

# Practical 6 Tutor notes

The brief Introduction to the formal properties of texts on pp. 63–4 should not be skimmed. It is vital that students understand the point of Chapters 6–8, which is to give them tools for picking out the salient linguistic features of a text: they cannot decide which features are relevant unless they can see them in the first place. They must also grasp that any expression can be analysed on all the levels of variables. This is why we refer to the same two lines of Keats in each of Chapters 6–8. The ultimate objective of these chapters is to help the student learn to ask, quickly and efficiently, the questions listed in the Formal Matrix in the schema on p. 5 of the coursebook.

In discussing Chapter 6, students should be pressed at all stages to show that they see what is at issue. Discussing the prosodic effects of poorly chosen sentence connectors or poorly translated modal particles will take time, but is important because it is an early illustration of the interconnectedness of the different levels of textual variables.

## 6.1 Phonic/graphic and prosodic issues

Given the need to consult bird books and/or ornithologists, this assignment is best done at home, in groups if desired. It is a good example of a mixed-genre text, part consumer-oriented, part literary and part technical – students can have fun with the bird calls, but they must get the species' names right. The bird calls do need careful attention, however: if students do not raise the point, ask them how an English-speaker would pronounce 'gük', 'quäh' and, above all, 'kijack'!

## 6.2 Phonic/graphic and prosodic issues

This exercise can be done equally well in class or at home. Graphic constraints are as stern here as phonic and prosodic ones can be in literary texts, yet the ST is positively playful. Doing the exercise in groups can give more hesitant students the confidence to prioritize gist over literalness and, where necessary, to alter the order of the component parts of the message in order to spread the capitalized sentence over the page. There is no need for a handout as such; the version we give below was produced in about 30 minutes, and afterwards tweaked to achieve a satisfactory visual effect in layout on the page.

## 6.3 Phonic/graphic and prosodic issues

Few translators earn their living translating songs, but this assignment is worth doing, because it gives an idea of the variety of things that can legitimately be done with texts by translators and others. It is not as difficult as non-musical students at first think it will be. You do not need to be able to sing or read music to do it (although if there are



#### 6.4 Phonic/graphic and prosodic issues

This assignment is equally suitable for group work in class or at home. Apart from anything else, it is a useful exercise in pastiche; such exercises in verbal inventiveness are invaluable in developing confidence, competence and versatility in the TL – a too-often neglected aspect of translator training. As part of their research for the assignment, students should be prepared to track down the English hymn (whether in its three-verse or its four-verse form); however, in case they find this difficult, here is the three-verse text:

Praise to the LORD, the Almighty, the King of creation;  
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation;  
All ye who hear,  
Now to His temple draw near,  
Joining in glad adoration.

Praise to the LORD, Who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,  
Shieldeth thee gently from harm, or when fainting sustaineth;  
Hast thou not seen  
How thy heart's wishes have been  
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the LORD, Who doth prosper thy work and defend thee,  
Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend thee;  
Ponder anew  
What the Almighty can do,  
If to the end He befriend thee.

## PRACTICAL 6.1 CLASS HANDOUT

Compare your VORFRÜHLING IM AUWALD TT with the published one:

### Early spring (April) in riverain forest

#### *Night*

A cold wind blows through the bare branches of the ancient and gnarled trees. Large areas of the forest are still flooded, the swollen March having burst its banks as usual in early spring.

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Tawny owls (*Strix aluco*) call, the male 'hoo...oo...oooooooooh', the female answering later with her 'ke-wick...ke-wick...'. Branches creak, Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) give their harsh 'frank...', and you hear the quiet 'qwark...qwark...' of a Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*). Ducks splash down on to the water, White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) hiss and bill-clatter in their tree nests.

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#### *Birds' concert in the early morning*

Dawn: the wind has dropped and it's slowly becoming warmer.

Ducks splash down, a Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) trots purposefully past, a young Tawny Owl gives the quiet squeaky 'szii...szii...' food call, a female Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) quacks loudly in alarm. The dawn chorus begins with the song of the Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and gradually becomes louder and more varied as more species join in. A selection of the sounds to be heard (in order): Tawny Owl, Robin, Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), Kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus [sic]*) give a shrill vibrant 'vrii...vrii..' and shrill 'kee-kee-kee...' sounds, storks bill-clatter, a Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) moves past, a Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*) sings 'tsee-tsee-tsee-tirrrr', and a Great Tit (*Parus major*) 'tsee-tsee-peh', farmyard cockerel, Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) twitter, Woodpigeons (*Columba palumbus*) give their muffled cooing song 'co-cooo-co coo-coo...', Carrion Crows (*Corvus corone*), Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*), Middle Spotted Woodpecker (*Picoides medius*) calls 'gük', Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Picoides minor*) drums, Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*), a Middle Spotted Woodpecker gives its slow, nasal 'quäh' call and the wing-clapping of Woodpigeons in display-flight is clearly heard.

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#### *Day / Middle spotted woodpecker and black woodpecker*

Loud nasal 'quäh' of Middle Spotted Woodpecker, drumming of Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Picoides major*), Jackdaws call, Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Woodpigeon, Great Tit and Chiffchaff can be heard, and a male Black Woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*) calls 'kijack...kijack...' as a change-over signal to his mate who taps demonstratively inside the nest-hole before flying off with powerful and noisy wing-beats.

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(Wilson 1988)

## PRACTICAL 6.2 CLASS HANDOUT

IBM TT

The time has come to stop racking your brains about new foreign outlets. If it weren't for the huge costs of maintaining overseas distribution networks, you'd be set **to open new retail outlets** just about anywhere – because you have the right product. Now there is a way: the Internet.

5 Internet users **all over the world** – millions of them, just think!

– can access you directly, thanks to IBM's new online business packages. And you in turn can access them **without** your costs going sky high. With IBM, you analyse product uptake, spot the trends, and your latest prices and special promotions

flash up in front of **people all over the world** at a  
10 click. Our systems provide full security for confidentiality in credit card transactions

and elsewhere. All this without anyone anywhere **charging you shop rental.** And you are in control as if you were out there yourself.

## **PRACTICAL 6.3 CLASS HANDOUT**

'99 LUFTBALLONS' TT

*Compare your TT with the published one:*

### **99 RED BALLOONS**

- You and I and a little toy shop  
Buy a bag of balloons with the money we've got  
Set them free at the break of dawn  
4 'till one by one they were gone.  
Back at base, sparks in the software  
Flash the message 'something's out there'  
Floating in the summer sky  
8 Ninety nine red balloons go by
- Ninety nine red balloons  
Floating in the summer sky  
Panic bells, it's red alert  
12 There's something here from somewhere else  
The war machine springs to life  
Opens up one eager eye  
And focusing it on the sky  
16 The ninety nine red balloons go by
- Ninety nine decisions treat  
Ninety nine ministers meet  
To worry, worry, super scurry  
20 Call the troops out in a hurry  
This is what we've waited for  
This is it boys, this is war  
The President is on the line  
24 As ninety nine red balloons go by
- Ninety nine knights of the air  
Riding super high-tech jet fighters  
Everyone's a super hero  
28 Everyone's a Captain Kirk  
With orders to identify  
To clarify and classify  
Scramble in the summer sky  
32 Ninety nine red balloons go by

Ninety nine red balloons go by

Ninety nine dreams I have had

In every one a red balloon

36 It's all over and I'm standing pretty

In this dust that was a city

If I could find a souvenir

Just to prove the world was here

40 And here is a red balloon

I think of you and let it go.

(Nena 2005)

## PRACTICAL 6.4 CLASS HANDOUT

### GROSSER DANKCHORAL TT AND COMMENTARY

#### (i) Strategic decisions

The German hymn which the ST parodies is well known in its English version, and is sung to the same tune. In every respect but one (the four-line stanzas), the ST almost perfectly matches the rhythm and rhyming structure of 'Lobe den Herren'. We shall accordingly keep the tune of the hymn in mind when constructing the rhythm of the TT.

The ST's subversiveness derives from the general contrast between its pessimistic content and the devotional optimism of the hymn it parodies – very few textual details have precise counterparts in the hymn. Our strategy is to retain this overall effect, by having the TT obviously echo the English hymn's rhythm and rhyme scheme, while retaining the essential message content of the ST. That there can at best only be a global correspondence between the English hymn and the TT is confirmed by the fact that the hymn only has three stanzas (four in some versions), as against the ST's five.

#### (ii) TT

### THANKSGIVING HYMN

Praise ye<sup>1</sup> the night and the darkness upon you descended!<sup>2</sup>  
Gather ye nigh,<sup>3</sup>  
Lift up your eyes to the sky:<sup>4</sup>  
4 Already your brief day is ended.<sup>5</sup>  
Praise ye the grass and the beast living, dying beside you!<sup>6</sup>  
Lo<sup>7</sup> how at least<sup>8</sup>  
Ye live like the grass and the beast,  
8 So must they perish beside you.<sup>9</sup>  
Praise ye the tree that from carrion rises exulting!  
Carrion sweet,<sup>10</sup>  
Praise ye the tree guzzling meat,  
12 All the while Heaven exalting.<sup>11</sup>  
Praise in your hearts that the mem'ry of Heaven's a short one!  
It knows by grace<sup>12</sup>  
Neither your name nor your face  
16 Your presence here's noticed by no one.<sup>13</sup>  
Praise ye the cold and the darkness, all life that is ended!  
Yonder, behold:<sup>14</sup>  
You're not worth a fig when all's told  
20 And can all die unattended.<sup>15</sup>

(iii) *Decisions of detail*

Most of the decisions of detail very obviously arise from the fact that we have prioritized rhythm and rhyme scheme over strict lexical accuracy. It would be unnecessary and tedious to analyse every example of this, so we shall illustrate it primarily from the first stanza, and subsequently only comment on the most noteworthy solutions.

1 'Each verse of the English hymn begins 'Praise to the LORD', and is addressed to the singer's soul ('O my soul, praise Him'). In this, it follows Neander's text. Brecht's poem, however, is addressed to people in general ('Lobet'). Given Brecht's Marxism, this switch from self-absorption to collectivity is significant. 'Praise ye' makes it clear that the text addresses a plural audience – contrast 'Praise the night [. . .], lift up your eyes', which would most likely be read as singular. (And this would probably continue until line 13, 'your hearts'.) Inserting 'ye' has two further advantages: it introduces a touch of archaism which corresponds to 'Lobet' (contrast 'Lobt'), thus clearing the way for parody, and it enables the correct rhythm to be created.

2 '[. . .] die euch umfassen' would be more accurately rendered as 'which embrace/surround you'. But 'the night and the darkness which surround you' would not scan, and would thus not satisfy the strategy. An alternative is 'Praise ye the night and the darkness by which you're surrounded', but this is arguably less dynamic than the ST, in which the night and darkness actively wrap themselves round their victims. Hence our grammatical transposition to an adjectival past participle: 'descended' is lexically inaccurate, but was chosen for strategic reasons, to rhyme with the 'ended' of line 4. It would, of course, be possible to find a fourth line to rhyme with 'surrounded' – 'How narrow your brief day is bounded', 'Already by shadows you're hounded', etc., etc.; our rendering is less metaphorical, more direct, closer to the ST than these. See also note 5.

3 'Gather ye nigh' combines 'zuhause' with a textual echo of the English hymn ('to His temple draw near'); the archaic, biblical-sounding 'nigh' confirms the parodic tone, and of course provides a rhyme for 'sky'.

4 'Lift up your eyes' fits the rhythm, where 'Look up into the sky' does not; an alternative would be 'Look up into heaven on high', but that would be comically tautologous. 'Lift up your eyes' is also tonally appropriate, echoing Psalm 121: 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.'

Translating 'Himmel', there is in principle always a choice between 'Heaven' and 'sky'. In a 'Dankchoral', 'Heaven' would usually be the more natural option. In this poem in particular, so obviously satirical, translating with 'sky' might seem to miss the point. Yet lines 3–4 of the ST clearly refer to looking up into the dark night-time sky, from which daylight has disappeared. 'Sky' is thus the appropriate translation here. Even so, if there had been no other opportunity to bring 'Heaven' into the TT, we would have seriously considered using it here. Fortunately, there are at least two cases (ST lines 12 and 13) where 'Heaven' is clearly the better rendering.

5 Among the many alternatives were: 'Already by day you're abandoned' (ambiguous), 'Already the brief day has left you' (unintentionally comic?), 'Already your brief day is over', 'Already the brief day's departed'. Whatever the other objections, the major problem remains that of making lines 1 and 4 rhyme. 'Descended' and 'ended' are a

fortunate pairing; and 'your brief day is ended' carries a tonally appropriate echo of the familiar evening hymn: 'The day Thou gavest, LORD, is ended.'

6 In the ST, 'und sterben' is a disruptive addition to the regular rhythm. As such, it aggressively draws attention to the notion of dying, gratingly emphasizing the text's sarcastic pessimism. We found it hard to imitate the effect while preserving the naturalness of the ST syntax, so we have compensated with the abrupt disjunction in 'living, dying': if the line is read or sung as a continuous rhythmic unit (as in the German and English hymns), then the ear hears '[. . .] the grass and the beast living dying [. . .]', an oxymoron which is just as pessimistic as the ST formulation, as if living amounts to dying. (When heard like this, the expression is grammatically analogous to 'I live grieving/sighing/rejoicing' etc.)

7 'Lo' ('Look') is an exact match in literal meaning and archaism for 'Sehet' ('Seht').

8 'At least' is a good example of an expression introduced primarily to meet the strategic demand of rhyme, and which, while not carrying the message content any further, does not undermine it; the bathetic touch is also appropriate.

9 ST line 8 repeats 'sterben' rather than finding a rhyme for the 'sterben' of line 5. Fortunately, it is easy to produce a similar effect in the TT.

10 See note 8.

11 As in lines 5 and 8, ST lines 9 and 12 simply repeat the same word in the rhyme position. Our TT could not reproduce this small deviation from the pattern, but the consonantal rhyme of 'exulting / exalting' is an analogous deviation.

12 See note 8. 'By grace' introduces a theological connotation absent from the ST, perhaps overstressing the satire slightly.

13 ST lines 13 and 16 do not rhyme at all – another example of the occasional subversion of Neander's rhyme scheme. Our imperfect rhyme ('short one / no one') is disruptive, but less striking than in the ST. An alternative subversion would be to disrupt the rhythm, as in: 'Your presence here's marked by no one.'

14 The archaism of 'behold' corresponds to the archaic spelling of 'Schauet'; 'Yonder' is an appropriate rendering of 'hinan', and happily provides a parodic echo of the English hymn ('Ponder anew').

15 In lines 17 and 20, we repeat the '-ended' rhyme from the first stanza. The ST does not do this, but 'sterben' is found twice in the second stanza as well as in this last line of the poem, where it rhymes with the equally pessimistic 'Verderben'. In taking up the rhyme from 'darkness upon you descended' and 'your brief day is ended', the TT to some extent compensates for the loss of triple 'sterben' with 'life [. . .] ended' and 'die unattended'; 'die unattended' is also a sarcastic deflation of the English hymn ('His goodness and mercy shall daily attend thee'). Compared with 'Verderben / sterben', however, these rhyming words are still rather feeble; so we have introduced a further element of compensation in the rhyming iambs of 'the cold / behold / all's told': these are like three hammer blows, helping to bring the TT to as emphatic an end as the ST.