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C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, published in 1950 by Geoffrey Bles in the United Kingdom and by Macmillan in the United States (Ford 253) has been translated 129 times (UNESCO). In 1957 Lisa Tetzner first published her translation into the German, *Der König von Narnia (Das Märchen 95)*.

Translation is not an exact science. It is more of an unsung art with constant considerations to be made. Maria Nikolajeva in her article "Translation and Crosscultural Reception" delineates that the translator must deal with the "source language (the language from which the translation is made) versus the target language (the language into which the text is translated), as well as the source reader/audience/culture and the target reader/audience/culture" (407). There are two opposite points of view in general translation theory. The first, the "equivalence theory" propagated by Göte Klingberg, maintains that a translation "should be 'faithful' to the original," while the second, the "dialogic theory," maintains that "the translator should take into consideration the target audience, whereupon changes may not only be legitimate, but imperative" (Nikolajeva 407). Adherents of the equivalence theory value being faithful to the text, while adherents of the dialogic theory want the reader of the translation to have a similar experience to that of the reader of the original. They would advocate, for example,

that foreign references should be "domesticated" (407, 409). As Maria Nikolajeva notes, however, "The strategies of a practitioner are likely to combine the two approaches" (407).

The Tetzner translation of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, while adhering relatively closely to the original Lewis text, does make changes in all sorts of ways. These changes cover all aspects of written communication. Tetzner makes changes in words, changes in sentence structure, and changes in paragraphing; she adds things, and she leaves things out. While the basic plot remains intact, the various changes can affect the tone and spirit of the novel and, perhaps, its underlying meaning.

Words

Obviously, the most basic element of a translation is the word. Since English is a Germanic language (Hartmann 439), the translation between English and German is easier than it is between English and non-Germanic languages. Nevertheless, there are some things that just don't translate well. Colloquial expressions are the most obvious example. The first night at the professor's the boys come into the girls' room to talk over their situation, and Peter says, "We've fallen on our feet and no mistake" (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* 4; hereafter *LWW*). In German he says, (Lewis, *Der König* 8 ; hereafter *König*). "I believe, we have had pig."

(All translations from the German back into English are mine; page numbers refer to the original German language text.) According to *The New Cassell's German Dictionary* this is a colloquial expression for to "be in luck" or to "fall on one's feet" (419). Although this is not a literal translation, it is an accurate translation. Anthea Bell, a prolific translator of children's books from German and French has said, "It is the spirit rather than just the letter that the translator pursues" (232). In this case, a colloquial expression in English is translated into a colloquial expression in German, providing the meaning while maintaining the tone and the mood. It adheres nicely to the spirit of the original.

Other difficulties for a translator are cultural references. When Aslan and his followers go to the witch's castle to free the creatures turned by the witch into stone, he first restores the creatures in the courtyard. Then he instructs his followers, "Now for the inside of this house!" said Aslan. "Look alive, everyone. Up stairs and down stairs and in my lady's chamber! Leave no corner unsearched. You never know where some poor prisoner may be concealed." (*LWW* 171). The allusion "Up stairs and down stairs and in my lady's chamber" comes from an English nursery rhyme.

Goosey, goosey gander,
Whither shall I wander?
Upstairs and downstairs
And in my lady's chamber.
There I met an old man
Who would not say his prayers,
I took him by the left leg
And threw him down the stairs.
(Opie 26)

It is not surprising that German literature has no equivalent nursery rhyme. Tetzner has Aslan say, "Look around everywhere for the living – upstairs, downstairs, also in the room of the witch" (*König* 142-143). The translation conveys the meaning, but the playful tone is lost.

Another example of the difficulties of translating even simple words is revealed in

the scene in which Lucy first meets Mr. Tumnus. Here there is a peculiar problem caused by the odd pronouns Lewis chose to use. In the English version, when Lucy first meets the faun, Lewis waffles on the pronoun. When the faun is being described in chapter one, Lewis refers to the faun as "he." He says "a very strange person stepped out" and in his description, Lewis uses "he" throughout (*LWW* 9-10). However in chapter two, when the faun and Lucy begin to interact, Lewis describes the faun as an "it." "...the Faun was so busy picking up *its* parcels that at first *it* did not reply. When *it* had finished *it* made her a little bow....and then *it* stopped as if *it* had been going to say something *it* had not intended (*LWW* 11-12) (italics mine). However, when we shift from the narrator's perspective to Lucy's, the pronoun becomes "him." "'My name's Lucy,' said she, not quite understanding him" (*LWW* 11). When he says his name is Tumnus, and she calls him Mr. Tumnus, that seems to end the confusion and the faun becomes permanently a "he" or "him." It is significant that the confusion referring to the faun as an "it" or a "he" occurs at the same time that the faun is also confused and trying to place Lucy's identity. He asks her if she is a "Daughter of Eve," if she is "what they call a girl," and asks "You are in fact Human?" (*LWW* 11). Lucy becomes a human to him at about the same time that he becomes Mr. Tumnus and "he" to her. In German it is not possible for Tetzner to duplicate this confusion. The word for faun is "Der Faun" with a masculine article, so whether "it" is male or not, the pronouns are always the masculine "er" and "ihn," the German for he and him.

This confusion was actually an issue raised by Lewis's publisher about a later Narnia tale. Lewis wrote a letter on March 20, 1953 explaining the confusion. "My view about *He* and *It* was that the semi-humanity cd. (sic) be kept before the imagination by an unobtrusive mixture of the two" (*Collected Letters III* 307). In English, Lewis has the option of being ambiguous about a creature or an animal's "humanity." In German, however, that option does not exist. There is

a built in male word for "it" and a problem that is usually only an issue moving from German to English, becomes an issue moving from English to German.

There are other situations, where the choice of words on the part of the translator is not caused by the linguistic difficulties between the two languages, but rather is a stylistic choice on the part of the translator. In the opening paragraph, Lewis says about the children's reaction to the professor, "...they liked him almost at once" (*LWW* 3). In Tetzner's translation, she leaves off the "almost." Later that first evening, when the children are discussing the professor, Susan says, "I think he's an old dear" (*LWW* 4). In the German, the "I think" is left off. Lewis tends to express things tentatively. The children don't like the professor at once, but almost at once. Susan thinks he's an old dear, but she could be wrong. Tetzner removes the words that create ambiguity.

Another example of changes in word choice is caused by the fact that Lewis frequently chooses fairly plain or repetitive language, almost like the repetition in oral literature or in epic poetry. Tetzner seems unwilling to stick to Lewis's repetitive word choice. Lewis for the most part uses very simple words, especially when relaying speech. His preferred word is "said." In the first chapter, Lewis uses the word "said" eighteen times. Tetzner, on the other hand, uses the comparable German word, "sagte" six times, and one of those times, which we shall discuss shortly, it is used with a qualifier, which changes its simple meaning. Less than 1/3 of the time does Tetzner use the simple verbs that Lewis uses. Tetzner's choice to change Lewis's simple verbs causes more than a simple change in style or tone. It has other ramifications.

In chapter one, the first night the children are in the Professor's house, Edmund complains about the way Susan is talking. When she asks what he means, Lewis records "'Trying to talk like Mother,' *said* Edmund" (italics mine) (*LWW* 4). Tetzner, on the other hand, says Edmund "growled" (*König* 8), which has the connotation of being angry or

being resentful. When Lucy is startled by a noise, Edmund says, "It's only a bird, silly" (*LWW* 5). In German we have, "'Stupid Dolt,' said Edmund. "It is just a bird." (*König* 8). Tetzner has Edmund provide a much stronger, nastier reply than Lewis does. Then the next morning, when the children get up with hopes of exploring outside, it is raining. "'Of course, it *would* be raining!' said Edmund" (*LWW* 5). Tetzner makes the mild complaint stronger. She adds an adverb, so it becomes "Edmund said angrily" (*König* 9).

Edmund is from the beginning, a rather crabby, little kid, but Lewis goes to considerable pains not to paint him as the black sheep in the family. Paul Karkainen describes Edmund's behavior as a "slide" into evil; he becomes "more and more confused, wrongheaded, bitter, and unhappy" (Karkainen 22). Devin Brown in his book, *Inside Narnia*, says that Lewis is superb at realistically presenting characters' going astray. "His characters are not completely good one moment and then wickedly bad the next...the descent into transgression occurs step by step" (61).

Tetzner seems to want to portray Edmund in the initial chapters as worse than Lewis does. Lewis is interested in portraying the choices that lead Edmund astray. Through a series of incidents, stresses, bad influences, bad attitudes, but especially poor choices, Edmund becomes a traitor, but he is not a traitor in chapter one. He becomes a traitor in chapter nine, when he goes to the witch and tells her that his brother and sister are just up the river at the Beavers and that they are to meet Aslan at the Stone Table. C.S. Lewis spends considerable time tracing Edmund's choices and how formative they are. By the time Edmund reaches the Beavers', he has become so self-engrossed that he imagines the others are ignoring him (*LWW* 88). Even so, Lewis says "You mustn't think that even now Edmund was quite so bad that he actually wanted his brother and sisters to be turned into stone" (89) and spends a long paragraph explaining the circuitous paths his self-deception requires.

It is probably safe to say that Lewis spent this kind of time detailing Edmund's choices, because for him character is important. Edmund is arguably the most important character in the novel, because of the nature of the myth-making Lewis is creating.

There has been much controversy about *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as allegory. Many readers have considered the Narnia tales to be allegories. Lewis maintained in a letter to a schoolgirl in 1979 that this novel is a "supposal," (*Collected Letters III 1113*). Whether the novel is an allegory or not, one thing is apparent, if one considers it an allegory. In the Christian myth Jesus Christ dies for the sins of the whole world. All are sinners in need of redemption. In Narnia Aslan dies for the treachery of one person, Edmund. It should be Edmund who is killed on the Stone Table. Consequently, Edmund's choices lie at the heart of the redemption story. By not knowing in chapter one which child will prove to be the most flawed, we can watch Edmund's fall and rise as a kind of Everyman. It's not in his personality, his genes, or his destiny; it's in his choices.

It seems as if Lewis doesn't reveal to us first thing where Edmund is headed, because his primary interest is character development; Tetzner with more negative word choices clearly indicates where Edmund is headed, because she is more interested in plot; non-ambiguous characters make the plot more clear. Some minor word changes in her translation undercut the arc that Lewis creates of Edmund's slide into treachery and his rise back to compassion and acceptance of redemption.

Sentences / Clauses

The second building block of communication is sentences. On the first page of the novel we have Tetzner omitting a sentence found in the original. Lewis starts by introducing us to the four children, and then in the second sentence he says, "This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from

London...." (*LWW 3*). Tetzner leaves out "This story is about something that happened to them." It is not a particularly graceful phrase, but Lewis frequently uses these authorial interjections. Tetzner prefers a more formal style, whereas Lewis prefers a style that makes you feel as if you were with him, and he is telling you the story personally. His graceless phrases are the phrases of common speech. Tetzner tends to edit out the repetitions and informality.

On the other hand, Tetzner is not averse to inserting sentences that don't exist in the English. When the children decide to explore the house, because of rain outside, Lewis says, "The first few doors they tried led only into spare bedrooms, as everyone had expected that they would; but soon they came to a very long room full of pictures and there they found a suit of armor" (*LWW 6*). Lewis goes on to describe other rooms, but the German translator stops to add to the sentence. "since they were well-behaved children, they closed the doors, without going in" (*König 9*). We can't really know why the translator interjected this sentence. Perhaps she wanted to give a reason why the children did not go into the rooms and look around. Or perhaps she wanted to insert a little aside on how young readers should behave, when guests in a stranger's home. Logically, however, it doesn't fit. If well-behaved children do not enter spare bedrooms, then there is no chance for them to enter the wardrobes in spare rooms either. A well-behaved child would probably not step into a wardrobe and rub her face against the fur coats. If well-behaved children do not enter wardrobes in spare rooms, we do not have a story.

Wardrobes are somewhat like refrigerators. They have handles on the outside, but no handles on the inside; Lewis makes five statements about the dangers inherent in this aspect of wardrobes. Lucy is careful to not do anything so foolish as to shut herself in a wardrobe.

Edmund, on the other hand, is not careful and he does do foolish things. When he follows Lucy into the wardrobe, he does

not think ahead as to how he is going to get out of the wardrobe, which prefigures how he does not think about his actions in his interactions with the White Witch. What Edmund is thinking about, instead of how not to get shut in a wardrobe, is that "he wanted to go on teasing [Lucy] about her imaginary country" (*LWW* 27). His desire to heckle clouds his judgment, just as his desire in Narnia to get back at Peter clouds his judgment.

Lucy and Edmund discover each other in Narnia after Lucy has been with Mr. Tumnus and Edmund with the White Witch. It should be a problem for both of them to return to the spare room, since Edmund has closed the wardrobe door. Lewis, however, seems to have forgotten. "Then suddenly they felt coats around them instead of branches and next moment they were both standing outside the wardrobe in the empty room" (*LWW* 43). Lewis doesn't actually say that they came out through the door.

The German translator, however, has not forgotten, and she inserts the following sentence. "Edmund had indeed foolishly closed the wardrobe door, but the others had looked into the wardrobe for the two and had not shut the door tightly" (*König* 39). In this case, Tetzner has inserted a sentence in order to remedy an oversight on the part of C. S. Lewis. Lewis's primary concern seems to be to reveal his characters by their actions. Tetzner just wants them to get out of the wardrobe.

Tetzner's added sentence solves a dilemma created by Lewis's error; unfortunately, it does not logically work in the fantasy. Lewis demonstrates throughout the story, and actually throughout the whole series, that no matter how much time one spends in Narnia, no time at all will elapse back in England. Peter and Susan do not believe Lucy, when she claims to have been gone a long time, because there was no time lapse in English time. However, this is what the Professor thinks is most believable about her story. As he explains to them, "...I don't think many girls of her age would invent that idea for themselves" (*LWW* 49-50). This

means, of course, that when Lucy and Edmund come back from Narnia, enough time could not have passed in England for Peter and Susan to have checked the wardrobe and left the door unlatched. In English time, Lucy and Edmund should be coming back a moment after they left.

Lewis is at times somewhat careless with his fantasy world. It's a magic wardrobe; when one needs to get in to Narnia, the back disappears and you get in. When you need to get out, the door will be unlatched. He seems to make assumptions that others do not. For example, one of his child readers named Phyllida wrote to him in 1953 and pointed out that the squirrel family and friends had been turned to stone by the White Witch while celebrating Christmas. Aslan only revives the stone statues in the witch's castle. The squirrel family is never mentioned. Lewis wrote back to her and said that she was quite right. "I thought people would take it for granted that Aslan would put it all right. But I see now I should have said so" (*Letters III* 361). In this case, Lewis seems to think that the magic in the fantasy world takes care of certain plot details, but readers like Lisa Tetzner and Phyllida want the loose ends tied up, not just in this world, but also in Narnia.

Just as Tetzner sometimes uses more forceful and emphatic words than Lewis does, she also sometimes prefers more forceful sentences. One of the most striking is that when the children first realize that the wardrobe has no back, Tetzner has the girls swearing. When Lucy first finds her way into the wardrobe, she is surprised to see the light from the lamp-post, "not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off" (*LWW* 8). Tetzner removes this idea from a clause attached to the sentence about the light and gives it a sentence of its own. "The back wall of the wardrobe should be only a few centimeters away from her and was God knows where!" (*König* 11). Likewise when the four children hide in the wardrobe to get away from Mrs. Macready, they begin to notice that they are not really in a wardrobe. When Susan first realizes this, Lewis narrates,

"O-o-oh!" said Susan suddenly...."I'm sitting against a tree" (*LWW* 54). In Tetzner's translation we have "'O God!' screamed Susan suddenly....'I am leaning against a tree'" (*König* 48). In this last passage, we have the characteristic dropping of the verb "said," for a stronger one. We also have her using the word for God, when Lewis does not. Opinions, of course, vary on the interpretation of the Mosaic command, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (*King James Version*, Exodus 20:7), but the most orthodox is undoubtedly that if you are not praying to God, or talking about Him, you are using the name frivolously or "in vain." It is difficult to picture the young innocent Lucy, who seems to embody spiritual wisdom, or the young woman, who as queen will be known as Susan the Gentle (*LWW* 184), idly swearing when startled. Tetzner's swearing females come across more modern, tougher perhaps than the boys. Her Lucy and Susan sound more like refugees from the bombed streets of London they have just left. They seem discordant with the pastoral landscape they are in and the one they are about to enter.

Conclusion

I tend to stand on the side of those who advocate for the equivalence theory of translation. As an English speaking American, I have thousands of children's books available for me to read. However, since less than 1% of books published for children in English are translations (Nikolajeva 405), I don't have very many opportunities to read about other countries, other peoples, other cultures. I would like the translator to provide a path to the author. I do not want translators to provide a path to themselves, their ideas, their agendas. I want them to stay as much as possible out of the way. I think C. S. Lewis would agree with me. He said about another famous children's book,

Consider Mr (sic) Badger in *The Wind in the Willows*—that extraordinary amalgam of high rank, coarse manners, gruffness, shyness,

and goodness. The child who has once met Mr Badger has ever afterwards, in its bones, a knowledge of humanity and of English social history which it could not get in any other way ("On Three Ways").

That is not the philosophy of one who thinks foreign references should be "domesticated."

Lisa Tetzner was a talented translator with an admirable fluency with English and with German. However, when she changes the underlying meaning of a story by using negative words, which create a scapegoat, instead of a small boy sliding into the dark side, and when she changes the personality of characters, by putting swear words into the mouths of girls the author portrays as relatively innocent, I don't believe she has created a path. She has created an obstacle course. I am glad there was no one in between me and my reading of C. S. Lewis.

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