

# Analysis of the texts

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.62.06ana>

 Available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

Pages 65–95 of

**Challenging the Traditional Axioms: Translation into a non-mother tongue**

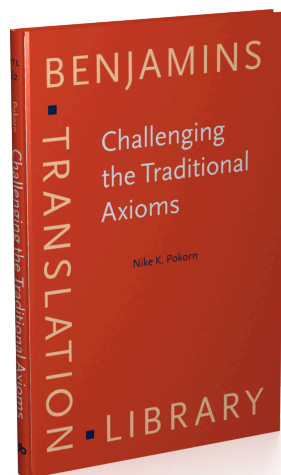
**Nike K. Pokorn**

[Benjamins Translation Library, 62] 2005. xii, 163 pp.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way. For any reuse of this material, beyond the permissions granted by the Open Access license, written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)).

For further information, please contact [rights@benjamins.nl](mailto:rights@benjamins.nl) or consult our website at [benjamins.com/rights](http://benjamins.com/rights)



## Analysis of the texts

### Presentation of the selected translations

Let us now look at the seven translations of the above-presented texts more closely. After briefly reviewing the critical response to the translations (if available), and describing some of the macro-structural characteristics of the texts, special attention is paid to shifts in meaning, stylistic features and cultural elements that could represent a problem for a non-native speaker of either the source or the target language.

#### *The Ward of Our Lady of Mercy* by Henry Leeming

*The Ward of Our Lady of Mercy* was translated into English by Henry Leeming in 1968, but was published as late as 1976 in Ljubljana by the state-funded publishing house Državna založba Slovenije. The translation is not accompanied by notes or a glossary, but with a five-page introduction where Anton Slodnjak briefly presents the life of Ivan Cankar and draws parallels between the topics treated in the novel and the fate of Malchie (short for Amalia), one of the daughters of Albina Löffler, a divorced dress-maker and Cankar's landlady in Vienna. Malchie Löffler contracted tuberculosis of the bone and (like her namesake in *The Ward*) died in a hospital two years before the publication of the novel. Slodnjak's introduction also attempts to find in Cankar's work the influences of different European literary currents of the period and compares his work to that of Goethe, Victor Hugo, Dostoyevsky and Hauptmann.

But even more interesting than the introduction are the two notes following it. The first one quotes Alfred Löffler, saying that his sister Malchie fell when she was a small child, contracted an incurable disease from that fall and never recovered after that. Alfred is also quoted as saying that their tenant Ivan Cankar was very fond of her. This note adds the text an apparently close connection with factual events taken from Cankar's biography, which was typical of positivist post-war literary criticism. In the second note, the reader is in-

formed that the work was rejected at the time of its appearance and that the public was particularly scandalised by Chapters 6 and 8, which were seen as refined pornography, brought to artistic perfection. In Chapter 6 Cankar describes the earlier history of Lois and Brigid, the life of Lois's adulterous mother and father and of Brigid's prostituting mother, in Chapter 8 he depicts the sexual abuse of blind Toni. It continues by quoting Cankar's reply that the work is "as pure as spring water", adding that the author forbade the translation of Chapter 8, depicting the life of Toni before entering the hospital, in the Russian and Czech version.<sup>12</sup> Thus although the English translation does include the "problematic" chapters, the reader nevertheless gets cautioned about them.

The translation by Henry Leeming reveals shifts at different levels: from changes of punctuation, distribution of the text in paragraphs, omissions and extensions, to changes of meaning. For example, Leeming consistently shortens Cankar's paragraphs and sentences and thus also changes the author's characteristic style, which creates a specific rhythmical effect in the original with the use of two or three subordinate clauses or two or three phrases within a sentence (Mahnič 1956/57; Pogorelec 1969, 1976/77, 1977). Leeming is consistent in his changes, which results in the English text being expressed in a more abrupt, jerky style. Shortening of the sentences also entailed extensive changes of punctuation: commas and semicolons are replaced by full stops.

With regard to changes of meaning, some of the shifts are less radical than others, since they do not affect the meaning of the whole sentence or paragraph, and therefore are unlikely to change the understanding of the novel itself:

- (1) Stale so ob postelji in so molčale, zunaj pa se je že nagibal dan, že so plavale sence na nebu, plezale so že tam zunaj po zidu gor<sup>13</sup> ... (Cankar 1972:22)

Leeming: They said nothing but remained at her bedside while outside the sun sank in the west till dark shadows lay across the sky and far away in the distance crept along the *mountain wall* ... (Cankar 1976:33)

Leeming translates "plezale so že tam zunaj po zidu gor" (LT<sup>14</sup>: "crept along the wall") with "and far away in the distance crept along the mountain wall"; the wall of the hospital thus becomes a mountain wall. Instead of a dreary view of a wall offered by a hospital window, the translation grants a view of the natural world and thus adds a new dimension to the life of the sick girls. This shift might suggest that the hospital is situated outside the city, or at least somewhere where children can enjoy natural beauty and thus diminishes the expectations of the girls waiting for the promised trip to nature – the Garden of Eden.

However, other elements depicting the surrounding city are so strong that despite this change the translation still seems to convey the stifling atmosphere of a large city.

Similarly, he changes the meaning in the next example:

- (2) Komaj toliko so bile odprte trepalnice, da se ji je samo pisano bleščalo skozi senco dolgih temnih *vejic*. Odprle so se duri; prišel je v sobo angel, zeleno drevesce je imel v roki. (Cankar 1972:79)

Leeming: Her eyelids were almost closed but a bright glimmer of light shone through the shadows of the long dark *branches* outside. The door opened and an angel came into the room carrying a small green tree in his hand. (Cankar 1976:104)

In this case Leeming depicts the hospital as being surrounded by trees and dark branches. In the original the greenery is not mentioned at all, the noun “*vejice*” means “eyelashes” in this case, although it can also mean “branches” in other contexts. Both those examples reveal that Leeming might have misunderstood the original, being a non-native speaker of Slovene. There are more examples revealing his less than full mastery of the source language:

- (3) Prestrašila se je, kadar se je bližal korak, *zakaj* vsi ljudje so bili zli ... (Cankar 1972:51)

Leeming: She was terrified at the sound of footsteps. *Why* were all the people so bad? (Cankar 1976:69)

In this case the conjunction “*zakaj*” which in the contemporary Slovene is almost always used as a relative or interrogative pronoun corresponding to the English ‘why’ is used as a causative conjunction which could be translated with “because” or “since”. It is obvious that the translator did not recognise this slightly archaic use of the word. He also misunderstood the following literary use of the word “*ali*”:

- (4) “Zakaj nečeš domov?” je vprašala Brigita.

Lojzka se je komaj ozrla in ni odgovorila.

*Ali* Brigita bi bila šla s tako bogatim gospodom, s tako elegantno damo na bogat dom, v veliko hišo, kjer je vseh sladkosti dovolj. Zakaj tudi Brigita je nagnila glavo in je poslušala, kadar je šlo življenje mimo, zdrznila se je in bi ubogala, kadar je šla zunaj mimo okna starka in je vabila ... (Cankar 1972:67)

Leeming: “Why don’t you want to go home?” asked Brigid.

Lois just looked round at her but made no answer. *Would* Brigid have gone off with such a grand lady to that rich home, that great house with all good things in plenty? Certainly, Brigid, like Tina, bowed her head and gave ear as life passed by, shuddered and would have done anything she was told when the old woman outside the window beckoned ... (Cankar 1976:89)

Although the use of the word “ali” meaning ‘but’, ‘however’ is literal and rarely used, it is clear that Cankar used it in this sense. The translator again took the most common meaning of the word, usually translated by ‘why’ or just indicating a yes/no question and translated it accordingly with “would” as part of a question.

Some of the changes, however, cannot be explained by the fact that he might have misunderstood the original wording:

- (5) Daj ga iz roke, Malči, *poginil bo!* (Cankar 1972:38)

Leeming: Put him down, Malchie, or *he’ll fly away!* (Cankar 1976:52)

The girls get a canary in their room and are jealous of Malchie when she caresses it – at the same time this sentence forbodes its death; the canary dies of fear when one of the visitors tries to catch it and hold it in his hands. The wording “poginil bo” does not have a double meaning in Slovene and bears no phonological similarity to Slovene equivalent of “he’ll fly away” – “odletel bo”. Leeming here chose to translate the original wording “poginil bo” (LT: “he’ll die”) with “he’ll fly away”, thus changing death into flight and does not convey the foreboding.

In the next example, although marginal at first sight, Leeming changes the meaning of the story and influences our perception of the social background of the main character:

- (6) /.../ in kadar je šla z doma in jo je spremljal mladi gospod, je imela na glavi klobuk z rožami in svilenimi trakovi, na rokah rokavice, *pozlačen* brislet za pestjo. (Cankar 1972:71)

Leeming: /.../ and when she went in the young man’s company she wore a hat with flowers and silk ribbons, gloves on her hands and a *gold bracelet* on her wrist. (Cankar 1976:94)

In this description of Malchie’s mother Leeming translated the adjective “pozlačen” (LT: “gilded”) with “gold”, which might give the reader the false impression that Malchie lived in a relatively well-off environment. Descriptions

of the world outside the hospital are rare in the original, the reader only gets a glimpse into the social reality the sick girls came from, so that such details are important. Malchie has a working-class background, her mother does not own gold but only gilded jewellery. By giving her a gold bracelet, she climbs up the social ladder. This change might have been again the result of the fact that Leeming is not a native speaker of Slovene and might have misunderstood the word. On the other hand, this change might have been the result of his negligent reading of the original, like the following one:

- (7) “Rezika, – *mati!*” (Cankar 1972:23)

Leeming: “Rezika – your *father*’s here!” (Cankar 1976:33)

In this case Leeming translated “*mati*” (LT: “mother”) with “father”. Rezika, one of the sick girls in the hospital, is frightened of her mother and loves her father. Lois, who likes teasing, calls out this sentence in order to frighten Rezika. Rezika turns pale and hides herself under the blanket, but her fear immediately turns into joy when she sees her father. When Leeming changes “mother” into “father”, the reader does not know why Rezika is first in a panic and then relieved when her father appears.

The next translation shift also changes our reading of the text:

- (8) “Potrpi, Tina, ozdraviš in *pojdeš*.” (Cankar 1972:54)

Leeming: “Be patient, Tina. You’ll soon get better. Then *you’ll go home again*.” (Cankar 1976:73)

Tina is the most mature girl in the hospital. In contrast to the others, she wants a life outside hospital walls, she longs for love and romantic encounters. But going out does not mean going home for her. In fact, going home would be the worse of her nightmares: before being hospitalized, she was exposed by her family on a heap of dung in the middle of winter. Malchie sees Tina’s suffering and tries to console her by saying to her that she shall leave the hospital and enter the world she desires. When instead of “*pojdeš*” (LT: “you shall leave”), Leeming uses “you’ll go home again”, in his translation Malchie’s benevolent words change into a threat which does not correspond to the feeling of friendship the two girls share.

In *The Ward of Our Lady of Mercy* Cankar often uses the symbolism of place and creates a parallelism of different worlds. The incurably sick girls know three worlds: the first is the corrupt and cruel world of the city surrounding the hospital. For the girls the city and its inhabitants personify the horror that bursts into their world during visiting hours and even kills their beloved

canary. The second world is that of the hospital – a world that already touches on the new, real life, but is still dangerously close to the world surrounding the hospital. Thus the world of the hospital can lead to the third, real life, hidden in death, or to the spiritual death praised by the life outside the hospital walls. The third world, anxiously anticipated by most of the girls, is the everlasting, heavenly life after death – this is the place Malchie enters in the closing sentences of the novel.

Leeming in his translation often distorts the symbolic distinction between the corrupt world outside the hospital, the paradisaical life after death and the warmth of the hospital ward:

- (9) ... od daleč še je prihajal moten, nerazločen šum – šum mesta, ki je živelo *tam daleč, daleč onkraj življenja* ... (Cankar 1972:25)

Leeming: From somewhere far away there still came a dull, confused noise – the noise of the town, which had its own being out there in the distance, somewhere *where life still held sway* ... (Cankar 1976:36)

For the girls in the hospital, the real life is the life after death – their previous life in the city full of suffering represents not life, but death, the death of the soul. This often repeated paradox is lost in the translation, where Leeming's translation of "šum mesta, ki je živelo tam daleč, daleč onkraj življenja" (LT: "the noise of the city which had lead its life far away, far beyond life ...") gives the impression that the girls thought that real life was the life of the city.

The hospital in the original represents a kind of waiting room with a door/death leading to the new and eternal life.

- (10) Videle so tudi brezštevne luči, ko so jih bili prižgali angeli in ki so plamtele pobožno *tam zunaj, globoko doli na zemlji*. (Cankar 1972:74)

Leeming: They also saw out there the innumerable lights which the angels had lit for them and which blazed with a holy flame *down here on earth*. (Cankar 1976:98)

The hospital is no longer a part of this earth, it is *praeambula vitae aeternae* – it enables the girls to enter a new life. The fact that they do not feel connected with life on earth, especially at Christmas time, could not be seen in translation where the phrase "tam zunaj, globoko doli na zemlji" (LT: "outside, down there on earth"), emphasizing the distance between the lives of the girls and the life of the city, is translated with "down here on earth", which places everything, including the girls, in the earthly realm.

The vision of the third 'world' also gets blurred in the translation:

- (11) Tudi njena vera je bila trdna, vera v drug svet in v novo življenje in *tudi nji se je mudilo tja*, kjer sije resnično sonce in je vsa pokrajina neizmeren vrt ... (Cankar 1972:98)

Leeming: And her faith was firm, her faith in that other world, in that new life, so firm that *she felt no need to hurry* to that land where the real sun shone and all the countryside was one vast garden ... (Cankar 1976:131)

The sentence is taken from the passage describing the death of Malchie. The other girls have to postpone a long-awaited trip to the countryside and have to wait for her to die. In her dying vision, Malchie sees herself joining her friends in the ward on their trip which leads her to the Garden of Eden where Christ, her first and last lover, awaits her. Malchie wants to be united with her bridegroom and is therefore in a hurry – it is difficult to explain why Leeming translated the original “tudi nji se je mudilo tja” (LT: “she felt the need to hurry there”) with the opposite “she felt no need to hurry” and made the original incomprehensible. Certainly, it would be difficult to argue that he mistook the affirmative for the negative form of the verb.

Other important translation shifts include extensions and omissions. Extensions do not usually change the understanding of the text, except in some cases:

- (12) Obšel jo je nemir, ker se ji je zazdelo, kakor da bi bili krenili vozovi na napačno pot – dol proti dolini, kjer je noč in trpljenje ... Ustnice so se gibale, vzkliknila je, ali glasu ni bilo. Tedaj se je ozrla Lojzka: “Glej, treba je skozi dolino ... *kako bi drugače gor?*” (Cankar 1972:99)

Leeming: She felt anxious because it seemed to her that the carriages had taken a dangerous turn – into a road which led downhill, to the place of night and suffering ... Her lips twisted and she tried to scream, but no sound came. Then Lois turned round and said, “Look, we’ve got to go downhill first ... *it’s the only way to the hills!*” (Cankar 1976:133)

These sentences are also taken from the passage describing Malchie’s dying visions, picturing herself and her friends on a trip to countryside. The passage could be understood as a description of a real trip the girls are going to make or as a metaphorical description of the voyage Malchie’s soul is going to undertake at the time of death. Lois words “Glej, treba je skozi dolino ... *kako bi drugače gor?*” (LT: “Look, one has to go through the valley ... how else would one go up?”) could also be understood as a reminder that Malchie has to die first before entering the eternal garden. Leeming’s extension “it’s the only way to



the hills” limits the understanding of the passage to the description of a real voyage and makes the metaphorical understanding more difficult.

But the largest and most noticeable differences between the original and Leeming’s translation are large omissions which remain unexplained and which the reader of the English translation is never cautioned about. The largest and most important for the understanding of the entire novel is the following:

- (13) Od vseh strani je zazvonilo, od vzhoda in od zahoda; od neizmerne neba so lile božične pesmi, vrele so iz zimske zemlje.

*To je bil dan, ko se je rodil Človek in vsa srca so se odpirala njemu v hvalo in ljubezen, vse srca so zahrepenela k njemu.*

*Napotila so se k njemu tisočera užaljena, ranjena srca. Vsi ubogi, zaničevani, zavrženi so se napotili, brezkončna procesija je bila. Vsi tisti, ki jih je bilo življenje s trdo pestjo, so odprli trudne oči in so vzdignili ranjene ude, šli so in so mu nesli srca naproti. Križani Človek je sprejemal vse, na nikogar ni pozabil, ki se mu je približal, vsem je delil dragocene darove. In bili so mu hvaležni in so zaupali vanj. Dar, ki jim ga je bil podelil, je bil vreden več, nego vsa oskrunjena srca. Kogar se je dotaknila njegova usmiljena roka, kogar je blagoslovil njegov pogled, tisti je izpregledal, padlo mu je breme raz ramena, lahke in poskočne so bile njegove noge. Večni Človek mu je bil podelil večnost. Kadar so skeleli udarci življenja, je romalo srce k njemu, v deželo utolaženega upanja, pozabljene trpljenja.*

*Zazvonili so božični zvonovi od vzhoda in od zahoda in vsepovsod so se dramili ranjeni in zavrženi in so vstajali. Trpljenje je praznovalo veliki praznik upanja in zmagoslavja; utolaženi so bili, ki so izpregledali, da vodi čez Kalvarijo cesta v veselo večnost. Ponosni so bili in so gledali zmagonosno, ko so vedeli, da so v njem in del njegov, zato ker so bičani in s trnjem kronani. . .*

*Tako so praznovali praznik, ko je nastopil Človek svojo veličastno pot. Ni ga bilo tisto noč ubogega srca, ki bi veselo ne vztrepetal; komaj je razumelo radost, ki je kipela do vrha; komaj se je zavedal zaničevani in zavrženi in bilo mu je kakor v sanjah, ko je slišal tolažilne besede in ko je začutil usmiljeno roko na razgubanem čelu, na ramah, ranjenih od bremena.*

*Polna solz, krvi in gnusobe je sopla zemlja tam doli, v temi; ali glej, tisto noč je vzplamtelo tisočero in tisočero luči, vzdigali so se brezštevilni plameni, tresli so se in so plapolali in so hrepeneli gor. . .*

“Nocoj hodijo angeli po zemlji,” je dejala Tončka. (Cankar 1972: 73–74)

Leeming: The bells rang out on all sides, from east and west. The sounds of joyful Christmas songs surged up from the wintry earth and poured from the immensity of the sky.

“To-night the angels will walk among us,” Toni said. (Cankar 1976:98)

LT: The bells rang out on all sides, from east and west; the sounds of Christmas songs poured from the immensity of the sky, they surged up from the wintry earth.

*This was the day when Man was born and all hearts opened for Him in praise and love, all hearts yearned for Him.*

*Thousands of offended, wounded hearts headed towards Him. All the miserable, the despised, the discarded headed towards Him, in an endless procession. All those who were battered by life opened their weary eyes and raised their wounded limbs, they went and brought Him their hearts. The crucified Man accepted everyone, He did not forget anyone who approached Him, He distributed precious gifts to everyone. And they were thankful and they trusted Him. The gift he gave was worthier than all the desecrated hearts. Whoever was touched by his merciful hand, whoever was blessed by his look saw, the burden fell off his shoulders, light and lively became his legs. The eternal man gave him eternity. When the strokes of life hurt, the heart went on a pilgrimage to Him, to the land of consoled hope, of forgotten suffering.*

*The Christmas bells rang out from east and west and on all sides the wounded and the discarded awakened and arose. Suffering celebrated the great holiday of hope and triumph; those who saw that a road into the merry eternity leads through Calvary were appeased. They were proud and had a triumphant look in their eyes because they knew that they are in Him and are His part, because they were flogged and crowned with thorns . . .*

*Thus they celebrated the holiday when Man set off on his magnificent path. There was not a miserable heart that evening that would not tremble in joy; it could hardly understand the happiness that surged up; the despised and the discarded were hardly aware of it and they were like in a dream when they heard the words of solace and felt the merciful hand on the wrinkled brow, on their shoulders wounded by the heavy burden.*

*The earth full of tears, blood and abomination panted down there, in darkness; but look, that night thousands and thousands of lights lit up, numerous flames rose, they flickered and flared and yearned to go up . . .*

“Tonight the angels walk on earth,” Toni said.

Without any prior notice a large section is omitted at the beginning of Chapter 7 – the chapter that follows the disclosure of the sad histories of Tina, Lois, Brigid and Malchie, the stories about lonely childhood, adultery,

paedophilia and crushed hopes. Cankar's insistence that his novel is not "filthy" but that when writing this work his thoughts were "as pure as spring water" (Izidor Cankar 1960:9–10), could be understood only in the light of the thought explained in those paragraphs, since only then the suffering of the sick girls becomes understandable. The omission of these important paragraphs profoundly influences our reading of the whole novel; without them it comes close to a purely naturalistic work depicting the sinister and squalid aspects of human nature, and almost completely loses its impressionistic, new romantic, religious character. The fourteen girls "waiting for life and health in death" (Iz. Cankar 1960:9–10), as the author described them, are the saviours of the fallen and corrupt world. All their suffering has not been in vain, because they are united with God. Moreover, with their suffering they help the Saviour and as a reward gain an insight into the joys of the life after death. Without this passage the novel becomes more naturalistic, which means that in the translation not only the message of the original was changed but also its tone.

The translation of the last sentence in the novel is also revealing:

- (14) Pozdravljen, Kristus, ženin, ti vdano ljubljeni, težko pričakovani! ... Pozdravljen! ... (Cankar 1972:100)

Leeming: Hail Jesus – dear Jesus. (Cankar 1976:133)

LT: Hail, Christ, my bridegroom, my devotedly beloved, the long-awaited one! ... Hail! ...

With those last words Malchie dies and at the same time accepts Christ who is going to take her into the garden of eternal light. The words she uses are typical for Christian mystical tradition, in particular the metaphorical use of Christ as bridegroom eagerly expected by the soul which stems from the traditional interpretation of the Biblical *Song of Songs*. Malchie's death is not only the passage to a new life, but also the perfect mystical union with the Saviour. The fulfilment of the suffering lives of the children could then be found in the mystical union with Christ. Leeming in his translation tones down the conclusion and leaves out the emotional, erotic words – those changes, however, could not be explained by the claim that they are the result of cultural differences between Slovene and English culture, the description of the most perfect union with God through erotic imagery belongs to the common Christian tradition and could therefore also be found in English mystical literature. By avoiding the open description of Malchie's perfect union with God, the translation also tones down the mystical elements of the work and rewrites the novel in a more naturalistic vein.

When encountering culture-specific terms in the original (although they are extremely rare, most probably because the author wanted to stress the symbolic character of the hospital) the translator used different techniques. In the next example the original enumerates some of the mythical creatures from Slovene folk mythology:

- (15) /.../ mamca je bila, ki sedi za pečjo in pripoveduje bajke o vedomcu, o polnočnih strahovih, o beli ženi in torklji ... (Cankar 1972:49)

Leeming: Here winter was an old nurse sitting by the stove, telling her ghost stories about witches, the spirits that walked at midnight, the lady in white, the spinning-wheel fairy ... (Cankar 1976:65)

“Vedomec” is a person who leaves his body when asleep and becomes an evil spirit (SSKJ 5, 386); “bela žena” is a beautiful, female creature who lives in woods or in water, a kind of fairy (SSKJ 5, 988), “torklja” is a creature that punishes spinsters who spin in the evening on certain days (SSKJ 5, 127). Leeming exchanges the first culture-specific term with a culturally similar term in English (thus “vedomec” becomes “witches”), the second and the third are translated literally (“polnočni strahovi” becomes “the spirits that walked at midnight”, “bela žena” is translated by “the lady in white”), for the last term an explanation is offered (“torklja” becomes “spinning-wheel fairy”), which skilfully keeps the meaning and clarity of the passage and at the same time retains the local flavour in the translation as well.

To conclude, it is difficult to give a simple answer to the question whether the shifts in Leeming’s translation are those typical of non-native speakers of the source language and native speakers of the target language. Does the analysis reveal the translator’s basic ignorance of the source language culture and language, as some might expect, or is this translation, because Henry Leeming is a competent native speaker of the target language and a person who knows the language of the original well, the best translation Slovene culture can hope for?

As far as the shifts concerning the punctuation, shortening of the sentences, and the distribution of sentences into paragraphs are concerned it would be difficult to argue that those changes are the result of the fact that the translator is a native speaker of the target language. Since Cankar’s long sentences are not typical of the Slovene language as short sentences are not of the English language, it seems wise to ascribe these stylistic changes consistently applied to entire translated text to the personal style of the translator.

Leeming's translation is also characterised by omissions. Some of them do not change the meaning of the text, others do. In particular, the largest omission of the five paragraphs at the beginning of Chapter 7 changes the novel profoundly and minimises its religious connotations, thus bringing the work more in line with the ideological stance of the state publishing house financing the translation. Similarly, the translation of the last sentence in the novel reveals that Leeming read and understood *The Ward of Our Lady of Mercy* as a naturalistic novel and therefore curtailed all the impressionistic and symbolic differentiation between the corrupt world of the city, the *praeambula vitae aeternae* in the hospital and the joyful world of life after death. Nor could this change be attributed to the fact that Leeming was a native speaker of English, since it is specific for this particular translator and should therefore not be generalized.

Extensions in Leeming's translation sometimes help the reader to understand culture-specific elements, sometimes they are the result of the translator's understanding and interpretation of the text: for example, in the passage where he interprets the voyage as a real trip to the countryside and avoids the ambiguity and the possibility of understanding the text as describing the final voyage Malchie's soul is going to undertake. In this case as well, it would be difficult to claim that such changes are typical for translators who are native speakers of English, since the shift is clearly the result of this specific translator's interpretation of the text.

When translating culturally-specific terms Leeming decides for a literal translation or for the use of a similar but general expression in English and does not resort to culturally-specific English expressions. He keeps many features of the original culture which, to be honest, are rarely present in the original. Here Leeming, as a native speaker of English and a member of a culture in which target-oriented translation is normative (see Venuti 1995), contrary to expectations, does not try to adapt the text as closely as possible to the target culture, but opts to retain Slovene culture-specific elements in the translation.

Through translation shifts that change the meaning of the novel, Leeming usually reveals his specific interpretation of it as a naturalistic work. Some changes cannot be explained and are perhaps the result of inaccurate reading of the original – such mistakes are characteristic not only of native speakers of the target language, they could be found in all the translations, regardless of the mother tongue of the translator. Only two instances were found where inaccurate translations might be the result of the fact that the translator was not a native speaker of the source language: i.e. when he did not recognise the archaic or the literary use of conjunctions.

If it is assumed that the translator who is a native speaker of the major target language and a non-native speaker of a minor source language should reveal his limited knowledge of the source language and culture and therefore try to adapt the text forcefully to the target culture – that is the general assumption on the potential flaws of translations by non-native speakers of the minor source language – then the analysis of Henry Leeming's *Ward of Our Lady of Mercy* shows, contrary to that position, that his translational shifts rarely give justification to such an assumption. On the other hand, the claim that a competent native speaker of the target language who knows well the source culture and language (like for example Henry Leeming) shall undoubtedly create an "impeccable" translation, again does not entirely correspond to the truth. Leeming's translation of *The Ward of Our Lady of Mercy* is specific, characterised by extensive omissions which are never acknowledged to the reader. Thus we may conclude that this translation does not answer the expectations of the first group of theoreticians who are suspicious of the non-native translators of the source language or the expectations of the second group who idolise the work of native speakers of the target language since every translation is largely, if not completely, the result of the individual convictions and strategies of a particular translator.

### *A Cup of Coffee* by Louis Adamic

The translation of Cankar's *A Cup of Coffee* is one of Adamic's first translations into English. It was first published in July in 1922 in the journal *Overland Monthly*; in 1926 it was reprinted in *Mladinski list (Juvenile)*, which was the publication of left-wing Slovene immigrants in the USA who were members of the organisation *Slovenska Narodna Podporni Jednota* (see Petrič 1978b: 39; Susel 1992: 239).

This translation of the sketch is the only one to have received some critical response: Jerneja Petrič (Petrič 1978a: 433–435, 1989: 52–53) claims that Adamic's "limited grasp of English" led to the translation failing to reflect Cankar's style and that the text was adapted and some passages shortened. She argues that at that time Adamic was "still developing his skills in English expression" (Petrič 1978a: 435, also 417), and that he started translating in order to enrich his vocabulary and develop his own style of writing in English (Petrič 1989: 51; see also Christian 1978: 223). And, indeed, in a letter to his publisher, Arthur Whipple, Adamic writes: "I am sending you a collection of short stories and shorter novels I translated between 1921 and 1923 when I was

still ‘wandering’ around America and tried to write English the way I was able to.” (Christian 1978:226) But despite some obvious linguistic difficulties the translator had, the analysis of the text reveals some deliberate changes of the text which are a result of a specific translational strategy and not so much his poor knowledge of the target language.

First let us look at some passages where Adamic’s translation might be interpreted as the result of his poor knowledge of English or his careless reading of the original:

- (1) Tri ali štiri leta kasneje mi je v tujini tuja ženska prinesla kavo v sobo.  
(Cankar 1974:265)

Adamic: Three or four months later a strange woman brought me a cup of coffee to my room. (Cankar 1926a: 83)

LT: Three of four years later a foreign woman brought coffee into my room.

Here Adamic translated “three or four years later” with “three or four month later”, and since Adamic still knew Slovene at that time, his translation almost certainly reflected his careless reading of the original which resulted in this translational shift.

Adamic’s translation is also characterised by omissions:

- (2) Nisem ji rekel ne zvečer, ne drugi dan in tudi ne ob slovesu ... (Cankar 1974:265)

Adamic: But in the evening I could not speak to her kindly, nor the next day. (Cankar 1926a: 83)

LT: I did not say anything to her that evening, nor the next day, nor when we parted ...

In this case, the omission of “in tudi ne ob slovesu” (‘nor when we parted’) could be explained by the translator’s limited knowledge of the target language, i.e. that he just did not know how to express this part of the sentence in English. Similarly, he avoids a problematic part in the following sentence:

- (3) Človek je v sami razmišljenosti hudoben in neusmiljen. (Cankar 1974:264)  
Adamic: Sometimes a person is merciless, cruel. (Cankar 1926a: 82)

LT: When distracted, one can be malicious and merciless.

The next omission, however, could be explained by the translator’s weak English or by the use of a specific translation strategy – Adamic left out parts of the text that are not linguistically difficult but the ones that could be considered

as not essential to the development of the story. Adamic later described himself as a working-class writer writing for the working class, and argued in an article entitled “What the Proletariat Reads” that “not a few radical workers dislike the proletarian novels in which the authors’ artistic mannerisms and tricks obscure what they wish to communicate” (Adamic 1934: 321–322). It is possible to interpret his modifications of the following passage where he left out everything in italics as deliberate changes to meet the supposed taste of the proletariat:

- (4) Preselil sem se pod streho, v seno. *V ta svoj dom sem plezal po strmih, polomljenih stopnicah, lestvi podobnih. Postlal sem si v senu, pred vrata na klanec sem si postavil mizo. Razgled moj je bil siv, razglodan zid.* V zli volji, v potrnosti in črnih skrbih sem pisal takrat svoje prve zaljubljene zgodbe. (Cankar 1974: 263; emphasis by N. K. P.)

Adamic: I moved to the attic, where, in that dismal mood of mine, I began writing my first love stories. (Cankar 1926a: 82)

LT: I moved to the loft, among the hay. *Up to this home I used to climb by steep broken steps like those of a ladder. I made my bed in the hay, against the door which gave on to the slope I placed the table on. I looked out on to a grey crumbling wall.* In ill humour, depression and black thoughts I wrote my first love stories.

A specific translation strategy is also a more plausible reason for other quite extensive omissions at the beginning of the sketch:

- (5) Velikokrat v svojem življenju sem storil krivico človeku, ki sem ga ljubil. Taka krivica je kakor greh zoper svetega duha: ne na tem, ne na onem svetu ni odpuščena. Neizbrisljiva je, nepozabljiva. Včasih počiva dolga leta, kakor da je bila ugasnila v srcu, izgubila se, utopila v nemirnem življenju. Nenadoma, sredi vesele ure, ali ponoči, ko se prestrašen vzdramiš iz hudih sanj, pade v dušo težak spomin, zaboli in zapeče s toliko silo, kakor da je bil greh šele v tistem trenutku storjen. Vsak drug spomin je lahko zabrisati s kesanjem in z blago mislijo – tega ni mogoče zabrisati. Črn madež je na srcu in ostane na vekomaj.

Rad bi človek lagal sem sebi v dušo: “Saj ni bilo tako! Le tvoja nemirna misel je iz prosojne sence napravila noč! Malenkost je bila, vsakdanjost, kakor se jih sto in tisoč vrši od jutra do večera!”

Tolažba je zlagana; in človek občuti sam in z grenkobo, da je zlagana. Greh je greh, če je storjen enkrat ali tisočkrat, če je vsakdanji ali nepoznan. Srce ni kazenski zakonik, da bi razločevalo med pregreškom in hudodel-



stvom, med ubojem in umorom. Srce ve, da “zavratnež ubija s pogledom, z mečem junak”; in rajše bi dalo odvezo meču nego pogledu. Tudi ni srce katekizem, da bi razločevalo med njimi po besedi in zunanjih znamenjih. Srce je pravičen in nezmotljiv sodnik. *Sodi in obsodi grešnika po skriti, komaj zavedni kretnji, po hipnem pogledu, ki ga nihče ni opazil, po neizgovorjeni, komaj na čelu zapisani misli; celo po koraku, po trkanju na duri, po srebanju čaja. Le malo grehov je napisanih v katekizmu in še tisti niso poglobitni. Če bi bilo srce izpovednik – dolga in strašna bi bila izpoved!*

Odpustljiv je greh, ki ga je mogoče povedati z besedo, izbrisati ga s pokoro. Težak in pretežak, do zadnje ure krvaveč je greh, ki je ostal samo v srcu kakor spomin brez besede in brez oblike. Le sam sebi ga človek izpoveduje, kadar strmi v noč in mu je odeja na prsih težja od kamena.

*“Ne kradel nisem, ne ubijal, ne prešestoval; čista je moja duša!”*

*Lažnivec! Ali nisi lupil jabolka, ko si šel mimo lačnega ter si pogledal brez sramu? Hujše je bilo, nego da si kradel, ubijal in prešestoval! Pravični sodnik, srce, bo rajše odpustilo ubijavcu, ki je gredoč na vislice pobožal jokajočega otroka, nego tebi čistemu! Zakaj srce ne pozna malenkosti in tudi ne paragrafov . . .* (Cankar 1974: 262–263; all emphases in quotations are mine)

Adamič: I have often been unjust, unfair to people whom I loved. Such injustice is an unpardonable sin, permanent, enduring, unforgettable in one's conscience. Sometimes the sin is as forgotten, eroded from your life, drowned in the eventfulness of the days; but suddenly, perhaps in the middle of a beautiful enjoyable day, perhaps at night, it comes back upon you, to weigh down your soul, to pain and burn your conscience as though you have just committed it. Almost every other sin or bitter memory may be washed away with atonement and good thought, except this sin of injustice against someone whom you love. It becomes a black mar on your heart and there it remains.

A man may perhaps try to lie to his soul. “It wasn’t so bad as that. Your restlessness has created a black night out of mere shadows. It was but a trifle, an every-day occurrence.” . . . Such words are lies, and the man knows it. The heart is not a penal code in which crimes and offenses are defined. Nor is it a catechism, in which sins are classified. The human heart is a judge just and consistent.

Pardonable is a sin which can be described by a word of mouth and atoned for. But heavy, tremendously heavy, is a sin which remains with you – in your heart – indescribable, formless. You confess it to yourself when you tremble in fear before death, or at night when the covers of your bed seem like mountain piles upon you. (Cankar 1926a: 82)

LT: Often in my life I have done harm to a person I loved. This is like a sin against the Holy Ghost; neither in this nor in the other world can it be forgiven. It can never be blotted out, never forgotten. Sometimes it lies unfelt for long years as if it had burned itself out in the heart, as if it were lost, submerged in the restlessness of life. All at once, in the midst of some happy hour or at night, when one wakes with a start from a bad dream, there falls on the soul the burden of a memory, burning as painfully and as deeply as if the sin had been committed that very moment. All other memories may be erased with repentance and with gentle thoughts – this alone cannot be erased. It is a dark stain on the heart and remains so for ever more.

One would like to be able to lie to one's soul, to say "It was not like that. It is only your restless mind making dark nights out of the lightest of shadows. It was such a little thing, the sort of thing that happens every day, a hundred or a thousand times between morning and evening!"

But the consolation is false; and man feels, personally and with bitterness, that it is false. Sin is sin, be it committed once or a thousand times, be it a thing of every day or one unknown. The heart is not the penal code with its distinctions between crime and misdemeanour, between murder and manslaughter. The heart knows that "a traitor kills with a look, a hero with a sword", and will rather pardon the sword than the look. Nor is the heart the catechism with its distinctions between venial and capital sins, with its distinctions by words and by outward signs. The heart is a righteous and infallible judge. *It judges and sentences the sinner by a secret, scarcely observable movement, by a momentary glance of which no-one has been aware, by an unuttered thought scarcely traceable upon the brow; even by a step, by a knock on the door, by a sip of tea. Only a few sins are defined in the catechism and those not the chiefest. If the heart were a confessor – long and dreadful would that confession be!*

Pardonable is the sin which may be told in words, redeemed by penance. A wound, a dire wound, bleeding till the final hour is the sin which has remained in the heart as a memory, wordless and formless. Only to himself does man confess, gazing into the night, the blanket upon his breast heavier than stone.

*"I have never stolen, nor killed, nor committed adultery; my soul is pure!"*

*Liar! Did you not peel an apple as you passed a hungry man and look at him without shame? That was worse than if you had stolen, killed or committed adultery! That righteous judge, the heart, will rather forgive the murderer who in the shadow of the gallows comforted a weeping child than you, the pure one. For the heart knows no trifles and also no provisions of the*

*law.* (adapted from the translation by E. Jereb & A. MacKinnon in Cankar 1971a: 140–141)

The sentences in italics are not translated in Adamic's version. It seems hardly possible that Adamic avoided the translation of those passages because he did not know how to express them in English, especially because also later on when his English was much stronger (in fact so strong that he claimed that he had lost his Slovene and replaced it with English) omissions and extensions were an essential part of his translation strategy (see Kocijančič 1993, 1999). Most probably in this case as well, he considered those passages as the author's "artistic mannerisms and tricks" which obscure what he wishes to communicate (Adamic 1934: 321–322). Adamic later on directed his interventions in particular towards changing or omitting passages that were too explicitly religious. And this early translation already anticipates such changes – the underlined sentence is thus translated using more neutral expressions in English: "This is like a sin against the Holy Ghost; neither in this nor in the other world can it be forgiven" becomes "Such injustice is an unpardonable sin, permanent, enduring, unforgettable in one's conscience", where "the Holy Ghost", "this and the other world" are not mentioned, and "conscience" is introduced. With this shift the translator emphasizes that we shall ultimately answer to our conscience and not to God, and thus according to his personal views transfers the reader from the realm of divine justice to the human one.

He also adds some elements to the text:

- (6) Pust in zlovoljen, brez besede in pozdrava sem se vrnil pod streho, da bi pisal, kako sta se ljubila Milan in Breda in kako sta bila obadva plemenita, srečna in vesela.

"Roko v roki, obadva mlada, od jutranjega sonce obžarjena, v rosi umita ..." (Cankar 1974: 264)

Adamic: After I informed her that I wanted some black coffee, I returned to the attic to continue my love story, to write how Milan and Breda loved each other, how noble, divine, happy and joyful they were. . . "Hand in hand, both young and athrob with life, bathed in morning dew-drops, swaying –" (Cankar 1926a: 82)

LT: Sour and ill-humoured, without as much as a word I went up to my loft to write about the love of Milan and Breda, and how noble, fortunate, happy and merry they both were.

"Hand in hand, both young, illuminated by the morning sun, bathed in dew ...".

Besides joining two paragraphs into one, Adamic also adds that Milan and Breda were “divine”, introduces a neologism “athrob with life” meaning ‘throbbing with life’, and extends the text at the end with “swaying” – which all reveals a considerable self-confidence of the translator in the target language, so much so that he dares introduce new words into the language.

Although less daring, his extensions of the text are present everywhere, including in the last sentence of the sketch:

- (7) Zakaj srce je pravičen sodnik in ne pozna malenkosti ... (Cankar 1974:265)

Adamic: For a man’s heart is a just and consistent judge; a man’s heart does not concern itself with paragraphs and provisions in statute books or trifles. (Cankar 1926a: 83)

LT: For the heart is a righteous judge and knows no trifles ...

Instead of Biblical terseness and the conclusion that something that seems a mere trifle for someone can be the most painful sin for the other, Adamic offers the translation of the final sentence overburdened with legal expressions he should have but did not include in the passage quoted above in example (6).

Louis Adamic as a representative of non-native translators in many ways supports the claims of those translation theoreticians who argue that all inverse translations are defective and that they sound foreign and unacceptable to native speakers of the TL. But even more than linguistic awkwardness, Adamic’s translation manifests a specific approach to translation, according to which the text can and should be freely reformulated according to the translator’s poetological and ideological views. Moreover, it seems that the most crucial translation shifts which effect the understanding of the sketch are due to his specific translation strategy and not so much to his negligence or poor knowledge of English.

### *A Cup of Coffee* by Agata Zmajić and M. Peters-Roberts

The sketch *A Cup of Coffee* was also translated by a Croatian, Agata Zmajić, and M. Peters-Roberts, who was most probably a native speaker of English. The translation was first published in the London *Review of Reviews* in 1933. Although almost nothing is known about the creation of the sketch, the translation is interesting because it was translated by two non-native speakers of the SL. Their translation strategy can already be detected in the introductory sentences:

- (1) Velikokrat v svojem življenju sem storil krivico človeku, ki sem ga ljubil. Taka krivica je kakor greh zoper svetega duha: ne na tem, ne na onem svetu ni odpuščena. Neizbrisljiva je, nepozabljiva. Včasih počiva dolga leta, kakor da je bila ugasnila v srcu, izgubila se, utopila v nemirnem življenju. Nenadoma, sredi vesele ure, ali ponoči, ko se prestrašen vzdramiš iz hudih sanj, pade v dušo težak spomin, zaboli in zapeče s toliko silo, kakor da je bil greh šele v tistem trenutku storjen. Vsak drug spomin je lahko zabrisati s kesanjem in z blago mislijo – tega ni mogoče zabrisati. Črn madež je na srcu in ostane na vekomaj.

Rad bi človek lagal sem sebi v dušo: "Saj ni bilo tako! *Le tvoja nemirna misel je iz prosojne sence napravila noč!* Malenkost je bila, vsakdanjost, kakor se jih sto in tisoč vrši od jutra do večera!"

Tolažba je zlagana; in človek občuti sam in z grenkobo, da je zlagana. Greh je greh, če je storjen enkrat ali tisočkrat, če je vsakdanji ali nepoznan. Srce ni kazenski zakonik, da bi razločevalo med pregreškom in hudodelstvom, med ubojem in umorom. Srce ve, da "zavratnež ubija s pogledom, z mečem junak"; in rajše bi dalo odvezo meču nego pogledu. Tudi ni srce katekizem, da bi razločevalo med njimi po besedi in zunanjih znamenjih. Srce je pravičen in nezmotljiv sodnik. Sodi in obsodi grešnika po skriti, komaj zavedni kretnji, po hipnem pogledu, ki ga nihče ni opazil, po neizgovorjeni, komaj na čelu zapisani misli; celo po koraku, po trkanju na duri, po srebanju čaja. Le malo grehov je napisanih v katekizmu in še tisti niso poglavitni. Če bi bilo srce izpovednik – dolga in strašna bi bila izpoved!

Odpustljiv je greh, ki ga je mogoče povedati z besedo, izbrisati ga s pokoro. Težak in pretežak, do zadnje ure krvaveč je greh, ki je ostal samo v srcu kakor spomin brez besede in brez oblike. Le sam sebi ga človek izpoveduje, kadar strmi v noč in *mu je odeja na prsih težja od kamena.*

"Ne kradel nisem, ne ubijal, ne prešestoval; čista je moja duša!"

Lažnivec! Ali nisi lupil jabolka, ko si šel mimo lačnega ter si pogledal brez sramu? Hujše je bilo, nego da si kradel, ubijal in prešestoval! Pravični sodnik, srce, bo rajše odpustilo ubijavcu, ki je gredoč na vislice pobožal jokajočega otroka, nego tebi čistemu! *Zakaj srce ne pozna malenkosti in tudi ne paragrafov ...* (Cankar 1974:262–263)

Zmajić & Peters-Roberts: DURING my life I have often grieved someone I dearly loved. It is my belief that this is like the sin against the Holy Ghost, which "shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come".

The memory of it may remain asleep for many years, almost forgotten in the whirl and turmoil of everyday life. Then, all of a sudden – it may be in the midst of a scene of gaiety, or, in the dead of night during a terrible

dream – it awakes, to weigh heavily on the soul, to burn and torment as if it had only been committed a moment before.

Other memories can be blotted out by good deeds, holy thoughts, and deep repentance, but this – never. It remains always a dark blot on the soul. How gladly would man salve his conscience, would try to belittle the offence . . . . “It was not quite as bad as all that . . . *It is your over-sensitiveness that had magnified a small fault into a sin . . . .* Why, it was merely a trifle, which happens many times a day between sunrise and sunset . . . .” But this is only false comfort, for he knows perfectly well, and also feels bitterly, that he is only deluding himself. The offence remains the same, whether committed seldom or often, once or a thousand times.

THE heart is not a penal Book of Law, distinguishing between offences and crimes, between killing and murder. It acknowledges that the hero destroys with the sword, but so does the traitor with a look, and the first is pardoned rather than the last.

Neither is the heart like the Church Catechism, which separates sins into small and great, into mortal and venial. The heart is a righteous, incorruptible Judge which sentences and condemns the secret impulse, barely recognized; the swift glance which nobody sees, the fleeting unexpressed thought; and it even judges the way of walking, knocking at the door, or drinking tea. *It is a searching Judge, who probes into the innermost recesses of our being.*

NOT all sins, and certainly not the weightiest, are contained in the Catechism. Were our heart to act as Confessor, what a long and terrible confession it would have to hear.

Sins which can be confessed in words, and cleansed by repentance, may find forgiveness, but those never admitted, never mentioned, will remain like nebulous, unformed shapes to burden our souls to the end of our life. These are the sins which man only admits to himself when he lies awake at night, staring into the darkness, and feeling *as if the ceiling were about to crush down upon him.*

“I have never stolen nor killed, neither have I committed adultery . . . . My soul is clean!”

Liar! Did you not look with indifference on the face of a hungry man when you passed him, peeling you apple? This is worse than stealing, killing or committing adultery. A murderer who stops to caress a weeping child on his way to execution will be forgiven sooner than you, you clean soul! (Cankar 1933b:52)

At first glance the translation shows a new organisation of the text: the paragraph divisions do not correspond to those of the original. The translators also change the original punctuation; particularly interesting is the fact that they put in inverted commas those parts of the text they felt to be closely following Biblical wording (see e.g. the first paragraph). Some of the changes also modify the tone of the text towards a more objective mood and moderate the poetical features of the original, for example: “Le tvoja nemirna misel je iz prosojne sence napravila noč!” (LT: It is only your restless thought making dark night out of the lightest of shadows!) becomes “It is your over-sensitiveness that had magnified a small fault into a sin . . .”, which conveys the same meaning but in more prosaic terms. Similarly, the next underlined example: “Le sam sebi ga človek izpoveduje, kadar strmi v noč in *mu je odeja na prsih težja od kamena*,” (LT: Only to himself does man confess, gazing into the night, *the blanket upon his breast heavier than stone*.) becomes “These are the sins which man only admits to himself when he lies awake at night, staring into the darkness, and feeling *as if the ceiling were about to crush down upon him*.”

The translators also omit the last sentence (“Zakaj srce ne pozna malenkosti in tudi ne paragrafov . . .”; LT: For the heart knows no trifles and also no provisions of the law.) and add a sentence: “It is a searching Judge, who probes into the innermost recesses of our being.” Those changes, however, do not affect the understanding nor the meaning of the sketch – they seem to be the result of a specific translation strategy and could not be classified as shifts typical of non-native speakers of the source language.

However, some of the changes could be explained by the fact that neither translator was a native speaker of Slovene:

- (2) Postlal sem si v senu, pred vrata na klanec sem si postavil mizo. Razgled moj je bil siv, razglodan zid. (Cankar 1974: 263)

Zmajić & Peters-Roberts: Here I arranged a bed in the hay, and placed a table near the door, so that I could have a view of the mountains while I worked. On my other side was a grey, crumbling wall. (Cankar 1933b: 53)

LT: I made my bed in the hay, against the door which gave on to the slope I placed the table. I looked out on to a grey crumbling wall.

The translation by Zmajić and Peters-Roberts adds that the narrator had a view of the mountains while he worked and thus introduces a (largely stereotypical) Alpine element into the story. The original stresses the fact that the young writer could only look at the grey, crumbling wall, which is still included in the translated text but it no longer represents the complete opposite to

the imaginary world of the writer of the love story, since it no longer limits the narrator's view. This shift could be explained by the translators failing to understand the phrase "pred vrata na klanec" (LT: "against the door which gave on to the slope") and therefore changing the text in translation.

The next example is also interesting:

- (3) Človek je v sami razmišljenosti hudoben in neusmiljen. (Cankar 1974:264)

Zmajić & Peters-Roberts: Lack of imagination can make a man cruel and wicked. (Cankar 1933b:53)

LT: When distracted, one can be malicious and merciless.

Their translation of the word "razmišljenost" (which is defined by the *Slovene Dictionary* as 'raztresenost', i.e. 'distraction', 'heedlessness', 'inadvertence' (SSKJ 4, 378)) by "lack of imagination" might be explained by the fact that they were not native speakers of Slovene and did not know the word in question. However, those two cases were the only instances where it could be argued that the fact that the translators were non-native speakers of Slovene influenced their translation.

All in all, *A Cup of Coffee* by Agata Zmajić and M. Peters-Roberts could be defined as a meticulous, thorough translation. It is characterised by a reorganisation of the paragraphs of the text, and by a partial toning down of some of its poetical features. The translation does not completely correspond to the assumption that translators who are not native speakers of the source language fail to understand the original and therefore often change the meaning of the text – those "mistakes" are very rare and they only occur in places which are not essential for the understanding of the sketch and do not change the style or the tone of the original.

### *A Cup of Coffee* by Jože Paternost

Jože Paternost translated *A Cup of Coffee* for the right-wing newspaper of Slovene immigrants in the USA, *Ameriška domovina*, in 1957, i.e. 12 years after he and his family left Slovenia for good. The translation was published on page 6, squeezed among various advertisements and jokes. The translation seems sloppy; it is often inaccurate, and many of the more difficult passages are simply omitted:



- (1) Postlal sem si v senu, pred vrata na klanec sem si postavil mizo. Razgled moj je bil siv, razglodan zid. (Cankar 1974:263)

Paternost: I made a bed in the hay and placed my table before the door. My only view was a grey, corroded wall. (Cankar 1957a:6)

“Pred vrata na klanec” (LT: “against the door which gave on to the slope”) – a phrase which proved problematic to other translators – is simply omitted. Similarly, Paternost does not translate the adjective “plemenita”:

- (2) Pust in zlovoljen, brez besede in pozdrava sem se vrnil pod streho, da bi pisal, kako sta se ljubila Milan in Breda in kako sta bila obadva *plemenita*, srečna in vesela. (Cankar 1974:264)

Paternost: Ill-humored and peevish, without a word I returned under the roof in order to write how Milan and Breda loved each other and how they were so happy and gay. (Cankar 1957a:6)

LT: Sour and ill-humoured, without as much as a word I went up to my loft to write about the love of Milan and Breda, and how noble, fortunate, happy and merry they both were.

The adjective “plemenita” (i.e. ‘noble’) proved difficult for some translators since it is not clear whether it refers to the social status or the state of mind of the two main characters in the narrator’s novel (although nobility of mind is more plausible in view of Cankar’s other works). Paternost’s translation also reveals awkwardness in English expression – his literal translation “I returned under the roof” of the Slovene phrase “iti pod streho” meaning ‘going up to the loft’ is questionable and hardly understandable in English. But it gets even worse; in the next example his translation conveys just the opposite of the original message:

- (3) Človek je v sami razmišljenosti hudoben in neusmiljen. (Cankar 1974:264)

Paternost: A man is in his very thoughtfulness malicious and cruel. (Cankar 1957a:6)

LT: When distracted, one can be malicious and merciless.

Most probably Paternost wanted to write “thoughtlessness” and not “thoughtfulness”, since it makes little sense that thoughtfulness can make us malicious and cruel to others.

The next change of meaning is also interesting:

- (4) Ustnice so se smehljale kakor otroku, ki prinaša vesel dar. (Cankar 1974:264)

Paternost: She smiled as if to a child to whom she was bringing a joyful gift.  
(Cankar 1957a:6)

LT: Her lips smiled like those of a child bringing a happy gift.

It seems as if the translator did not understand the original text, although he is a native speaker of Slovene. Cankar compared the mother to a child carrying a happy gift – Paternost translated the passage so that in his version the mother smiles like a mother bringing the child a joyful gift, which makes the comparison pointless, since she is a mother bringing her child a gift.

To conclude, besides a limited mastery of English, Paternost's translation also reveals negligent reading of the original or even a possible misunderstanding of the Slovene text (in fact, his misunderstandings are much more crucial than those detected in the work by two non-native speakers of Slovene, Agata Zmajčič in M. Peters-Roberts) which completely undermines theoretical assumptions of the innate capacities every native speaker should have had.

### *A Cup of Coffee* by Elza Jereb and Alasdair MacKinnon

The last translation of this sketch included in the questionnaire is the work of a pair of translators, consisting of a native speaker of the source language, Elza Jereb, and a native speaker of the target language, Alasdair MacKinnon. The translation was published in 1971 in Ljubljana by the state publishing house Državna založba Slovenije in a volume entitled Ivan Cankar *My Life and Other Sketches*. The selection of the sketches and the introduction were the work of Josip Vidmar, the most prominent literary critic of the post-Second-World-War period in Slovenia. The book includes, in addition to the sketch mentioned in the title, a selection of sketches from the last period of Cankar's life, in particular from his *Dream Visions*. The front page announces that the sketches were selected by Josip Vidmar, who is the President of the Slovene Academy of Science thus providing the "academic" guarantee that this selection is in fact representative of Cankar's work.

In his introduction, Josip Vidmar claims that Cankar represents not only the peak of the literary current called the Slovene *Moderna* but also of Slovene prose in general. He compares his work with that of Ibsen, Nietzsche, Oscar Wilde, Verlaine and Baudelaire and claims that Cankar's work reveals "no Russian influence" – although Cankar in his correspondence often confessed that

he was a great admirer of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, which Vidmar almost certainly knew. It seems as if Vidmar wanted to stress Slovene independence from Russian influence as such and present Cankar as a part of the Western and not Eastern literary tradition. He stresses Cankar's belief in the purity of humanity exemplified in the notion of the mother; the devotion and indignation he felt towards his nation (Vidmar also briefly presents the historical and political reality Cankar lived through); and finally his protest against social injustice typical of the early capitalism spreading throughout Slovene lands during his lifetime. He also gives a short biography of Cankar and stresses that he found his only solace in Socialism and "an essentially non-materialistic religion of longing" (Vidmar 1971: 11). The introduction stresses that Cankar's work was too revolutionary in form and spirit for his time and that the contemporary critics therefore often rejected his work; but that the posterity recognised his greatness (Vidmar even mentions Partisan brigades carrying his name during the Second World War) and that future generations found in him their predecessor. Vidmar concludes his introduction by saying that the aim of this selection was to represent as comprehensively as possible the variety of Cankar's sketches (Vidmar 1971: 7–13).

The sketches in this selection are all openly source-oriented. Thus the translation of *A Cup of Coffee* reveals the typical features of Jereb and MacKinnon's translation strategy. For example, the original paragraph divisions of the text are retained in the translation. No misunderstandings of the original or changes of meaning, and no extensive omissions or additions were recorded. All the passages that proved problematic to other translators did not seem to have caused any problems to them:

- (1) Postlal sem si v senu, pred vrata na klanec sem si postavil mizo. Razgled moj je bil siv, razglodan zid. (Cankar 1974: 263)

Jereb and MacKinnon: I made my bed in the hay. Against the door which gave on to the slope I stood the table. I looked out on to a grey crumbling wall. (Cankar 1971a: 142)

In contrast to other translators mentioned above, Jereb and MacKinnon do not avoid translating the phrase "pred vrata na klanec". Nor does the translation of the word "razmišljenost" seem problematic to them:

- (2) Človek je v sami razmišljenosti hudoben in neusmiljen. (Cankar 1974: 264)

Jereb and MacKinnon: Out of pure inadvertence man may be evil and pitiless. (Cankar 1971a: 142)

They have also recognised the ambiguity of the word “plemenit” (‘noble’) and kept it in their translation:

- (3) Pust in zlovoljen, brez besede in pozdrava sem se vrnil pod streho, da bi pisal, kako sta se ljubila Milan in Breda in kako sta bila obadva plemenita, srečna in vesela. (Cankar 1974: 264)

Jereb and MacKinnon: Sour and full of ill humour, without as much as a word I went up to my loft to write about the love of Milan and Breda, and how noble, fortunate, happy and gay they both were. (Cankar 1971a: 142)

The translation by Elza Jereb and Alasdair MacKinnon does not fit into any of the presupposed categories; it is faithful to the original but at the same time fluent in the target language; it does not reveal any problems the translators might have had in understanding the original text, and at the same time it avoids excessive foreignness in the target language. Unfortunately, in the passage used in the questionnaire, there occurs a printing mistake (instead of “I recall now that she was never as beautiful as at that moment” the text has “I recall now hat (sic!) she was never as beautiful as at that moment”) which influenced many of the subjects interviewed.

### *Children and Old People* by Anthony J. Klančar

Anthony J. Klančar published his translation of the sketch *Children and Old People* (*Otroci in starci*) in 1933 in the English section of the left-wing journal of Slovene immigrants in the USA *Nova doba – New Era*. The translation shares the page with Labor Day greetings addressed to the readers by the Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins.

In the editor’s note, we learn that the sketch *Children and Old Age* (sic!) was taken from Cankar’s *Dream Visions*, the last and most important work by the great Slovene novelist. It is added that the sketches were published in 1917 and that they reflect the author’s impressions of the First World War. The editor then also mentions that the work has been translated into Russian, Czech and Italian, and that some of the sketches have recently been translated into French. In the last sentence we learn that in Slovene literary history Cankar’s works are seen as either naturalistic or Decadent and Symbolic (Cankar 1933a: 7).

Klančar’s translation closely follows the original; it retains almost completely the original paragraph divisions and punctuation (in only one case

does he join two paragraphs). His translation is source-oriented and almost *verbatim* follows the original wording:

- (1) Otroci so imeli navado, da so se pogovarjali, preden so šli spat. Posedli so po široki peči in so si pripovedovali, kar jim je pač prišlo na misel. Skozi motna okna je gledal v izbo večerni mrak z očmi, polnimi sanj, iz vseh kotov so se vile kvišku tihe sence in so nosile prečudne bajke s seboj. (Cankar 1975:21)

Klančar: The children were in the habit of conversing before they went to sleep. They sat for awhile on a broad, flat stove and told each other what happened to occur to them. Evening dusk peeped into the room through dim windows, with its eyes full of dreams; the silent shadows writhed upward from all corners and carried off their extremely wonderful fairy tales. (Cankar 1933a:6)

However, Klančar tended to use words of different register and style in all of his translations: very formal and rarely-used words are often found in a colloquial surrounding (e.g. in the above-quoted example the use of “conversing” for an unmarked word in Slovene “pogovarjali” (LT: ‘talked’)). This passage also reveals that because Klančar was a member of the second generation of Slovene immigrants in the USA, he already had troubles understanding the Slovene original. For example, in the original we read that “iz vseh kotov so se vile kvišku tihe sence in so nosile prečudne bajke s seboj” (LT: “out of every corner the silent shadows drifted upwards, carrying strange fairy tales with them”), where the translator must have understood “prečudne” (LT: “strange”, “very strange”) as “prečudovite” (LT: “wonderful”, “extremely wonderful”) and translated it wrongly.

With regard to Slovene names, the translator decided to retain them:

- (2) Otroci so si bili tako podobni med seboj, da se v mraku ni prav nič razložil obraz najmlajšega, štiriletnega Tončka, od obraza desetletne Lojzke, najstarejše med njimi. (Cankar 1975:21)

Klančar: The children resembled each other so much that in the twilight one could not at all distinguish the visage of Tonček, the youngest, a boy of 4, from the visage of Lojzka, the eldest, a girl of 10. (Cankar 1933a:6)

He translated “Tonček” and “Lojzka” with “Tonček” and “Lojzka”, changing only the spelling of the first name in order to assure the right pronunciation. However, he is not consistent in his foreignization:

- (3) Matijče je razložil /.../. (Cankar 1975:22)

Klančar: Matija explained /.../. (Cankar 1933a:6)

In this case he changed the dialectal variant “Matijče” with its unmarked literary version “Matija” – he most probably found the form of the proper name in the original too foreign for the target audience.

Some solutions also reveal that he had problems with English as well:

- (4) Pošta je bila oznanila, da je oče “padel” na Laškem. “Padel je.”  
(Cankar 1975:21)

Klančar: The post had sent notice that father “fell” in Italy. “He fell.”  
(Cankar 1933a:6)

- (5) Stara dva sta sedela globoko sključena, tesno drug ob drugem in sta se držala za roko, kakor že dolgo ne poprej; gledala sta nebeško zarjo večerno z očmi brez solz in nista rekla nobene besede. – (Cankar 1975:24)

Klančar: The two old people sat bent low, tightly side by side, and held each other’s hands as they had once a long time before; they gazed at the dying sunset with tearless eyes and said nothing. (Cankar 1933a:6)

In example (5) the sequence of tenses could be applied so that the Past Tense should be changed into the Past Perfect Tense, in example (5) the elliptical sentence “as they had once” seems too elliptical and would require the use of the substitute verb “do” or the repetition of the verb.

To sum up, Klančar’s translation of the sketch *Children and Old People* closely follows the original text: it almost completely reproduces the original paragraph divisions and punctuation. The translator has some difficulties with English, e.g. he sometimes combines words of different register and has some grammatical problems; it is also possible that he had problems understanding the Slovene text. When translating culture-specific terms, the translator opts for the foreignisation of the text and retains those terms in his translation, which could be explained by the fact that the text was published in a bilingual journal for Slovenian immigrants to the USA. This explanation, however, should be treated with caution. The target audience does not always prove to be a defining factor for the choice of the general strategy or method assumed by the translator, particularly in Klančar’s case. Thus, for example, Klančar employed several opposing strategies in the same year in the same journal: e.g. in his translation of another short story by Ivan Cankar entitled *Sonce! ... Sonce! (The Sun! ... The Sun! (Cankar 1933:6))*, published in the above-mentioned Slovene immigrant journal *New Era*, he used a mixture of foreignising and domesticating strategies, and later in the same year a domesticating strategy in his translation of Cankar’s *Rue de nations* (Cankar

1933:6). It can be argued, then, that the choice of translation strategy is not necessarily influenced by the target audience for the translation.

### *Children and Old People* by A. J. Klančar and George R. Noyes

Anthony J. Klančar revised the translation discussed above with an American linguist G. R. Noyes in 1933/34 and published it with four other sketches (i.e. *The Captain*, *The Sun ... The Sun ...*, *The Dead will not Allow It*, and *Rue de nations*) under the title *Slovene Idylls* in the journal *The Slavonic Review*.

The revised *Children and Old People* smooths out all the stylistic lapses of the previous version:

- (1) Otroci so imeli navado, da so se pogovarjali, preden so šli spat. Posedli so po široki peči in so si pripovedovali, kar jim je pač prišlo na misel. Skozi motna okna je gledal v izbo večerni mrak z očmi, polnimi sanj, iz vseh kotov so se vile kvišku tihe sence in so nosile prečudne bajke s seboj. (Cankar 1975:21)

Klančar and Noyes: The children were in the habit of talking together before they went to sleep. They sat for awhile on a broad, flat stove and told one another whatever happened to occur to them. The evening dusk peered into the room through dim windows, with its eyes full of dreams; the silent shadows writhed upward from every corner and carried away with them their marvellous fairy tales. (Cankar 1933/34a:494)

While Klančar and Noyes in their revised translation replace the awkward word “conversing” with a more neutral expression “talking”, they still keep “marvellous fairy tales” (they do however drop “extremely”) which gives evidence that the translation was only stylistically revised and was not retranslated as such – Noyes only modified the style and did not check the original as far as the meaning was concerned.

Noyes’s stylistic improvements, however, did not orient the text completely towards the target culture: e.g. this adapted translation still keeps the culture-specific proper names:

- (2) Otroci so si bili tako podobni med seboj, da se v mraku ni prav nič razložil obraz najmlajšega, štiriletnega Tončka, od obraza desetletne Lojzke, najstarejše med njimi. (Cankar 1975:21)

Klančar and Noyes: The children so much resembled one another that in the twilight one could not distinguish the countenance of Tonček, the youngest, a boy of four, from that of Lojzka, the oldest, a girl of ten. (Cankar 1933/34a:494)

Moreover, this translation does not change the spelling of the names like Klančar did in his first version and keeps the original Slovene diacritical mark. Another proof that Noyes most probably did not check the original is the next example:

- (3) Matijče je razložil /.../. (Cankar 1975:22)

Klančar and Noyes: Matija explained /.../. (Cankar 1933/34a:495)

Although the revised translation tried to keep the original spelling of the proper names, in this case not only the spelling but the name itself is changed from the dialectal version “Matijče” into “Matija” following Klančar’s decision in his first translation.

But despite the fact that the text was not retranslated, it was nevertheless stylistically and grammatically revised:

- (4) Pošta je bila oznanila, da je oče “padel” na Laškem. “Padel je.” (Cankar 1975:21)

Klančar and Noyes: The post had brought notice that father “had fallen” in Italy. “He had fallen.” (Cankar 1933/34a:494)

- (5) Stara dva sta sedela globoko sključena, tesno drug ob drugem in sta se držala za roko, kakor že dolgo ne poprej; gledala sta nebeško zarjo večerno z očmi brez solz in nista rekla nobene besede. – (Cankar 1975:23–24)

Klančar and Noyes: The two old people sat very close together, bent low; and they held each other’s hands as they had once held them long years ago; they gazed at the dying sunset with tearless eyes and said nothing. (Cankar 1933/34a:496)

Thus in example (4) the Past Perfect Tense is used; and in example (5), the last sentence in the sketch, the verb form is repeated and the sentence is reformulated in order to be more in accordance with the grammatical and syntactical rules of English.

It could be then argued that this translation of *Children and Old People* is still Klančar’s, but now thoroughly stylistically revised by Noyes. This revision made the text more fluent, natural and grammatically acceptable in the target language. But despite the fact that both Klančar and Noyes were native speakers of English and members of a culture where target-oriented translation was normative (see Venuti 1995), this translation pair nevertheless keeps the original spellings of proper names as sign of cultural otherness in the translation and does not over-domesticate the text.