belief, Malcom Budd on Wittgenstein and aesthetics, and Anne-Marie S. Christensen on Wittgenstein and ethics.

In sum, then, this book is no definite resource, but provides plenty of opportunities for further reflection and controversy – and that is meant as high praise rather than as a point of criticism.

Wittgenstein and the Complexities of Semio-Translation:

Wittgenstein in Translation
by Dinda L. Gorlée

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Readers familiar with Dinda Gorlée's earlier works, *Semiotics and the Problem of Translation* (1994) and *On Translating Signs: Exploring Text and Semio-Translation* (2004) will quickly recognize the signature of a scholar consistently dedicated to the Peircean semiotic tradition in her new book *Wittgenstein in Translation.* They will also appreciate that the new venture is not only a gold mine for a better understanding of Wittgenstein and Peirce, but also paints its picture on a generous palette of reading and scholarship from Plato, the Bible, St. Augustine, to not so recent as well as some contemporary writers. One of the obvious strengths of *Wittgenstein in Translation* is the author's comprehensive familiarity with the published works and manuscripts of Ludwig Wittgenstein, as well as an impressive range of existing translations of his

writings in English and some other languages. Given such accolades, even an extended review can do no more than draw the reader's attention to the book's general direction and some of its major themes. In reading *Wittgenstein in Translation,* we need to accept that Gorlée is not providing us primarily with yet another philosophical perspective on the Wittgensteinian oeuvre; her central focus is the pursuit of the question of what is happening when we attempt to render Wittgenstein's German in another language.

The book's opening motto "*Worte sind Taten'* (words are deeds) firmly establishes the author's platform of a pragmatics beyond the merely linguistic, the conviction that language cannot be well described if we remain stuck within merely verbal parameters. Gorlée understands her project as a criticism of the "shaky ground" of existing translations of the Wittgenstein oeuvre (5) and also as an attempt to provide a new direction for the predictable explosion of translations of the *Nachlass.*

In opposition to the traditional but "debilitating burden of synonymy", Gorlée aims at "harmonizing the semiotic method of Wittgenstein and Peirce" in order to achieve Peirce's ideal of the "power of constructive translation" (15f.). In the absence of a "multi-lingual glossary" for translating Wittgenstein's German writings, the book is designed to fill a substantial gap. Methodologically, Gorlée's *semio-translation* draws on Peirce, Jakobson, Bühler, Uexküll, Sebeok, and others, with a view to finding a "disciplinary wholeness", especially one favouring an interpretively appropriate alignment of Wittgenstein and Peirce (17f.). Central to that relationship is Peirce's notion of the "fallibilistic sign burden" which makes "retranslation" an inescapable and never-ending task (13). Facing the necessity of selection any review must obey, I opt for a focus on three major themes that run through *Wittgenstein in Translation*: semio-translation; language-games and words as deeds; and Wittgenstein and the "healing' of philosophy.

I. Semio-translation

A central concern in Dinda Gorlée's conception of translation is that all successful intertranslational rendering must transcend the merely linguistic; translation is of necessity embedded in the nonverbal signification of cultural umbrellas. As such, semio-translation is "future-oriented" and a "cumulative" process which is "irreversible", forming a "growing network of directing ideas of different values", much like "an organism radiating in all directions of time and space". In agreement with Peirce's idea of the growth of signs in the community of sign users, Gorlée views semiotranslation as evolving toward ever "higher rationality, complexity, coherence, clarity, and determination, while progressively harmonizing chaotic,

unorganized, and unintegrated translations" (18f.). Initially no more than an assertion, this evolutionary point is consistently argued and exemplified by comparisons of original and subsequent translations of Wittgenstein's writings.

Following Peirce, Gorlée ties semio-translation to a community of readers as translators and interpreters "in all languages" by providing "a number of copies, recopies and variants in translated and retranslated versions" (86). Far from these versions being in any way stable, translation consists in "making interpretants" (43) and so remains a "fallible game" (21). It does not come as a surprise then when Gorlée dismisses the idea of "an ideal or standard translation", or "authorized version" as "an oxymoron" (19; Gorlée 2004: 103f.). Since translation, like all sign activity, involves the production of Peircean *interpretants,* its results will always remain open to question and retranslation, generating "a potentially infinite network of different interpretant text-signs". Because of the necessary involvement of an endless chain of interpretants in translation the author, once more in agreement with Peirce, closely aligns translation with interpretation: "we can approximate interpretation to translation" (41). Interpretation, translation, and communication are all aligned in *Wittgenstein in Translation* as producing a "parallel argumentation" (46f.).

Gorlée's semio-translation is also indebted to Roman Jakobson's influential threesome of *intralinguistic, interlinguistic, and intersemiotic* translation, except that the verbal economy of translation always already mixes features of Jakobson's second and third types. Intersemiotic translation, the author says, "involves the decentring of verbal language to transpose it into nonverbal languages" (51). This is a crucial step reminiscent of Peirce's insistence that "every assertion must contain an icon or a set of icons, or else must contain signs whose meaning is only explicable by icons" (*CP* 1.158). Though iconic features exercised Wittgenstein's mind ubiquitously throughout the *PI* in the form of *Vorstellbarkeit* (imaginability), he was not prepared to follow this part of the Peircean scheme to its logical conclusion (Ruthrof 2011; 2013). Gorlée resolves this tension by reluctantly letting go of her obligations to the iconic Peirce and instead emphasizes "agreement in the definitions" and "agreement in judgments" (*PI* §242; G 46f.). It is above all "the logical superstructure of the context" that "must guide the choices between synonyms, arising in the translator's" mind "from the different "forms of life" he or she is acquainted with" (307).

Even so, iconicity is at least a stepping stone in Gorlée's semio-translation in the shape of "metalingual", "metapoetic", and "hypoiconic analogies" (219) whereby "the translator needs to 'visualize' the mixed fragments before translating them in the right perspective" (213). At this junction

Gorlée appears to be in conflict with Wittgenstein's commitment to the merely incidental contribution of *Vorstellung,* a topic I shall have occasion later to return to (*PI* §6). What is important, Gorlée insists, is "to carry over Wittgenstein's cultural source values into the target text, expressing essentially the same degree of emotional states and cultural thought". The goal then is "cultural equivalence" rather than merely "linguistic equivalence" (220).

This broad conception of translation is reiterated throughout the book and resumed again towards the end when Gorlée emphasizes the constraints on linguistic meaning exerted by such non-linguistic features as gesture, *Gebärde* and *Geste,* mental attitude, and other extraneous features. Summing up, she writes, "the semiotic environment of a linguistic context reacts against the vagueness of the experiential propositions of the game" (288). This larger web stands against Wittgenstein's "basic uncertainty of the last pages of *On Certainty*". Compelling grounds turn into "a person-oriented rational experiment" of reasoning, a much more complex situation than propositional certitude (289). Even when I act with complete certitude, writes Wittgenstein, this very certainty "is my own" (*OC* §25; G 290).

Wittgenstein in Translation, though, is not only a theoretical enterprise; it is as much a practical demonstration of how translation works, where it goes wrong and where its results are

convincing. When Gorlée does comparative work with Wittgenstein translations from different periods, she is having fun displaying her multi-lingual skills, especially when she draws the reader's attention to the nuances of meaning that result of necessity when we transpose Wittgenstein's attempts at precision thinking in natural language from one tongue to another. A good set of examples of Gorlée's linguistic skills is given from pages 188ff., as for instance her comments on the translation of Wittgenstein's phrase "*Die musikalische Gedankenstärke bei Brahms*" as "the strength of the musical thinking in Brahms" (189), or on what happens when "*schlecht*" is rendered as "evil", which would add a misleading "devilish touch" (205), or on the appropriateness of the translation of "*Verblendung*" by "bedazzlement", which retains traces of "*blenden*" and "*blind*" (205). A rare exception is the rendering by Winch of "*Betrachtung*" by "approach", rather than "viewing" or some other representational phrase, which goes unnoticed, yet results in a loss of Peircean iconicity (202). This little difference is the more important because Wittgenstein, in spite of his struggle to rid the theorization of language of *Vorstellung,* always acknowledges it when he cannot but observe "the law of mental association" at work (*CP* 5.284; 216). To remind ourselves of how forcefully this law is conceived by Peirce in the same passage, "there is no exception … to the law that every *thought-sign* is translated or

interpreted in a subsequent one", except when terminated by death. Another little misreading has occurred, I think, on page 210 where the author refers Wittgenstein's "*ihnen*" to "Beethoven and Goethe", when it actually refers to "*Probleme der abendländischen Gedankenwelt*" (210). On the whole, though, Gorlée has a fine ear and feeling for Wittgenstein's (Austrian) German. She frequently notes such effects as semantic alienation and other meaning shifts away from the "original source" (263), as for example in her detailed analysis of "particular" and "peculiar" (261-265). She is especially critical of the French translation of the *BBB* which "reflects an "elegant" novel in the French literary style of philosophy", yet introduces both "overtranslation and undertranslation, *as if it were Wittgenstein's philosophy*" (269). Trans-cultural translations of Wittgenstein's text may produce appealing results; when they do not, it is because, Gorlée observes, "Wittgenstein's authorship" has been "muddled up" in the target language (270).

Gorlée ends her theme of semio-translation with a reprimand addressed to "many of the global translations" which, though "good translations" fail to "enable philo-sophical reasoning about Wittgenstein's philosophical manuscripts". This leads Gorlée to ask the fundamental question: "Is Wittgenstein's philosophy perhaps trans-latable but nonetheless untrans-latable?" (270f.). The answer she

offers is that Wittgenstein is trans-latable when the translator(s) recognize that "meaning in translation is no statistics" but rather the product of "a multi-layered organicism of the mind, working on combining the cotextual (that is, the surrounding linguistic context) and contextual meaning (of the situational and extralinguistic con-text) as Wittgenstein's signature or his form of life" (279). In spite of translation remaining "an uncertain procedure", what is ultimately crucial according to Gorlée is that we respect Wittgenstein's "revelatory attitude" which in many ways mirrors Augustine's, for whom translation, as Gorlée notes, was a "missionary" task (309 n37).

II. Language-games and words as deeds

Although the pragmatics of later writings on language by Ludwig Wittgenstein's is hardly in dispute, it is worth repeating his conviction that "words have meaning only in the stream of life" (*LW* 1982: 913; G 165). Gorlée highlights this fundamental tenet because almost everything Wittgenstein has to say after the *Tractatus* rests on it. At the same time, in order not to distort the fine print of Wittgenstein's con-ception of language we must pay attention to these two qualifications, one, that "use" is to be understood in terms of its "rules"; the other, that the "meaning of a word" is defined "not by the feeling that attaches" to it (*W* 1979: 3ff.; G 173), but "how

the general term "word" operates in grammar" (173). At the same time, meaning in Wittgenstein is to be conceived, Gorlée's writes, as a "process of cultural ordering" (174). The important qualification to stress with respect to "use" then is the separation of its rule-governed character from *Vorstellung,* a point that is not easily reconciled with the Peircean sign conception. With this qualification in mind, we can sum up the way Gorlée characterizes Wittgenstein's *Sprachspiel,* the language-game, as his central, pragmatic notion. According to Gorlée, the language-game is a verbal translation of non-verbal situations and other verbal configurations requiring a reverse process of translation (61). Both linguistic and non-linguistic "play-acts" are types of "cultural construction" (279). They shape *Lebensformen* by "grammar". (159) Thus Wittgenstein views language-games as "the primary thing", and "feelings, etc." as "a way of looking" at it (*PI* §656; G 160). Whether the two can be so neatly separated in the semantics of natural language must remain a moot point.

This criticism however does not affect Gorlée's formulation that "the language-game itself is the real game, Secondness, sandwiched between the logical Thirdness and emotional Firstness" (160). Keeping in mind her insistence on the Peircean triadic conception of the sign, meaning requires all three, such that the *Betrachtungsweise* would have to be accepted as a constituent component of the language-game at the semantic

and pragmatic levels, without reduction to empty, symbolic notation. This seems to be confirmed a little later when Gorlée says that "the language-game, *in its semiotized version,* operates outside language to imply extralinguistic components" (160; my emphasis). Wittgenstein appears to support this reading, if not in §6, but a paragraph later in the *PI,* where he regards "the whole of language and the activities with which it is interwoven" as the "language-game" (PI §7), as part of a *Lebensform,* (PI §23) which reinforces Gorlée's emphasis on the "socio-cultural variety of the language-games" (224).

In playing the language-game we constitute meaning of necessity, as a "necessary necessitation" (*CP* 1.530). Meaning in this process is not, according to Gorlée, "a single word but rather deeds of a propositional syntax, the semantics of a fragment, without reaching the total work", a claim she exemplifies by way of the Heraclitean metaphor of not being able to step into the same river twice. "The experiential association of the crossing of the river is the language-game", which we must play in reading *On Certainty* (293). Here, Wittgenstein substitutes for deductive certitude "a variety of subjective truths" and "propositional attitudes of uncertainty" (294). In Wittgenstein's "method of doubt and inquiry" the final interpretant forever recedes before us. Because of the effects of Wittgenstein's imponderables of "nuances of tone, gaze, and gesture", the traditional

"action of judgment" is converted into the "action of the deeds of the language-game" (*LW* §121; my rendering; G 298; 295). In natural language, then, we are dealing with "experiential propositions", if with propositions at all, one might add, which are always already "mediated" by Wittgenstein's final notion of "groundlessness" (299). In a way, in Wittgenstein's last language-games, it would seem that the "grammar of propositional argument" is *aus den Angeln gehoben*, that is, literally *unhinged*.

In her theorization of language-games, another feature of Wittgenstein's pragmatics to be mentioned briefly, though thoroughly pursued by Gorlée, is the Faustian theme of the primacy of verbal meaning as deed and action, the theme of "the meta-action of deeds in language" (107). This becomes obvious, says Gorlée, "when a word can be discovered in a passionate and alive search, meaning becomes more complex" and "words become deeds" (128). Likewise, linguistic "clues are not words in language, but cultural deeds" (231). As such, language is a cultural activity stretching from its habitual to its most creative employment. For Gorlée, as for her philosophical mentor Wittgenstein, "the central problem is the existence and significance of human creativity in language", which emanates from "the symbiotic act of the Peirce-like interpreter and translator" (131). But even in its most creative use, language rests on forms of life as its "basic condition", Wittgenstein's "*Hinzunehmende, Gegebene*" (what has to be accepted, what is given) (*PI* §192; G 230).

III. Wittgenstein and the "healing" of philosophy

With reference to Rorty, Gorlée suggests that Wittgenstein's ultimate aim was to "heal" philosophy (77). This, as I will sum up a little later, seems to consist in repairing both the philosophical myth of the symbolic and the preoccupation with mental processes. Given Wittgenstein's deceptively "simple language", how, the reader may ask, is such a "healing" possible? How can an oeuvre dedicated to a style of *bricolage* produce "a highly philosophical picture", a *Weltbild* (*PI* §42)? And how does Gorlée persuade us that "a system of broken and unbroken parts" (45), comparable with Peirce's "scattered outcroppings" (59), amounts to a *Weltanschauung*? Gorlée likens Wittgenstein's "fragmentary experiment" to "a postmodern 'potpourri' of a basically unpublished philosophical system", a mixture of "short texts or paragraphs" concealing "contradictions" (62). What emerges from all this, the author says, is a "private style of writing mere fragments about philosophy" which offer an "aesthetic vision" and the "personal confessions of being an author" (66). As Gorlée illustrates, a salient characteristic of Wittgenstein's unique style is his habit of

interspersing his formal discourse with "informal questions and commands answered by himself". "Loose scraps of observation or thoughts" inform his method of philosophical inquiry such that they generate the effect of a "pseudo-pedagogical performance" (67). Viewed from this angle, suggests Gorlée, the *PI* could be seen as a "scrapbook" (68). And yet, in spite of the impressions of no more than "*Denkbewegungen*", a series of "mental snapshots", we are provided not just with "isolated ideas" (70), but rather with earnest "*Geichnisse*" (parables) (*Nachlass, CV* 16; G 70). Looking at Wittgenstein's writings and its reception in translation, Gorlée discovers a larger purpose, part of which she calls his "fragmentary therapy" (77). And there can be little doubt that in the end his "solipsistic and collective 'puzzle picture'" (*PI* §§23, G 168), his *Bemerkungen* and *Aufzeichnungen,* his quasi-propositions, like Peirce's "instantaneous impulses" (*CP* 6.330; G 95), amount to one of the most influential philosophical positions of the twentieth century.

A forever intriguing aspect of Wittgenstein's "new philosophy" are his almost desperate attempts at avoiding what he regards the two major traps threatening critical thought: "In philosophy one is in constant danger of producing a myth of symbolism, or a myth of mental processes" (*Z* 1967: 211; G 88). In striving to avoid importing into the description of natural language the logical but unwarranted

presupposition of the purity of "crystalline" clarity, Wittgenstein replaces Fregean sense with a "shadowy being" (*BBB* 1958: 36). Pointing to the schematic nature of language, instead of adopting the notion of pure thought, Wittgenstein feels compelled "to paint something '*Verschwommenes*' (something blurred) … a grey section" (*Nachlass MS* 229: 411; G 91). So meaning, for the later Wittgenstein, according to Gorlée, had not only lost the sharpness of definitional sense but also "its straightforward referentiality" and as a result "had become a complex, elusive, semiosic entity to be vaguely understood by the receivers (translators)" (156). This is why, as Gorlée persuades her readers, the language-games afford us "no proof, no reality, and no truth". They offer "degrees of fidelity" (169).

The other philosophical trap, Gorlée tells us, Wittgenstein does not wish to fall into is the unwarranted stipulation of "mental processes". This appears to be directed against the Lockean, Kantian and Husserlian traditions. Yet, as Wittgenstein well knows, such a new direction is difficult to make coherent and persuasive. After all, how is it possible "even to think of the existence of things, if we always only see *Vorstellungen* – their replicas – always only *Vorstellungen (nie die Dinge selbst)*" (*W* MS 211: 108f.; G 153)? Kant's *Vorstellung* continues to loom as a massive cognitive precondition of appearances. In a similar vein, Wittgenstein appears to rebel against

phenomenology and its elaboration of the mental process. Yet again, there are obstacles in the way of such a critique. As Wittgenstein feels compelled to concede, "the life of the sign" as well as its "use" depend on "certain definite mental processes through which alone language can function". Without them, "the signs of our language seem dead" (*BBB* 1958: 3f.; G 154). Such sentiments are supported by Wittgenstein's sensitivity to the manner in which a culture utters its expression, a theme I have discussed repeatedly under the heading of *implicit deixis* (e.g. Ruthrof 2000: 48-53; 2011: 173). As Gorlée acknowledges, Wittgenstein expresses this aspect of meaning simply and neatly as a "feeling" with which "the sentence is said" (*BBB* 1958: 35; G 156).

Guiding us through *Wittgenstein in Translation,* Gorlée argues the "shift from arithmetic to existential logics", Wittgenstein's "open nature of quasi-propositions" suggestive of "a sort of *unvollständiges Bild*", an incomplete picture rather than a coherent world view (*PB* 1984: 115; G 88). Indeed, the very idea of "incompleteness" is shown to lie at the heart of Wittgenstein's "new philosophy". Pulling certain threads of Wittgenstein's "*unvollständiges Bild*" together, we are nevertheless able to pursue in more detail the question at the heart of his later work, of what precisely "*meaning as use*" consists in. Two powerful philosophical trends appear to have made it difficult for him to complete this part of his theoretical landscape: his scientific

dedication to *observables* and his lingering formal commitment to the ideal of *algebra,* in a way "blocking the road of inquiry" (*CP* 6.273). What Wittgenstein tried to escape from until the very end of his thinking, as portrayed by Gorlée, is the one issue that could have added significantly to, if not completed, the picture Wittgenstein was striving for, permitting him to "leave something in the place where something was missing": his very own, trade-mark transformation of Peirce's *iconic,* rather than reductively symbolic, *mental interpretant* (*PB* 1984: 115). Yet, as much as he wrestled with *imaginability* throughout his later career, Wittgenstein in the end could not accept it as that which, suitably translated, was the *something* that was missing in his account of language as "refinement". What Gorleé has been successful in driving home for this reader, in addition to a wealth of other insights, is Wittgenstein's absolute commitment to critical inquiry as a spiritual search, to be surpassed only by his extraordinary modesty. When he recalls his insight of the meaninglessness of the law of causality Wittgenstein says, "*da hatte ich das Gefühl vom Anbrechen einer neuen Epoche*" (there I had the feeling of the dawning of a new epoch). He is thrilled to be a participant in the inception of a new way of thinking rather than, as in the English rendering, "I felt myself initiating a new epoch" (113).

IV. Conclusion

In her Conclusion "with antici-pation", the author surveys the main steps of her argument in *Wittgenstein in Translation*. She does so with a mild reprimand of translations which have failed to be sensitive to his "total oeuvre". Such errors can be avoided, Gorlée suggests, if philosophical translation were to follow the "path of the com-puterized version of Wittgenstein's philosophical work" conducted in the "Hyper-Wittgenstein" project by the "Wittgenstein Archives in Bergen" (324). She ends her book with yet another nod to Peirce by telling the reader that such an approach via hypertext would reveal "the underlying code of inward iconicity and outward indexicality" resulting in a "multi-disciplinary symbolicity" (326). By no means an easy read, *Wittgenstein in Translation: Exploring Semiotic Signatures* is an enormously rich book, original, personal, and entirely committed to the spirit and detail of Wittgenstein's writing. It will prove an invaluable source of information for readers interested in Peircean semiotics and a broad and sympathetic perspective on Wittgenstein's life-long intellectual struggle.

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