Henno Rajandi's Theory of Language and His Practice of Translation[1]

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Abstract. The focus of the article is on the translating style of Henno Rajandi (1928–1998), a translator who has been an embodiment of a masterful translator for the past fifty years. Rajandi, an academic linguist and also a short-time lecturer of Western literatures at the University of Tartu, was well equipped to conceptualize his practices. He has left us with statements about the perceived social significance of translation, and with his general theory of language together with suggestions about its use in communication. Hypothesizing that the theory should bear on his practice of translation, I interpret Rajandi's translation of *Pride and Prejudice* in the light of his linguistic theory. For Rajandi language is a network of paradigmatically related elements of meaning–form correspondences selected depending on their syntagmatic value. For the addresser all the elements of the system are formal and the meaning is given, for the addressee the elements are all meaningful and the form is given. He compares an element to a coin stamped by different matrices and dependent on the different neurocognitive environments of the speaker and the listener. As his conceptualisation emphasizes the relative nature of communication, his translation has to be acknowledged as a first person performance.

Keywords: translation process, general theory of language, Estonian translation of *Pride and Prejudice*

The 20th century Estonian history of translation can be seen to fall into two periods: translations of the first half of the century were engaged in building Estonian culture as a European culture and marking an end to the traditional German and Russian cultural hegemonies in Estonia; while in the second half of the century translation was a site where conflicting worldviews competed to promote the practices and beliefs under their influence. The two periods are

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differentiated by different types of cultural interface on all the levels of translation, and using the terms suggested by Maria Tymoczko (2007) the two can be labelled as the representational and the transcultural. A distinguishing aspect of the transcultural is that it tends to obscure the point of origin of a given cultural element, in contrast to the symbolic nature of representation. Thus the emphasis in post-World War II translation was on sustaining what was common to the receiving and the source cultures against a background of public propaganda that stressed the special status of *homo sovieticus*.

I suggested this much a few years ago (Lange 2011). The present article draws on the intellectual heritage of Henno Rajandi (1928–1998), who translated about forty titles from French and English fiction and non-fiction into Estonian, and is concerned with the translation technique of Rajandi because he is one of those rare Estonian translators to have written on the assumptions he used about language, providing a valuable source that can be consulted to help interpret his translational decisions. The limited focus of the article should be read against the wider social context: Rajandi's prime years coincided with the bleakest years of the Soviet occupation, and he has spoken of his disquiet about the 'aggressive vacuum' (Rajandi, Sang 2002: 185) he had perceived in the Estonian intellectual climate, a vacuum that had to be filled by the 'European channels' being kept open. Even a fragmentary list of his translations – Anatole France *L'Île des Pingouins* (1956), Alexandre Dumas *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne, ou Dix ans plus tard* (1959), Albert Camus *La Peste* (1963), William Golding *Lord of the Flies* (1964), Simone de Beauvoir *Une Mort très douce* (1965), Michel Butor *La Modification* (1968), William Golding *Free Fall* (1969), François Mauriac *Le Désert de l'amour* (1970), Laurence J. Peter & Raymond Hull *The Peter Principle* (1972), Thornton Wilder *The Ides of March* (1983), Gustave Flaubert *Madame Bovary* (1985), D. H. Lawrence *Sons and Lovers* (1985), John Milton *Areopagitica* (1987), Aldous Huxley *Brave New World* (1987), Evelyn Waugh *Brideshead Revisited* (1994) – shows that the reading matter Rajandi proposed deviated radically from the standardized Soviet discourse, and as such Rajandi was an intellectual whose translational choices were appreciated by the reading public, as the many re-issues of most of his translations show. My focus, however, is not the social significance of Rajandi's work but rather the linguistic rationale behind his translations because a theory of language should bear on the practice of translation. This, at least, is the hypothesis of the present article: Rajandi's theory of language manifests itself in his practice of translation, and we can proceed to test it by working with Rajandi's 1977 article *Keel: protsess ja süsteem* (*Language: A Process and a System*), its 1978 sequel *Funktsionaalsus ja ülevaatlikkus keelekirjelduses* (*On Functional and Comprehensive Description of*

Language), and his translation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, which was published in 1985.

Translation Process as Evoked by Translation Product

For some time, research into the Estonian history of translation has primarily been concerned with the 'sociology of translation', emphasizing the role of translators in (re)shaping the repertoire of culture. The possibilities offered by the sociological approach are far from exhausted but the recent 2012 special issue of *Methis. Studia humaniora Estonica* on Estonian translation history also shows that many translation scholars in Estonia are attempting to overcome the somewhat perplexing situation that research into translations in history has not been much different from the research of other disciplines, like book history, that include translations among their objects, as it does not treat translations as translations per se. This, however, is wrong, as translations differ from other text types in the sense that interpreting them involves relating them to the original, and the relation has to be specified for justice to be done to the name and nature of translation studies. In order to study this aspect of translation history we also need to describe translation products in terms of translation shifts without resorting to the source-oriented position that treats the instances where a translation has deviated from formal equivalence to the source text as always being close to 'errors'. The translation style could also be a manifestation of a different course of semiosis of the translator following certain linguistic and literary convictions. Indeed, the original can never determine a translation in absolute terms because translation is a non-linear process interacting with many systems of many elements and phenomena may emerge that are unpredictable from the constituent parts of the original. The processual approach to translation – the paradigmatic one in theoretical translation studies (Torop 1995: 119–137; Toury 1995: 172–175; Longa 2004; Sütiste 2009: 11–33) – is the one that is at the very heart of translation studies and primarily differentiates it from its neighbouring disciplines. Comparative literature, for example, is more focused on texts, while in translation studies "the locus of study is never the text as an entity itself […] [but] rather what the texts can reveal as concerns the *process* which gave rise to them" (Toury 1995: 174, emphasis from the original).

When James S. Holmes listed process-oriented research as a field in translation studies, however, he saw it as the one that can best be investigated under laboratory conditions (Holmes 2002 [1988]: 177); these though, cannot be established for history. Thus, the standard programme of translation history

(D'hulst 2001, 2010) has limited the study of translational *quomodo?* (how are translations made?) to the norms that steer translations, bearing in mind the study of the evolution of translation reflection (D'hulst 2010: 402). Reinterpretation of the concept of norms is also very much what Douglas Robinson's recent study (2011) of the translations of the Finnish translator Alex Matson is about, but the processual conceptualization of translation also suggests other hypotheses about what may govern translation. Acknowledging the 'three-in-one' nature of translation where interlingual translation includes also intralingual and intersemiotic forms of translation (Jakobson 2002 [1959]), the verbal text can be divided into its verbal, auditive and visual components (Sütiste, Torop 2007: 560) in the realization that when translators reformulate the original, they not only recode words but also construct cognitive configurations. Moreover, the communicative and pragmatic aims and the thinking style of a translator must inevitably coordinate and integrate the translator's source language comprehension and the target language production, leading to a textual profile that reveals certain aspects of the original while blurring others.

Language: A Process and a System

Henno Rajandi's 1977 article *Language: A Process and a System* was written after he had published 34 different titles of translations and taken his candidate's degree on the Estonian syntax (in 1969). He was working for the Department of Grammar in the Institute of Language and Literature in Tallinn, and as such his task in the article was to describe the linguistic system. What is significant in the present context is that Rajandi accepted early in his article that although the connection is tight between the communication process and the linguistic systems and texts operating in it, these are separate objects of description that have to be treated as such for a proper relationship to be established between them. When reaching this relationship in his concluding pages, he discusses issues of linguistic innovation and tries to conceptualize them against the nature of the linguistic system as he had described it. He lays bare his doubts about purely literary linguistic innovation (*puhtliteratuurne keelerikastamine*) and says it will not necessarily result in a better and more refined understanding (Rajandi 2002 [1977]: 144) as had been the hope early in the 20th century of the ideologists of Young Estonia, who had used foreignizing translation strategies in order to enrich the Estonian language. Instead, the measure of richness of a language, Rajandi says, is quick and adequate understanding, a paucity of homonymy between a text and a thought, and not the abundance of synonymy

between them (ib. 143); thus, a rich language is clear and is understood immediately.

This is a statement that could affect translation practice and make it conform to the law of growing standardization as proposed by Toury (1995): surely a target culture repertoreme facilitates quick understanding better than a source-text texteme stemming from the peculiarities of the source discourse. Indeed, Ott Ojamaa (1926–1996), a contemporary and a colleague of Rajandi, has described Rajandi as an 'optimalist' who takes into account the time, the place, and other conditions in order to obtain the best result possible (Ojamaa 2002 [1988]: 199). Ojamaa wrote this in reference to the high recognition granted to Rajandi's translation of *Madame Bovary*, which was awarded the annual prize for Estonian literature in the category of literary translations in 1986. So Rajandi with his fluent translations in fine idiomatic Estonian syntactically following the patterns of the target language as if the text had been originally written in it was an embodiment of a good translator, and as a long-term editor of Eesti Raamat from 1953 to 1962 he had also been in a position to shape the operational norms of translation on a larger scale.

Remembering what has been said already – that there is a close connection between the communication process, the linguistic system and a text operating within that system – let us read more closely what Rajandi has said about the system. Although what will follow now is for some time linguistics rather than literary studies, let us trust in the unity of philology as providing a way to offer a more analytical description of Rajandi's translations, which establish an epoch of their own.

Rajandi defines the linguistic system as a *tähenduslike vastavuste süsteem* (system of meaningful correspondences, Rajandi 2002 [1977]: 113) between the thought of a speaker and its linguistic form, and between the linguistic form and the thought of the hearer. In the communication process the system is used twice in two different directions: for the addresser all the elements of the system are formal and the meaning is given, while for the addressee the elements are all meaningful and the form is given (ib. 141–142). Thus, the meaning–form opposition in the system is not absolute but applies to specific, immediately related elements described from a certain *perspective*. An element interpreted by a speaker as a formal alternative and by a listener as a meaningful one, is one and the same, and Rajandi compares the situation to the two faces of a coin stamped by different matrices.

The relationship between meaning (*tähendus*) and form is central in language: *tähenduslike vastavuste funktsioneeriv süsteem tervikuna [on] aga õieti see, mis keel viimases instantsis üldse on* (the functioning system of meaningful correspondences is *what* language is in its final instance, ib. 115). Rajandi does,

of course, distinguish between the meaning–form relations and the conditional relations (*tingimuslikud seosed*) that determine what to form as what and when – very much like Ferdinand de Saussure (1969 [1916]: 155–169) in his differentiation between the *signe* and its *valeur* – but he relates the ontology of language definitely to the first of these, i.e. the meaning–form relations. A grammatical description of language that focuses on the description of sentences is thus not the option he would choose. Rajandi was writing at a time when syntax-based general grammars were being contested in general linguistics, and he was writing in solidarity with the newly born (neuro)cognitive approaches. He clearly states (Rajandi 2002 [1977]: 127) that his article is an attempt to get over the idea of language as a set of movable parts containing or composing each other: a lexical element in the system is not comprised of phonemes in the way that a word in a text is comprised of letters; instead, it is related to various elements of all the layers of the system and also to the thought components outside it. This graphic analogy of language as a paradigmatic web of elements and their relations ramifying in both directions is in marked contrast to the trees of generative linguistics and supports Rajandi's observation that a sentence is a unit of *text* measuring out information, not an element of the system, and the rules that describe a sentence in terms of its composition (S → NP + VP) should not be confused with those that shape meaning–form relations.

As Rajandi has used footnotes sparingly, we probably get only a fragmentary idea about who his intellectual partners could have been. The legacy of Chomskyan linguistics is undeniable, as is that of Saussure, but he never refers to the latter and nor does he use his terminology. Instead, his wish to distance himself from the rigid structuralist tradition associated with Saussure's name is made obvious by the use of the dynamic notion of *system* and not the static term of structure; moreover, Rajandi never uses the word *märk* (sign) but speaks of *elements* of the language system (like Hjelmslev). Reference is also made to Hjelmselv: Rajandi recalls Hjelmslev's 'beautiful poetic comparison' (Rajandi 1978: 649, footnote 2) of the linguistic system to an open net that casts its shadow on the undivided matter outside it (Hjelmslev 1963: 57), and he uses the graphic image of the net as an analogy to describe the workings of the system. This image is able to hint at the neural networks of the brain in a way that a list of grammar rules cannot. References to the neural 'reality' of the linguistic system are constant throughout the article and Rajandi confesses his faith in the developments in neurolinguistics (Rajandi 2002 [1977]: 213). His attempt to visualize the operations of the system is dynamic indeed: once an element has been activated from outside by either thought components or phonetic stimuli, it sends an impulse to all the ramifications stemming from it, and these keep spreading by either simultaneous or alternative ramifications

or convergences in an irregular net of variable thickness until they are realized outside the system or die out because of their irrelevance (Rajandi 1978: 654–655). Rajandi formulated the functional as well as the spacial nature of the system and affirms what would now be called the 'ballistic nature of language' (Dennett 1991: 145): in its physical realization an utterance can never be 'fixed' (Rajandi 1978: 728); it is on the limits of its intellectual traceability that we can perceive the system. Rajandi is imagining it in a way that is surprisingly similar to Daniel Dennett's Multiple Drafts model for distributing many processes around in the brain where

> contents arise, get revised, contribute to the interpretation of other contents or to the modulation of behavior (verbal or otherwise), and in the process leave their traces in memory, which then eventually decay of get incorporated into or overwritten by later contents, wholly or in part (Dennet 1991: 135).

For the elementary meanings in the system (such as the 'meaning' of phoneme *t*, or that of a sememe, or a syntactic function) Rajandi sets limits: what means what and when is far from clear (*mis mida tähendab ja millal*? […] *ei ole kaugeltki selge*, Rajandi 2002 [1977]: 148); the system begins where we begin to observe it, and ends where we lose sight of it (ib. 119).

The system is a means of communication while the selection of thought components – what to say about what and when – is located not in the speech centres of a brain but elsewhere. So the system could easily work in vain, whether the brain is normal or damaged; it can be a means to transfer thoughts, and it can, if thoughts are twisted or absent, also be a means to transfer lies, follies or nonsense: *Keel on mõtete ülekandmise vahend, mõtete vildakuse või puudumise korral ka vale, rumaluse ja mõttetuse ülekandmise vahend* (ib. 122).

This is by and large how Rajandi has imagined the system wherein all the elements have alternatives and the task of the speaker is to select between formal alternatives and the task of the listener between meaningful ones (Rajandi 2002 [1977]: 143). A conclusion from the very nature of the system is to accept that one and the same idea can be expressed in multiple ways. Referring to Igor Melchuk, who had advanced Meaning-Text Theory and its applications in machine translation, Rajandi repeats that the Russian sentence *Смит не сумел перевести этот текст только из-за этого, что в нем оказалось много специальных терминов* has more than a million (*sic!*) paraphrases. True, language as a system and language as a process are two distinct things as the title of Rajandi's article suggests, and as such they have to be treated differently. Endless semiosis (formulated after Peirce) could be a property of the system,

but not of a process; in a communication process the semiosis stops at a certain point out of habit (Robinson 2011: 29) instead of being endlessly deferred. Rajandi, as already mentioned, agrees with this: as far as the primary needs of communication go, endless variation is not of primary importance.

Does this idea of teaming meaningful alternatives drawing on communicative grammar apply also to translation of fiction, where the textual limits to various possibilities could be quite strict? Was Rajandi's central concept while translating that of a *reasonable* similarity that would count A and B as equivalent if the semantic structures of the two versions of a meaning statement are perceived as roughly the same, such that "A is similar to B in respect of C according to comparison process D, relative to some standard E mapped onto judgements by some function F for some purpose G" (Medin, Goldstone 1995: 106)?

It seems so. Translation equivalents like *as soon as she was out of the room = niipea kui uks tema järel sulgus* [as soon as the door had closed behind her] (Austen 1985: 33) are frequent. Rajandi feels no need to permit the interference of the linguistic patterns of the original for the sake of a nuance of a meaning, as had been a cherished translation practice early in the 20th century. In that sense, the theories of language of Johannes Aavik and Henno Rajandi are fundamentally different: for Aavik the inherited knowledge of a language is of minor importance as language is a machine that can be perfected *ad infinitum*. Rajandi, on the other hand, is not really constructing sentences, as the sentences are formed by the system once the linguistic system has been triggered.

Translating at a time when translation could foreground the conflict of social narratives and question the sanctioned Soviet cultural repertoire, Rajandi's translations are seldom filigree exercises in comparative poetics; this was neither his personal norm nor the norm of his day. Rather, his translations are abundant in what Antoine Berman has called the trials of the foreign. Rajandi feels free to add linguistic information or emphasis if it is relevant for the extralinguistic situation of the text-world he is translating. Trusting natural language and the natural process of 'understanding' he has not let his original authors 'censor' his cognition.

Pride and Prejudice in Estonian

The translation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* came out in 1985 together with *Madame Bovary*, which was awarded the highest recognition available for a translation at the time. This makes the quality of *Pride and Prejudice* an

indicator of the operational norms of translation of the period. In order to get an idea of the mode of Rajandi's translation, I have compared half of his *Pride and Prejudice* (chapters 1–10, 20–29, and 50–61) with the particular original he used while translating (Penguin Books 1938) and marked out the translational decisions that I could not relate to the poetics and cognitive specifics of the original. A prescriptive reading of a translation at a micro-level that lays bare both the dependence and independence of the translation in relation to its original is of more pedagogic than scientific value as no two comparative readings would result in the same interpretation. Unfortunately the more systemic approach that has been established as a norm in translation studies (Lambert, van Gorp 1985) cannot be employed in the present article, which has limited itself to a description of the translation techniques and to the question: is there a connection between Rajandi's theory of language and his practice of translation?

The three statistically most common tendencies, each of which is used in more than two hundred cases, were (1) syntactic changes related to cutting or sometimes uniting sentences; (2) added information or emphasis, and (3) the use of idiomatic Estonian to translate unidiomatic lexical items.

A sentence is a unit measuring out information according to Rajandi, and in his translation it is he not Jane Austen who is doing the measuring. But it is not only a language that is a continuum; the same goes for translation shifts. The same device (1) – cutting sentences by turning most of the semicolons of the original into the full stops of the translation – can also be described in terms of the changed rhythm or, in some cases, interpreted as a modification of the medium: the orality of the original tirade of Mrs Bennet in the opening of the novel

> Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week

has been replaced in the Estonian translation by three well-edited compound sentences of literary standard:

Henno Rajandi's Theory of Language and His Practice of Translation

Tea siis, kallis mees, et nagu mrs. Long ütleb, rentis Netherfieldi üks rikas noormees Põhja-Inglismaalt. Ta olevat esmaspäeval neljahobusetõllaga kohta vaatamas käinud ja see hakanud talle nii kangesti meeldima, et ta teinud mr. Morrisega kohe kaubad maha. Ta kolib juba enne mihklipäeva sisse ja osa teenijaskonda on järgmise nädala lõpul platsis [You must know my dear husband that Mrs. Long says Netherfield is taken by a rich young man from the north of England. He is said to have come down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately. He is to take possession before Michaelmas and some of his servants are to be there by the end of next week].

In a few cases the syntactic changes were related to the completion of elliptic sentences, where the translation added information that has resulted in the effacement of the drama elements sometimes used by Austen: the 'stage directions' of the original have become full main clauses with their subjects and verbs: *And gravely glancing at Mr. Darcy:... – Ja mr. Darcyle tõsiselt otsa vaadates lisas ta:...* (24[2]) [And gravely glancing at Mr. Darcy <u>he added</u>]. Or, *"...But that gentleman," looking at Darcy, "seemed to think..." – „...Aga see džentelmen," jätkas ta Darcy poole pöördudes, „näib arvavat..."* (42) [„But that gentleman," <u>he added</u> looking at Darcy, „seemed to think..."].

A typical example of added information or emphasis is *Elizabeth could not but smile at such a <u>conclusion</u> of such a <u>beginning</u> – Et nii halvaendeliselt alanud jutuajamine nii ootamatu lõpplahenduse leidis, pani Elizabethi tahtmatult naeratama* (106) [Elizabeth could not but smile at such an <u>unexpected conclusion</u> for <u>a conversation with such an ominous beginning</u>]. As has been suggested already, Rajandi is not only translating the verbal component of the text but is also using its visual part or his knowledge of the textual world, such as an attitude or a relationship, which he states explicitly. Thus, *a <u>woman</u> must* in the original becomes *tõeline naine peab* (37) [a <u>true woman</u> must] in the translation; or *Of what are you <u>talking</u>? – Millest sa <u>õieti</u> räägid?* (105) [Of what are you <u>actually talking</u>].

Rajandi's undeniably idiomatic Estonian (3) is met in places like *I should <u>persuade</u> you – räägin sulle augu pähe* (9) [I should <u>talk you into it</u>; *verbatim* I should <u>talk a hole into your head</u>]; *neglect – käega lüüa* (9) [drop /an acquaintance/, *verbatim* <u>slap /it/ with one's hand</u>]; *as much as you <u>chuse</u> – nagu süda kutsub* (9) [*verbatim* as <u>your heart invites you</u>]. Or, *...will have a daughter <u>married</u> before – saab esimese tütre enne tanu alla* (130) [*verbatim* will have her first daughter <u>cover her head with the marriage hat</u>]; *But do you think she would be*

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2   The number in the brackets here and in following examples refers to Austen 1985.

prevailed – _Mis sa arvad, kas ta laseb endale augu pähe rääkida_ (131) [But do you think she would be talked into it/<u>a hole would be talked into her head</u>]; _were he once to <u>enter</u> it – peaks ta sinna jalga tõstma_ (132) [were he once to <u>raise his foot into</u> it]. Here, again, the label of the device is problematic because to render _marry_ as _tanu alla saama_ [cover her head with the hat of a married woman] could also be an attempt at the archaisation that Rajandi has been mildly employing throughout the novel by using the Estonian archaic _tundmus_ for the words 'feeling' (5, 125), 'affection' (21, 339), 'regard' (22), 'inclination' (44), 'heart' (126), or 'sentiment' (339).

The next devices are not so frequent as they were represented by less than fifty cases each. They are (4) effacement of the abundance that characterizes the utterances of Mrs Bennet so that the linguistic irony of the translation is milder; (5) minor textual cuts like _looking grave and anxious – murelikul näol_ (343) [looking anxious]; (6) modulations like _little known – absoluutselt tundmatu_ (2) [absolutely unknown]; (7) changed agents or objects such as _who has taken it_ [meaning the house] – _kes see uus rentnik on_ (5) [who is the new tenant]; (8) effacement of word-repetition, as added repetition has occurred one-third as often; (9) exaggeration such as _misfortune – enneolemata kurb saatus_ (319) [fate of unprecedented sadness]; and (10) misunderstood references that make no big pragmatic mistakes and are a feature of the pre-Google era, such as _as soon as Nicholls_ [a housekeeper at Netherfield mentioned in the novel twice] _has made white soup_ [made of veal or chicken broth, egg yolks, ground almonds and cream and served with hot sweetened wine and water at balls] – _kohe pärast nigulapäeva_ (53) [soon after Saint Nicholas' Day].

The result is a translation that would have been called a '_loov tõlge_' [creative translation] in the then conceptualization of translation practice that contrasted fluent translation with a mechanical rendering of the original lexical units (Sepamaa 1967)[3]. In creative translation the translators were encouraged to use inventively the peculiarities of the target language – as they had been used in the original – to achieve a brilliant and masterful literary text. In an ideal case the translator was supposed to work with a clear-cut idea of the poetics of the original in order to preserve the original style.

Although the present article has no space for comparative poetics, let us have a closer look at the first sentence of _Pride and Prejudice_, just because Jean-Jacques Lecercle (1990: 12–14) has called it 'the most memorable in the English language' leaving one with an uneasy feeling of excess.

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[3] For the reference I am indebted to Elin Sütiste.

> It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

'A truth universally acknowledged' is combined with a 'must' that turns a law into an obligation. It is not just that 'a man is in want of a wife' but he 'must' be so, it is his duty. The universal truth, as we learn from the second and even more from the third sentence of the novel, is the hope of Mrs. Bennett, and it is the reader's first encounter with the illogical workings of her mind, which must be understood ironically. The Estonian is:

> *Eks ole üldiselt teada, et varakal mehel on tingimata naist vaja.* [It is generally known that a man of property inevitably needs a wife.]

There is no excess in the version, and the meandering style of Mrs. Bennett is almost direct. Besides, the translation creates an impossible intertextual link with John Galsworthy by quoting the translation of the title of the Galsworthy novel, which had first been published in the translation of Marta Sillaots in 1936 and was reissued in 1960. The solution is not the only possibility in Estonian – could it be there are a million of them? – but it definitely is a fine sentence in Estonian that asks for editing only once it has been read against the original. [*On universaalselt tunnustatud tõde, et korralikku varandust omav üksik mees peab naist tahtma.*]

Conclusions

A periodization of the Estonian history of translation similar to the one recalled at the beginning of the article has been offered by Ülar Ploom (2011): he differentiates between the translations of linguistic and cultural innovation, the translations of the ideologically resistant and linguistically conservative Soviet period, and the discourse-aware translations that have prevailed since the 1990s. In our present context this could mean that in the Soviet period the linguistic ontology of fiction (Sutrop 1996, Kaldjärv 2007) had not been thematized enough and a brilliant performance of the target language standards was more important for translators and editors than the specific poetics of the original. Against the backdrop of comparative poetics the practice can be questioned: the hermeneutic motion (Steiner 1975) has stopped before its final stage of restitution and the need for interference from the original on the

micro-linguistic level has not been acknowledged. In the context of the natural workings of language, however, the practice is simply miming real life cognition: a translation is the other side of the original stamped by the matrices available to the translator whose writing has to be acknowledged as a first person performance.

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