will value this assistance on archaic, obscure and nowadays even misleading words in the King James Version. The authors, by dint of patient and discerning scholarship, have amassed a wealth of material which should aid any one who seeks to know the essential meaning of the Scriptures.

Robert G. Bratcher

On Translation, ed. Reuben A. Brower (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 23). Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 1959; pp. 297. $6.50.

This book is a symposium on several aspects and problems of translation, by eighteen authors. Its three parts are respectively: (I) "Translators on Translating" (nine articles, pp. 11-133), (II) "Approaches to the Problem" (seven articles, pp. 137-267), (III) "A Critical Bibliography of Works on Translation" (pp. 271-297).

Part I opens with Eugene A. Nida's "Principles of Translation as Exemplified by Bible Translating", known already to readers of *The Bible Translator* [1]. It could be called the blue print for the book; but then it should be added that the other authors' building on that blue print has been somewhat incidental and fragmentary. This article, together with Achilles Fang's "Some Reflections on the Difficulty of Translation", Willard V. Quine's "Meaning and Translation", and Roman Jakobson's "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", are the only ones in the book that take into account non-western languages.

The essays of this part, although differing from each other in many respects, have one concern common to them all: the necessity of trying to "approximate the form", as the editor states in his Introduction (p. 7). This phrase, originally taken from Valéry, is elaborated by Jackson Mathews in "Third Thoughts on Translating Poetry" (p. 67 ff.) as follows: "The translator has to invent formal effects in his own language that give a sense of those produced by the original in its own." To evoke a "sense of formal relation to the original", he has to work by analogy, not by imitation, and he has to resist the temptation "to fall under the spell of the model, to try to imitate its obvious features, even its syntax, or to mimic the voice of the other poet" (pp. 67-68). This point is especially stressed in the book because many articles (at least eight out of sixteen) are wholly or primarily concerned with the translation of poetry, i.e. that kind of composition where form is most important. In this the book is typical of its kind, according to one of the contributors, John Hollander, who remarks that "the problem of translating poetry has been taken somehow as the model for all translating problems, both because of particular pitfalls and a general hopelessness," ("Versions, Interpretations, and Performances," p. 209). This special stress on poetry might possibly give rise to the misconception that "approximation of form" is a problem in poetic translation only. Fortunately Edwin Muir points out the importance of formal elements in prose also; for instance the word order in the writing of Franz Kafka "not only expresses his meaning but is involved as part of it; only in that order

[1] Cf. TBT X (July 1959) pp. 148-164.

could he have said what he had to say," ("Translating from the German" p. 93).

In how far is this "approximation of form", this "invention of formal effects" in the receptor language possible? And—supposing for a moment that we can neatly distinguish between 'meaning' and 'form'—are we able to approximate the form and at the same time be faithful to the meaning of the original? Both things seem to be so nearly incompatible that one feels tempted to speak, as we have seen already, of "general hopelessness" of the translation task, or to state (as is done by Jackson Mathews, p. 77) that a poem can best be translated both in verse and in prose, the verse apparently to give a sense of formal relation, the prose to "take the onus off the verse of being expected to say exactly what the original says, which no verse translation can do and live." This could be cited as an argument for the use of a rhymed version of the Psalms in worship alongside with a prose translation in the Bible. But it amounts nevertheless to the splitting up of the work of translating as well as of the reading, understanding and appreciation of the translation.

An attempt to escape—partially at least—from this dilemma seems to be made where a line is drawn between literary and ordinary translation (Hollander, p. 207), or between the "verbal mythology" of language and its cognitive function (Jakobson, p. 236f.[2]). The ordinary translation, then, of works merely for information does not need the approximation of form, or at least does not need it so urgently as his literary partner. A similar distinction seems to be made in some of the other articles (Douglas Knight's "Translation: The Augustan Mode", p. 196, and Renato Poggioli's "The Added Artificer", pp. 139, 145). In this dichotomy the "ordinary translation" is not quite the real thing, of course. We will do well to remember that Bible translating seems to fall largely under this category.

The question arises whether this "approximation of form" can be a postulate of general validity. Is it not wholly dependent on the proximity of languages? If so, the postulate cannot always be valid. In this connection Willard V. Quine's contribution could be quoted, where he states: "Translation between languages as close as Frisian and English is aided by resemblance of cognate word forms. Translation between unrelated languages, e.g. Hungarian and English, may be aided by

[2] The following is an excerpt from this passage:

"Any assumption of ineffable or untranslatable cognitive data would be a contradiction in terms. But in jests, in dreams, in magic, briefly, in what one would call everyday verbal mythology and in poetry above all, the grammatical categories carry a high semantic import. In these conditions the question of translation becomes much more entangled and controversial.

"Even such a category as grammatical gender, often cited as merely formal, plays a great role in the verbal mythological attitudes of a speech community. In Russian the feminine cannot designate a male person, nor the masculine specify a female. ... a Russian child, while reading a translation of German tales, was astounded to find that Death, obviously a woman (the Russian word being feminine), was pictured as an old man (German *der Tod*, masc.). *My Sister Life*, the title of a book of poems by Boris Pasternak, is quite natural in Russian, where "life" is feminine, but was enough to reduce to despair the Czech poet Josef Hora in his attempt to translate these poems, since in Czech this noun is masculine."

traditional equations that have evolved in step by a shared culture," (p. 148). Thus "containment in" a linguistically cognate "continuum or in a continuum of cultural evolution" (p. 170) may facilitate the translating process. And it is the approximation in form especially that is facilitated by it.

Perhaps it is revealing that the remark quoted is to be found in one of the few articles in the book that deal also with non-western languages, i.e. languages not contained in the linguistic or cultural continuum of Standard Average European, or SAE (to use Benjamin Lee Whorf's common denominator). It is for the same reason that Eugene Nida is more circumspect than many of the other contributors in giving a definition: "Translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language, first in meaning and secondly in style." This includes approximation of form but does not make it an indispensable condition. And it puts the cognitive function of language first: "When ... one must be abandoned for the sake of the other, the meaning must have priority over the stylistic forms" (p. 19) [3].

The chief virtue of a book like this is that it sets us thinking. The remarks made above are only meant to afford an example of the kind of problem about which it sets us thinking.

I would add a few words about just one other problem that is mentioned: do we have simply to accept a mistake or unhappy wording in the original and to translate it as it stands, or should we correct the original and translate accordingly? Vladimir Nabokov, in tracing back allusions to and quotations from English literature for a translation of Pushkin (in the same way as a N.T. scholar may try to define allusions to or quotations from the Old Testament for passages in the New Testament, e.g. Acts 2:24 or Mark 4:12), found that the source was not the English original but a—usually bad—French translation thereof (in the same way as allusions or quotations in the N.T. may be from the Greek of the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew original). The bad source often led to a bad quotation or allusion. The author, rightly I think, resisted "the formidable temptation" to render Pushkin's line beautifully in accordance with the English original, and preferred to render it as it stood, in accordance with the French translation that Pushkin had in mind (p. 102 ff.). He entitles his essay ironically "The Servile Path". This kind of servility is certainly the Bible translator's task, even his privilege. It is a specific application of the general rule that the translator should not try to improve his source, which is clearly exemplified in Justin O'Brien's contribution. He points out that Camus, in speaking of "le battement cadencé de la double pagaie aux ailes couleur de fruit," is in fact using a false metaphor, the 'wings' belonging to the canoe and only being formed by the paddle. Yet, in translating he kept to the metaphor, false as it was: "the cadenced beat of the double paddle's bright coloured wings," (cf. "From French to English" p. 89 ff.). This is to be preferred to Rolfe Humphries' principle: "If there are rare moments when I think I can improve on him [my author],

[3] Cf. TBT X (July 1959) pp. 154-55.

and not violate his spirit, I must not, out of modesty, refrain, for I shall already have weakened so many passages that the debt is still all on my side," (cf. "Latin and English Verse" p. 66). Attractive as the thought is, it leads the translator on dangerous paths and to ends he should not try to reach, I think.

Mention has already been made in the previous remarks of several articles in Part II. We confine ourselves, therefore, to noting the editor's contribution, in which six translations of Aeschylus' "Agamemnon" are compared, giving special attention to the norms of and conceptions about poetic language that each of them betrays. The essay shows us how deeply each translation is influenced by the poetic taste and modes of thought of its time. It might be interesting to make a similar comparison of several older and more recent translations of the Psalms.

In Part III Bayard Quincy Morgan gives (a) an anthology of eight pithy judgments about the art of translation, gathered from six centuries, (b) an introduction to the bibliography, and (c) a selective list of books and articles on translation, ranging from Cicero in 46 B.C. to Boris Pasternak in 1958 A.D. The items are followed by short critical comments "intended to reveal the basic character of most of the titles listed" (p. 273). The works included are, of course, mostly English, but some in Latin, French, German and Slavonic languages guard against one-sidedness.

Every selection is subjective by definition. So is this one; there could be added to it, for instance, Paul Valéry's "Variations on the Eclogues" [4] mentioned by Jackson Mathews as "one of the finest modern essays on the art of translation" (p. 75). But this does not detract in the least from the usefulness of the list, which is still heightened by the index of authors' names (pp. 295-297).

From the rich book under review I have, as it were, picked up a few of 'the crumbs that fall from the master's table' to provide some points for discussion. In closing I want to express the admiration of an astonished foreigner: how learned must be the country where even "readers for pleasure" (see cover) are able to read and understand an English essay on translation giving parts of its argument in Chinese (cf. p. 112 ff.)!

J. L. Swellengrebel

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[4] "Traduction en vers des Bucoliques de Vergile," précédée de "Variations sur les Bucoliques" (written in 1944, first edition 1953, reprinted for Librairie Gallimard, Paris 1956.)