a feeling of motion: liveliness.

By comparison, the English language favours an iambic rhythm in which equal time is devoted to stress and unstress. This type of rhythm is simply 'heavier' than the dactylic one and gives a sense of greater 'weight' and 'substance'. All stresses convey this sense of 'weight'. Compare, for instance, the waltz to the funeral march. In Chopin's Sonata in B-Flat Minor, Opus 35, the opening and refrain of the Funeral March of the third movement can be transcribed as such:
as compared to the typical waltz rhythm:

\[-|-|---|---|---|---\]
\[-|---|---|---|---|---|---\]

If the Funeral March were to be a poem, although it would never be a typical English poem, we would count thirty-three stressed and twenty-four unstressed syllables, an approximate ratio of 4:3, as compared to the 1:2 ratio of the waltz. What this tells us about the relationship of stress to unstress is clear. The more stresses, the 'heavier' and 'slower' the line seems; the fewer stresses, the 'lighter' and 'faster' the line. The 'heavier' the line, the greater is the suggestion of substance, inertia, death; the 'lighter' the line, the stronger the notion of movement, speed, and life. As a comparatist, the translator may well ask why such a difference in the rhythm of language exists and what it says about the people and conditions which produced it. Not only their speech rhythms may differ but quite likely also their character, their lifestyles, their sense of self; all these, as it were, dance to the beat of a different tune. The southern dactylic rhythms (with their relative lack of stresses) are
livelier than the northern iambics; a difference which may not only be a geographical or climatic one, but have its origin in a multitude of historical influences all worthy of investigation. Keats is part of the northern iambics as much as they are part of him. Those who first thought of writing English poetry in iambics did so by following the natural inclination of the language.

The iambic pentameter, then, as chosen by Keats as well as by many of his predecessors, is neither 'deadening' nor is it 'flighty'. The iambic pentameter expresses in fact a perfect balance between stress and unstress. The pleasure, which it gives, rises from a feeling of harmony which is found in mature poetry, a harmony which the iambic line conveys. To preserve the iambic pentameter is a major consideration in translating Keats' Odes since the insistence of the iambic stress is one of the most important non-verbal features which is responsible for the somber dignity, heaviness and restraint of the Odes. The Ode itself, being the genre of Pindar, was meant to employ a slow, dignified chanting rhythm, a rhythm which, in the English language, is very well given justice by iambic meter.

The importance of maintaining the iambic stress and the realisation of the difficulty in the rhythmic relationship between the two languages was not discovered until much experimenting. My first version of "To Autumn" was so pre-occupied with language and rhyme that the result was a rhymed translation in dactylic meter giving a very uncontrolled impression. The iambic rhythm, finally, rather than the rhyme, seemed the most precious feature to retain,
not only in "To Autumn" but also in the other Odes whenever it was employed by Keats. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn", for instance, the 'frozen moment' asks for slow and thoughtful iambics. In "Ode to a Nightingale", the idea of trance and death pervades the poem and calls for iambic stress.

"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk."

When the poem 'soars' in stanza four, the iambic pattern loosens momentarily, allowing the lines a greater 'flightiness':

"Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards;
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways."

In "Ode to Psyche", the iambic rhythm seems least justified by subject matter alone; yet, there is no doubt that the strong repetitive rhythm adds to the incantatory quality of the poem, and the incantatory quality leads to the kind of ecstasy and vision which we are allowed to share with the poet at the moment of our hypnotic communion.

Thus, having decided to adapt rhythms to iambic meter and to give up 'schemes of rhyme', unless they were themselves rhythmically
important, I further wanted to retain the pauses at the end of the lines. This seemed another important rhythmic device which allows for an incantatory effect. Incantation is but one method of hypnosis. Rhythmically induced pauses are an invitation to the reader to take a long breath after a determined stretch of time. The more regularly these pauses follow one another, the more repetitive and hypnotic the effect will be, and the faster the listener will succumb to the power of the poem.

The incantatory power of poetry thus greatly depends on the rhythmic regularity of the sounds as achieved by Keats through iambic regularity and the expectation of regular pauses, but also through rhythmic echoes within one stanza or consequent stanzas. The rhythmic echoes are usually in conjunction with rhyme echoes. In "To Autumn", for instance, Keats allows the rhymed lines to follow an identical rhythm:

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells

or:

Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy brook
Steady thy laden head across a brook
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look

or:

Think not of them thou hast thy music too
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue.
These parallels of rhythm and rhyme give the poem a certain regularity and solidity which can be felt at once. In "Ode to Psyche", Keats alternates iambic pentameter lines with iambic trimeter in stanzas two and three. These repetitions of the type of rhythm, length of rhythm, rhyme-rhythm parallels (and also repetition of words), all contribute to an incantatory and solemn effect. This is why stanzas two and three of "Ode to Psyche" are magical. Stanzas one and four, on the other hand, which also use an alternating line length in the last four lines, fail to give this sense of magic. There are two reasons for this. First, to create a break in the pattern so late in the stanza, is almost like drawing attention to a definite conclusion. It works like the couplet at the end of a sonnet which serves to sum up in conclusion. Indeed, Keats has such a conclusion in mind:

The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

and:

And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!

Since these lines are so conclusive, the short twelfth line of stanza one ("Abrooklet, scarce espied"), which could work as an
'echoe' re-inforcing thought and pattern, hangs loosely and irritatingly in the air. Secondly, the very short last line of stanza one ("His Psyche true!") is never again used anywhere in the poem. Such a short line at the end of a stanza tends to be emphatic and climactic. One has the feeling that Keats has spent himself, has given away his climax too early in the poem, and that everything else which follows is post-climactic. Altogether, "Ode to Psyche" seems to be rather confused in its intention. Should it be 'conclusive' or merely yield to the magic of the vision? The Ode seems to be an experiment struggling for a fusion of vision and knowledge. The tension, which exists between the magical middle section and the frame tending toward interpretation of the vision, is undermining the power the poem might have on strength of its language. In my translation of "Ode to Psyche" I have tried to be as 'incantatory' as possible. Throughout the poem, I alternate iambic pentameters with shorter iambic lines, in order to induce a 'swaying' motion.

O Hellstel! Trotz verlor'ner Schwüre,  
Zu spät, zu spät, das Spiel der trauten Leier,  
Verzaubert waren Wälder, Flure,  
Gesegnet war die Luft, das Wasser, Feuer.  

...  
Dein Lied, und Laute, Flöte, Würze  
Im Weihrauchbecher schwingt,  
Dein Schrein, Dein Hain, Orakelsprüche  
Zu dem Propheten singt.

I have also incorporated the shorter lines of the original and find that, because of my adjustment to alternating line lengths,
these shorter lines are less irritating. In a translation of Keats' Odes, the consideration of the non-verbal component of rhythmic patterning and the understanding of how it affects the listener are most important.

Even the use of language can be divided into verbal and non-verbal aspects. The sound of words is as important as the meaning of words. Again, Keats uses the non-verbal aspect, the sound of language to its fullest potential. The feeling of sensuousness in the Odes is created through sounds. A language is not only sensuous when its words convey sensuous meaning, but also when the words themselves imitate the sounds of natural phenomena. Keats' sensitivity to natural sounds expresses itself in such words as "winnowing winds", or "the murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves", or "bees...for which warm days will never cease". One can hear and feel the winds, the flies, the humming of the bees. Luckily, most words referring to objects and processes of the natural world are onomatopoeic to start with. The word "wind" tries to re-create the sound of wind, and the word "bees" imitates their buzzing. This is nothing new; assonance and alliteration merely tend to amplify the onomatopoeic effect of the particular word. But assonance and alliteration also give a certain audible direction to the imagination. For instance, there is a difference in sound between "whispering winds" and "winnowing winds". Both use assonance and alliteration to help build up the audible impression of wind. One imagines, however, that a "winnowing wind" moves without obstruction across a wide
plain, meadow, or sea, while a "whispering wind" may move quietly through the filigree of forest branches, rustling leaves on the way. Consequently the sense impression, as experienced through listening to the right sounds (quantitative and qualitative) calls forth different sets of connotations stored in the memory. Assonance and alliteration, apart from their incantatory possibilities, thus evoke and direct imagination. They are helpful tools—if I go back to the starting point of this essay—in recovering what seems to be lost in the memory of sounds and events. Although Keats uses these tools of assonance and alliteration with a great sense of discretion, it is because of them that the strict adherence to formal rhyme patterns becomes less important since assonance and alliteration weave their own intricate patterns of sound. Even though not always abandoning rhyme, I have tried to copy Keats' use of assonance and alliteration as best as I could. It was a pleasure to find that the German language is rich in all kinds of suggestive sounds, and that it was relatively easy to 'alliterate' and 'assonate'. The originals and the translations, therefore, gain a great deal when read out loud and when the sounds are actually formed by the lips, when they are 'mouthed' like the grapes, apples, and nuts, of which Keats speaks in his Ode "To Autumn".

Keats is thus a poet whose main power lies in the use of non-verbal techniques, and a translation which tends toward an imitative and impressionistic rendering (an 'essential equivalence' rather than a 'close' or 'free' translation) of the
originals seems justified. Because of my tendency toward 'equivalence', some details in the Odes are not given full consideration. It was more important to convey the right feeling or mood rather than to record every detail. I was more interested in the magical fire which glows through the poems than in the literal rendering of every detail. To kindle a similar fire was the aim of my translation.

It could hence be said that I am a translator who, at least with respect to Keats, favours 'essential equivalence'; but I am also a 'sensualist' who would never give up the 'music' of Keats for any possible philosophic content which may be deduced from it. Although my own subjectivity shines through my translations, there is no doubt that Keats came to 'obsess' me at various points. How else can it be explained that some of the translations seem to have written themselves. Thus, quite readily absorbed by the spirit of Keats, whatever 'essence' he may have imparted to me, that 'essence' found its concretisation in my particular compromises: my action of translating.

VI

From the preceding pages it can be seen, then, that although one learns translation by doing it, one learns about translation by thinking about what one is doing. Translation is a subjective, personal act which can have no definite guidelines. Its closeness
to, or deviation from, the original depends on how the translator perceives his responsibility. His sense of responsibility will be determined by his notion as to the priorities of content and form which he acknowledges as the outward manifestation of an inner 'essence' which he wishes to capture. Whatever his priorities or compromises may be, he must be free to choose as he pleases. For the sake of true communication, there is a need and place for every type of translation. For the sake of creativity, there is his need for personal discovery and growth. In the process of translating, he penetrates to a level of consciousness where his and the author's identities touch. There he receives the gift of 'essence' and brings back from their common meeting ground, an intuition thereof. But his translation can be only a personal and subjective rendering of the original. His 'fallen' state, his subjectivity, should be accepted as inevitable. His function is nevertheless important. He is a communicator of ideas and beauty, and indirectly he is an interpreter and a man of letters. By becoming aware of literary and linguistic differences, he comes in touch with more universal questions which may lead him into other fields of inquiry. He is a practising comparatist, and if he has the power and understanding, he may do much to integrate knowledge and contribute to its advancement. Primarily, however, he is a man of action. He learns to do by doing what he learns to do; but as a man of contemplation he also learns to know by learning how to think about his doings; the act, process and function of his actions.
FOOTNOTES


5 Adams, n. x.


8 Adams, p. 21.


10 Pope, n. xxxix.

11 Pope, n. xxxix.

12 Pope, n. xi.


20. Rexroth, p. 36.


27. Steiner, p. 296.

29 Adams, p. 16.

30 Forster, pp. 16-17.


32 Steiner, p. 198

33 Adams, p. 15.


36 Forster, p. 23

37 Adams, p. 182.

38 Steiner, p. 296 f.

39 The term 'hypnosis' will not be used in its exact scientific meaning but rather as a metaphor. What is really meant is a form of altered consciousness intimately known to those who re-create translations.

40 Steiner, p. 25

41 Steiner, p. 26.

Steiner, p. 130.

Steiner, p. 298

Steiner, p. 198

Steiner, p. 198

Rexroth, p. 36.


Selver, pp. 116-117.

Adams, p. 178.

Steiner, p. 18.

Steiner, p. 89.

Steiner, p. 53.

Adams, p. 15.

Adams, p. 17.

I do not mean to suggest that English prose is generally spoken in iambs but rather that it has a subtle tendency to fall into that pattern; this does not mean that it must, or should, do so. It is in comparison with German that this tendency is more apparent.
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ODE TO APOLLO

IN thy western halls of gold
When thou sittest in thy state,
Bards, that erst sublimely told
Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,
With fervour seize their adamantine lyres,
Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires.

Here Homer with his nervous arms
Strikes the twanging harp of war,
And even the western splendour warms,
While the trumpets sound afar:
But, what creates the most intense surprise,
His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

Then, through thy Temple wide, melodious swells
The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre:
The soul delighted on each accent dwells,—
Enraptured dwells,— not daring to respire,
The while he tells of grief around a funeral pyre.

'Tis awful silence then again;
Expectant stand the spheres;
Breathless the laurel'd peers,
Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease,
And leave once more the ravish'd heavens in peace.

Thou biddest Shakespeare wave his hand,
And quickly forward spring
The Passions—a terrific band—
And each vibrates the string
That with its tyrant temper best accords,
While from their Master's lips pour forth the inspiring words.

A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
And, as its martial notes to silence flee,
From a virgin chorus flows
A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.
'Tis still! Wild warblings from the Aeolian lyre
Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire.

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
Float along the pleased air,
Calling youth from idle slumbers,
Rousing them from Pleasure's lairs—
Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move,
And melt the soul to pity and to love.
WO in goldener Halle wohnt
Majestät—Du königlich,
Sänger einst vor Deinem Thron
Von Helden sangen meisterlich;
Nun greifen wiederum nach Diamantenleier,
Und Saiten strahlen Licht und werfen funkelnd Feuer.

Hier schlägt Homer mit reger Hand
Die Kriegerharfe scharf zum Ton,
Und Pracht des Westens hellentflammt
Erwärmt sich zum Trompetenstoss;
Doch was am meisten überrascht den Blick,
Ist seine Seele die in jungen Augen liegt.

Dann, durch den weiten Tempel schwillt und eilt
Die süße Melodie von Maro's Leier—
Verzückt der Sinn an jeder Note weilt,
Entrickt er weilt—in atemloser Feier—
Und spricht vom Schmerz derjenigen um Totenfeuer.

Dann, dunkle Stille atemlos
Der Sphärenreigen leis',
Bekränzter Freundeskreis,
Sie hören auf den letzten Ton,
Und rühren nicht bis Milton's Donner bricht
Und bringt dem Himmel wieder Friedenslicht.

Du bietest Shakespeare rühr die Hand,
Und schnell auf Saiten streicht
Die Leidenschaft ihr buntes Band,
Und süßer Klang entweicht
In Stimmung mit dem farb'gen Temperament;
Indessen Meistermund harmonisch Worte nennt.

Und Spenser bläst auf Silberhorn,
Und wenn die Kriegertöne fliehn,
So fließt von edler Jungfrau'n Chor
Der keuschen Reinheit hohe Hymnen hin.
Ganz leis! der Himmelsharfe Zitterklang
Verklingt, verzaubert atmet Welt zum Ehrgesang.

Dann gleiten Tasso's inn'ge Weisen
Auf lauen Lüften glücksbewusst,
Und rufen Jünglinge ganz leise
Zum sel'gen Lager ihrer Lust—
Dann über Saiten sanft sein Finger streicht
Und schmilzt die Seele ganz vor Lieb und Leid.
But when Thou joinest with the Nine,
And all the powers of song combine,
We listen here on earth:
The dying tones that fill the air,
And charm the ear of evening fair,
From, thee, great God of Bards, receive their heavenly birth.
Wenn Du zu ihnen dich gesellst,
Dann alle Macht im Lied sich sucht,
Berauscht es lauscht die ganze Welt:
Der Laut leis schwindend in der Luft,
Des Abends sanft ins Ohr uns ruft,
Von Dir, O Gott der Sänger, himmlisch uns besucht.
ODE TO PAN

O. THOU whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lov'est to see the harmadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,
By thy love's milky brow;
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan!

0 Thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
What time though wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom
Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow girted bees
Their golden honeycombs; our village leas
Their fairest blossom'd beans and poppied corn;
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
To sing for thee; low creeping strawberries
Their summer coolness; pent up butterflies
Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh budding year
All its completions—be quickly near,
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
O forester divine!

Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
For willing service; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit;
Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw;
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewildered shepherds to their path again;
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,
And gather up all fancifullest shells
For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping;
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the crown
With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown—
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, 0 satyr king!
ODE AN PAN

O DU, von mächt'gen Stämmen wild umrankt
Steht Dein Palast, umschattet ewig ganz
Das Flüstern, Leben, Tod und Auferstehn
Der Flur friedlicher Blumen ungesehn;
Du, der es liebet den Nymphen zuzusehn,
Die Haselblüten flechten in ihr Haar;
Und Stund' um feierliche Stund' hörst Du
Der 6den Melodie des Schilfrohrs zu—
In wüst'en Plätzen, dumpfe Hitze treibt,
und Schierlingskraut zu selt'ner Höhe neigt;
Dann denkst wie traurig Du einst warst, entsetzt,
Wenn holde Syrinx Dir entschwand—und jetzt,
Bei ihrer weissen Hand!
Bei jenem Labyrinth durch das sie wand,
Schenk uns Gehör, allmächt'ger Pan!

O Du, für den ein Schlummerlied die Tauben
Eigens flüten zärtlich unter Myrten,
Wann wanderst Du allein zur Abendstund'
Durch Sonnenflut und Flur und Wiesensund,
Durch Dein bemooostes Reich: O Du, wenn Laub
Sich neigt, so schenkt schon jetzt der Feigenbaum
Die reife Frucht; und gold'nen Honigsam
Reicht dar ein gelbmgürtet' Bienenschwarm,
Und unser Dorf langt Blüten Dir und Korn;
Der Hänsling seine Jungen ungebor'n
Und singt für Dich; die wilde Beere bringt
Dir Sommerkühle nah; und Schmetterling
befleckte Flügel. Ja, das neue Jahr
All seine Fülle voll—geschwind komm nah,
mit jedem Wind seufzt Bergeshain,
Du göttlicher Beherrscher dieses Schreins!

Du, dem jeder Faun, beflügelter Satyr,
Zu Dienste eilt; im Halbschlaf aufzuspürr'n
Den Hasen der in müd'en Gräsern hockt;
Und aufwärts über scharfe Hänge lockt
Die Lämmer von der Adler lüstern Schlund;
Wenn er mit Zauberspruch und Kund'
Verwirrte Schäfer weist auf rechtem Weg;
Und dann die atemlose Runde dreht
Am Schaum der See, erlies'ne Muscheln pflückt,
Die in Najadengrotten Du entzückt
Zum Spiel der Nymphen wirfst, wenn ungesch'n
Du siehst bestürzt sie in der Zelle steh'n,
Und stolpern, schleudern schnell mit flinker Hand
Die Silberäpfel, Zapfen unentwandt
Als ihr Geschütz, wenn Echo um dich raunt,
Schenk uns Gehör, O königlicher Faun!
O Harkener to the loud clapping shears
While ever and anon to his shorn peers
A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
Anger our huntsmen: Breather round our farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a swooning over hollow grounds.
And wither drearily on barren moors:
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge—see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows!

Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity;
A firmament reflected in a sea;
An element filling the space between;
An unknown—but no more: we humbly screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Paean,
Upon thy Mount Lycean!
Du hörst laut Scheren klappern in dem Wind,
Und hier und dort ein Schaf läuft bläkend hin
Zu seiner kahlen Schar. Du bläst das Horn
Wenn wilde Eber wühlen um das Korn
Zum Zorn des Jägersmann's; wehst um den Hof,
Verscheuchst das lose Wetter, Schimmelmoos,
Die Ministranten sonderbaren Lauts,
Der über hohlen Grund sich senkt und raunt,
und über ödem Sumpf dann stumpf verklingt;
Du grauenhafter Wächter, vor Dir springt
Das Tor universeller Kenntnis auf—
Die Frommen hier, ihr Haupt umkränzt von Laub,
sie huldigen Dir dann zum Lohn,
Dryope's Kind, Du edler Sohn!

Sei unergründlich Du und doch das Haus
Der einsamen Gedanken, das hinauf
Bis an den Himmel reicht und scheut Verstand;
So lass den nackten Sinn, sei Hefe dann
Die wächst auf diesem Klumpen Erde schwer,
Und mach ihn luftig leicht, lass ihn ersteh'n;
Der Unermesslichkeit sei ein Symbol,
Ein Firmament im Meere's Spiegel voll,
Ein Element das füllt den leeren Raum
Des Ungewissens—doch nicht mehr; wir schau'n
Zu Dir bescheiden mit gebücktem Haupt,
Und bitten Dich wenn Himmel es erlaubt,
Beschwören Dich, empfang den Lobgesang
Auf Deinem Berge Lycean!
BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Brows'd by none but Diana's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week:
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!
ODE

IHR Sänger von der Freud' und Pein,
Ist irdisch Eure Seele rein?
Habt auch Himmelsseelen Ihr,
Und Doppelleben zum Revier?
Ja, und Himmlische dort geh'n,
Wo Sonn' und Mond rund um sie dreh'n;
Und Brunnen rauschen wunderbar;
Und Stimmen donnern unsagbar,
Flüstern auf der Himmelsflur,
In Bäumen leis und liegen nur
Auf Rasen des Elysiums,
Wo Rehe der Diana ruh'n
Sanft unter Glockenblumen Dach;
Und Ganseblümchen süß entfacht
Der Rose Düfte über Land,
Ein Duft der Erde unbekannt;
Wo Nachtigall tönt wieder
Nicht Phantasienlieder,
Sondern von Wahrheit singt;
Und göttlich Melodie erklingt
Von gold'ner Zeit, Vergangenheit,
Geheimnisse der Himmel weit.

Auf Himmelshöhen lebt Ihr so,
Und auch auf Erden irgendwo;
Und die Seele, die daheim,
Zeigen uns den Weg geheim
Zur Himmelsseele frohen Sinn's,
Die niemals schlummert, zieht's uns hin.
Hier die Irdischen sie flüstern
Sterblichen von ihren Lüsten;
Ihrer Not und ihrer Pein;
Ihrer Freud und ihrem Leid;
Ihrer Schande, ihrer Pracht;
Was uns lähmt, was stark uns macht.
So lehret Ihr uns jede Stund'
Weisheit, doch, fliesst fort geschwind.

Ihr Sänger von der Freud' und Pein,
Irdisch ist die Seele rein!
Habt auch Himmelsseelen Ihr,
Und Doppelleben zum Revier!
ODE TO FANNY

I

PHYSICIAN Nature! let my spirit blood!
O ease my heart of verse and let me rest;
Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood
Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full breast.
A theme! a theme! great nature! give a theme;
Let me begin my dream.
I come--I see thee, as thou standest there,
Beckon me not into the wintry air.

II

Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,
And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries,—
To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears
A smile of such delight,
As brilliant and as bright,
As when with ravished, aching, vassal eyes,
Lost in soft amaze,
I gaze, I gaze!

III

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast?
What stare outfaces now my silver moon?
Ah! keep that hand unravish'd at the least;
Let, let, the amorous burn—
But, pr'ythee, do not turn
The current of your heart from me so soon.
Of save, in charity,
The quickest pulse for me.

IV

Save it for me, sweet love! though music breathe
Voluptuous visions into the warm air;
Though swimming through the dance's dangerous wreath,
Be like an April day,
Smiling and cold and gay,
A temperate lilly, temperate as fair;
Then, Heaven! there will be
A warmer June for me.
ODE AN FANNY

I

ARZT der Natur! Lass meiner Seele Blut,
Mach frei mein Herz, entbinde Poesie,
Auf Dreifuss rhythmisch schlag' die Melodie
Der Verse mir aus heisser Herzensglut.
Ein Thema reich' mir, mächtige Natur,
Schmiede den Traum mir nur.
Ich eile, seh' Dich, fühle Dich dort steh'n,
Zieh mich nicht hin wo Winterwinde weh'n.

II

Aha! Liebste Du, Du holdes Heim der Furcht,
Der Hoffnungen, der Lust und Elend toll,
Heut' Nacht trägt Deine Schönheit reife Frucht,
Ein Lächeln wonniglich,
Auf Deinem Angesicht,
Wenn mit Vasallen-Augen schmerzenvoll,
Vertieft im Wunderweh,
Ich seh', und seh'.

III

Wer denn, mit gier'gem Blick, verschlingt mein Mahl?
Wer starrt, verwirrt nun meinen Silbermond?
Aha! Lass die Hand mir unberührt so fahl,
Verliebte flink entbrannt;
Bleib' mir stets zugewandt,
Wenn Überflut fliesst aus dem Herzensstrom.
O lass, ich bitt' von Dir
Den regsten Atem mir.

IV

Lass ihn mir, Geliebte! Wenn auch Musik
Visionen atmet in die laue Luft,
Und sich durch Tanzgewinde wehrlos wiegt;
Sei küh! wie der April,
Der munter lacht still
So hell und mild, so mild wie Lilienduft;
 Dann, Himmel! zeigt für mich
Ein wärm'rer Juni sich.
V

Why, this—you'll say, my Fammy! is not true:
Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,
Where the heart beats: confess—'tis nothing new—
Must not a woman be
A feather on the sea,
Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide?
Of as uncertain speed
As blow-ball from the mead?

VI

I know it— and to know it is despair
To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny!
Whose heart goes fluttering for you every where,
Nor, when away you roam,
Dare keep its wretched home,
Love, love alone, has pains severe and many:
Then, loveliest! keep me free
From torturing jealousy.

VII

Ah! if you prize my subdued soul above
The poor, the fading, brief, pride of an hour;
Let none profane my Holy See of love,
Or with a rude hand break
The sacramental cake;
Let none else touch the just new-budded flower;
If not—may my eyes close,
Love! on their last repose.
V

Warum— sagst Du, O Fanny! S'ist nicht wahr:
Leg' Deine weiche Hand aufs Herz geschwind,
An jene Brust aus Schnee - ist es nicht klar -
Sind Frauen nicht so sehr
Wie Flaum auf wildem Meer
Gewogen hin und her, bei Flut und Wind?
So wankt der Lüfte Spiel
Der Pusteblume Ziel.

VI

Ich weiss es— und es wissen, heisst Verdruss
Für den— O Fanny!— der dich liebt wie ich;
Ein Herz das ringsum um dich flattern muss,
Und wenn Du ferne weilst,
Friedlos vom Haus es streift.
Liebe, Liebe allein hält Fein um sich;
Wenn einsam, treib' zur Flucht
Quälende Eifersucht.

VII

Ach! Wenn Du die Seele schätzt, besiegt und wund,
Mehr als den Stolz einer verschwund'nen Stund,
Lass niemanden entweih'n den Liebesthron.
Lass keine Hände roh
Brechen das heil'ge Brot;
Lass keinen pflücken Knospen von dem Mohn;
Wenn nicht, so schliess mir ganz,
Liebel' der Augen Glanz.
TO -

WHAT can I do to drive away
Remembrance from my eyes? for they have seen,
Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen!
Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,
What can I do to kill it and be free
In my old liberty?
When every fair one that I saw was fair,
Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
Not keep me there;
When, howe'er poor or particolour'd things,
My muse had wings,
And ever ready was to take her course
Whither I bent her force,
Unintellectual, yet divine to me;--
Divine, I say!—What sea-bird o'er the sea
Is a philosopher the while he goes
Winging along where the great water throes?

How shall I do
To get anew
Those moulted feathers, and so mount once more
Above, above
The reach of fluttering Love,
And make him cower lowly while I soar?
Shall I gulp wine? No, that is vulgarism,
A heresy and schism,
Foisted into the canon law of love;--
No,—wine is only sweet to happy men;
More dismal cares
Seize on me unawares,—
Where shall I learn to get my peace again?
To banish thoughts of that most hateful land,
Dungeoner of my friends, that wicked strand
Where they were wreck'd and live a wrecked life;
That monstrous region, whose dull rivers pour,
Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore,
Unown'd of any weedy-haired gods;
Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scourging rods,
Iced in the great lakes, to afflict mankind;
Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black, and blind,
Would fright a Dryad; whose harsh herbag'd meads
Make lean and lank the starv'd ox while he feeds;
There flowers have no scent, 'birds no sweet song,
And great unerring Nature once seems wrong.
AN -

WIE kann ich fegen fort geschwind
Erinnerung aus dem Aug? Sie hat erblickt
Vor einer Stund; Ah, meine Königin!
Gedanken fühlt! O Liebe sagt und sinnt,
Wie töt' ich sie, wie jag' ich sie vorbei,
Wie werd' ich wieder frei?
Wenn jede Schöne schönsten Anblick bot,
Und Hälfte süser Schlingen bog, sie zog
Mich nicht in Not;
Wenn bettelarm die Muse, Lumpending,
Auf Schwingenwind
Ward stets bereit zu hohem Flug und flog
Wohin ich sie auch zog.
Ganz ohne Geist, doch gänzlich göttlich mir
Göttlich ich sag!— Wird jede Möwe dir.
Zum Philosoph wenn über See sie fliegt
Und wiegt wo wogend Meerschaum liegt?

Wie kann ich denn
Enfalten schnell
Die Federn jung und schwingen mich empor
Hinauf, hinauf
Ins Land der Liebe lauf',
Zwinge sie und schweb' zum Himmelstor!
Verschlüss' den Wein? Nein, jene Tat ist schlimmer
Als Häresie und Chisma,
Ins Kirchenrecht der Liebe eingefügt;
Nein, Liebe schmeckt nur frohen Männern süß;
Die bitt're Lust
Greift um sie unbewusst.
Wo findest' ich jenen der mir Friede schenkt?
Und weist Gedanken mir aus diesem Land,
Aüs diesem Kerker, von dem leeren Strand,
Wo Freunde scheitern, Leben brach zerschellt?
In diesem öden Reich, die Flüsse dieser Welt
Sie giessen Urnen aus dem trägen Schlamm,
Kein Eigentum des algenhaar'gen Gott's.
Der atemlose Wind schwingt hoch den Stock,
Vereist in grossen See'n, und züchtet so die Welt;
In Wäldern üppig, schwarz und blind ergällt
Nie der Dryaden Lied; im harschen Gras
Verschmachtet stets der Ochs am dürren Mass,
Kein Blumenduft, kein Vogelklang,
Wenn hohl dröhnt trügerisch Naturgesang.
0, for some sunny spell
To dissipate the shadows of this hell!
Say they are gone,—with the new dawning light
Steps forth my lady bright!
0, let me once more rest
My soul upon that dazzling breast!
Let once again these aching arms be plac'd,
The tender goalers of thy waist!
And let me feel that warm breath here and there
To spread a rapture in my very hair,—
0, the sweetness of the pain!
Give me those lips again!
Enough! Enough! it is enough for me
To dream of thee!
O, bringt mir Sonnenlicht,
Das Dunkel dieser Hölle bricht!
Ah, es ist fort— in Morgenröteschein
Die Liebliche steht rein!
O, lass in süßer Lust
Die Seele ruh'n an jener hellen Brust!
Lass noch einmal die wunden Arme mein
Die Kerkermeister jenes Leibes sein!
Lass mich den warmen Atem fühlen nah
Der mich berauscht und spielt in meinem Haar—
O, Süsse dieser Qual!
Die Lippen noch einmal!
Genug! Genug! Es ist genug wenn mir
Es träumt von Dir!
ODE TO PSYCHE

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrete should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conched ear:
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couch'd side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whirl'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied:

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyes,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love:
The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retir'd
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swung censer teeming;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.
ODE AN DIE PSYCHE

O GÖTTIN! Hör' welch' stumme Weisen
Ich Töchtern der Erinnerung entwand;
Verzieh' mir, wenn ich Dein Geheimnis
Mit leisem Klang verkünde und Gesang:
Mir war's als sah ich Psyche schlafend,
Beflügelt, oder träumt' ich's blos', ganz nah;
Es schien ich wanderte im Walde
Gedankenlos; im Traum ich plötzlich sah
Zwei Kinder sanft die Wang' an Wang
Im Blütenduft und Laubgeflüster ruh'n,
Durch dichten grasumwund'nem Laufe
Ein Bächlein springt im Nu:

Auf stillen kühlen Purpurbeeten
Die silberknospen flochten um das Paar,
Ein ruh'ger Atem durch die Blätter weht.
Ein Arm den and'ren hat umwunden,
So nah der Mund und dennoch nicht gefunden,
Als ob die Hand des Schlummer's ihn entführ't,
Ein Küss ganz nah fast lachend ihn berührt.
Den Knaben in der Düm'm'run'g ich erkannt'
In Morgenröte neu;
Doch wer warst Du, O Taube engverwandt?
Die Psyche treu!

O jüngstes, schönstes Traumgebilde
Versunk'n'er Gotter der antiken Welt,
Strahl'ner Du mit Antlitz mildes
Als Sonn' und Sterne glühen am Himmelszelt.
Heller Du, doch Tempel hast Du keinen,
Noch Schrein in Blütenpracht;
Der Jungfrau'n Klagelieder schweigen
Zur Stund' der Mitternacht.
Schweigt Lied und Gehe, Flöte, Wurze
Im Weihrauchbecher stirbt,
Kein Schrein, kein Hain, Orakelspruche
Um den Propheten wirbt.

O Hellstel Trotz verlor'n'er Schwüre,
Zu spät, zu spät, das Spiel der trauten Leier,
Verzaubert waren Wälder, Flure,
Gesegnet war die Luft, das Wasser, Feuer.
Trotzdem der Ehrfurcht ich entrückte
Seit langer Zeit, den klaren Flügelglanz,
Der um die Gotter des Olympus tanzt,
Ich seh', und sing' mit sel'gem Blicke.
So lass mich Klagelieder reimen
Zur Stund' der Mitternacht;
Dein Lied, und Laute, Flöte, Würze
Im Weihrauchbecher schwingt,
Dein Schrein, Dein Hain; Orakelsprüche
Zu dem Propheten singt.
Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The Moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!
Ja, Priester will ich sein und bilden
Den Tempel Dir im Dickicht meines Sinn's,
Wo Äste der Gedanken winden,
Statt Führen wachsend wispern leis im Wind.
Weit, weit soll'n diese dunklen Wälder
Die wilden Berge Kamm um Kamm umflieh'n,
Wo dort in moosbedeckten Tälern
Den Nymphen raunt der Wälder Wiegenlied.
In diesem weiten stillen Raum
Den Rosentempel will ich bau'n
Mit Kranzgewinde meines Sinn's,
Mit Knospen, Glocken, Sternennamenlos,
Des Gärtners Phantasie entspringend,
Der zwei Mal nie dieselbe Blume spross.
Und sieh' dort wohnt die sanfte Freude
Im hellen Lampenschein.
Ein Fenster öffnet sie ganz leise,
Und lässt die Liebe 'rein.
ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

I

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? what struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter
Therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, 0 mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.
ODE AUF EINE GRIECHISCHE URNE

I
Du ruhige, unberührte, stille Braut,
Du Kind des Schweigens und der trägen Zeit,
Historiker, Du süßer noch als Reim
Erzählst Geschichten der Vergangenheit.
Welch Sagenkranz umwirkt wohl Deine Form
Mit Göttern, Menschen, oder beider Los
In Tempe oder fern im Tal Arkadiens?
Wer sind die Männer? Götter? Jungfrau'n bloss?
Welch wilde Jagd? Welch Sträuben ringt um Flucht?
Welch Flüten, Schellen da im Sinnesrausch?

II
Das Lied ist süß, doch süßer ist der Klang
Ungesung'n er Weisen. D'rum Flüten spielt
Den Sinnen nicht, denn lautlos Euer Gesang
Dem sel'gen Geist mit leiser Stimme singt.
O Jüngling unter'n Baum. Verlierst doch nie
Dein Lied, noch dieser Baum sein Blatt.
Verliebter, nimmer kannst Du küssen sie,
Obwohl so nah ihr Mund—doch klage nicht,
Sie schwindet nie, trotz verlor'ner Lust,
Für ewig liebst Du; ewig bleibt sie schön.

III
O sel'ge Zweige könnt nicht lassen jeh
Das Laub, noch jemals bieten Lenz Adieu.
Und sel'ger Sänger, unermüdlich spielst
Du Flütenmelodien für immer neu.
Beglückte Liebel Sel'ger Liebe Lust;
Für immer warm der unerfüllte Mund,
Für immer seufzend und für ewig jung.
Voll atmet, leidenschaftlich wallt die Brust
Des Menschen, schwillt das Herz ihm sorgenvoll,
Und Lippen dürsten dann im Sinnesbrand.

IV
Wer sind sie, die zum Opferdienste zieh'n?
Zu welchem grünen Schrein, geheimer Hirt
Bringst Du das ausgewählte Opfertier,
Die bunten Bänder flechtend um das Haupt.
Welch kleine Stadt an Fluss und Meerestrand,
Welch burgbewachtes Dorf am Bergeshang
Ist menschenleer an diesem frommen Tag?
Es schweigen Deine Gassen, kleine Stadt,
Und keine Seele, die uns sagen kann
Warum Du einsam bist, kann Heim zu Dir.
O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.
O schönste Pose! Attischer Bau!
Mit Marmormännern, Mädchen reich umwirkt,
Mit Ranken, Waldeszweigen eng umziert.
Du stille Form; Du, gleich der Ewigkeit
Stiehst aus Gedanken. Kühles Pastoral!
Wenn Alter diese Generation zerbricht
So wirst Du steh'n, inmitten Anderer Schmerz,
Der Menschen Freund; zu ihnen dann Du sprichst:
"Die wahre Schönheit ist der Wahrheit gleich—
Kein and'res Wissen braucht auf Erden Ihr."
ODE ON INDOLENCE

'They toil not, neither do they spin.'

I

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced;
And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
In placid sandals, and in white robes graced;
They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,
When shifted round, the first seen shades return;
And they were strange to me, as may betide
With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

II

How is it, Shadows! that I knew ye not?
How came ye muffled in so hush a mask?
Was it a silent deep-disguised plot
To steal away, and leave without a task
My idle days? Ripe was the drowsy hour;
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
Benumb'd my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower;
0, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness?

III

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd
Each one the face a moment whiles to me;
Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
And ached for wings because I knew the three;
The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name;
The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
And ever watchful with fatigued eye;
The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,—
I knew to be my demon Poesy.
ODE AUF DIE LÄSSIGKEIT

'Sie weder arbeiten, noch spinnen'

I

DREI Schatten sah ich einst am Morgen zieh'n,
Geneigten Haupts, verschlungen Hand in Hand,
Vorüber flieh'n im Silhouettenspiel,
Mit sanfbeschoshetem Schritt und Schleierband;
Sie schwan'den wie auf ird' nem Marmorbild,
Das um die Urne gleitet, die sich dreht,
Und wenn sie ehn em um die Achsel schwang,
Der Schattenkreis sich windend um sie band;
Sie waren fremd auf jener Vase Bild,
Die mir von Phidias' Hand gemeisselt schien.

II

Wie kam's Ihr Formen, dass Ihr mir so fremd?
Was soll die Maske schweigsam und verhüllt?
Stiehlt Ihr den tr'agen Tag? War das der Flan,
Der Eure Geister lautlos zu mir führt
Und ohne Werk mich liess? Reif war die Stund;
Die trunk'ne Wolke Sommerlässigkeit
Benebelte mein Aug; der Puls mir wich;
Der Dorn des Leids und Freudekranz verblich;
Warum schwand't Ihr nicht fort, und liess den Sinn
Mir unbetrübt nur einem— nur dem Nichts?

III

Ein drittes Mal vorbei — sie wendeten
Ihr Antlitz nur dem solitären Blick
Und schwan'den schnell; nach Flügeln flehte dann
Mein Sinn; vertraut schien mir ihr Angesicht;
Das erste Mädlein war die Liebe rein;
Die zweite war Begierde, Wangen bleak
Wenn wachsam lauerte ihr müder Blick;
Als letzte Maid, noch eher Liebste mir
Je mehr man tadelt ihren Eigensinn,—
Erkannte ich Dämonin Poesie.
They faded, and, forsooth! I wanted wings;
O folly! What is love! and where is it?
And for that poor Ambition! it springs
From a man's little heart's short fever-fit;
For Poesy—no,—she has not a joy,—
At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
And evenings steep'd in honied indolence;
O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
That I may never know how change the moons,
Or hear the voice of busy common-sense!

A third time came they by—alas! wherefore?
My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams;
My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams.
The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;
The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,
Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay;
O Shadows! 'twas a time to bid farewell!
Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

So, ye Three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise
My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;
For I would not be dieted with praise,
A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!
Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more
In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn;
Farewell! I yet have visions for the night,
And for the day faint visions there in store;
Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle spright,
Into the clouds, and never more return!
IV
Sie schwanden, und, fürwahr! Reicht Schwingen mir:
O Torheit! Was ist Liebe? Wo ihr Schrein?
Und wo Begierde, wo! In Flammen quillt
Aus heisem Herzen sie als Fieberglut:
Und Poesie!— nein— sie erfreut mich nicht,—
So süß und müde um die Mittagstund',
Und Abends nippend Honigmüssigang:
O, reicht den Becher ohne Bitternis,
Denn blind sei ich dem Mondes Wechselspiel,
Und taub der Stimme steter Nüchternheit.

V
Noch einmal wichen sie vorbei— Warum?
Mit Blumen übersät' die Seele mir
Den Rasen reger Schatten, wirren Lichts,
Im Schlummer, schwer bestickte trüben Traum;
Kein Regen durch die Morgenwolke brach
Trotz süßer Tränen schwer in Lidern Mai's;
Ums off'n Fenster Rebenlaub sich schlang,
Liess Blütenwärme, Drosselschlag herein;
O Phänomen! So bietet mir Adieu!
Auf Euren Schoss fiel meine Träne nicht.

VI
So denn, Phantome, lebet wohl! Ihr könnt
Mein Haupt von Blumenbeeten nicht erhöhn:
Will mich nicht weiden an dem grünen Lob,
Ein Lieblingslamm im possenhaften Spiel!
Verblendet sanft vor meinem Aug', und fügt
Den Maskentraum ins Bildnis Eurer Urn';
Adieu! Ich habe Träume für die Nacht,
Und für den Tag, Visionen mitgebracht.
Fliegt, Ihr Schatten! von meinem trägen Geist
Auf Wolkenhöh', und nimmer kehrt zurück!
ODE ON MELANCHOLY

I
No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Prosperpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

II
But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

III
She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.
ODE AUF DIE MELANCHOLIE

I

Nein, nein, geh nicht zur Lethe, winde Wein
Nicht aus den Wurzeln wilden Eisenhut's;
Und wende Deine Stirne nicht zum Kuss
Der Schattenfrucht, Proserpins Rubien;
Aus Elbenperlen binde weder Kranz,
Noch lass den Trauermantel schlingen Dir
Um Psyche; Totenküfer, Eulenschlag,
Lass nie als Partner Deinem Leiden nah;
Denn Schatten trunken dunklen Schatten sucht,
Und wachen Schmerz der Seele tief ertränkt.

II

Doch wenn Melancholie vom Himmel fällt,
Als jähe Wolkenträume sich ergießt,
Tränkt die geneigten Blumen auf dem Feld,
Verhüllt den grünen Berg im Leichentuch;
Dann still' den Schmerz an einer Morgenros',
An bunten Regenwogen über'n Strand,
Trink von der Fülle der Päonie;
Und wenn die Liebste Dir auch zürnt und tost,
Lass sie in Wut, umfass' die weiche Hand,
Und trinke tief von ihrer Augen Flut.

III

Sie wohnt bei Schönheit—Schönheit flieht und stirbt!
Und Glück die Finger von den Lippen zieht,
So bietet ihr Adieu; nah bitt're Lust,
Vergalltes Gift von dem die Biene nippt;
Ah, im Heiligtum des Freudentempels tief,
Verschleiert, Wehmut herrscht im höchsten Schrein;
Entblösst nur dem, der ihre Trauben bricht
Am Gaumen süßer Lust, den herben Wein;
Wenn seine Seele macht'ge Wehmut trinkt,
Wird er Pokal der unter Wolken schwingt.
ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaded-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd d around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.
ODE AN DIE NACHTIGALL

I

MEIN Herz vergeht, die Dämmerung betäubt
Mir Sinn, als ob aus trüben Becher schwer
Es Schierling oder Opium geschöpft
Zum Augenblick, und Lethe-zu versank.
Es ist nicht Neid auf Dein beglücktes Los,
Doch eher froh in Deiner Seligkeit,
Dass, leichtbeflügeltes Dryadenkind
Auf Melodiengrund,
Auf Buchengrün, und Schatten ohne Zahl,
Mit vollster Kehle Du vom Sommer singst.

II

Nur einen Rebentrunk! Im tiefen Grab
Der Erde dunkler Kellerstatt gekühlt,
Von Flora schmeckend und von ländlich Grün,
Vom Tanzen, Singen, Sommer, Fröhlichkeit.
Nur einen vollen warmen Sonnenkelch,
Mit Rubien echter Hippocrene voll,
Und Perlenkronen schäumend bis zum Rand,
Mit purpurfarb' nem Mund
Ich möchte leer'n und lass die Welt allein,
Und mit Dir schwinde in den dust'ren Wald.

III

O schwinde nur, vergeh, und ganz vergiss
Was unter'm Blätterlaub Du nie gekannt.
Ermattung, Fieber und der Menschen Not,
Der And'ren Stöhnen immer stets im Ohr.
Wo Greise zittern bis auf's graue Haar,
Wo Jugend welkt, verblasst und leidend dirbt,
Wo Denken nur noch neue Tränen bringt
Den Lidern sorgenschwer.
Wo Schönheit weder ihrer Augen Glanz,
Noch Liebe Morgen ihre Lust umfängt.

IV

Nur fort! Nur fort! Ich fliege schnell zu Dir,
Nicht im Triumphzug Bacchus', sondern hoch
Hinauf auf Flügeln leichter Poesie,
Wo dumpfer Sinn verirrt und bleibt zurück.
Und schon bei Dir! Zärtlich ist die Nacht,
Und Königin des Mond's auf ihrem Thron
Umringt vom Hofe ihrer Sternenfee'n.
Doch hier scheint uns kein Licht,
Das nicht mit Himmelslüften weht
Durch dust'ren Dunst und moosumschlung'nen Weg.
I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath;  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
In such an ecstasy!  
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
The same that oft-times hath  
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! Adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
In the next valley-glades;  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?
V
Dort kann man Blumen nicht zu Füssen seh'n,
Noch sanfte Würze hoch an Ästen hängt,
Doch ahne ich im Duft der Dunkelheit
Die Süße, die die Jahreszeit verschenkt
An alle Gräser, Sträucher, wilden Apfelbaum,
Das Hagedorn, und Heckenrose weiss,
Ein blasses Veilchen tief im Laub versteckt,
Und jüngstes Kind des Mai's,
Die frühe Moschusrose tugetränkt,
Und's Summen letzter Sommerfliegen spät.

VI
Düster lausch' ich, und in manchem Augenblick
Hab' ich den sanften Tod doch fast geliebt.
In Versen hab' ich zärtlich ihn verführt,
Mit meines Lebens Atem ihn berührt.
Nun, schöner noch als jen scheint mir der Tod,
Und's Sterben leidlos spät zur Mitternacht,
Wenn Deiner Seele Schwelle überströmt
Mit vollster Freudeslust.
Noch klingt Dein Lied, doch hören kann ich kaum,
Dein Requiem mir von dunkler Erde raunt.

VII
Unsterblich Du, dem Tode nicht bestimmt!
Nie Elende Dich von den Lüften zwingt.
Dein Lied, das heute Nacht mir klingt, Du sang'st
In alter Zeit dem König und dem Clown.
Vielleicht der selbe Vogelsang das Herz
Der Ruth mit weher Sehnsucht hat erfüllt,
Als sie mit Tränen stand im fremden Korn.
Der selbe Zauberklang
Verwünschte Läden öffnet auf den Schaum
Der wilden Seen in Elfenländern 'lor'n.

VIII
Verlo'rn! Das Wort wie eine Glocke hell
Ruft mich zurück zu meiner Seele selbst.
Adieu! Die Phantasie, die Lügenfee, betrügt
Nur halb so schnell als sie gerühmt.
Adieu! Adieu! Der Klagehymne Laut
Verklinget über Wiesen, stillem Strom,
Zum Bergeshang, und dann verstummt im Grab
Des nächsten tiefsten Tals:
War es Erscheinung oder Traumgebild?
Fort ist das Lied——wach' oder schaffe ich?
TO AUTUMN

I

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-listed by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.
AN DEN HERBST

I

HERBST und reife, volle Fruchtbarkeit,
Der schwülen Sonne engster Busenfreund;
Gemeinsam bindet Ihr den Rebenkranz,
Und füllt mit Früchten ihm das mürbe Laub.
Ihr beugt mit Äpfeln tief den grünen Baum,
Und bringt mit Reife Frucht und Obst zum Kern.
Ihr schwängert süß die Nuss; dann knospen auch
Die späten Blüten, und ein Bienenschwarm,
Der in den Kelchen trunken Süße sucht,
Dünkt warme Sommertage nie vorbei.

II

Dort, inmitten vollster Fülle sorglos
Sitzt in Scheunen Du. Ähren binden leicht
Dein Haar, gelüftet von dem linden Wind,
Umstreichelt leicht vom warmen Sonnenlicht.
Auf Stoppeläckern schläfst Du ruhig ein
Im Duft des Mohns; die Sichel ganz vergisst
Das blum'umschlung'ne Korn am Grund.
Und manchmal späte Lese hoch am Haupt
Du schreitest fest mit schwerem Schritt zum Hof.
Beim Apfelpressen schaust Du träge zu
Wenn Saft versickert leise, Stund' um Stund'.

III

Wo sind die Lieder des Frühlings, ach wo?
Denk nur, Du hast den eig'nen Gesang.
Wenn glühend Wolken blendend leis' im Klang
des Abenlichts die Äcker in Röte;
Am Sumpf ein Chor der Mücken lüftet, summt
Sein letztes wimmerndes Lied und fällt
Im flauen Wind, verstummt und stirbt.
Noch reife Lammer blöken laut vom Berg,
Noch ein Rotkehlchen pfeift im Tal und Feld,
Die Grille singt, und in dämmernder Welt
Die späte Schwalbe auf zum Himmel schwirrt.
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