

problem of translating along a vertical axis, where the SL text is seen as being of a higher status than the TL text. Unless the translation is intended as a crib, it also means accepting Popović's theory of the inevitability of shifts of expression in the translation process.¹³

As an example of the way in which different concepts of translation can be applied to the translation of a classical author, let us take three versions of Catullus Poem 13.

An Invitation to Dinner

Cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me
 paucis, si tibi di favent, diebus,
 si tecum attuleris bonam atque magnam
 cenam, non sine candida puella
 et vino et sale et omnibus cachinnis.
 haec, si, inquam, attuleris, venuste noster,
 cenabis bene; nain tui Catulli
 plenus sacculus est aranearum.
 sed contra accipies meros amores
 seu quid suavius elegantiusve est:
 nam unguentum dabo, quod meae puellae
 donarunt Veneres Cupidinesque,
 quod tu cum olfacies, deos rogabis,
 totum ut te faciant, Fabulle, nasum.

(Catullus, 13)

- (1) Now, please the gods, Fabullus, you
 Shall dine here well in a day or two;
 But bring a good big dinner, mind,
 Likewise a pretty girl, and wine
 And wit and jokes of every kind.
 Bring these, I say, good man, and dine
 Right well: for your Catullus' purse
 Is full – but only cobwebs bears.
 But you with love itself I'll dose,
 Or what still sweeter, finer is,
 An essence to my lady given
 By all the Loves and Venuses;

Once sniff it, you'll petition heaven
 To make you nose and only nose.

(Sir William Marris, 1924)

- (2) say Fabullus
 you'll get a swell dinner at my house
 a couple three days from now (if your luck holds out)
 all you gotta do is bring the dinner
 and make it good and be sure there's plenty
 Oh yes don't forget a girl (I like blondes)
 and a bottle of wine maybe
 and any good jokes and stories you've heard
 just do that like I tell you ol' pal ol' pal
 you'll get a swell dinner
 ?
 what,
 about,
 ME?

well;

well here take a look in my wallet,
 yeah those're cobwebs

but here,

I'll give you something too
 I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE BABY

no?

well here's something nicer and a little more cherce maybe
 I got perfume see
 it was a gift to HER
 straight from VENUS and CUPID LTD.
 when you get a whiff of that you'll pray the gods
 to make you (yes you will, Fabullus)

ALL
 NOSE

(Frank O. Copley, 1957)

(3) Inviting a friend to supper

To night, grave sir, both my poore house, and I
 Doe equally desire your companie:
 Not that we thinke us worthy such a ghest,
 But that your worth will dignifie our feast,
 With those that come; whose grace may make that seeme
 Something, which, else, could hope for no esteeme.
 It is the faire acceptance, Sir, creates
 The entertaynment perfect: not the cates.
 Yet shall you have, to rectifie your palate,
 An olive, capers, or some better sallade
 Ushring the mutton; with a short-leg'd hen,
 If we can get her, full of eggs, and then,
 Limons, and wine for sauce: to these, a coney
 Is not to be despair'd of, for our money;
 And, though fowle, now, be scarce, yet there are clarkes,
 The skie not falling, thinke we may have larkes.
 He tell your more, and lye, so you will come:
 Of partrich, pheasant, wood-cock, of which some
 May yet be there; and godwit, if we can:
 Knat, raile, and ruffe too. How so ere, my man
 Shall reade a piece of Virgil, Tacitus,
 Livie, or of some better booke to us,
 Of which wee'll speake our minds, amidst our meate;
 And Ile professe no verses to repeate:
 To this, if ought appeare, which I not know of,
 That will the pastrie, not my paper, show of
 Digestive cheese, and fruit there sure will bee;
 But that, which most doth take my Muse, and mee,
 Is a pure cup of rich Canary-wine,
 Which is the Mermaids, now, but shall be mine:
 Of which had Horace, or Anacreon tasted,
 Their lives, as doe their lines, till now had lasted.
 Tabacco, Nectar, or the Thespian spring,
 Are all but Luthers beere, to this I sing.
 Of this will have no Pooly', or Parrot by;

Nor shall our cups make any guiltie men:
 But, at our parting, we will be, as when
 We innocently met. No simple word,
 That shall be utter'd at our mirthfull boord,
 Shall make us sad next morning: or affright
 The libertie, that wee'll enjoy to night.

(Ben Jonson)*

*I am grateful to my colleague, Paul Merchant, for drawing these examples to my attention.

It is obvious that the three English poems are very different from one another, visually different in terms of length, shape, organization of lines, and enormously different in tone. What they have in common is what Popovič describes as the invariant core, elements such as the invitation to dinner line, the affectionate joky tone line and the plea of poverty line. What is missing in the third version, however, is the other consistent element in the original and the two English versions, the compliment to Lesbia line. The invariant therefore comprises both theme and tone, for the forms and approaches employed by the translators are widely different. Marris has clearly attempted a 'close' translation, in so far as the bounds of English syntax and the formal structures of rhyme and metre allow, but the method is so restrictive that by line 10 it has begun to obscure the meaning and blunt the sharpness of the poem. Catullus' skill depends on compressing a large amount of information into a small frame, of writing a poem that is sumultaneously a gently comic invitation to a friend and a token of appreciation of the woman he loves. Moreover, it relies on the familiarity of the reader with a set of referential systems – the joke about the gods, for example, or the significance of perfume, which mean nothing to the contemporary reader. Marris, however, chooses to translate the words even though the references may be obscure, but opts for a curiously archaic formulation of lines 11 and 12. He uses the term *essence* rather than *perfume*, and translates *meae puellae* grandly as *to my lady*, retaining the plural form of *Veneres Cupidinesque* although the significance of that plural is lost on English readers. Then in the last two lines he runs into other difficulties. By translating *tu olfacies* as *sniff* it, he alters the register, and then returns immediately in the second part of the line to more courtly