Translating Place Through Colour: A Schema for Creating Literary Meshes

Discussion

In the usual manner, translation is often thought of in terms of texts where a text in one language goes through a process of change and is 'translated' into the same text but in another language. The meaning is the same in both pieces of literature. However, although the meaning is the same in both texts, where translation occurs there are subtle differences in nuance and substance between the source text and the target text based on the exact words and phraseology that the translator employs. In this way the translator is active, existing both in the world of the source text and the target text *as well as* existing in the point between the texts where meaning is transferred. This place is particular to the translator, and is never accessible by either source or target text.

Contrary to the usual manner of translation, in this instance texts are not employed as the start or end points for translation. Rather, the process is shifted. A number of source concepts[1] go through the process of translation and are transformed into target concepts[2]. These target concepts are translated into literary concepts[3], which are then parsed through a piece of literature, creating a literary mesh from non-literary original target and source concepts. The act of translation itself creates a new work of literature, and does not seek to illuminate the source or target materials. Instead translation reveals the creation of a new literary mesh.

This schema here attempts to articulate the relationship between place and colour, and will illustrate the new work that can be created using Benjamin's *Arcades Project*. It can be applied to other concepts and is not particular to this exemplum.

Exemplum

Here we see Benjamin's travel through Europe (and projected travel through to North America) translated as places on a map, which can be translated into areas with borders, armies, folk-tales and specific food-stuffs which are countries, and these countries are then translated into their symbolic label, the flag. These flags are translated into their constituent colours which are then translated into German and then translated into their English counterparts. This translation is done with the aid of bilingual dictionaries, which enhances the subtle differences in both source and target language. These translations of colours are then parsed through Benjamin's unfinished and wide-ranging work (accessed through translation) *The Arcades Project*. Thus a new literary mesh is created through the schema of translating place through colour.[4]

---

[1] Examples include: animal, vegetable, mineral
[2] Examples include: place, space, belonging
[3] Examples include: nouns, verbs, adjectives
[4] אַ שפּראַך איז אַ דיאַלעקט מיט אַן אַרמיי און פֿלאָט

Appendix 1
Dates and Places

1892	Germany
1917	Switzerland
1920	Germany
1924	Italy
1925	Germany
1926	France
1926	Soviet Union
1927	Germany
1927	France
1929	Germany
1932	Spain
1932	France
1933	Denmark
1933	France
1938	Denmark
1938	France
1940	Spain
(-	Portugal
-	United States of America)

Appendix 2
Flags

black red gold

red white

black red gold

green white red

black red gold

blue white red

red gold

black red gold

blue white red

black red gold

red yellow dark purple

blue white red

red white

blue white red

red white

blue white red

red yellow

(green red

red white blue)

Appendix 3
Colour

sich schwarz ärgern	black with anger
Rouge	red lipstick/blush
goldfarbig	golden
rot	red [wine]
weiß	colourless
Dunkel	gloomy
tiefrot	Burgundy
goldfarben	autumnal
grün	fresh
Eiweiß	eggwhite
der rote Farden	the common thread
Schwarzweißfotografie	black and white photography
eine blutige Schlacht	a red battle (bloody)
Goldglanz	golden sheen, golden lustre
blau	the colour intermediate between green and violet, blue pipe smoke
Weißling	white butterfly, pieridae
rot gekleidet	dressed in red
rot (glühend)	red hot
goldblond	fair, golden
schwartz	wicked/evil thought, plan, deed
fuchsfarben	foxcoloured
Goldmünze	gold coin
blau	drunk
weiß	bright and colourless

rosenrot	rose red
schmutzig	filthy, black
gerötet	reddened e.g. of eyes, face
Gold	gold jewellery
rote Bete	beetroot
gelbblondes Haar	blonde hair
lila Flieder	purple lilacs
das Blau	the sky or the sea
blass	pale
blutbefleckt	bloodstained
die Röte	blushing
weiss	caucasian
traurig	sorrowful, mournful
weiße Augenhaut	whites of the eyes
die Roten wählen	to vote left wing
rot	of red hair or fur ranging from golden brown to deep reddish brown
weiß	unmarked
derb	rude
wissen	to know
rot wie ein Krebs	red as a lobster
glühten	to glow
gelb	amber
(grün	unripe
einen roten Kopf bekommen	to go red in the face

rotsehen   to see red

weiß   ashen

ein blauer Fleck   a bruise)

Appendix 4
The New Literary Mesh (with references)

"amid your angry waves"	E10,3
"their lips open up like flowers"	I6,1
"and which, on those golden evens *when you feel yourself revive*"	J71a,2
"This orgy of power, wine, women, and blood known as the Commune."	k4,8
there I traveled on a colourless Sunday afternoon	G1a,4
These visions bespeak the gloomy awareness	C7a,4
"from bordeaux to burgundy, from burgundy to full-bodied Saint-Georges"	a4,1
"I rode in a forest on an autumn afternoon"	M17a,4
the gravel on the walks was covered with fresh linen	M1a,4
"like moon eggs fallen from the sky"	T4a,3
"common to both is the renunciation of the idea"	J56a,6
"Photography is useless here."	J91,1
"So for him ever afterwards these places had the beauty that only belongs to battlefields."	M11,2
"Where golden porticoes glimmer in the water"	M5,2
"smoke many a pipe"	U8,2
"the hesitant wing of the butterfly"	M4a,1
clearly displayed the red silk drawers covering thigh and belly	O1,5
"Women were seen pouring boiling oil or hot water on the soldiers"	a2a,2
"How many maidens fair, alas! I've seen / Fade and die."	J23,6
"I portray evil with its intoxications"	J45,2
Image	F4,2
the worn coin loses nothing of its value	S10,3

the ecstatic drunkenness which the lovers owe to the wine is a morning drunkenness	J68a,6
"a large, brightly lit room"	L2a,2
"like the grapevines and roses we train on slender trellises at home"	R2,2
"not only ragged by nauseatingly filthy"	a3a,1
The shame-reddened wound on the body	O1a,4
"Common, as well, are earring with distinctive little pendants on them"	V6,1
"Gourds, pumpkins, hibiscus roots"	S2a,6
"the fairy tale of the prince with the golden hair"	T1,8
"A border of modest and mild violets"	O8a,2
"it was implausible that so many eagles could be found in a Parisian sky"	C7,3
"I sprang up like a pale blade of grass between the paving stones"	M15,3
"the body of a young woman whose livid neck and bosom are stained with a long trail of blood."	a1,3
"without blushing"	p3,1
"I see a fair-skinned young lady"	C2a,5
"being who sing of their sorrows"	J51,1
"her polished eyes"	J54a,5
Especially from the data of architecture and socialism	S1a,7
"for the coiffure as well: fiery red hair is very popular"	B6a,2
"clear as the thought of the poet"	G2a,9
As a matter of fact, prostitution in the Middle Ages does not, for example, display the crudeness that in the nineteenth century would become the rule.	J67a,1
Who still knows, nowadays	B1,8
for the hideous crab	d17a,3
the irreproachable glow	T1a,8

written in false gemstones E^O,34

(however, it was "unfinished"   Q1a,4

"no longer expressing anything but a crazy ferocity"   J69a,3

Baudelaire was incensed   J14,6

whose pallid and anaemic complexion   J3a,2

"bumping into walls with a poet's grace"   J68,4

Bibliography

Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin. Boston.

Weinreich, M. (1945) ʼדער ייִוואָ און די פּראָבלעמען פֿון אונדזער צײַטʻ in *YIVO Bleter* 25.1 p.13.