

Versatorium – is an assortment for poems and translating that assort nothing, asserts nothing but explores and translates both fluently and without deploring. In doing so, we oar between art or theory, tending an open ear to either side. A prior entirely dependent limb of Vienna University, *Versatorium* today have loosened themselves toward the distal end of the rather solid body of tertiary education, henceforth as independent assortment with students of various degrees and disciplines, for example Comparatively Literary Studies, Scherman Studies, Inclish Studies, Tramstation Studies, Heart History, Fined Art, Muse-Sick Studies and Thatcher, Film and Medea Studies.

Walter Benjamin's, Ludwig Wittgenstein's and Stanley Cavell's theoretical considerations on the one hand and the works of $L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E$ poetry on the other give us impulses for literal, pictorial and sonic translations that are unproductive enough to not take that last step into resultings but translate language rewind itself and be rewound by the appreciation of its complexity and agility. This makes *Versatorium* a group of athletes and the discipline artistic gymnastics where we somersault, encompassed in a language that contains less than it fans out, itself tangling and twirling. Translation then assembles endless tasks as in allotting an unfurnished let. Translation then becomes a lotion, a solution even that does not provide results but bedabbling curiosity. Translation then is to skew the reading of the following: "There is a lot in what I say." There is lead in every language yet we rather not ferry it over as lead. There is a knot in every point we make.

Versatorium – რა უცნაურად უდერს. ჩემთვის: ვერა საინტერესო, ვერსაავტორო, ვერსატიშვარო, ვერსაოცნებო და ა. შ. ვერსად გაექცევი სიმაღლეს.

„ნუ იტყვი, რომ ყველაფერი აბსურდია!

ყველაფერი ის რისიც გვჯეროდა, არსებობს.

უბრალოდ -

სიმაღლედ არ არის ისე იაფი,

როგორც ზოგჯერ ჩანს“ (კარლო კაჭარავა)

ჩემთვის და ისევ ჩემთვის ყველაფერი რისიც მჯეროდა არსებობს აქ ამ უაღრესად პატარა სივრცეში, ყოველგვარი შეზღუდვების გარეშე, რომელსაც ვერსატორიუმი ჰქვია. თავისუფლება:

Obviously this poem can be translated by someone in 30 seconds by anyone who speaks German and English – horizontal into horizontal, thread into Faden, falls into fällt, and into und, figure into Figur, yellow into gelb, month into Monat, clothes for example into Kleider and acacias into Akazien. If that anyone would busy himself for thirty seconds or a whole afternoon to dig up a better word than Lehrling for apprentice, or the mot juste for tarnish, he or she would transform the poem into an equation which kinda means: coercing the poem. Is translation in danger of synchronising?

იძახის თავის რექსში: „წერილი ემიგრანტს“ ვერ ვეთანხმები. მეც ემიგრანტი ვარ და ენის დავიწყება ბედნიერება არაა!! რა თქმა უნდა ემიგრანტს უნდა თუ არ უნდა ნაკლები შესაძლებლობა აქვს მშობლიურ ენაზე საუბრის. პირადად ჩემთვის ესაა ძირითადი მიზეზი, თუ რატომ დავიწყე ხერმეორედ, ჩემი მშობლიური ენის შესწავლა კარლო კაჭარავას და H2SO4 ის შემოქმედებათა ფონზე. და არა მართლ მე, არამედ

Weight

The horizontal thread
falls and a figure
is deformed
yellow month
clothes and acacias change
a late apprentice
in the sun
I make a mirror
for the tarnish

სიტყვის , რწმენის ,
ზნეობის . თავისუფლება
ენის????

„ამ ენით ბესიკი
მეტყველებდა
მერე ტიცოან ტაბიძე
ახლა ჯანსუღ ჩარკვიანი.
შენ ეს იცი, შენ უკვე დიდი
ხანია
მოგეცა ამისი დავიწყების
ბედნიერება.“

როგორც კარლო კაჭარავა

ახადგაზრდა ინტელიგენტ სტუდენტებთან ერთად. აქ ავსტრიაში, ვენის ცენტრში, ვერსატორიუმის სივრცეში. არაფერი არაა ამამე საამო, როდესაც უცხოედი გაოცებურია შენი ენის „ვერურობით“, ასოთა მოხაზულობით, ბგერათა უღერადობით და მთელი გულისხმიერებით ცდილობს, რაც შეიძლება ღრმად ჩასწვდეს ამ ყველაფერს. და როდესაც შედეგს მიაღწევს მერე....მერე უფრო დიდ პრეტენზიებს უყენებ საკუთარ თავს და უფრო უკმაყოფილო ხარ. შენი თავით.....ეს ჩვენი ვერსატორიუმის შემოქმედებაც კარდო კაჭარავას „ფრანკ კაფკა“ ნახატივითაა....

„მე ვცხოვრობ ზიზღით და სიყვარულით სავსე ქვეყანაში, რომელსაც სამწუხაროდ ჩემი მეორე სამშობლო ჯერ არ ჰქვია“

Versatorium requires a minimum of 30 hours to translate this poem. Rather, 30 days. Not entire days, God beware, there are no such things as entire days, only uncompleted days which are interrupted, given up, able to let go. Being able to let go needs a lot of time; there is a lot to let go of and it needs time, before at length the bulk has been set free. After translating you know less than before. Will it suffice at the University of Vienna and in Academia to know less than before afterwards? Afterwards having less results than before? Afterwards somersaulting, making saltos but no resaltos? Afterwards letting go, before targets? Academia as profession-avoiding-manoeuve (PAMs). This reminds of Walter Benjamin's and Gerschom Scholem's Muri University near Bern, described in great detail in „Acta Muriensa“, between 1918 and 1923:

Muri University schedule (selection):

Philosophy

Prof. I. Kant: *Course on Erdmann. From Pork to Bacon*

Prof. Dull: *Soul Measurement*

Prof. Peeler: *Soul Mashing*

Camilla Schulze: *Free Fall Theory, followed by practical exercises*

Prof. Sigmund Freud: *Where do the little ones come from*

Charles Darwin: *Travels of a Naturalist:*

Usually known as *Survival of the Fittest*, this book is now published in a delightful, illustrated edition. Very distinguished, the images of Darwin in a fit.

Jurisprudence

Introduction into the Theory of Procrastination Tactics

Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Insulting

Theology

Prof. Robert Eisler: *History of Occidental Paganism from Papageno to Paganini*
the form.: *Ladies' Coat and Bathing Booth*

Prof. A. van Harneck: *The Easter Egg. Its Merits and Risks*

Christian Morgenstern: *Collegium Logicum:*

From the late composer of the Gallows Songs, a series of in depth shots at Modern Logics has been published. Here at last Aristotle's barren syllogism was superceded. Plenty novel and surprising deductions are disclosed. We must limit the scope of possible examples that cover all of knowledge to the following from Theology:

Adam was a giant

Adam had 7 sons

$7 \times 7 = 49$

According to Adam Giant. Quod erat demonstrandum

Another one from territory philosophy. It is known that Kant wore a pigtail. But precisely this sentence has mocked all attempts of a deductive derivation so far. Can't Morgenstern intervene?

All Indians wear pigtails.

Kant was an Indian.

Thus, Kant wore a pigtail.

Kain is red, kin is dead

Reckonable

Babel echo.

A speculative deduction of the Indians themselves might conclude these proofs: Sin is red, God is dead

Sky's red

Redskins.

Skin is king, mink is in

Head is mad

featherlad.

Black oak too

Go back toe

Tobacco.

Another one from planetary philosophy. One knows, Kant had a braid. But exactly this sentence has defied all attempts of a didactic seduction so far. Right here Morgenstern ducks into it.

All Indians have braids

Kant was an Indian

Thus Kant had a braid.

A speculative deduction by the Indians themselves may conclude

these examples: Hard hat, soft bed

Softwear

Featherhead

So *Versatorium* needs a minimum of 30 h/p (hours per poem) in order not to fall prey to the deductions and deductive derivations and logic reasoning. Poems do not deduce themselves; nothing can be deduced from them, not even a translation. Is there such thing as non-sensual similar translation that does not deduce? The nonsensical similar translation? Is the poem itself non-sensual similarity?

Versatorium is the description of a struggle, with the help of many languages. In 2012, *Versatorium* was officially registered at the police headquarters in the city of Vienna and identified as a project that searches for poetry, researches and translates poetry, unofficially translates letters in alphabetical and non-alphabetical order. At the beginning of the 20th century, after a trip to Vienna, Kafka wrote: ‚da ich mich fürchtete auf Wiener Waldboden zu schlafen, kroch ich – rasch glitt der Stamm zwischen den Ringen der Arme und Beine hinab – auf einen Baum, der auch schon taumelte ohne Wind.‘ Which in the American ‚Kafka Complete Stories‘ was translated into: ‚since I feared to sleep on the ground I crept – the trunk sliding quickly down the rings formed by my arms and legs – up a tree which was already reeling without wind.‘ The American translation does not mention that Kafka changed exactly one letter while he was writing this, that Kafka was constantly stumbling over letters and prefixes and prepositions when writing. *Reeling*, the words seems to be a faithful rendering of *taumelte*, no modification, no contribution by the translators involved. As true as a tree, no otherness conceivable. However, Kafka was stumbling. He was in the process of reforming his handwriting while rewriting ‚Description of a Struggle‘. Rewriting it into a description of a struggle number 2 with no title. Kafka was transforming his German *Kurrentschrift* into Latin letters while writing the second description of a struggle.

In the first text, known as ‚Description of a Struggle‘ (‚Beschreibung eines Kampfes‘), one of his very first literary texts, Kafka stumbles because of the similarity of the words *Bäume* and *Beine*, which in English could happen too if you were writing about *lakes* and *legs* for example. He writes,

or writes and fails: ‚kroch ich mit um den Stamm gewundenen ((Bäum)) Beinen auf einen Baum.‘ Instead of writing legs, he writes trees – because of the similarity of the two words in German. He quickly corrects the mistake, actually not the mistake, but the letters, slightly modifying them. Bäum – Beine. He is stumbling over trees and legs. Over legs and letters. Over the alphabetical little legs.

And then he goes on stumbling, in this early text of his, which he was to give the title ‚Description of a Struggle‘: ‚kroch ich auf einen Baum, der auch schon baumelte ohne Wind.‘ After mistaking *Beine* and *Baum* and correcting the mistake, he mistakes *Baum* and *baumelte*. Correctly speaking a tree can hardly perform this. It cannot properly dangle while it is standing erectly – baumeln, hanging loosely swaying to and fro. A tree rises. It rises like the little letters but cannot properly dangle like some of them can. *Versatorium* would probably prefer not to translate *der Baum baumelte ohne Wind* into *the tree dangling without wind* – maybe into *wood that would without wind*. *Versatorium* is likely to translate letters. Walter Benjamin, in ‚Origin of the German *Trauerspiel*‘ writes: ‚Nur der Buchstabe spricht.‘ Only the letter speaks. Why only the letter? Because it speaks out against the sadness of meanings. The sadnesses of meaning. It knows of the origin of the sadness games and plays. Walter Benjamin wrote – change exactly one letter and you get: Worte (words).

Versatorium is apt to suggest: the tree that tries without wind. The tree is almost treeling, it is doing something that only trees can perform if they try hard, something like rising and falling in the same moment and movement, rising into a fall, falling into a rise, a kind of seasickness on level ground, as Kafka remarks. ‚The things you say!‘ I cried far too loud for the insignificant remark and the low hallway, but I was afraid of falling silent or of lowering my voice. ‚Really, the things you say! Now I realize, by God, that I guessed from the very beginning the state you are in. Isn’t it something like a fever, a seasickness on land, a kind of leprosy? Don’t you feel it’s the very feverishness that is preventing you from being properly satisfied with the real names of things, and that now, in your frantic haste, you’re just pelting them with any old names? You can’t do it fast enough. But hardly have you run away from them when you’ve forgotten the names you gave them. The poplar in the fields, which you’ve called the ‚Tower of Babel‘ because you didn’t want to know it was a poplar, sways again without a name“.

A fever, a seasickness on land, a kind of leprosy. The German word behind the *kind of leprosy* is: *Art Aussatz*. Indeed, *Aussatz* means *leprosy*. But it also means the letters of the word. It means: in German you can attach the prefix *aus* to the word *Satz* and thereby completely change the meaning. *Satz* on its own would be a sentence or a jump. The prefix *aus* influences the meaning so deeply that it disappears. In *Aussatz* the sentence changes into a non-sentence, even an out-sentence. The entire paragraph deals with the question of the *real names of things*. In the word *Aussatz* the real name of a sentence is the real name of a disease or the real name of something unknown – out of the way – other? *I guessed from the very beginning the state you are in*. A meaningful sentence – but are the letters themselves meaningful and concrete too? In the German version we find: *von allem Anfang an ahnte*, a line in which the words seem to begin to rhyme. The word *ahnte* is soon followed by the word *Zustände*, then by *Lande*. *Ahnte*, *ande*, *ande*. Does this bring us closer to the true name of things? The poplar out in the fields, called the ‚Tower of Babel‘. In German the poplar and Babel speak through the same letters and sounds: *Pappel*, *Babel*, the two almost indistinguishable, the one translatable into the other. ‚Es ist ein Wunder, daß wir nicht singen.‘ It is a wonder that we don’t sing.

Kafka changes the word *baumelte* in the later text, only slightly adjusting the spelling. Instead of *baumelte* he writes *taumelte*, changing the meaning of the word, hardly changing the letters. The American translation translates *taumelte* into *reeling*. But what about the letters? *Taumelte*, it still sounds like the earlier *baumelte*. A tree that is reeling: the reeling suddenly sounds unusual, highly

impossible. When a tree reels, is it actually treeling? Is it doing something that only trees can perform and letters?

How untrue the poem is
(and *Versatorium's* work)

If in a poem we read the word *thread* or *Draht*, it probably is an example of the effort to lose or loosen or disentangle something that is locked into the word, something that means *Draht* or *Faden* or *thread*. To disentangle oneself from a thread and move away, maybe emigrate. Who wishes to write a poem, will probably want to be untrue or wireless at least. (Can you Fred a needle? Are you a Fred? Unthreatened?)

A scene from Wilhelm Hauff's translation factory:

“So it is true then“, I said, “the works of this Britt are so wildly spread as the Bible, so that old and young and even the lowest of the low are enchanted by him?”

“It seems just as impossible as Sir What A. Britt writing this collection of tomes in so short a time; yet ‘tis so, for only a short while ago, he outed himself as author; however, I saw the factory with mine own eyes.”

“That can't be!”

“Indeed, on estimating, in Germany alone sixty thousand copies have spread and every day his fame sprouts. In Vienna they have specifically implemented a translation factory, where every day they translate fifteen folios and print them immediately.”

“Do they have to save time by dividing the labour?”, me asked.

“For once”, he responded, “and thereafter everything is processed mechanically; the Professor Lux is currently engaged in the development of a steam engine which knows French, English and German, then manpower becomes superfluous. The factory presents the following layout: In the backyard stands a paper mill, which makes unlimited paper, which rolls across into the ground floor of the main building dry as a sheet of lava; there it is cut into folios by a mechanism and pressed under the presses of the press. Fifteen presses are in operation, producing twenty thousand prints per day. Next door is the drying area and the bibliopegist shop. It has been estimated, that the paper porridge, at five o'clock in the morning still fluid, by eleven o'clock the next morning, therefore within thirty hours, will have turned into an elegant booklet. The translation compound is situated on the first floor. Accessed through two halls. In each of the latter, fifteen hands at work. Each morning at eight o'clock each hand is handed half a folio by Sir What A. Britt, which by midday three o'clock must be translated. They like to call it: “the grinding job”. This way fifteen folios become translated every morning. At three o'clock these people receive a decent launch pack. At four o'clock they are confronted with half a folio of printed translation, which have to be run over and co-wrecked.”

“But tell me what do they do with the translated morning folios?”

“We shall see forthwith. About to two halls hit four little chambers. In each waits a stylist with a secretary. Stylists are those who heave the translations of the Thirty from the coarse to the refined; it is their office to embellish the style. Such a stylist gains two pounds a day but is required to reimburse his secretary from this. Seven or eight grinders are allotted to one stylist. Once a page has been prewritten, it is sent to the stylist. While handling the English version and listening to the secretary reading the translation, he optimises period after period. In a fifth chamber two poetic hands sit, translating into German verses the motti of each chapter and the poems of the text.”

I admired this marvellous mechanism, only regretting that the thirty hands and four stylists necessarily would have to lose their bread when Professor Lux invents the translation engine.

“God knows, how it will go then”, the small man responded; “presently a booklet costs only a Georgian dram in the Geusau factory; in the future two booklets will be supplied for a fine-ounce, and there will be a book launch every four days.”

Dissonance

(if you are interested) The discovery route leads through the area marked by the parenthesis. leads to discovery Split by the parenthesis, *dissonance* and *discovery* are scattered into distant neighbourhoods. As margins they attach themselves to the world inside the parenthesis, two outlaws on the outskirts of what Rosmarie Waldrop calls the *Lawn of Excluded Middle*. In other words: the two dispersed lines look like signboards along a border announcing a place called (if you are interested) which they do not enter but hesitatingly touch or address or dress. Between the thresholds marked by the two brackets an inbetween (Lat. inter-esse) literally takes place. For Waldrop the inbetween describes the place where translation is at home: “Translation’s ultimate task may be to bear witness to the essentially irreducible strangeness and distance between languages – but its immedaite task is exactly to explore this space.“ Is translating comparable to exploring a yet unspoken language, exploring an unoccupyable area on the map of the languages of the world? Does translation explore by not occupying, but by beginning – prepared for the unexpected, ready for participation? Necassarily a jump over thresholds, the thresholds of a door or a parenthesis, a flowing back and forth, wave after wave, as in Waldrops long poem ,Unpredicted Particles‘? discovery’s inevitable there where a window

“I must empty out *my* contribution to words, so that language itself, as if beyond me, exclusively takes over the responsibilitiy for meaning.“ (Stanley Cavell in *This New Yet Unapproachable America*)

„Our foot is trespassing on Your shores“

The English word *trespass* is an opening and openness inviting you in: to trans/pass. And yet, the word in its usual usage –‘to make an unlawful intrusion’, ‘to commit a transgression or offence; to sin’ – blocks every passing through: NO TRESPASSING signs say and signal to keep out. Everywhere feet are kept. Feet tripping, feet trampling, feet that pitter-patter, feet that clatter, feet, not treading, but paddling feet. Feet with ground. Solid ground under their feet searching feet. Fluent feet. Fleeing feet. In Austria there are a lot of

The cited fragment is taken from Elfriede Jelinek's text *Die Schutzbefohlenen / The Shielded Subjects* that she wrote after visiting the Refugee Protest Camp Vienna in Votive Church. In a cooperation with refugees

people that practice TRESPASSING, most of whom are without papers, having embarked from distant places. On the move they passed dangers, they came through, finally they came here, to Vienna, however, they do not come to a hold even here. Where do they belong? Where can they pause? You there, don't you dare stand still, that's private ground. But where does the next step lead? It certainly does not lead here, here is no entrance either! The English *trespass* translates into the German *betreten* that forms a sediment in which the Old High German *bitretan* 'to scrunch, crush' as well as the Middle High German *betreten* 'to surprise, assault, catch hold of, seize' accumulate. The otherwise obsolete Middle High German form is still common in Austria and Switzerland: *Jemanden bei einer strafbaren Handlung betreten / to trespass somebody in a criminal act*. The eventual meaning *betreten sein / to feel embarrassed*, derived from the latter, expresses in a stricter sense 'embarrassed for having been trespassed'. When a trespasser reaches Austria, he or she is not handed a passport, no trespass, no pass at all, but in turn he or she is automatically and lawfully trespassed by the police. Can a person be trespassed (like somebody's property or lawn)? In what kind of language? What happens to a language, that makes no difference between human and lawn? Is a possible translation for *trespass*: Welcome?

of the Refugee Protest movement *Versatorium* is translating Jelinek's text simultaneously into English, Urdu, Pashto and Georgian.

Translating itself is a kind of trespassing since it involves a process that not only marks and makes intrusions of language territories but also relies on an inviolable space inbetween languages whose limits are constantly deferred by translation. Instead of just changing territory, language is deprived of any limitable territory in the act of translating.

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