

syllable to begin with and most of them came only later to have the stress pattern they still have. They did not thus normally take part in the change [-is/-əs] > [-iz/-əz] > [-z] of the first type, which affected only unstressed inflexional morphemes.

However, since the change of stress pattern and the reduction of unstressed syllables partly overlapped in time (15th century),⁴ it is likely that there was variability in the -ys/-is/-es names in ME. If a name of the second category had its stress moved to the first syllable early in the stress-shifting process, it could become a candidate for participation in the unstressed-syllable-reduction process, particularly if it was used as a surname, readily seen as a patronymic like Alfreds, etc. This could well have happened to the name Pepys, which is from “the OF personal name *Pepis*... Pepys is the family name of the Earls of Cottenham, which title was granted in 1850. Records of the manor of Cottenham, Cambs., show bearers of the name living there as early as 1290. The diarist Samuel Pepys was a member of this family” (Hanks & Hodges). The spelling of the name would then be traditional and conservative – when the pronunciation changes, spellings remain unchanged more often in the case of names, both proper names and place-names, than in the case of common nouns.⁵

As for Glamis, “[t]he name (pronounced Glaams) is derived from the Gaelic, *glamhus*, ‘a wide gap’, ‘a vale.’” (*Encyclopædia Britannica*.) One Stephen del Glames held lands near Lyntonrothrik in Scotland c. 1200, perhaps referring to Glamis in Angus (Black 1946). Again the name appears to be monomorphemic, at least to an English ear; the -ys/-is/-es ending is thus not an inflexional morpheme. Essentially the same development as was suggested for Pepys above might then be possible for Glamis. The end result of the changes is in any case yet another couple of phonologically unpredictable names, to add to an already impressive collection.

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⁴ The stressing of French loanwords was unstable for centuries, Jordan 1934:218.

⁵ “Among curiosities of nomenclature is to be mentioned the divergence between the written and the uttered form of many English surnames. In some cases it is the orthography which has suffered, the old pronunciation being retained; in others the spelling has undergone little change, and the spoken name has become more easy to articulate.” Ewen 1931:344.

MARIA PROITSAKI

A “Circus-Freak” and 20,000 Other Migrants in Rita Dove's *Museum*

When Rita Dove, the African American writer, came to Europe for the first time in 1974, she experienced various reactions to her blackness. On the one hand she was seen as an oddity, people stared, or even pointed at her, making her feel as being “on constant display” (Taleb-Khyar 350). On the other hand, she was seen as an American. She was Black, but she was treated differently from the way she was treated in America because she was Black (Rubin and Ingersol 233). However, Dove often realized that she was almost invisible as a person to those around her: she was only a shell, an object, a representative for all Black Americans, and she was pitied as “a symbol for centuries of brutality and injustice against Blacks” (Rubin and Ingersol 233; Taleb-Khyar 351). But if she felt alienated in Europe, she had already experienced alienation at home. There is an “awareness of Difference” she claims, that Blacks, and members of minority groups in general, grow up with” (Taleb-Khyar 351).¹ While Dove's experience could be a case of an oversimplified white/other binary, the “awareness of Difference” that she mentions is today shared by an increasing number of people. During the last decades, an emphasis on ethnicity has made minority groups more visible and differences came into focus, or were invented where they did not previously exist. Difference is often based on visual grounds, but the Other is not always easily detectable. Class, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, historical and cultural aspects emerge as distinguishing factors for the classification of people into groups, and serve the construction of more or less visible Others.

Two of Rita Dove's poems from *Museum* (1983), “Agosta the Winged Man and Rasha the Black Dove,” and “Parsley,” deal with Others who are defined arbitrarily, on visual or acoustic grounds. In the first poem, inspired by a painting from 1929, which she encountered in Berlin, Dove explores otherness on the basis of skin color and physical handicap. In the second, she highlights an historical event from 1937, where language becomes the means of identification of Haitians in the Dominican Republic. I believe that seen together, the poems reveal risks lurking behind a role language might play as complementary to skin color, in the construction and exclusion of Others. Much like Dove herself, Rasha the “Black Dove” is with her dark skin easily identifiable in Germany. The black migrant workers

¹ See also Taleb-Khyar 354-355.

however, become “visible” first through their flawed language. Skin color and language seem here comparable, in the sense that they both serve as distinctive traits of the alleged Other. Language is very interesting in this context because, unlike color, it tends to be perceived as legitimate ground against which the Other is defined.

A painting created by the artist Christian Schad (1894-1982), “Agosta the Winged Man and Rasha the Black Dove,” portrays two circus-freaks: a man with a handicap which made him look as if he had wings, and a Black woman who used to perform on stage as a dancer with a snake. In the poem with the same title, Dove approaches these two freaks through the eyes of the painter, perhaps in an effort to reconstruct and reconsider the racism in the ideology of the time.

Rasha, whom Dove imagines to be a migrant from Madagascar, was considered odd due to her skin color and made her living by displaying herself in a circus show. Her classification as an oddity is supported here by her difference from another of the artist’s models, a white lady, whose pose and refined manners Schad remembers:

He remembered Katja the Russian
aristocrat, late
for every sitting,
still felling
the October Revolution –
how she clutched her sides
and said not
one word. (“Agosta” 41)

Katja’s strict and distant posture stands in great contrast to Rasha’s earthy figure. In the painter’s mind, Rasha is an exploited curiosity, a passive entertainer of vulgar crowds, as well as an ordinary woman who performs trivial chores: “When the lights dimmed, / Rasha went back to her trailer and plucked / a chicken for dinner” (41). Still, however sympathetic, Schad fails to disassociate Rasha from her role on stage emphasizing her savage physicality when he thinks of her moving “as if she carried / the snake around her body / always” (42). As opposed to Katja’s silence and her dramatic past, Rasha is obviously associated with nature. Her name, the snake, the plucking of chicken and the bringing of “fresh eggs into / the studio, flecked and / warm as breath” (42), seem to imply an immediacy with nature.² Furthermore, while the Russian appears to take modeling seriously, Rasha retains her casual manners even in the studio. For her the sittings are simply occasions of further display. Katja, on the other hand,

² If they are presented to the artist to be used for painting, the eggs could be seen as Rasha’s own contribution to her victimization.

has probably had her portrait ordered, and is therefore entitled to be late, or remain quiet if she chooses. The depiction of these two women operates then, as a confirmation of their status, and consequently establishes the inferiority of the Black woman. While both women are foreigners, Rasha is the one who is uncultivated and exotic.

In an artistic perspective this rare exotic sample commands documentation. Therefore, in Rasha’s case, having been endowed the privilege of portrayal is not positive treatment, as it does not occur for her own sake. Instead, her depiction, much as her exhibition on stage, takes place due to the rarity of her features and inevitably involves a racist perception of her by the painter, as by the viewers of the show. Rasha’s experience is by no means unique. Helga Crane, in Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand* (1928), is a Black woman, who moves to Europe and lives in Copenhagen for two years. Hazel Carby notes that Helga enjoys being appreciated at first, but she soon realizes that she is treated like “an exotic object, admired only as a representative of the primitive and the sensual” (169). A famous Danish artist who paints Helga’s portrait creates “an animalistic, sensuous creature on his canvas” (171-172). According to Carby, it is the fascination of the whites with the primitive and the exotic that turns Helga into “a mere object for white consumption” (172). The same applies here to Rasha: she becomes a romanticized stereotype, which stands for the primitive and which the whites feel free to exploit.

Rasha is dehumanized also in relation to Agosta, her fellow freak. Their representation, the object of the painter’s concern, reveals a kind of hierarchy: her dark skin is hardly enough for Rasha to qualify as an extraordinary protagonist. Her difference is not so extreme. Agosta, whose rarity is less fictive than her own, is more interesting visually. He is a natural wonder worth the attention of amazed medical students as well as the admiration of “women / trailing / backstage to offer him / the consummate bloom of their lust” (42). Agosta’s abnormal body construction in a way also contributes to his elevation to a celebrity level, allowing him to enjoy certain privileges. Being the main attraction, he is to be seated on a throne in the painting, while Rasha’s position at his feet is merely complementary:

Agosta in
classical drapery, then,
and Rasha at his feet.
Without passion. (42)

However arbitrary the grounds on which they are judged, the marginality of the two is taken for granted not only by those around them, but also by themselves. In the Germany of the late 1920s discriminating attitudes are overt, and victims seem not to have any illusions about their status. Rasha and Agosta are labeled as different and treated accordingly. Deprived of

hopes to evade discrimination, they choose to agree to play the role of the Other and express their perspective only through their calm and “merciless” gaze, which is ironically registered in the painting.

In “Parsley” on the other hand, the migrant Haitians, an ethnic minority in the Dominican Republic in the 1930s, are unaware of their difference until a dictator puts it into context. Visually they are not different from the locals, but their way of speaking Spanish differs, since their French mother tongue hinders the correct pronunciation of the letter “R”. It is their language then that betrays them, and as their presence is undesirable to the dictator Rafael Trujillo, he prepares their elimination taking language to his aid. His method is easy and efficient: people are asked to say “perejil,” the Spanish word for “parsley,” and those who fail to pronounce it lose their lives. For Dove this act is one of “arbitrary cruelty,” and her aim through the poem is “to try to understand that arbitrary quality of his cruelty” (Rubin and Ingersol 229, 232).

The poet tries to imagine a motive for a massacre of about 20,000 people and enters the dictator’s mind to trace his thoughts. Dove claims that the poem contains facts that are a product of research, but “what goes through Trujillo’s mind as he tries to find a way to kill someone” is her own invention (Rubin and Ingersol 230). She pictures the general on a certain Day of the Dead, pacing up and down uneasy. His sorrow for his dead mother, his memories of her, and the presence of her parrot in her empty room result in murderous frustration: “As he paces he wonders / who can I kill today” (“Parsley” 76). Dove follows how in memory of his mother he dictator orders sweets for the bird, how he looks at the sugar cane fields outside while old battlefield scenes unravel in his mind, and how the song of the Haitian workers in the fields, upsets him further.

He hears
the Haitians sing without R’s
as they swing the great machetes:
Katalina they sing, *Katalina*,

mi madre, mi amor en muerte. God knows
his mother was no stupid woman; she
could roll an R like a queen. Even
a parrot can roll an R! (76)

Due to their inability to pronounce the Spanish words correctly the immigrant workers are inferior even to the parrot, “who has traveled / all the way from Australia in an ivory / cage” (76). The general sees this as an insult to his mother. So when he hears the bird call his name “in a voice / so like his mother’s” (77) he breaks into tears and the connection between the killing and the word is made:

The general remembers the tiny green sprigs
men of his village wore in their capes
to honor the birth of a son. He will
order many, this time, to be killed

for a single beautiful word. (77)

Helen Vendler suggests that hearing the parrot, the dictator, as a son, feels dishonored by the people in his country who “cannot pronounce [his mother’s] language, cannot with the word ‘parsley’ (correctly enunciated), celebrate his male existence” (74). The irritation their language causes to the general then, makes the Haitians potential victims, as well as provides the means to their extinction.

The general’s reaction to accented speech could be a case in the study of language attitudes. Research in language attitudes shows that “listeners react emotionally, as well as evaluatively, to differences in a speaker’s accent” and that they feel “less pleasure” after hearing a speaker with a non standard accent than after hearing a speaker with a standard accent (Cargile and Giles 213). This is symptomatic of the existence of “‘emotional associates’ – particular emotions (in the case, less pleasurable ones) that accompany contact with representative members of particular social out-groups” (Cargile and Giles 207-208).³ In the poem however, the workers do not address the general. They sing spontaneously and their song neither fulfils a practical purpose nor claims artistic status. In fact, one could claim that the workers are not discouraged from singing in Spanish although their speech is differently accented. Their use of the Spanish language is therefore far from a sign of inadequacy or failure. In their case, not being able to roll an “R” is unessential, since it can neither influence their competence in the fields nor hinder their ability to communicate. Still, the “affective consequence” (Cargile and Giles 213) of their French accent is obviously negative.

But, in my opinion, Trujillo’s hostility may be more than the result of sudden intolerance combined with sinister imagination. His behavior is put under a different light, if one takes into consideration a remarkably similar incident described in *The Book of Judges* in the *Old Testament*, where the Gileadites make use of a word-test to identify their defeated enemies:

When any Ephraimite who had escaped begged leave to cross, the men of Gilead asked him, ‘Are you an Ephraimite?’, and if he said, ‘No’, they would retort, ‘Say Shibboleth’, and because he could not pronounce the word properly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. (Judg. 12:5-6)

³ Mary Louise Prat’s ideas around the assumed homogeneity of a “speech community” may also be of interest here (87-88).

Dove's comments and her amazement with the fact that the dictator "thought up this word," indicate that she ignored the biblical text when creating the general of the poem. "It fascinated me," she says, "that this man would think of such an imaginative way to kill someone, to kill lots of people; that, in fact, he must have gotten some kind of perverse joy out of finding a way to do it so that people would speak their own death sentences" (Rubin and Ingersol 230). Although there is no evidence proving a connection of the incident described in this text with the 1937 historical event, I find the striking similarity of the two cases intriguing.⁴ The assumption of an hypothetical relevance of the biblical incident in fact suggests new potential dimensions in the dictator's act.

If he was a good Christian, Trujillo might have encountered the word-test in his *Bible* and was, perhaps, encouraged by its efficiency. In that case, whether "perejil" was a word he decided upon thoughtlessly, or one that meant something to him, would only demonstrate how inclined he was to refine the method and adjust it in order to enjoy its use. Much as Dove imagines him in the poem, he might have kept searching, not for a reason or a way to kill, but for a word that made sense. However, if the idea of the test was not the product of his own imagination, only a mere appropriation of an existing model, the general must have been far more calculating about the destruction of the Haitian colony. At the same time, fetched from the *Bible* the test acquires some kind of ethical legitimacy. Perhaps then the dictator perceived his operation as justifiable, having found inspiration in the most legitimate religious piece of work.

Whether the operation is his own invention or a repetition of a previously performed one, I believe that the arbitrariness of the general's cruelty lies in the use of the word-test. Whatever his original reasons were, he was determined to order the Haitians' death. Their discrimination could be a result of his "evaluative reaction" to their accent, or he might simply be following the prescription of defining difference from the *Bible*. In any case, grounded on linguistic diversity, the Haitians' discrimination is extremely arbitrary.

This simple but very sophisticated language-test reveals the existence of a surprisingly wide range of aspects that could be used to define deviations from the norm. Different forms or degrees of discrimination are then to be expected since, as Madan Sarup points out, there is "a common assumption that there is only one norm; the dominant norm is the correct one, and others must adjust" (12). Because they are never given the opportunity to adjust,

⁴ In a note, Vendler presents a description of the event by Robert D. Crassweller from his *Trujillo* (New York: Mackmillan, 1966). The exposition here presents interesting similarities to the text in the *Bible*: "A crude test was adopted to probe the claim of Dominican nationality which the terrified Haitians often cried out. Everyone was asked to say the Spanish word perejil, and those who pronounced it pelegil, were damned as Haitians and cut down without further ado..." (135).

the otherness of Rasha and Agosta is permanent. They are openly objectified, to a greater or lesser degree, and kept at a distance as exotic (Sarup 10-11). The only alternative they have is to exploit their "abnormality." On the other hand, the Haitian migrants, who seem to have tried to assimilate, are defined as Others unexpectedly and on unpredictable grounds. With the word-test they are seemingly invited to prove that they are not different and to participate in the norm. But this is a mock alternative, designed so as to exclude them: unable to meet the unrealistic demand for standard Spanish, the Haitians are in fact forced to pronounce their conviction.

Ethnic purity is today being questioned, whereas the demand on migrants to achieve a pure language is in many cases extreme. Beyond Trujillo's extraordinary method, there are several, not so far fetched examples where controversial language tests are put into rather similar use.⁵ While millions of people communicate successfully in not so perfect English, in smaller speech communities, general, if vague, attitudes of suspicion or intolerance towards linguistic deviations reflect tendencies to set apart non-native speakers as outsiders. Especially in the west, language is one of the basic elements around which individual and national identities are constructed. Therefore there may be interesting dimensions in the existence of legitimate strategies, where language contributes to discrimination by providing the ground on which difference is defined. Through what could be a kind of colonization of the migrant, it seems to me that language functions as a self-defense system of dominant cultures.

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⁵ According to a modified immigration law in New Zealand, those who wish to establish themselves in the country should have a level in English that allows them to get accepted for university studies. This restriction, introduced in 1995, has caused a dramatic decrease in immigration. In Latvia, after the country's independence, ethnic Russians – even children born in the country – are refused citizenship if they fail to pass a language exam, which is so difficult that about 700,000 inhabitants are presently deprived of their civil rights. In Sweden, to identify the origin of especially African refugees and expel them to the correct country, the authorities depend upon speculative observations by language experts, who study the recorded speech of these individuals. Although this method has been much questioned, it is still used.

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MALL STÅLHAMMAR

Books on Literary Translation

Survey review

Docent Mall Stålhammar, engelska institutionen, Göteborgs universitet, medverkade i förra numret av *Moderna Språk* med en översiktsrecension av böcker i stilistik. Hon fortsätter här med en genomgång av aktuell litteratur inom ett annat av sina specialområden, översättning.

Books reviewed:

Gentzler, Edwin, Contemporary Translation Theories. London and New York: Routledge 1993. 224 pp. ISBN 0 415 09172 1 (paper).

Lefevere, André (ed.), Translation/History/Culture. A Sourcebook. London and New York: Routledge 1992. 182 pp. ISBN 0 415 07697 8 (hardback). Price: GBP 50.

Qvale, Per, Fra Hieronymus til hypertext. Oversettelse i teori og praksis. Oslo: Aschehoug 1998. 334 pp. ISBN 82 03 22226 9 (hardback). Price NKR 298.

Venuti, Lawrence, The Scandals of Translation. Towards an ethics of difference. London and New York: Routledge 1998. 210 pp. ISBN 0 415 16929 5 (paper). Price: GBP 15.99.

Venuti, Lawrence, The Translator's Invisibility. A history of translation. London and New York: Routledge 1995. 353 pp. ISBN 0 415 11538 8 (paper). Price: GBP 17.99.

(All the books under review deal with *literary* translation – works on the translation of non-literary texts will be the subject of a forthcoming review.)

Like so many professional translators (cf the volume of interviews, articles etc in honour of the late Giovanni Pontiero, prize-winning translator of e.g. Saramago; Orero & Sager 1997), Per Qvale points out the gap between theory and practice: all too few practising translators analyse their own work in writing, and literary translation in particular is rarely taught or analysed. He attempts to remedy this state of affairs in *Fra Hieronymus til hypertext*, in his own words "en kåserende avhandling, med essayistiske innslag, tidvis analytisk, stundom digressiv, ibland slentrene, undertiden lössluppen", covering translation theory through the ages, selected linguistic theory, (including dips into any science that may have a bearing on language), as well as concrete translation, word processing and publishing problems. The result is indeed a rambling, occasionally amusing but equally often confusing book in search of a critical editor to cut, structure and organise the material. Significantly enough, the most rewarding sections are those on translation theory (divided between chapters I and VI), where subject matter and