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JAPANSKA

I was only feeling a little lonely.

A comparison of Alfred Birnbaum's and Jay Rubin's translations of
Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*.

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Abbreviations

SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text

Abstract.

Whether to translate literally or freely has always been the big question when it comes to translating literature, and throughout time it has become clear that translators who observe different conditions also adopt different strategies, and ultimately come up with remarkably different products. The purpose of this thesis is to compare the different English translations of Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood* (1987) by Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin, and clarify which translation methods they tend to lean towards in order to gain an understanding of how their choice of translation methods affects the result of their work. To gain the knowledge required for the thesis, a set of definitions of different translating methods and their usage by Peter Newmark will be used as an essential starting point and base of the work. Based on the translation methods lined up in Peter Newmark's book *A textbook of translation* (1988) it was possible to clarify that Alfred Birnbaum uses translation methods such as faithful translation and semantic translation, whereas in most cases leaning towards faithful translation, while Jay Rubin sticks to translation methods such as communicative translation, sometimes even free translation.

Keywords: Japanese, Literature, Translation, Translation Analysis, Haruki Murakami, Norwegian Wood, Birnbaum, Rubin.

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1. Introduction

I've always had a certain interest in literature and naturally when I started studying Japanese language at Gothenburg University I also took a large interest in Japanese literature, and more specifically, the author Haruki Murakami. I started off reading Murakami's novel *South of the border, west of the Sun* (1992) and I was fascinated by his writing style and the simple yet mysterious feeling there was to the novel, so I bought some more of his works and continued my journey. He was able to deal with heavy subjects such as suicide, sexuality, and paranormal events as if it was a natural part of everyone's daily life, and although his novels are full of both dramatic and emotionally endearing events, these events were not something the characters seemed to find abnormal. Even as the reader, you find yourself in a calm, relaxed environment in the world of Murakami's works. I realised that sometimes I just do not want to read a book jam-packed with nuances, subtle and tightly woven characters and plots. Murakami was the answer.

Thanks to the translators whose skills were able to keep the Murakami feeling to the books—hardly ever bothering to set the scene or describe the setting, yet making you feel as if you are taken into a different world through the characters experiences—this was the Haruki Murakami I was drawn to.

1.1. The Topic

The topic of this thesis is how Haruki Murakami's novel "Norwegian Wood" has been handled by the two different translators; Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin, both very different translators whose styles reflect greatly into their work. In this thesis we get to the pulp of their translations and localise their differences as we enjoy the works of Haruki Murakami.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose with this thesis is to compare the different translation of "Norwegian Wood" by Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin; the argumentatively most famous translators of Haruki Murakami's works, and clarify which translation methods the two of them use in order to gain a deeper understanding of how this affects the result of their work. Although they both have worked

with Murakami their translation styles are noticeably different, and it is largely discussed between oversea-fans of Murakami whether Birnbaum or Rubin is the most suitable to represent Murakami in English.

I became inspired when I read an interview where Murakami himself stated that in his personal opinion Alfred Birnbaum's translations were more lively, free and experimental, while Jay Rubin is more careful and tends to stay with the original. (Publisher's Weekly, September 21, 1991) I, on the other hand, was under the opposite impression. I had always seen Birnbaum as the more loyal one; the one who tends to stick to the original, while Rubin, in his English translation, manage to create free texts that differ substantially from the original texts.

With this in focus, the following research questions will be used as base throughout this study:

- Which of the translation methods set up by Newmark do Rubin and Birnbaum tend to lean towards?
- And with this in mind, who is the freer translator? And who is the more faithful one?

2. Background

In views of extreme literalists, such as Walter Benjamin and Vladimir Nabokov, it is known that since the first century BC arguments regarding whether to translate literally or freely has been the big question when it comes to translating. Many favoured some kind of free translation: the spirit, not the letter; the sense, not the words; the message, rather than the form; the matter, not the manner. This was often used as a revolutionary slogan of writers who wanted the truth to be read and understood. At the turn of the nineteenth century, when the study of cultural anthropology suggested that the linguistic barriers were insuperable and that language was entirely the product of culture, the view that translation was impossible gained some acceptance, and with that, it must be as literal as possible. (Newmark, 1988 p.45)

For centuries, translation of foreign texts was the primary methodology employed worldwide when it came to foreign-language teaching and learning. Usually, the study of a foreign language began with the acquisition of reading ability and would then go on to application situations regarding situation. As a consequence of the growth of international communication, the need for efficient and effective translation is exploding even today, making it a fundamental element of our communication system. However, In Hasegawa Yoko's book *The Routledge Course in Japanese translation* she highlights the fact that in most Japanese-language programs the study of translation is rarely included as a regrettable aftereffect of the development of foreign-language pedagogy (Hasegawa, 2012 p. 4-7). The Main reason for this may be that grammar translation is judged defective as it may ignore the spoken language and deals with isolated unconnected sentences used in communication rather than coherent texts (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004). In fact, only focusing on communication has resulted in a growing awareness of formal inaccuracies, as learners tend to value the ability to expressing “personal” meanings, consequently compromising their grammatical accuracy. This problem can be solved by translation, which is known to value grammatical accuracy, which becomes particularly important when focusing on such complicated language as Japanese. (Hasegawa, 2012)

Japanese language includes relatively different sets of proper nouns, male/female speech and culture-specific terms in comparison to English, which can make the translation process problematic. Moreover, what makes Japanese such difficult language to translate is also often said to be due to how Japanese language acquires much of its beauty and strength from indirectness— or what English-speakers call vagueness, obscurity, or implied meaning. For example, subjects are often left unmentioned in Japanese sentences, and onomatopoeia, with vernacular sounds suggesting meaning, and it is said to be a virtue often difficult if not impossible to replicate in

English (Roland Kelts, 2013). This future can often be found in Murakami's works.

2.1. Earlier Studies

A few similar studies of translation analysis of Japanese literature has been made before, but what differs this study from others is the fact that this thesis focuses on a novel that carries two different translations in the same language; English. It is also not based on personal opinion and knowledge, but uses the help of different translation methods and norms to clarify the difference between the two and their translations of Murakami's works. For example, a different translation analysis has been published as a thesis by John Wasmuth from Lunds University. While he does not bring up anything about the differences between Birnbaum and Rubin, he instead focuses on how metaphor translation has been featured in the English, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian translations of "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle" (1994–1995). In general the metaphors tend to be translated into something that lies close to Haruki Murakami's pictorial language, since Murakami's novels lack much of cultural metaphors. (Wasmuth, 2012)

Additionally, a few earlier comparisons of Jay Rubin and Alfred Birnbaum have also been made, but counting only the scientific ones, they reduce to quite few. Readers in favour of Alfred Birnbaum often claim that Jay Rubins translations are missing something; that he doesn't capture the feeling Murakami is trying to convey as well as Birnbaum. While people in favour of Jay Rubin can agree to Birnbaums translations more flashy, but he uses American phrases that make the readers wonder what the original truly said. (murakami.livejournal.com)

A great example of their differences can be seen the following example: The opening of 'The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle.' (1992)

Jay Rubin: When the phone rang I was in the kitchen, boiling a potful of spaghetti and whistling along with an FM broadcast of the overture to Rossini's *The Thieving Magpie*, which has to be the perfect music for cooking pasta. "I wanted to ignore the phone, not only because the spaghetti was nearly done, but because Claudio Abbado was bringing the London Symphony to its musical climax.

Here we see Jay Rubin transfer Murakami's work into perfectly flowing English, even though he does not quite follow the flow of the original text. Instead he focuses more on the work being well

received by the readers.

Alfred Birnbaum: I'm in the kitchen cooking spaghetti when the woman calls. Another moment until the spaghetti is done; there I am, whistling the prelude to Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* along with the FM radio. Perfect spaghetti-cooking music. I hear the telephone ring but tell myself, Ignore it. Let the spaghetti finish cooking. It's almost done, and besides, Claudio Abbado and the London Symphony Orchestra are coming to a crescendo.

Birnbaum's version on the other hand follows a completely different word flow with slightly unnatural English, but you can tell that he's focusing on bringing Murakami's soul into his translation. Considering that this piece was featured in novel from "The Elephant Vanishes" (1993) before the actual release of the whole novel, it may not be fair to compare these two texts. Birnbaum's version might not, for example have been worked on as much as Rubin's.

Despite this, it is tough to say which one is the better, Rubin who focuses on delivering a great novel into perfectly flowing English, or Alfred Birnbaum who focuses on conveying what Murakami is making his readers feel, into English. In the end, this is something to be more reflective of the viewer's preferences than the subject merits.

3. Method

Firstly, general insight into both translation norms and theories will be of importance. Following this, a look on Haruki Murakami's use of language and biography would seem appropriate to archive knowledge that will be important when analysing the two translations. Just as a little background on both of the translators I'm focusing on in order to gain a view of what kind of audience their work is aiming for and what purpose they had in mind while translating. In order to answer questions that may or may not arise during this thesis, we need to start off by coming to terms with different translation methods and norms and define the qualities that distinguish them from each other. What defines Murakami's writing style? What makes Murakami so easy to translate, while yet staying away from the style that we consider "western"? Moreover, what translation styles seem the most appropriate when mastering the art of translating Murakami? This will provide a stable base of knowledge that will assist us all the way through the analysis process.

For the purpose of this thesis a pattern to follow while analysing the different translations and comparing them to the original text will be of importance. Therefore, the methods of translation and dealing with metaphors when transferring them into the TL which can be found in Peter Newmark's book "A textbook of translation" (1988) will be used as a base to define which translation method each of the translators lean the most towards. During the analysis process examples from "Norwegian Wood" will be analysed in comparison to these guidelines and will be fundamental when drawing conclusions of how their translations affect the atmosphere of the work. To do so, let us also put the following points into focus:

1. Faithfulness to the original.
2. Changes of the word flow and sentence built when transferring to the TL.
3. Ignorance of words and events when translating.
4. Methods used when transferring metaphors to the TL.
5. Methods of dealing with cultural words and expressions that may occur in the ST.

4. Material

Haruki Murakami's novel *Norwegian Wood* (1987) and its published translations by Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin were chosen as the subject of this thesis for several reasons. Firstly, the fact that it holds two different translations which convey relatively different atmospheres to their readers constituted the analysis with interesting material. For example, it is from the beginning clear that the translators probably had different aims and methods when transferring Murakami's words into English and therefore ended up with remarkably different results. Secondly, when discussing Japanese writers and their work Murakami is – mostly due to the success of “Norwegian Wood” – probably the one we are the most familiar with outside of Japan. Something which not only the mind behind the work, but also the effort of the translators can take credit for as they shaped the work in such way that not only Japanese readers but readers all over the world would be able to enjoy the novel.

This study will focus only on the first section of the first chapter of the book as it presents us with the characteristics of not only “Norwegian Wood” itself, but also Murakami's writing style. Other sections of the book were also put up for consideration, but as the result of the analysis was still the same the material was restricted to only the first section

5. A Textbook of Translation

In Gideon Toury's study "The nature and role of norms in translation" translations and their potency, socio-cultural constraints have been described along a scale anchored between two extremes: authenticity, and on the other hand, acceptability. Between these poles lies a vast middle-ground occupied by inter-subjective factors and commonly designated norms. Moreover, translators who often observe different conditions also adopt different strategies, and ultimately come up with remarkably different products. (Toury, 1995 p. 53-69)

This chapter aims to describe the translation methods Peter Newmark points out in his book "A text book of translation" (1988), which will be used as a guide although the study.

5.1. Peter Newmark's Translation Methods

Peter Newmark's book "A textbook of translation" (1988, p.46-47) shows excellent examples on different translation methods and I've chosen to focus on them because their differences and areas of usage are relatively easy to tell apart.

Faithful translation

A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original text within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures. In other words *faithful translation* transfers cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical abnormality in the translation. A faithful translation attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions of the text-realization of the SL writer.

Semantic translation

Semantic translation is similar to 'faithful translation', with the difference being that it must take more account of the aesthetic value: the beautiful and natural sounds of the SL text, compromising on 'meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. It may also translate less important cultural words by culturally neutral third or functional terms but not by cultural equivalents, and may make other small concessions to the readership. Semantic translation is more flexible than

faithful translation and allows for the translator's intuitive empathy with the original.

Adaption

Adaption is the most free form of translation. It is used mainly for plays where the themes, characters, and plots are usually preserved but the SL culture converted to the TL culture and the text is rewritten.

Free translation

Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original making it often unnecessarily long and pretentious and not a translation at all.

Communicative translation

Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

Also worth mentioning are *Word-for-word translation*, *Literal translation* and *Idiomatic translation* which I have chosen not to include deeper explanations of as their area of usage is more relevant to pre-translation process than to finished translation material which this study will be focusing on.

5.2. Semantic and Communicative Translation

Semantic and communicative translation fulfills the two main aims of translation; accuracy and economy. They treat the following items similarly: stock and dead metaphors, normal collocations technical terms, slang, colloquialism, stand aid notices, chromatics and ordinary language. Semantic and communicative translation must also be seen as wholes. Semantic translation is personal and individual, follows the thought process of the author, tends to over translate and pursues nuances of meaning yet aims at precision in order to reproduce pragmatic impact.

Communicative translation on the other hand is social, concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to under-translate, to be simple and is always written in a natural and resourceful style. Though theoretically, communicative translation allows the translator no

more freedom than semantic translation.

Peter Newmark also includes a chapter in the book where he suggest a great plan of translation, which I chose to include in my thesis, as it gives insight into how translators may think while processing through their work, which is also a very important point to keep in mind when coming to a result of my analysis. (Newmark, p.47)

For the process of translation, it is according to Peter Newmark, in most cases dangerous to translate more than a sentence or two before reading the first two or three paragraphs, unless a quick glance through convinces you that the text is going to present few problems. The more difficult—linguistically and culturally—the text is, the more Newmark advises us to take care of more of the preliminary work before starting to translate a sentence. Simply a misjudged hunch may force you to try to put a wrong construction on a whole paragraph, wasting a lot of time before you may realize you are being foolish. He also recommended that while translating a sentence, you should always follow as literally and closely you can to the original text. There are also plenty of words, like modal particles or grammatically-bonded words, which you may decide not to translate, but translate word-for-word, whether the words are “linguistic” or cultural and appear relatively context-free. Later, you have to contextualize them and be prepared to back-track if it so happens that you have opted for the wrong technical meaning. It will keep you a clear image of what is actually happening within the text, although you may lean towards another translation method when finishing your work. (Newmark, p.51-52)

5.3. Other Ideas of Translation

Lawrence Venuti refers to the translation process as domestication and foreignisation (The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation, 2008, p.14-19), whereof domestication is often too focused on fluency and elimination of foreign elements when translating and consequently the result fails to convey cultural and linguistic essence of the ST. Foreignisation on the other hand aims to preserve cultural and linguistic elements, perhaps not by reproducing the ST in the most literal manner possible, but through experimenting with ways of using different styles, dialects and vernaculars in order to convert unique characteristics of the ST.

I would like to mention that there have been a lot of ideas of how translation can also be regarded as a form of rewriting. This was developed by André Lefevere, who sees translation as an act carried out under the influence of particular categories and norms congruent to systems in a society. In other words, translation takes the form of rewriting with respect to the idea that society

is a constituent of a system which comprises categories and norms that influence the translation process and result. (Lefevere, 1992)

5.4. Metaphors

Although the main purpose of this thesis is to analyze translation patterns and not get too deeply into different translation methods of metaphors, metaphors are, and will always be an essential touch of cultural expression in language. The purpose of this chapter is to build up a preparation regarding this before the actual analyzing of the text.

Metaphor is a key way in which writers express their style, build their themes and create emotive effect (Shani 2009). As a typical feature of communication, metaphors can present a challenge for translation, both for the translator and for its treatment in the discipline of Translation Studies.

In the literature on translation, the two main issues have been, firstly, the translatability of metaphors, and secondly, the elaboration of potential translation procedures. In most cases, the argumentation is based on a traditional understanding of metaphors as a figure of speech (Schäffner, C 2004).

Factors likely to affect translation of metaphorical expressions include the novelty of the metaphorical image, the relevance of the particular metaphorical expression to the communicative function within the text, the author's style, and the type of metaphorical expression. For example, similes are usually easier to translate than pure metaphors, because they are an explicit comparison between the image and that to which it refers.

Lately, more theorists have begun to see translation studies from a cultural perspective, recognizing the illusory concept of linguistic 'equivalence', and how translation strategy is influenced by factors that go beyond the actual words of the text (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990; Hermans, 2006; Venuti, 1998).

Peter Newmark points out the following seven translation methods and strategies for translating metaphors (Newmark, 1981 p. 88–91):

1. Reproduction and transferring the same metaphorical image in the TL. To take advantage of this method, the meaning behind the expression of the metaphor must have the same meaning in the language you are translating into. It is uncommon to use this method with

more complex metaphors since that might affect the result of the meaning in your translation in a way you did not intend.

2. Substitution of the source language image with a different TL image having similar sense. This method is often used for more complex and cultural metaphors that have equivalence in the TL to replace it with.
3. Translating a metaphor using a simile (conversely, a simile may be translated using a metaphor). This method will most likely weaken the meaning of the metaphor and might be useful when the ST is not too emotive.
4. Translating a metaphor (or simile) using a simile together with an explanation of its sense. This method can be useful if there is a chance a literal translation of the metaphor might become misunderstanding and confusing for most of the readers.
5. Converting metaphor to sense (paraphrasing). This strategy may be used if in a translation, finding the meaning of the metaphor in the TL would be a nearly impossible task. Newmark argues that this strategy should only be used if the metaphor only plays a smaller role in the whole context.
6. Deletion of the metaphorical expression. If the metaphor plays no important role in the ST, it may be deleted when translating into the TL. It is important to make sure that the authors or the text's essentials are not damaged when taking advantage of this strategy.
7. Using the same metaphor together with its sense. With this strategy, you keep the metaphor the same when transferring it into the TL, but with an attached explanation to make sure the readers are aware of the meaning.

Newmark argues that transferring the same metaphorical image into the TL should be the default strategy unless it is due to linguistic or cultural differences impossible to reproduce the same metaphorical image into the TL.

6. Haruki Murakami

It is very important to know the characteristics of authors before analyzing or translating a text. What is the author's typical subject matter? What kind of feeling would he like to convey to the readers?

6.1. Biography

Haruki Murakami was born January 12, 1949 in Kyoto, Japan. He is the son of two teachers of Japanese literature and grew up in Kobe. He always had a liking for Western authors and music, which he often reflects in his works. He attended Waseda University in Tokyo, where he studied theater and worked at a record shop, which have also been reflected in his books. For example, the areas that are featured in "Norwegian Wood" are very inspired by the areas around Waseda University, and the main character does also have a part time work at a record shop for quite some time. When Murakami graduated, he ran a coffee house and jazz bar in Tokyo with his wife Yoko for a couple of years (a part of his life that he features in his book "South of the Border, West of the Sun" (1992)).

In "What I talk about when I talk about running" (2007), Murakami tells us about how in the spring of 1978 when, laying in the grass at a Yakult Swallows baseball game in Jingu Stadium, it occurred to him for the first time to write a novel. By the autumn of the same year, he had written a 200-page novel entitled "Hear the wind sing," which he entered into a new writers contest at a literary magazine. He won the contest and his novel was published.

"The Wind-up Bird Chronicle" (1994–1995) won him a large international audience, though he has never won any of Japan's more prestigious literary prizes nor been accepted to the elite literary circles of Japan's distinguished authors. However, he has won a faithful audience both in Japan and internationally which clearly showed when he recently published his long-awaited novel "1Q84" (2009-2010).

Murakami is known for his blending of the fantastic realism of his novels, and it is this magical realism, in combination with his flowing use of language that gives his novels an ethereal, dreamlike quality. As a person, he keeps his private life quite unknown to the public, but is seemingly a "normal" person with a healthy life style; he has a liking for marathon running and doesn't smoke. (The New York Times, 2007)

Important to put into consideration when analysing the works of Murakami is that Murakami is a writer not only found in translation, but is also one who found himself in translation as he has translated several American writers into Japanese. While Murakami can speak and read English with great sensitivity, he has never written any of his works in English. He has also been reported to say that neither does he read his books in translation. (Kelts, *The New Yorker*, 9 May 2013) In this sense, it could be assumed that since Murakami is such a skilled translator himself, his books are already written for the purpose of being translated. Meaning that Murakami might adapt certain aspects of his work in order to make the job easier for his translators and consequently get a more natural yet still characteristic result.

6.2. The world of Haruki Murakami

Haruki Murakami's debut novel "Hear the Wind Sing" won the prestigious Gunzo Newcomers Award when it captured the hearts of the readers with its quirky characters, lively language and bittersweet portrayal of the collapse of the radical student movement after 1969. Since then, his works have on occasions been dismissed as faddish, uninspired, or lacking political heft. Nevertheless, readers found something to relate to in Murakami's fiction and his popularity soared. His works seemed to capture the sense of disillusionment, disconnection, and confusion that lingered close to a placid surface even during halcyon days. In recent works, Murakami no longer seems content to simply capture these feelings; rather, he attempts to explore their origins and demands greater engagement from his still somewhat passive characters.

In many cases, Murakami's characters appear content, though they are portrayed ironically. They commute to ordinary jobs, drink whiskey and beer, and listen to American music. Solitary creatures, they shut out the world with psychological barriers and self-imposed isolation. Nothing is obviously wrong with their lives, but something is amiss.

Even though the story lines in Haruki Murakami's works do not lack dramatic and unexpected events, the protagonists are rarely shocked. There is no sign of the nervous attitude of being on one's guard. They show a low level of awareness of their surroundings. They lack interest in much of contemporary reality, whose workings they largely accept without the pretension of being able to look through them. The protagonists embody the intuition, ubiquitous in late modernity, in which the inexplicable has become commonplace; it is normal that abnormal things occur. Carl Cassegard calls this *Naturalization of Modernity*. (2001, volume 10)

7. Norwegian Wood and its Translators

When it comes to translated literature, not thinking about the translator and his style of translating can be considered the biggest sign of acknowledgement of his work. Transferring the atmosphere, style and background of a book originally written in Japanese demands a lot of skill and not to mention full and deep knowledge of both cultures. (murakami.ch/rd/translators)

Norwegian Wood is Haruki Muraki's second novel, published in Japan 1987. The title is taken from The Beatles song by the same name and the story follows Toru Watanabe as he is looking back on his life as a 20-year old college student. Through his reminiscences we see him develop relationships with two very different women – the beautiful, yet emotionally troubled Naoko, a childhood friend living in a mental institution and Midori, a fellow university student who could be considered the anti-Naoko as she is outgoing, strong-willed and lively. (Lindquist, The Seattle Times, 3 juni 2001)

The first section of the book was adapted from one of Murakami's earlier stories, "Firefly" (1983) which was included in the collection "Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman" (2006).

7.1. Alfred Birnbaum and Norwegian Wood

The first translation of Norwegian Wood to be released was Alfred Birnbaum's version. The book was published in Japan, 1989, by Kodansha as a part of the Kodansha English Library series. Like other books of this series, it was intended for Japanese students of English which is something valuable to keep in mind for this thesis.

7.2. Jay Rubin and Norwegian Wood

The second translation of the book was translated by Jay Rubin and published in 2000, by Harvill Press in the UK, and Vintage International in the USA. This is the authorized version of publication outside of Japan.

8. Analysis

In this chapter I will present the results of my analysis. I've chosen to analyse the first section of the first chapter in the book, as it shows strong characteristic of both Jay Rubin and Alfred Birnbaum. I have divided the section into five parts to make it easier to focus on differences in the translations. The underlined parts of the text are what I would like to bring to focus.

1:

僕は三十七歳で、そのときボーイング 747 のシートに座っていた。その巨大な飛行機は
ぶ厚い雨雲をくぐり抜けて降下し、ハンブルク空港に着陸しようとしているところだっ
た。十一月の冷ややかな雨が大地を暗く染め、雨合羽を着た整備工たちや、のっぺりと
した空港ビルの上に立った旗や、BMW の広告板やそんな何もかもをフランドル派の陰
うつな絵の背景のように見せていた。やれやれ、またドイツか、と僕は思った。

Jay Rubin: I was 37 then, strapped in my seat as the huge 747 plunged through dense cloud cover on approach to Hamburg airport. Cold November rains drenched the earth, lending everything the gloomy air of Flemish landscape; the ground crew in waterproofs, a flag atop a squat airport building, a BMW billboard. So – Germany again.

Alfred Birnbaum: Here I am, thirty-seven years old, seated in a Boeing 747. The giant plane is diving into a thick cover of clouds, about to land at Hamburg Airport. A chill November rain darkens the land, turning the scene into a gloomy Flemish painting. The airport workers in their rain gear the flags atop the faceless airport buildings, the BMW billboards, everything. Just great, I'm thinking, Germany again.

Here we meet the main character Toru Watanabe for the first time and get an insight on where the story is being told. Rubin starts off saying “I was 37 then.” which gives us the impression that he is now telling the story from a different time line; perhaps as a 50 year old man back in Japan, or as an old man thinking back on his entire life. Birnbaum, on the other hand, starts off with “Here I am, thirty-seven years old.” which clearly indicates that this is where the main character is right now, this is where the story is being told. Birnbaum changed the entire paragraph to present form, while the original Japanese version is being told in imperfect form. In fact, the story itself will be

occurring in the mind of the 37 year old Toru Watanabe, sitting in that seat as the plane dives through the clouds. To make this more understandable, and get the flow of the story, Alfred Birnbaum chooses to start the entire paragraph in present form.

The second point I would like to take up in this paragraph is when presenting and explaining the surroundings Rubin uses the expression “lending everything the gloomy air of Flemish landscape” while Birnbaum on the other hand uses “turning the scene into a gloomy Flemish painting”. The original text does in fact indicate both of the scenery and the Flemish painting, very much like Birnbaum translated it. Here Birnbaum stays more faithful to the original in a *faithful translation*, transferring the same metaphorical image to the TL, while Rubin uses an *adaption* and changes it into a similar image that makes just as much sense in the TL. The two authors imply, in different ways, that the November rain that *darkens* or *drenched* the land is affecting the airport workers, the flags atop the airport building, the BMW signs, everything. The only difference, except from their word flow, is how Rubin chooses to use *drenched*, while Birnbaum uses *darkens*. In fact, a literal translation of '暗く染め' would be 'dyed dark' or 'dyed gloomy' which is already taken up when describing the landscape upon Watanabe Toru's arrival.

Lastly, he ends the paragraph with the sentence 'やれやれ、またドイツか、と僕は思った' which Rubin translates into “So – Germany again.”, while Birnbaum puts a gloomier contrast to it by translating it as 'Just great, I'm thinking, Germany again.' What implies a gloomy feeling for Toru regarding his arrival to Germany in the SL is the expression 'やれやれ' which can be translated into both an expression of disappointment, or an expression of relief, whereof Rubin implies more relief than Birnbaum. There's no sign of Toru Watanabe being particularly happy about arriving in Germany, yet there is a hint of relief, perhaps because the long flight has finally come to an end. Here Rubin sticks to a free translation, where he reproduces the matter without the manner; the content without the form of the original. Birnbaum on the other hand, sticks to a more faithful translation, keeping the gloomy feel of the sentence which Haruki Murakami presents us in the original.

2:

飛行機が着地を完了すると禁煙のサインが消え、天井のスピーカーから小さな音で BGM が流れはじめた。それはどこかのオーケストラが甘く演奏するビートルズの『ノルウェイの森』だった。そしてそのメロディーはいつものように僕を混乱させた。いや、いつもとは比べものにならないくらい激しく僕を混乱させ 揺り動かした。

Jay Rubin: Once the plane was on the ground, soft music began to flow from the ceiling speakers: a sweet orchestral cover version of the Beatles' "Norwegian Wood". The melody never failed to send a shudder through me, but this time it hit me harder than ever.

Alfred Birnbaum: The plane completes its landing procedures, the NO SMOKING sign goes off, and soft background music issues from the ceiling speakers. Some orchestra's muzak rendition of the Beatles' "Norwegian Wood." And sure though, the melody gets to me, same as always. No, this time it's worse than ever before. I get it real bad. I swear my head is going to burst.

Following Watanabe though the landing procedure we get introduced to a series of small, detailed events. The first one to catch my attention is how Haruki Murakami himself writes out ‘飛行機が着地を完了すると禁煙のサインが消え’ which in a faithful translation would be translated something along the lines with “when the plane finished the landing procedure the NO SMOKING sign goes off”. Here Birnbaum sticks close to the SL, translating it into a very similar equivalence in the TL. Looking at Rubin's translation on the other hand, he chose to remove the NO SMOKING sign from the result of his translation. There are several possible reasons for this, for example he might have found his first attempt on a translation unnatural sounding and decided to remove that part of the event, or he may have also seen the part of the SL as less important or inexpressive for the TL.

In the next section, Murakami starts of giving a description of the music that starts playing once the landing procedure has been completed. While Jay Rubin translates the description as “a sweet orchestral version of The Beatles ‘Norwegian Wood’” Birnbaum translates it as “Some orchestra's muzak rendition of The Beatles ‘Norwegian Wood’”. These two versions imply very different reactions towards the piece that starts playing, or perhaps even towards classical music as a whole. The ST does in fact describe the piece as a “cover of *Norwegian wood*”, performed sweetly by an orchestra”. While Birnbaum puts a quite colder feeling to it by

calling it a “muzak rendition of Norwegian Wood”, though in this case, considering Watanabe's relationship to the piece is not a very positive one, Birnbaum might have found it pointless to beautify the orchestra and the piece itself. Here, Jay Rubin is the one staying the most faithful to the SL though keeping a natural touch in the TL, while Birnbaum sticks to a freer translation, adapting it after the mood of the text for the sake of the TL.

Lastly we get our first insight on Toru Watanabe's relationship with his past. ‘そしてそのメロディーはいつものように僕を混乱させた’ means that just like always the melody sent him into disorder, or confusion, which may sound both unnatural and confusing to readers of the TL. Rubin and Birnbaum both conquer this challenge nicely as the two experienced translators they are by using a substitution of the SL image with a different TL image having similar sense and meaning. Rubin with his result: “The melody never failed to send a shudder through me”, and Birnbaum with: “And sure though, the melody gets to me, same as always.” Rubin transformed his version into a more natural English expression and Birnbaum stuck more to what the SL is trying to convey.

The same method is being used when translating the last part of the paragraph as well, where Birnbaum adds an extra explanation to his simile by stating that Toru Watanabe is feeling as if his head is going to burst, which also shows that Birnbaum has done his preparation and responsibility as a translator by having read ahead in the text to know that this is going to relate to the following paragraph.

3:

僕は頭がはりさけてしまわないように身をかがめて両手で顔を覆い、そのままじっとしていた。やがてドイツ人のスチュワーデスがやってきて、気分がわるいのかと英語で訊いた。大丈夫、少し目まいがしただけだと僕は答えた。

「本当に大丈夫？」

「大丈夫です、ありがとう」と僕は言った。スチュワーデスにはっきりと笑って行ってしまい、音楽はビリー・ジョエルの曲に変わった。僕は顔を上げて北海の上 空に浮かんだ暗い雲を眺め、自分がこれまでの人生の過程で失ってきた多くのもののことを考えた。失われた時間、死にあるいは去っていった人々、もう戻るこ とのない想い。

Jay Rubin: I bent forward, my face in my hands to keep my skull from splitting open. Before long one of the German stewardesses approached and asked in English if I were sick.

“No,” I said. “Just dizzy.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m sure. Thanks.”

She smiled and left, and the music changed to a Billy Joel tune. I straightened up and looked out the window at the dark clouds hanging over the North Sea, thinking of all I had lost in the course of my life: times gone for ever, friends who had died or disappeared, feeling I would never know again.

Alfred Birnbaum: I crouch forward and cover my face with my hands, and I just stay like that. Eventually a German stewardess comes to ask if I’m feeling ill. I’m fine, I answer, just a little dizzy.

“Are you sure you’re all right?”

“Really, I’m fine. Thanks.” I say. The stewardess smiles and heads off. Meanwhile the music changes to a Billy Joel number. I look up at the dark clouds over the North Sea and I think of how many things I’ve lost up to now in the course of living. Lost time, people dead or gone, feelings never return.

Starting off where the last paragraph left, the first phrase I'd like to focus on in this text is the expression ‘頭がはりさけてしまわないように’, meaning “for the sake of my head not bursting or splitting open”, which appears when Watanabe bends down and cover his face with both hands, in reaction to the “pain” caused by the melody. Jay Rubin manage to translate this into the well

working English sentence: “I bent forward, my face in my hands to keep my skull from splitting open.”, Birnbaum on the other hand already mentioned Watanabe's feeling like his head is about to burst and it is taken for granted that his readers will understand why Watanabe is now bending forward, covering his face with his hands. Here he keeps to a semantic way of translating, being flexible within both sentence built and language.

When analyzing flexibility within sentence built it can also be of value to look into the beginning of the conversation between Watanabe and the stewardess. Here Alfred Birnbaum lines up the sentence quite similar to the SL, turning ‘大丈夫、少し目まいがしただけだと僕は答えた’ into “I’m fine, I answer, just a little dizzy.” not using any quotation marks, yet quotes what is being said by adding “I answer” to the sentence, just like the SL makes a quotation adding ‘と僕は答えた’ and then let's the conversation continue on using quotation marks. Jay Rubin on the other hand transforms it, adding quotation marks to the first sentence as well, ending up with ““No,” I said. “Just dizzy.””.

Haruki Murakami ends the paragraph with the beautiful expression ‘もう戻ることのない想い’ which both Rubin and Birnbaum translate into “feeling(s)”. Not an incorrect translation, but a quite perfect example for what can happen when your only option is to translate the word into a simile; weakening the meaning of the word. ‘想い’ can also be translated into “thought” but is more related to deeper thoughts most likely connected with love, and even more so than the more common ‘思い’ is.

4:

飛行機が完全にストップして、人々がシートベルトを外し、物入れの中からバッグやら上着やらをとりだし始めるまで、僕はずっとあの草原の中にいた。僕は 草の匂いをかぎ、肌に風を感じ、鳥の声を聴いた。それは一九六九年の秋で、僕はもうすぐ二十歳になろうとしていた。

Jay Rubin: The plane reached the gate. People began unfastening their seatbelts and pulling luggage from the overhead lockers, and all the while I was in the meadow. I could smell the grass, feel the wind on my face, hear the cries of the birds. Autumn 1969, and soon I would be 20.

Alfred Birnbaum: As the plane comes to a complete stop, all the while until people unfasten their seat belts and start taking down their bags and jackets from the overhead compartments, I'm in the middle of a meadow. I can smell the grass, feel the breeze on my skin, hear the birds singing. It's the autumn of 1969. I'm about to turn twenty.

In this paragraph the situations around Toru Watanabe is being described. The first part of the paragraph to catch my attention is ‘飛行機が完全にストップして’ meaning “The plane completely stopped,” with ‘して、’ indicating that the later part of the sentence is most likely occurring after the plane has stopped. Jay Rubin transforms this into a well working expression, changing the ST into “The plane reached the gate,” while Birnbaum translates it as “As the plane comes to a complete stop,” which may confuse readers of the TL as it implies that the following event is happening as the first one is happening as well, but “as” may also be used to indicate the point of time the following event is occurring from. Meaning, as of when the plane had come to a complete stop, the passenger began unfastening their seat belts and pulling luggage from the overhead lockers. Alfred Birnbaum once again shows his tendency of being the one sticking the closest to the original sentence build.

The second thing to catch my attention is if we take a look at this sentence as a whole ‘飛行機が完全にストップして、人々がシートベルトを外し、物入れの中からバッグやら上着やらをとりだし始めるまで、僕はずっとあの草原の中にいた。’, it is clear how Jay Rubin and Alfred Birnbaum transform this into two very different versions. Starting off with Jay Rubin’s version where he chooses to divide this sentence into two different sentences ending up with the result “The plane reached the gate. People began unfastening their seatbelts and pulling

luggage from the overhead lockers, and all the while I was in the meadow.” to spare the readers of the TL the confusion of too long and unnatural sentences, which stuffing too many long and more detailed events into the very same sentence often can result in. Alfred Birnbaum on the other hand stays faithful to the sentence build of the SL. While Alfred Birnbaum's translation in this case would be seen as a faithful translation, Jay Rubin sticks to a translation method closer to semantic and communicative translation, being flexible within both language and sentence build.

Some grammatical differences can also be pointed out. ‘人々がシートベルトを外し、物入れの中からバッグやら上着やらをとりだし始めるまで、’ means “until the people started to unfasten their seat belts and pulling down baggage and jackets from the overhead lockers.” The expression of “until” may sound a bit unnatural and confusing in the TL, whereof Jay Rubin chooses to change it into “People began unfastening their seatbelts and pulling luggage from the overhead lockers, and all the while I was in the meadow.” whereas “all the while” indicates that the both events happened during the same time frame. Here, Jay Rubin sticks to a communicative translation method, transforming it into a slightly under translated, yet natural and resourcefully styled text, while Alfred Birnbaum stays faithful to the SL, making no largely noticeable changes to the grammatical style of the original except keeping his version in a present tense all the way through, while the SL is written in a past tense.

5:

前と同じ stewardess がやってきて、僕の隣りに腰を下ろし、もう大丈夫かと訊ねた。「大丈夫です、ありがとう。ちょっと哀しくなっただけだから (It's all right now. Thank you. I only felt lonely, you know.)」と僕は言って微笑んだ。

「Well, I feel same way, same thing, once in a while. I know what you mean. (そういうこと私にもときどきありますよ。よくわかります)」彼女はそう言って首を振り、席から立ちあがってとても素敵な笑顔を僕に向けてくれた。「I hope you'll have a nice trip. Auf Wiedersehen! (よい御旅行を。さようなら)」

「Auf Wiedersehen!」と僕も言った。

Jay Rubin: The stewardess came to check on me again. This time she sat next to me and asked if I was all right.

“I'm fine, thanks,” I said with a smile. “Just feeling kind of blue.”

“I know what you mean,” she said. “It happens to me, too, every once in a while.”

she stood and gave me a lovely smile “Well, then, have a nice trip. Auf Wiedersehen.”

“Auf Wiedersehen.”

Alfred Birnbaum: The same stewardess comes back, sits down beside me, and asks if I'm feeling better.

“I'm all right now, thank you. I was only feeling a little lonely.” I say, cheerfully as I can.

“I get the same way every once in a while. I know what you mean.” She nods as she gets up from the seat, then turns a lovely smile my way. “I hope you have a nice trip. Auf wiedersehen!”

“Auf wiedersehen!” I echo.

Moving along to the next paragraph the first section of Norwegian Wood is going towards its end. Here, the same stewardess comes back to check on Toru Watanabe once again and I'd like to put focus on how the ST sentence ‘前と同じ stewardess’ points out that it is the same stewardess as before, this being because qualifying Japanese nouns can be of a lot more importance than within English usage where nouns may easily be defined via articles as “the” or the usage of singular/plural. Here, Alfred Birnbaum stays faithful to the SL, while Jay Rubin chooses to transform the sentence as “The stewardess came to check on me again,” since both the

article “the” and the rest of the sentences clarify for the readers which stewardess he is talking about. Another example on Jay Rubin's way of removing words that may become unnatural or unimportant for the TL can also be seen later on in this paragraph when translating ‘彼女はそう言って首を振り、席から立ちあがってとても素敵な笑顔を僕に向けてくれた’ into “she stood and gave me a lovely smile.” Here, Jay Rubin sticks to a communicative translation style, simplifying and naturalizing the sentence for the TL by noticeably choosing to remove the nod that she gives Toru Watanabe and how she got out of the seat next to him. Most likely because these may have caused an unnatural balance to the sentence that he was striving for, and may not have been seen as important enough to work around. Alfred Birnbaum on the other hand, manage to stuff all of these events into his sentence ending up with “She nods as she gets up from the seat, then turns a lovely smile my way.”

The second part of the text I'd like to focus on is ‘ちょっと哀しくなっただけだから’ which Toru tells the stewardess to assure her he's feeling alright. ‘哀しくなった’ usually indicates “sad” or “sorrowful” but the already translated part of the sentence also indicates that Watanabe uses the expression “lonely”. Telling a person you just met that you're feeling lonely might not be something you naturally do, whether it is in English speaking countries or Japan, but this is also a part of the world of Haruki Murakami where his characters do not show much sign of feeling uncomfortable in situation we, as the readers may find unnatural. Here, Birnbaum sticks close to the SL version, keeping a touch of Murakami's writing style, while Rubin transforms it into “Just feeling kind of blue.” using “feeling blue” as a substitute of “sorrowful,” weakening the meaning of the expression, which in this case may not be of any negative effect. It is interesting to see how Birnbaum's version stays similar to Murakami's already imbedded English version of the conversation – the very conversation that was held in the reality that Murakami drew up for Watanabe – while Rubin ignores this, and draws up a new reality with a new conversation.

It is also interesting to take a look at the sentence built to figure out what kind of translators they both are. First, let's compare Alfred Birnbaum's translated sentence ““I'm all right now, thank you. I was only feeling a little lonely,” I say, cheerfully as I can.” with Jay Rubin's ““I'm fine, thanks,” I said with a smile. “Just feeling kind of blue.””. Here, Alfred Birnbaum stays almost identical to the SL's sentence built; keeping who it was who said what in the ending of the sentence. Just like how it in Japanese it can be necessary to end a quotation with the attachment “と,” while English only requires you to add quotes and a comma to make quotations. Rubin on the other hand chooses to change the sentence build into what he finds more suitable and natural in the TL.

9. Discussion

Based on the translation methods lined up in Peter Newmark's book "A textbook of translation" it is easy to clarify that Alfred Birnbaum uses translation methods such as faithful translation and semantic translation, whereas in most cases leaning towards faithful translation. He values transferring the original feel of Murakami's works into the TL, yet invests efforts into making the English language flow. Jay Rubin, on the other hand, sticks to translation methods such as communicative translation, and sometimes even free translation. He's not afraid to experiment with the sentence build and word flow, nor does he hesitate skipping out on words to prevent an unnatural sounding result. In this sense, it would be possible to compare Rubin and Birnbaum with Venuti's definition of "Domestication" and "Foreignisation". In Rubin's case; Domestication, as he often seem too focus on fluency in the TL and consequently eliminates certain foreign elements when translating. Birnbaum on the other hand aims to preserve cultural and linguistic elements and strives to convert unique characteristics of the ST, which can be seen in comparison with Foreignisation. (Venuti, 2008)

While attempting to reproduce the contextual meaning of the original, Birnbaum adapts to the TL grammatical structures. Yet at the same time he shows a high tendency of prioritizing the SL sentence build, only skipping out on words if they are absolutely unnecessary for the TL or impossible to translate. A good example on this is the sentence '彼女はそう言って首を振り、席から立ちあがってとても素敵な笑顔を僕に向けてくれた' from the 5th paragraph which he translates as "She nods as she gets up from the seat, then turns a lovely smile my way." Here, he managed to include every essential detail of the sentence without making it sound unnatural or difficult to understand for readers of the TL. The only word he chose to remove is 'とても' to prevent an unnatural balance to the word flow of the sentence. With this said, Birnbaum also has a tendency to over translate as he strives to follow and reproduce the thought process of Haruki Murakami, leading to a result that readers of the TL may find unnatural and sometimes even confusing.

Jay Rubin, on the other hand, takes advantage of his freedom, transforming the text into something new and fresh. Sometimes reproducing the matter without the manner, the context without the form of the original while being flexible within both language and sentence structure. This generally makes Jay Rubin a very talented translator, often ending up with a natural and nicely flowing English result. Yet, in contrary to Birnbaum, Rubin sometimes has a tendency to under translate and simplify when striving to naturalize the text for the sake of the TL.

Again, using the same example '彼女はそう言って首を振り、席から立ちあがってとても素

敵な笑顔を僕に向けてくれた’ from the 5th paragraph, which Jay Rubin transforms into “she stood and gave me a lovely smile,” it is easy to point out the fundamental differences between Jay Rubin and Alfred Birnbaum as this extreme example provides them. Here, Jay Rubin only keeps the essential details of the sentence, ending with a result much shorter than the ST.

As this text doesn't take up a very large number of cultural metaphors, it was difficult to gather material to draw up a big picture of how the two translators deal with such. In most of the cases, they both find substitutions for the metaphors. Whereas Birnbaum sticks closer to the ST version, preventing the original feeling of the text from slipping away, and Jay Rubin further away from the ST version. The only example of either of the translators using the first method in Peter Newmark's list: “Reproduction and transferring the same metaphorical image in the TL” is the sentence ‘フランドル派の陰うつな絵の背景のように見せていた’ which Alfred Birnbaum translates as “turning the scene into a gloomy Flemish painting,” nicely transferring the metaphorical image of the Flemish painting into the TL.

10. Result

Haruki Murakami is a relatively easy author to translate as his works lack cultural phenomenon and expression which may often occur in Japanese texts. However, striving to keep the original Murakami feel to the text while attempting to transform it into natural sounding English may become quite a challenge. Alfred Birnbaum prioritises keeping the original feel of the book when translating, while Jay Rubin strives to transform the text into a natural sounding result that the readers will find easy to understand.

To sum up the result of the text in “Norwegian Wood” I've chosen to analyze, Alfred Birnbaum is the more faithful translator, and tends to use translation methods such as faithful translation and semantic translation, whereas in most cases leaning towards faithful translation. Jay Rubin, on the other hand, tends to translate more freely and sticks to translation methods such as communicative translation, and sometimes even free translation. Birnbaum strives to keep the word flow and sentence structure faithful to the original when translating, and only skips out on words if they are unnecessary for the TL or impossible to translate. Jay Rubin tends to push the boundaries, being flexible within both word flow and sentence built. In most cases they both try to find substitutions to metaphors and cultural expressions that may occur, whereof Alfred Birnbaum in many cases stays closer to the ST version.

As Rubin often seem to focus on fluency in the TL he also consequently tend eliminate

certain foreign elements when translating. Birnbaum on the other hand aims to preserve cultural and linguistic elements and strives to convert unique characteristics of the ST. In this sense, it would be possible to compare Rubin and Birnbaum with Venuti's definition of "Domestication" and "Foreignisation".

In future studies it would be interesting to see more translations of Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin be brought up for analysis. For example, analyzing and comparing later translation works by Birnbaum to see if there have been any larger changes in his way of working as a translator. Or perhaps compare Jay Rubin's translation of *Norwegian Wood* with one of his translations of Haruki Murakami's magical realist novels, to get a deeper understanding of the art of translating today's popular Japanese authors.

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