

# “Cultural Translation” vs. “Poetic Translation”? A Problematic Categorization in Translating Poetry. The Case of Arthur Rimbaud’s *Ophélie* in German

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## ABSTRACT

Translating poetry represents the most arduous duty for the literary translator. Despite of its artistic nature translating verses can be object of the scientific investigation and contribute to the development of the translation studies. The following paper aims to examine the dynamics and the tensions being generated between the source text and the cultural norms of the target text, which act on the translator and considerably influence the filter. The comparison of translations becomes a fruitful method of inquiry, as it permits to shine a light on the development of translating theory in a diachronic perspective, which contributes to the study of the comparative cultural history, as well. This is the goal of the following comparison between two German translations of Rimbaud’s *Ophélie*.

**Keywords:** Cultural Translation, Poetic Translation, Filter, History of Translation Studies.

¿“Traducción cultural” versus “traducción poética”? Una categorización problemática al traducir poesía. El caso de la *Ophélie* de Artur Rimbaud en alemán

## RESUMEN

La traducción de poesía es la tarea más compleja a la que se enfrenta el traductor literario. A pesar de su naturaleza artística, la traducción poética puede constituirse en objeto de la investigación científica y contribuir al desarrollo de los Estudios de Traducción. El presente trabajo se centra en la dinámica entre el texto de partida y el texto meta, cuyas normas culturales actúan sobre el traductor y ejercen sobre él como filtro una considerable influencia. La comparación de traducciones resulta un método de investigación fructífero capaz de ilustrar desde una perspectiva diacrónica e interdisciplinar el desarrollo de la teoría de la tra-

ducción y también de la estilística comparada. Éste es el objetivo de la siguiente comparación de dos traducciones alemanas de la *Ophélie* de Rimbaud.

**Palabras clave:** traducción cultural, traducción poética, filtro, historia de los Estudios de Traducción.

**Sumario:** 1. The methodological relevance of comparing translations even for poetry. 2. Two translators in comparison: social, cultural and psychological aspects, which may determine the "cultural" or "poetic" nature of a translation. 3. The "Filter" as a place between ST and TT of linguistic-semantic deconstruction and reconstruction. 4. Investigation on the texts: translating methods, norms and strategies. 5. Conclusion: beyond the criteria of adequacy and acceptability. The critical approach to poetry translation.

Comparing translations can account for both the history of the transmission of a literary text within a foreign culture and bring out translation regularities, behaviors and norms, which might be related either to the conventions and the traditional perceptiveness of the target language/culture or to the translator's specific sensibility, taste and exegetical approach to the source text<sup>1</sup>. In this essay two German versions of Rimbaud's poem *Ophélie* enclosed in his first collection *Poésies* (1870) are compared and commented upon: Karl Klammer's *Ophelia* (1907) and Alexander Xaver Gwerder's *Ophelia* (1950). The main aim of this study is not to appraise the quality of the translations and to establish which is the best one, but to analyze how the peculiar devices of Rimbaud's poem are rendered in the foreign idiom and what kind of *filter* has acted in the interpretation and linguistic transfer from the French verses into the German ones. Moreover, the study offers – without giving a definitive solution to the problem – a further stimulus for reflection about the translatability-untranslatability of the lyric texts, insofar as poetry represents the highest level of linguistic density in a specific language<sup>2</sup>. Finally, an analysis of historical translations permits us to chronicle and trace the development of translation theory and practice from its origins to current ideas and habits of translating.

The Austrian officer Karl Anton Klammer (1879-1959) loved French literature and in the milieu of the Viennese Court he read Renaissance writers, in particular François Villon, and modern authors, above all Maurice de Maeterlinck and Arthur Rimbaud, whose works he translated into German around 1900. Klammer's texts, which exerted a sensible influence on the German expressionists and men of letters such as Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Klabund and Bertolt Brecht, are

<sup>1</sup> Although this essay does not principally aim at a stylistic analysis of Rimbaud's poem, the examination of a translation is a way of focusing on peculiar characteristics of the source text: "By looking at the original and the translation side by side and identifying those areas where translation turned out to be problematic, we can achieve a better appreciation of the original's qualities and complexities, and likewise of that phenomenon we call translation". (Park 1997: 13; Hermans 1985).

<sup>2</sup> "Wörter, Metrum, Rhythmus sind nicht mehr Ornament und Aufputz eines Sinnes, der auch anders ausdrückbar wäre, sondern sie sind so unauflöslich miteinander verbunden wie die beiden Seiten des Sausureschen Blattes Papier." (Reichert 2003: 49).

actually still considered to be the reference German translations of Villon's and Rimbaud's poetic works (Klammer 1955/56; Grimm 1960). His translation *Ophelia* was so widespread and appreciated that it set the tone to the vogue of the *Wasserleichenpoesie* (poetry of drowned corpses) in the German *Fin de siècle*. Alexander Xaver Gwerder (1923-1952) was a Swiss poet, who earned his living with his job as an offset-printer (Gwerder 1998; Bucheli 1994; Perret 1981; Fringeli 1970). Overwhelmed by the cultural narrowness of his militarized homeland unblemished by the sorrow of the Holocaust and urged into writing by the dream of evasion and freedom, he translated a few verses from the French symbolist poets without any particular intention of publication. Translating was to Gwerder a literary practice, which could ease him to the stylistic transfer and the process of soaring to highly poetic models such as Paul Valéry and Arthur Rimbaud.

Although both translators looked at the "damned poet" and the French lyric of symbolism as an incomparable *exemplum* of literature, the filter working in their translating activity is regulated by quite different norms. The concept "filter" may refer both to the translation as a (target) text acting on the cultural target-system (language, literature and ideas of the foreign milieu) and to the translation as a process/action concerning the translator and his world. In the latter case the filter consists of all factors determining and characterizing the translator's approach to the source text, from the choice of translating it up to the decision to publish it. In order to precisely define the filter having effects on a translation activity, psychological (sexual/genre) and psycholinguistic, historical, ethnic, sociopolitical and national-cultural aspects should be taken into consideration, as translation studies request an interdisciplinary and integrated approach (Snell-Hornby 1988, 1995, 2006; Sakai 1997). The filter is not understood as a barrier or a threshold, but it is rather the porous and semi-permeable membrane through which the source text passes to become translated text; it is the free space where code deconstruction and reconstruction take place. Every fiber of the membrane is thus similar to a nerve center which elaborates certain aspects of the text and gives an input turning into verbal transfer. The degree of permeability/impermeability of the filter varies depending on the above-mentioned factors. Translations can obviously reveal both what type of filter has acted in a specific epoch and milieu and give some important indication of the editorial and literary-cultural policy of a nation from a historical perspective.

Klammer was mainly a translator and a royal officer. French represented the dignifying language of the European imperial courts and an aristocratic code of expression, which had always influenced and ennobled the Viennese of the Hapsburg Court as well as the Austrian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the mythical *Austria felix*, where different peoples, faiths and languages should have happily coexisted, translation was a political matter as well. Therefore, the filter having an effect on his translation was rather sociocultural and normed by the literary tradition (target culture)<sup>3</sup>. Although a translation must inevitably be "a voluntary act

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the aesthetic and intimate nature of the poetic genre and to the dating of the analyzed translations, the concept "Cultural Translation" is here not to be understood in the modern sociopolitical and

that reveals his history and the socio-political milieu that surrounds him; in other words, his own culture [and ideology]" (Alvarez and Vidal 1996: 8), Gwerder translated independently facing Rimbaud and torn by both an inferiority complex and an opposite desire for poetic glory. He swung between the urge of identification with the *poète maudit* and the longing for world renown thanks to his poetic revolution beyond every *diktat* of the tradition. His filter was rather psychological and governed by an aesthetic motivation; creativity and challenge moved Gwerder's translating as if it were about a real poetic invention. However, what turns out to be perhaps unexpected here is that a sociocultural filter, which matches with a cultural goal too (in Klammer), does not necessarily correspond to a high degree of "fidelity to the original"; in the same manner, a poetic filter does not prove to be needfully acceptability-oriented (in Gwerder). In other words, even though strategies, norms and goals of the analyzed texts permit us to classify one as a mostly "cultural" translation and the other as a mainly "poetic" translation, they bring some results in the linguistic transfer, which cannot be simply defined on the basis of the "equivalence"<sup>4</sup> or the strategies figured out by André Lefevere (Lefevere 1975). It entails for this essay aiming to blend theoretical and "Descriptive Translation Studies" the impossibility to formulate pragmatic laws and drawing implications for the task of translating poetry<sup>5</sup>.

*Ophélie* (Arthur Rimbaud, 1870)

I.

Sur l'onde calme et **noire** où dorment les **étoiles**

**La blanche Ophélie flotte comme un grand lys,**

**Flotte très lentement, couchée en ses longs voiles...**

– On entend dans les bois lointains des hallalis..

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intercultural meaning deriving from Bhabha (1994). Klammer knew von Humboldt's and Herder's and Romantic theories about translating as a cultivation in both individual and social sense. Herder "understood *das Fremde* as a sort of added value that refines the language of the translator and his or her nation. For him, the German language in itself has no classical character, but it can acquire this through translations from the classical languages Greek and Latin (see Herder, *Über die neuere deutsche Literatur*). It is therefore only translation that can endow the German language and culture with a classical quality. Otherwise, German would remain imperfect, since in its original form it finds itself in a kind of linguistic state of nature, a condition of language before its first encounter with other languages before its first translation." (Buden, Nowotny, Simon, Bery & Cronin 2009).

<sup>4</sup> The concept of "equivalence" applied to the modern translation studies started with the linguistic theory of Russian formalism and structuralism and Jakobson's classification of the "Equivalence in Difference" in three kinds: Intralingual, Interlingual and Intersemiotic (cf. Jakobson 1959). Eugene Albert Nida introduced the construct of a cultural-oriented equivalence by underlining the "Dynamic Equivalence" of a translation (Nida 1964). Among the more recent taxonomies and approaches toward equivalence M. Baker's text *A Coursebook on Translation* is noteworthy as well as J.C. Catford's linguistic-cultural theories (cf. Catford 1996).

<sup>5</sup> The definition comes from Gideon Toury's book *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995). This study about the German translations of Rimbaud's *Ophélie* refers methodologically and theoretically to Toury's quoted book and to Toury, 1980.

**Voici plus de mille ans que** la triste Ophélie  
 Passe, fantôme **blanc**, sur le long **fleuve noir**  
**Voici plus de mille ans que** sa douce **folie**  
 Murmure sa romance à la **brise** du soir

Le **vent** baise ses **seins** et déploie en corolle  
 Ses **grands voiles** bercés mollement par les **eaux**;  
 Les saules **frisonnants** pleurent sur son épaule,  
 Sur son **grand front rêveur** s'inclinent les roseaux.

Les nénuphars froissés **soupirent** autour d'elle;  
 Elle éveille parfois, dans un aune qui dort,  
 Quelque nid, d'où s'échappe un petit **frisson** d'aile:  
 - Un **chant** mystérieux **tombe** des astres d'or

## II.

O **pâle** Ophélie ! belle comme la **neige**!  
 Oui tu mourus, **enfant**, par un **fleuve** emporté!  
 C'est que les **vents tombant** des **grand** monts de Norwège  
 T'avaient parlé tout bas de l'âpre **liberté**;

**C'est qu'**un souffle, tordant ta **grande** chevelure,  
 À ton esprit **rêveur** portait d'étranges bruits,  
 Que ton coeur écoutait le **chant** de la Nature  
 Dans les plaintes de l'arbre et les **soupirs** des **nuits**;

**C'est que** la voix des mers **folles**, immense râle,  
**Brisait** ton **sein d'enfant**, trop humain et trop doux;  
**C'est qu'**un matin d'avril, un beau cavalier **pâle**,  
 Un pauvre **fou**, s'assit muet à tes genoux!

Ciel ! Amour ! **Liberté** ! Quel **rêve**, ô pauvre **Folle**!  
 Tu te fondais à lui comme une **neige** au feu:  
 Tes **grandes** visions étranglaient ta parole  
 - Et l'Infini terrible éffara ton oeil bleu!

## III.

- Et le Poète dit qu'aux rayons des **étoiles**  
 Tu viens chercher, la **nuît**, les fleurs que tu cueillis;  
 Et qu'il a vu sur l'**eau**, **couchée en ses longs voiles**,  
**La blanche Ophélie flotter, comme un grand lys.**<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bold font aims here to show the thick weave of lexical and musical cross-references in the poem.

The poem, which was an “*exercice de style*” of the seventeen-year-old Rimbaud, consists of nine quatrains of alexandrines in alternate rhyme. The third part is composed of an only stanza and reminds of the form of the *lamentatio funebris* (complaint); in the last quatrain the poet repeats parts of the initial lines (“*étoiles*”, “*long voiles*”, “*La blanche Ophélie flotte[r], comme un grand lys*”) in the form of a typical “ring composition” (*Ringkomposition*), which reminds of Théodore de Banville’s poems, the *parnassien* author to whom Rimbaud sent his *Ophélie* in 1870<sup>7</sup>. Despite the outwardly rigid structure of rhymes and stanzas the rhythm of the poem is quite fluent and its musicality fascinated Banville and the French symbolist poets – Stéphane Mallarmé *in primis*:

Sur l’onde calme et noire où dorment les étoiles  
 La **blanche** Ophélie **flotte** **comme un grand lys**,  
**Flotte** très **lentement**, couchée **en ses longs voiles**...  
 - **On entend dans** les bois **lointains** des hallalis.

**Voici plus de mille ans que** la triste Ophélie  
 Passe, **fantôme blanc**, sur le **long** fleuve noir  
**Voici plus de mille ans que** sa douce folie  
 Murmure sa romance à la brise du soir

The “*arabesques sonores*” of *Ophélie* are signs and suggestions of sense. The alliterations of liquid and nasal consonants, the sound references and lexical reiterations flow in these first lines like “l’onde calme et noire” of “le long fleuve noir” and create not only a melodious poem (“romance”) but also a living song (“le chant [mystérieux de la Nature]”), as Rimbaud himself stated: “Si ces vers trouvaient place au *Parnasse contemporain*? – Ne sont-ils pas la foi des poètes? [...] Ces vers croient; ils aiment; ils espèrent; c’est tout”<sup>8</sup>. The rhetorical device of the lexical and phonetic *repetitio*, which symbolizes the mythical time of the cyclic and eternal return, is a symbolic constituent for the mimesis and represents a very important linguistic characteristic of this poem, considering that literary French (likewise the romance languages in general) prefers the *variatio* as its main figure of the speech.

Contrasting shades of light dye the first four stanzas, which most critics consider to have been inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite John Everett Millais’s famous painting “Ophelia” (1851)<sup>9</sup>: in this evocative-descriptive fresco black (the water) and white (Ophelia’s body) blend and contrast at the same time. Moreover, becoming (liquid and nasal) sounds they call to mind the dramatic scene of Ophelia’s last

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Rimbaud’s letter to Banville of 24 mai 1870. One of the most interesting and comprehensive commentaries on Rimbaud’s poems is that of Suzanne Bernard (Rimbaud 1961/1999).

<sup>8</sup> A. Rimbaud: *A Théodore de Banville, Charleville (Ardennes), le 24 mai 1870*. In: *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> This relation between Millais’s painting (firstly exposed in France from 1855 and currently in the “Tate Gallery” of London) and Rimbaud’s poem already appears in one of the first but most authoritative studies about Rimbaud: Enid Starkie, *Rimbaud*, London, 1938. A literary source of inspiration was Théodore de Banville’s *La Voie Lactée* enclosed in the *Cariatides*.

singing while drowning, as it is narrated in Shakespeare’s tragedy. Furthermore, the importance the sound level has in this poem is witnessed by Rimbaud’s choice to change even the protagonist’s name (“Ophélie”, with the English termination appears in the second line to create assonance “a/o” – *La blanche Ophélie flotte comme un grand lys* –; the French “Ophélie” for the rhyme with the key word “folie” and the assonance with “triste”). Such “macroscopic” features of the source-text should be reproduced for the foreign reader and listener, as writing was equivalent for Rimbaud to a music composition (Levy 1969: 66)<sup>10</sup>.

Ophelia (Karl Klammer, 1907)

I.

Auf stiller, dunkler Flut, im  
Widerschein der Sterne,  
geschmiegt in ihre Schleier,  
schwimmt Ophelia bleich,  
sehr langsam, einer großen weißen  
Lilie gleich.  
Jagdrufe hört man aus dem Wald  
verklingen ferne.

Schon mehr als tausend Jahre sind  
es,  
daß sie, ein bleich Phantom, die  
schwarze Flut hinzieht,  
und mehr als tausend Jahre flüstert  
schon sein Lied  
ihr sanfter Wahnsinn in den Hauch  
des Abendwindes.

Die Lüfte küssen ihre Brüste sacht  
und bauschen  
zu Blüten ihre Schleier, die das  
Wasser wiegt.  
Es weint das Schilf, das sich auf  
ihre Schulter biegt.  
Die Weiden über ihrer hohen  
Stirne rauschen.

Im Schlummer einer Erle weckt sie  
hin und wieder  
Ein Nest, aus dem ein kleines

Ophelia (Alexander Xaver  
Gwerder, 1951)

I.

Auf samtener Welle, still, die  
Sterne drin schlafen,  
schwebt weiss die Wunderblüte  
Ophelias  
am Schweigen vorbei, das zart ihre  
Schleier trafen:  
Man hört aus dem nahen Gehölz  
die Rufe Dryas –

Hier treibt Ophelias traurighelle  
Beschwörung  
aus dunkler Vorzeit hin über  
schwarzem Fluss.  
Seit mehr denn tausend Jahr gilt  
die Betörung  
und lockt im linden Abendwind  
zum Kuss.

Küsst Wind ihre Brüste, entfaltet  
mit Edelsteinen  
entlang im weichem Geström ihren  
wiegenden Sylph –  
Auf schneeige Schultern  
schauernde Weiden weinen  
und träumend neigt sich vor ihrer  
Stirne das Schilf.

Ringsum sie seufzen die  
Wasserrosen und zittern...  
Bisweilen lockt aus irgendeinem

<sup>10</sup> In Levy’s opinion translation should be “eine künstlerische Reproduktion, das Übersetzen als Vorgang ein originales Schaffen, die Übersetzung als Kunstgattung ein Grenzfall an der Scheide zwischen reproduzierender und original schöpfer Kunst.”

Flügelflattern schlägt.  
Die Wasserrosen seufzen, wenn sie  
sie bewegt.  
Ein Weiheklang fällt von den  
goldnen Sternen nieder.

II.  
Ophelia, bleiche Jungfrau, wie der  
Schnee so schön,  
die du, ein Kind noch, starbst in  
Wassers tiefem Grunde:  
weil dir von rauher Freiheit ihre  
leise Kunde  
die Stürme gaben, die von  
Norwegens Gletschern wehn.

Weil fremd ein Föhn, der dir die  
Haare peitschte, kam  
Und Wundermär in deinen  
Träumersinn getragen;  
weil in dem Seufzerlaut der Bäume  
und im Klagen  
der Nacht dein Herz die Stimme  
der Natur vernahm.

Weil wie ein ungeheures Röcheln  
deinen Sinn,  
den süßen Kindersinn, des Meeres  
Schrei gebrochen;  
weil schön und bleich ein Prinz,  
der nicht ein Wort gesprochen,  
im Mai, ein armer Narr, dir saß zu  
deinen Knien.

Von Liebe träumtest du, von  
Freiheit, Seligkeit;  
du gingst in ihnen auf wie leichter  
Schnee im Feuer.  
Dein Wort erwürgten deiner  
Träume Ungeheuer.  
Dein blaues Auge löschte die  
Unendlichkeit.

III.  
Nun sagt der Dichter, daß im  
Schoß der Nacht du bleich  
die Blumen, die du pflücktest,  
suchst, in deine Schleier  
gehüllt, dahinziehst auf dem

Nest  
im Schlaf der Erlen lau sie  
Flügelflittern:  
Gesang voll Rätsel fällt vom  
Sternenfest.

II.  
Ophelia! Schön wie fallende  
Wolken aus Eis!  
Du starbest, Kind, durch ein  
gewaltiges Fließen –  
Das war, als Stürme aus  
Norwegens Gletscherkreis  
von seligem Aufruhr sprachen, die  
Freiheit verhiessen;

das war, als ein Wirbel von Atem  
dein Haar überfuhr,  
in deinen Traumflug fremdeste  
Laute drangen –,  
als hoch dein Herzschlag  
schluchzte, sang Natur:  
Die taube Klage des Baums und  
Nachtseufzer sangen.

Das war, als die Stimme der Meere  
dir giftig und bitter,  
zu süß und zu irdisch die jungen  
Brüste zerfetzte;  
als morgens im frischen April der  
fahledle Ritter,  
ein armer Narr, sich stumm an die  
Knie dir setzte.

O Himmel! Liebe! Freiheit! –  
Welch ein Schaun!  
Du mischtest dich mit ihm wie  
Schnee und Feuer –  
Deine grossen Gesichte erstickten  
das Wort im Vertraun,  
- Am All erschranken die Augen dir  
ungeheuer!

III.  
Und der Dichter sagt, dass nun in  
den Strahlen der Sterne,  
die einstigen Blumen du suchst,  
die Nacht die geschah;  
und dass er, in Schleier gehüllt,



dunklen, stillen Weiher,  
im Schein der Sterne, einer großen Lilie  
gleich.

dich sagenferne,  
auf schwarzer Tiefe als Lilie  
treiben sah ...

With regard to the form of the poem both translations preserve the original division into three parts, which correspond to three thematic units too. While Gwerder maintains the alternate rhyme, Klammer inexplicably transforms it into a pattern ABBA, a usual – but not the most usual – rhyme scheme in the classical Goethe and in the German Romanticism, in Mörike, Heine, and later in Trakl and Rilke. Klammer's license brings to results, which might seem particularly appreciable at first glance. In the first stanza the rhymed words generate, in fact, highly symbolic semantic units ("Sterne"- "ferne" and "Ophelia bleich"- "Lilie gleich"), which is not evident in Gwerder ("schlafen"- "trafen" and "Ophelias"- "Dryas"). Nevertheless, Rimbaud's rhyme "lys"/"hallalis" aims here to underline the polarity Beauty-Death characterizing the whole poem focused on the coexistence of the contraries in the instant of Ophelia's passing. Gwerder's version respects Rimbaud's intention: Ophelia is linked with the war cry of the mythical Dryas (the god-oak), Ares' son killed by the brother Tereus. On the one hand, the philological and cultural translator Klammer reveals a source-oriented method in his version, insofar as he aims at mostly reproducing the "ring composition" by iterating lexical units, which also constitute principal characteristics of this poem at a sound and rhetorical level – "im Schein der Sterne", "einer großen Lilie gleich", the repetition of "gehüllt", the attributes "dunkel, still, bleich" and the word "Schleier" –. On the other hand, Klammer's translation is not particularly adherent to the source text: his search for a prosodic and rhetorical equivalence smooths out, for instance, the important relation between Ophelia and the Poet, who sees her corpse and the white lily, the symbol of her holy purity and royalty, beauty and transience together ("Et qu'il a vu [...] La blanche Ophelia flotter" has no correspondence in German) – an osmosis/distance which involves further levels of significance: the relation between the Death and Rimbaud himself, the two spheres of diegesis and reality, the dimensions of myth and history.<sup>11</sup> Gwerder might instead adopt in this case a serial method of translation and not recognize the important repetitions of the original poem: in his version only "Schleier" and "Sterne" appear. Nevertheless, he can otherwise compensate this loss through a quatrain rich in assonance and alliterations produced by the sounds "d", "sch" and the vowel "a":

Und der Dichter sagt, dass nun in den Strahlen der Sterne,  
die einstigen Blumen du suchst, die Nacht die geschah;  
und dass er, in Schleier gehüllt, dich sagenferne,  
auf schwarzer Tiefe als Lilie treiben sah ...

<sup>11</sup> After and thanks to Rimbaud's *Ophélie* a cult for the personage came out in the *Fin de siècle* in Germany (in the German Studies the movement is called *Opheliakult* or *Ophelia-Modewelle*): "Rimbauds Gedicht, das den Opheliakult des fin-de-siècle auslöst, stellt den Versuch einer empathischen Annäherung an die traurige, die tote Ophelia dar, von der es im Gedicht heißt, dass ihr Schicksal sich schon seit mehr als tausend Jahren darin erfüllt, einer weißen Lilie gleich auf dem Wasser dahinzugleiten". (Stuby 1992: 165).

Translating poetry keeping the metrical scheme of the source text requests handling lexical and syntactic material in order to recreate the whole effect of the original on the foreign reader. Gwerder turns out to be anything but a serial translator: sound echoes of this last stanza have great affinity just with the initial quatrain (cf. alliterations “a” and “sch”):

Auf samtener Welle, still, die Sterne drin schlafen,  
schwebt weiss die Wunderblüte Ophelias  
 am Schweigen vorbei, das zart ihre Schleier trafen:  
 Man hört aus dem nahen Gehölz die Rufe Dryas –

Despite some lexical losses – above all the semantic modulation in the order of the specification/explicitation “Wunderblüte”, which eliminates the key word “Lilie” – Gwerder reproduces here the “ring composition” at the level of the sonorities. What both translators ignore is Rimbaud’s peculiar usage of the dashes: these punctuation marks signalize that the poet penetrates the diegesis and refers to himself. In the lines marked and highlighted by the dashes Rimbaud compares his artistic experience with Ophelia’s drama and his *mal de vivre* with her madness. Klammer and Gwerder seem not to have recognized the relevance of this punctuation mark. The former neutralizes such a strong and highly significant element completely, whereas the latter manipulates it by creating suspension and multiplying voids at the end of the lines through dashes, commas and dots. This feature witnesses Gwerder’s presence overcoming Rimbaud’s dictation. To be more precise, he projects his urge for creativity and his desperate search for a personal style onto Rimbaud’s writing. In fact, fragmentation and a glut of silences characterizes Gwerder’s own verses. Klammer’s translation appears ruled by the attempt of dulling Rimbaud’s impetus and strength of feelings: indeed, apostrophes and exclamation marks disappear in Klammer’s version in the same way.

## II.

O pâle Ophélie ! belle comme la neige !  
 Oui tu mourus, enfant, par un fleuve emporté !  
 C’est que les vents tombant des grand monts de Norwège  
 T’avaient parlé tout bas de l’âpre liberté ;

[...]

C’est que la voix des mers folles, immense rôle,  
 Brisait ton sein d’enfant, trop humain et trop doux ;  
 C’est qu’un matin d’avril, un beau cavalier pâle,  
 Un pauvre fou, s’assit muet à tes genoux !

Ciel ! Amour ! Liberté ! Quel rêve, ô pauvre Folle !  
 Tu te fondais à lui comme une neige au feu :  
 Tes grandes visions étranglaient ta parole  
 - Et l’Infini terrible éffara ton oeil bleu !

Klammer

II.

Ophelia, **bleiche** Jungfrau, wie  
der **Schnee** so **schön**,  
die du, ein Kind noch, starbst in  
Wassers tiefem Grunde:  
weil dir von rauher **Freiheit** ihre  
leise Kunde  
die Stürme gaben, die von  
Norweges Gletschern wehn.

[...]

Weil wie ein **ungeheures**  
Röcheln deinen Sinn,  
den süßen Kindersinn, des  
Meeres Schrei gebrochen;  
weil **schön** und **bleich** ein Prinz,  
der nicht ein Wort gesprochen,  
im Mai, ein armer Narr, dir saß zu  
deinen Knien.

Von Liebe träumtest du, von  
**Freiheit**, Seligkeit;  
du gingst in ihnen auf wie  
leichter **Schnee** im Feuer.  
Dein Wort erwürgten deiner  
Träume **Ungeheuer**.  
Dein blaues Auge löschte die  
Unendlichkeit.

Gwerder

II.

Ophelia! Schön wie fallende  
Wolken aus Eis!  
Du starbest, Kind, durch ein  
gewaltiges Fliessen –  
Das war, als Stürme aus  
Norwegens Gletscherkreis  
von seligem Aufruhr sprachen,  
die **Freiheit** verhiessen;

[...]

Das war, als die Stimme der  
Meere dir giftig und bitter,  
zu süß und zu irdisch die jungen  
Brüste zerfetzte;  
als morgens im frischen April der  
fahledle Ritter,  
ein armer Narr, sich stumm an die  
Knie dir setzte.

O Himmel! Liebe! **Freiheit!** –  
Welch ein Schauen!  
Du mischtest dich mit ihm wie  
Schnee und Feuer –  
Deine grossen Gesichte erstickten  
das Wort im Vertraun,  
– Am All erschranken die Augen  
dir ungeheuer!

The second part of the poem carries forward the osmotic process involving the author and the heroine by enhancing the symbolic valence of the protagonist, which becomes a real archetype of denied childhood<sup>12</sup>, of a young soul torn and defeated by all nameless evil of the world. It is about a cosmic and metaphysical evil, which involves every domain of the being: nostalgia and beauty ("belle come la neige!"), nature and heart, existence and dream: "Ciel! Amour! Liberté! Quel rêve, ô pauvre Folle!". From the invocation to the "pâle Ophelia" up to the apostrophe to the "poor madwoman" invoked-evoked entities flow in an intensifying climax of ontological essence. Love, Heaven and Beauty merge into the sea of the Dream-Freedom and lead to the panic conclusion of the madness. Madness linked with suicide – the supreme marks of damnation – permits Ophelia-Rimbaud to reach the infinite and the unknown dismay, where polarities blend ("comme une neige au feu"). Vision

<sup>12</sup> The noun "enfant" ("Où tu mourus, enfant, ...", "Brisait ton sein d'enfant...") has no feminine form and may therefore be considered neuter in French like the German "Kind" or the English "child".

and silence ("Tes grandes visions étranglaient ta parole") will be the *Illuminations* of the mature Rimbaud's *Saison en enfer*.

Translations should be studied as historical documents, whose examination can reveal norms and methods peculiar to a specific phase within the diachronic development of translating practice as well as modern translation studies<sup>13</sup>. In the conservative culture of the Court of Hapsburg aesthetic values of the ancient-classical and German-romantic tradition were in force around 1900. Klammer's translation matches taste and expectations of his times and social class. In the name of balance, fluency and linearity Klammer levels stylistic rushes and rifts to the extent of neutralizing the original climax and the epistemological value of the madness: in the verse "Von Liebe träumtest du, von Freiheit, Seligkeit" the translator even eliminates every hint of folly, so that the "pauvre Folle" by Rimbaud seems to relieve herself in an inner bliss. Folly is related with the Ophelia's ancestral, a thousand-year-old singing (in the seventh line), which, in turn, recalls the poet's singing. "Ein armer Narr" of the previous line finds no correspondence and no musical echo in the last quatrain. Because of such syntactic-semantic modifications Ophelia does not walk – and not melt – into madness, but into love, freedom and beatitude by Klammer ("du gingst in ihnen auf"), so that Rimbaud's symbolic heroine turns from an archetype of the future *bateau ivre* nearly into a redeemed *schöne Seele*, a typical theme of the German literary culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The negative meaning of "Ungeheuer", which had intensified the expression "mers folles" in the penultimate stanza by neutralizing the key attribute "fou", refers to the dreams ("grandes visions") as a consequence of a syntactic-pragmatic modification. It appears quite inconsistent in this context, as the strong French verb "effarer" is translated with "löschen", a semantic modulation in the order of the leveling. As it is evident, microstructural shifts, which can be noted at a semantic, stylistic and pragmatic level, entail considerable effects on the macrostructural level of the target text (van Leuven-Zwart 1989 and 1990). Gwerder would like to penetrate the silences emerging between punctuation marks, words and lines: he knows that every break in the music pace is a metaphysical piece of infinity and truth. Therefore, he aims at putting emphasis on rifts and creating further blanks. Not only the exclamation marks of the source text but also three dashes fragment and scan the phases of Ophelia's anabasis towards the infinity. The most important dash is the last one, where the poet pronounces his definite sentence. Once again, Gwerder can be perfectly adherent to the sound level of the poem: the last line "– Am All erschraken die Augen dir ungeheuer!" presents significant alliterations and consonances, which are highly pertinent to Rimbaud's dictation. In the whole stanza the sound "sch", which can be reminiscent of the key words "schön" and "starbst" (the symbolic reigns of Beauty and

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<sup>13</sup> The scientific nature and status of the Translation Studies (in German "Übersetzungswissenschaft") is still under discussion: "Mit dem Begriff Übersetzungswissenschaft wird keine exakte Wissenschaft postuliert, denn davon kann beim Übersetzen nicht die Rede sein: vielmehr handelt es sich hier um eine Geisteswissenschaft wie bei der Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, bei den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften." (Snell-Hornby 1994: 10-11).

Death) of the first quoted stanza, ties all lines and – what is more – some very significant *Leitwörter*: "Schaun"- "mischtest/Schnee" -"erstickten" - "erschrecken". Through sound echos and the *voyelles*, which Rimbaud's pen transforms into colors and essences, dream, nature and death participate in Ophelia's metamorphose in Gwerder too. At a stylistic and lexical level his translation presents lexical additions and syncopes ("Schaun"/"im Vertrau") and manipulations in the order of the generalization ("Am All") or specification ("Gesichte") with the aim of maintaining the rhythm and sonority of the source text. Morphological and lexical modifications are very frequent in Gwerder's serial and rather target-oriented translating method. In the first quoted line, for instance, he neutralizes the key attribute "pâle" and instead of opting for a literary translation ("wie der Schnee so schön" is Klammer's solution, who marks the line through a widespread alliteration) he manipulates the meaning of the original by inventing new intensifying images, metaphors and metonymies ("fallende Wolken aus Eis" / "ein gewaltiges Fliessen" / "von seligem Aufruhr"). His aim is not so much that of maintaining the rhymes of the stanzas, but rather the hardening of the *poet maudit's* voice and rebellion ("Aufruhr"), in order to express his own protest against the Swiss provincial culture of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The poetic translation seems here to derive from an elective affinity between the two poets and to transfer rhythm, melody, meaning and language into a similar context creating new independent images and nuances. Klammer's linguistic and cultural translation turns out, on the contrary, to be adherent to the lexical, rhetorical and musical dictation of the source text: the figure of the repetition is generally respected and reproduced through significant lexical components ("Schnee", "Freiheit", "bleich", "schön"). Yet, important features of Rimbaud's style (apostrophes and dashes) and the element of the madness are totally neutralized, as already said, for they convey the poet's viewpoint and feelings towards the diegesis: the officer Klammer did not share Rimbaud's fondness for the literary damnation and the death. Nevertheless, that some solutions of Klammer's (i.e., "Gletschern" and "ein armer Narr") are borrowed by Gwerder means that his work enjoys a highly lyrical significance.

Even though Gwerder translated Rimbaud in the 50s after those decades (the 20s and 30s) rich in translations and innovative translating theories, his filter is rather psychological and artistic. His several semantic and pragmatic shifts in the target text demonstrate that the original lines represent to him a spring of poetic inspiration.

I.

Sur l'onde calme et noire où  
dorment les étoiles  
La blanche Ophélie flotte comme  
un grand lys,  
Flotte très lentement, couchée en  
ses longs voiles...  
- On entend dans les bois  
lointains des hallalis.

I.

Auf samtener Welle, still, die  
Sterne drin schlafen,  
schwebt weiss die Wunderblüte  
Ophelias  
am Schweigen vorbei, das zart  
ihre Schleier trafen:  
Man hört aus dem nahen Gehölz  
die Rufe Dryas –

Voici plus de mille ans que la  
triste Ophélie  
Passe, fantôme blanc, sur le long  
fleuve noir  
Voici plus de mille ans que sa  
douce folie  
Murmure sa romance à la brise  
du soir

Le vent baise ses seins et déploie  
en corolle  
Ses grands voiles bercés  
mollement par les eaux ;  
Les saules frissonnants pleurent  
sur son épaule,  
Sur son grand front rêveur  
s'inclinent les roseaux.

Les nénuphars froissés soupirent  
autour d'elle ;  
Elle éveille parfois, dans un aune  
qui dort,  
Quelque nid, d'où s'échappe un  
petit frisson d'aile :  
- Un chant mystérieux tombe des  
astres d'or

Hier treibt Ophelias traurighelle  
Beschwörung  
aus dunkler Vorzeit hin über  
schwarzem Fluss.  
Seit mehr denn tausend Jahr gilt  
die Betörung  
und lockt im linden Abendwind  
zum Kuss.

Küsst Wind ihre Brüste, entfaltet  
mit Edelsteinen  
entlang im weichem Geström  
ihren wiegenden Sylph –  
Auf schneeige Schultern  
schauernde Weiden weinen  
und träumend neigt sich vor ihrer  
Stirne das Schilf.

Ringsum sie seufzen die  
Wasserrosen und zittern...  
Bisweilen lockt aus irgendeinem  
Nest  
im Schlaf der Erlen lau sie  
Flügelflittern:  
Gesang voll Rätsel fällt vom  
Sternenfest.

Klammer's translation may be rather defined as *langue*, Gwerder's translation is first of all *parole*<sup>14</sup>. Gwerder manipulates the source text through modifications in the order of the specification, intensification, leveling and generalization. His translation may be symbolized as Benjamin's metaphor of the tangent that touches the circle at one single point, touches the original "lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course" (as cited in Schulte and Biguenet 1992: 261). Some shifts appear particularly relevant: i.e. the cut of a key word such as the metapoetic "romance", the several semantic shifts towards intensification – for example, "l'onde noire" translated into "Auf samtener Welle" – or lexical-stylistic mutation (addition) – "hallalis" rendered as "Rufe Dryas"; "triste" → "traurighelle"; "plus de mille ans" becomes "aus dunkler Vorzeit" following a morpho-syntactical alteration; "grands voiles" become flushed with a mythological and esoteric nuance in "ihren wiegenden Sylph", which is not unconnected with the atmosphere of Ophelia's metaphysical anabasis to the infinity at any rate; "Les saules frissonnants pleurent sur son épaule" turns into a *Partizipialkonstruktion* with

<sup>14</sup> The dichotomy refers to Ferdinand de Saussure's canonical work *Cours de linguistique générale*. 1916.

additions focusing on the phonic-rhetorical aspect “Auf schneeige Schultern schauernde Weiden weinen”. It can be registered generalizations (abstraction) such as “Beschwörung” instead of “fantôme” or “Geström” instead of “eaux”, leveling solutions such as “Betönung” at the place of “follie” and additions aiming at the compensation and reproducing of the rhyme – “douce follie / Murmure sa romance à la brise du soir” / “gilt die Betörung / und lockt im linden Abendwind zum Kuss” (once again it should be underlined how Gwerder can create alliterations and harmonic effects like the contrasting repetitions of the dark vowel “u” and the liquid sound “l+i”, which accompany the thematic polarities of the source text on the level of *ornatus* and *compositio*). Moreover, Gwerder sometimes renders problematic passages by creating lexical coins: for instance, “Flügelflittern” or “Sternenfest”.

Even though Gwerder’s translating method may seem to be serial at first glance, it turns out to be structural and not exclusively target-oriented. The filter acting in his translation is determined by aesthetic, poetic, rhetorical and musical issues and purposes. Gwerder brings back to life Ophelia’s suicide and Rimbaud’s osmosis with the goddess/sylph of Beauty and Death sharing the damned poet’s repudiation of the social restrictions of the world and exacerbating such an experience and this feeling through shifts in the direction of intensification or modulation not only at the lexical level, but also at the stylistic and rhetorical grade (i. e., alliterations). The aforementioned “anomalies” generate a new, personal version of the source text, but they are not at all out of sympathy with Rimbaud’s creative intention. A poetic translation does not necessarily entail a lack of the norm of acceptability. In other words, on the one hand, a psychological and aesthetic filter producing a “poetic translation” cannot bring a considerable degree of “lexical equivalence”. On the other hand, it can be highly responsive to the original intention of the author on the side of the *signifier*; Gwerder’s *Ophelia* is a perfect example of “textual equivalence” as a whole (rhetorical, sound, rhythmical equivalence). Just at a stylistic level Gwerder’s version may appear more high-sounding than the original text due to some mythological references, a refined lexical choice and because of an increase in syntactical complexity and variety (cf. participial constructions, several intricate or contorted structures, the usage of the subordination or the frequent inversions), whereas *Ophélie*’s syntax is quite linear.

As already said, Klammer’s translation is ruled by a cultural and sociopolitical filter. This does not imply a structural and source-oriented method, although his attention to the meaning and the trope of the lexical and sound repetition is evident.

I.

Sur l'onde calme et noire où  
dorment les étoiles  
La blanche Ophélie flotte comme  
un grand lys,  
Flotte très lentement, couchée en  
ses longs voiles...  
- On entend dans les bois  
lointains des hallalis.

Voici plus de mille ans que la  
triste Ophélie  
Passe, fantôme blanc, sur le long  
fleuve noir  
Voici plus de mille ans que sa  
douce folie  
Murmure sa romance à la brise  
du soir

Le vent baise ses seins et déploie  
en corolle  
Ses grands voiles bercés  
mollement par les eaux ;  
Les saules frissonnants pleurent  
sur son épaule,  
Sur son grand front rêveur  
s'inclinent les roseaux.

Les nénuphars froissés soupirent  
autour d'elle ;  
Elle éveille parfois, dans un aune  
qui dort,  
Quelque nid, d'où s'échappe un  
petit frisson d'aile :  
- Un chant mystérieux tombe des  
astres d'or

I.

Auf stiller, dunkler Flut, im  
Widerschein der Sterne,  
geschmiegt in ihre Schleier,  
schwimmt Ophelia bleich,  
sehr langsam, einer großen  
weißen Lilie gleich.  
Jagdrufe hört man aus dem Wald  
verklingen ferne.

Schon mehr als tausend Jahre  
sind es,  
daß sie, ein bleich Phantom, die  
schwarze Flut hinzieht,  
und mehr als tausend Jahre  
flüstert schon sein Lied  
ihr sanfter Wahnsinn in den  
Hauch des Abendwindes.

Die Lüfte küssen ihre Brüste  
sacht und bauschen  
zu Blüten ihre Schleier, die das  
Wasser wiegt.  
Es weint das Schilf, das sich auf  
ihre Schulter biegt.  
Die Weiden über ihrer hohen  
Stirne rauschen.

Im Schlummer einer Erle weckt  
sie hin und wieder  
Ein Nest, aus dem ein kleines  
Flügelflattern schlägt.  
Die Wasserrosen seufzen, wenn  
sie sie bewegt.  
Ein Weiheklang fällt von den  
goldnen Sternen nieder.

The most relevant alteration in Klammer's text is the syntactic-pragmatic modulation tending to the conservation of the rhythmical and metrical pattern. As already mentioned, Klammer neutralizes the hyphens and some enjambements too – it is evident how the end of nearly each line corresponds to a full stop instead of dots, semicolons and commas in Rimbaud's text. With regard to the meaning Klammer renders the whole sense of the source lines. What is not rendered here, is however the intensity of Rimbaud's damnation and Ophelia's mysterious transition into the Endless: for example, the "hallalis" fade away ("verklingen") and the "chant mystérieux" is translated with the term "Weiheklang", which introduces an unwanted touch of mystics and religion. The norm of adequacy, according to which the



"anomalies" of the original text acclimatize themselves into the new language and the new literature, coexists in Klammer with a source-oriented translating strategy and a structural method. Yet, as already analyzed above, the translator omits in the whole text fundamental references to highly symbolic semantic fields concerning madness, illness and suicide; and what is more, he blunts Rimbaud's emphasis on the osmotic process with Ophelia highlighted by apostrophes and exclamation marks. Despite a structural source-oriented habit in the translations of repeated words and despite of the lexical choices, which are generally adherent to the meaning of the French original, Klammer does not realize a version shining at fidelity like the English *Ophelia* of the poet and translator Olivier Bernard (1962):

## II.

O pâle Ophélie ! belle comme la  
neige !

Oui tu mourus, enfant, par un  
fleuve emporté !

C'est que les vents tombant des  
grand monts de Norwège  
T'avaient parlé tout bas de l'âpre  
liberté ;

C'est qu'un souffle, tordant ta  
grande chevelure,  
À ton esprit rêveur portait  
d'étranges bruits,  
Que ton coeur écoutait le chant  
de la Nature  
Dans les plaintes de l'arbre et les  
souples des nuits ;

C'est que la voix des mers folles,  
immense râle,  
Brisait ton sein d'enfant, trop  
humain et trop doux ;  
C'est qu'un matin d'avril, un beau  
cavalier pâle,  
Un pauvre fou, s'assit muet à tes  
genoux !

Ciel ! Amour ! Liberté ! Quel  
rêve, ô pauvre Folle !  
Tu te fondais à lui comme une  
neige au feu :  
Tes grandes visions étranglaient  
ta parole  
- Et l'Infini terrible éffara ton oeil  
bleu !

## II.

O pale Ophelia! beautiful as  
snow!

Yes child, you died, carried off by  
a river!

- It was the winds descending  
from the great mountains of  
Norway

That spoke to you in low voices  
of bitter freedom.

It was a breath of wind, that,  
twisting your great hair,  
Brought strange rumors to your  
dreaming mind;

It was your heart listening to the  
song of Nature

In the groans of the tree and the  
sighs of the nights;

It was the voice of mad seas, the  
great roar,

That shattered your child's heart,  
too human and too soft;

It was a handsome pale knight, a  
poor madman

Who one April morning sate mute  
at your knees!

Heaven! Love! Freedom! What a  
dream, oh poor crazed Girl!

You melted to him as snow does  
to a fire;

Your great visions strangled you  
words

- And fearful Infinity terrified  
your blue eye!

## III.

- Et le Poète dit qu'aux rayons des  
étoiles

Tu viens chercher, la nuit, les  
fleurs que tu cueillis ;

Et qu'il a vu sur l'eau, couchée en  
ses longs voiles,

La blanche Ophélie flotter,  
comme un grand lys.

## III.

- And the poet says that by  
starlight

You come seeking, in the night,  
the flowers that you picked

And that he has seen on the  
water, lying in her long veils

White Ophelia floating, like a  
great lily.

Renouncing the rhyme scheme and adopting the blank verse allows the realization of nearly a word-for-word translation, a mirror image of the source text at least at a semantic level. Bernard's text is responsive to Rimbaud's *diktat* in the syntax and the usage of the punctuation, above all of the dashes. Furthermore, repetitions are faithfully reproduced and the quite simple lexicon is overall maintained. Bernard follows a structural method here with a source-oriented strategy, which favors the norm of the adequacy. As his interventions on the semantic, syntactical and stylistic domain are practically nonexistent, his filter is evidently philological and literary-scientific, dictated by a modern way of translating just focusing on the strategy of the adequacy.

The translated text itself is a filter through which a foreign literature passes and becomes "national" literature. Translations can modify, enrich and renew not only vocabulary, prosody and stylistics of the target culture but also its perceptiveness of the exotic world with its values and ideas. Besides, the filter acts not only on the culture, but also on the translator's action. In this paper two different German versions of Rimbaud's *Ophélie* have revealed two different filters, a rather cultural and sociological filter (Klammer) and a rather poetic and psychological filter (Gwerder). The former turns out to be quite complex: on the one hand, it leads the translator to focus on the source as a set of stylistic devices, lexical choices and prosodic characteristics, which have necessarily to be rendered to the German speaking reader; on the other hand, the literary-cultural tradition of the target system and the Catholic and aristocratic Court of Hapsburg, in which Klammer served and for which he wrote and translated, urged him to level and smooth the rebel's scream, Rimbaud's identification in Ophelia and consequent boost to the suicide. Therefore, the grade of permeability of this kind of filter is limited due to the conventions of the target culture and the coeval concept of translation poetry, which, on the one hand, imposes the conservation of a rigid rhyme scheme even at the cost of substantial alterations upon the original text, on the other hand, requests adherence to the Classical and Romantic norms of beauty. The latter is just as complex: it rises, indeed, from the denial of the Swiss-German middle-class culture and lets nothing of the source text permeate that can be addressed against it (drive to the suicide, rebellion, damnation); at the same time, this type of filter is affected by the poet-translator's insecurity and desire to be recognized as a classic of his time. As a consequence, his version sounds highly poetic and the need to elevate Rimbaud's simple style is evident. Gwerder's trans-

lation imitates Rimbaud’s poem as a style practice and grants a privilege to the domain of the sonority and *ornatus*.

In contrast to the English quoted version of Bernard, for which the definition “cultural translation” may be used as a synonym of “translation responsive to the source culture” and whose filter is totally permeable – with the exception of the sacrificed rhymes – and ready to let pass every feature of Rimbaud’s writing, Klammer’s version is a “cultural translation” insofar as it tries to strike a balance between the strategies of the acceptability and the adequacy, between fidelity to the source and respect for the aesthetic norms of the Austrian literature of the *Fin de siècle*. Gwerder’s translation is, on the contrary, a rather “poetic translation” inasmuch as his motivation, his exegetical approach to Rimbaud and his translating purpose is lyric. Poetic is to Gwerder music, figure and feeling; microstructural shifts in translation may be tolerated just with the aim of transferring the macrostructural niveau of the original text, in other words, its poetic value and significance<sup>15</sup>.

In conclusion, this study of two historical translations of Rimbaud’s *Ophélie* does not aim as much to register strengths and weaknesses of the analyzed texts, to propose a translation model or to establish the degree of untranslatability of the lyric genre<sup>16</sup>, but rather to introduce a broader debate about translating poetry as it may be examined scientifically as with prose and drama by adopting objective parameters and categories such as strategy, norm, habit, method and the concept of filter. In addition, this paper aims to demonstrate that the analysis and comparison of translations request an interdisciplinary approach, in which linguistic, philological-literary, pragmatic, historical-cultural and sociological positions about translation can and should blend. Further surveys on comparing translations in lines should therefore be carried out just to apply the new results of the modern translation studies to the texts also from a diachronic perspective.

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<sup>15</sup> Gwerder’s attention to the phonetic and musical level of the poetic version seems to be adherent to Friedrich Schleiermacher’s translation theory, according to which poetry is a work, “where a most excellent and indeed higher meaning resides in the musical elements of language as they are manifested in rhythm”. [...] whatever seems to have an impact on sound qualities and the fine-tuning of feeling and thus on the mimetic and musical accompaniment of speech- all this will have to be rendered by our translator”. F. Schleiermacher (Di Yanni 2002: 91).

<sup>16</sup> It is famous Robert Frost’s definition of poetry as “what gets lost in translation”.

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