

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE IN THE TRANSLATION OF EMILIYA  
DVORYANOVA'S NOVEL *CONCERTO FOR A SENTENCE*

A Thesis  
by  
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## ABSTRACT

### FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE IN THE TRANSLATION OF EMILIYA DVORYANOVA'S NOVEL *CONCERTO FOR A SENTENCE*

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The first part of my thesis focuses on the issues related to foreignization practices in translation and seeks to find practical solutions for the translation of Emiliya Dvoryanova's novel *Concerto for a Sentence* from Bulgarian into English. It also discusses the positionality of the translator based on the ideological context. The second part of the thesis offers a sample from my translation of Dvoryanova's text.

In Part I, I begin with a brief review of the historical development of the theories that advocate foreignization, or the intentional preservation of linguistic and cultural elements from the original in the target text. Then, I use a theoretical model proposed by Antoine Berman in the 1980s to elicit the difficult points in the translation of Dvoryanova's text with special attention to the practices of foreignization. Berman's theory proposes a twelve-point classification of the deformation tendencies—forces that prevent translation from transporting the foreign elements in the target text. I choose four of the deformation tendencies from Berman's list to analyze my translation of *Concerto for a Sentence* with the goal to creatively enforce foreignization practices.

The use of practices like foreignization poses multiple philosophical problems, one of them being the question of translator's positionality. Further in Part I of my thesis, I delve into the theoretical discussion regarding the translator and his/her choices of a text and the consequences in the receiving culture. I conclude that the positionality of the translator is a complex issue dependent on several variables: the dominant ideology in the receiving culture, its capacity to tolerate dissident voices, and the relationship between the two cultures—that of the text's origin and the target culture.

At the end of Part I, I analyze the case of Dvoryanova's novel *Concerto for a Sentence*: the possibilities for foreignization practices in its translation together with my positionality as a translator. In the end, I provide a sample from my translation of the novel.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Part I: Positionality of the Translator and Creative Decisions to Attenuate the     |    |
| Negative Analytic.....  | 1  |
| Introduction.....   | 1  |
| Translation and Its Socio-Cultural Context.....                                     | 4  |
| Foreignness and Foreignization of Translation: From Theory to Practice.....         | 9  |
| Trails of the Foreign.....  | 13 |
| “Barbarizing” the Translation. Can <i>Concerto for a Sentence</i> Sound Foreign     |    |
| without Being Barbarized?.....  | 15 |
| Attenuating the Negative Analytic in the Translation of <i>Concerto for a</i>       |    |
| <i>Sentence</i> .....   | 17 |
| Rationalization.....  | 17 |
| Clarification.....  | 20 |
| The Destruction of Rhythms.....   | 22 |
| The Destruction of Underlying Networks of Signification.....                        | 24 |
| Foreignization as Revealing the Self-Same of the Text.....                          | 29 |
| Conclusion to My Analysis.....  | 30 |
| Choice of Text for Translation. Positionality of the Translator.....                | 31 |
| Positionality of the Translator in Translating <i>Concerto for a Sentence</i> ..... | 34 |
| <i>Concerto for a Sentence</i> As a Novel and Emiliya Dvoryanova as a Writer.....   | 35 |
| Part II: Excerpt from My Translation of <i>Concerto for a Sentence</i> .....        | 39 |

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Works Cited.....              | 60 |
| Biographical Information..... | 63 |

## **Part I: Positionality of the Translator and Creative Decisions to Attenuate the Negative Analytic**

*To translate a foreign poet is to add to one's own poetry; yet this addition does not please those who profit from it. At least not in the beginning: the first reaction is one of revolt. A language into which another idiom is transfused does what it can to resist. It will find new strength in it later, but for now it is indignant. It abhors that new taste.*

Victor Hugo (qtd. in Lefevere, *Translating Literature* 125)

### **Introduction**

Translating literary texts is a responsibility-laden act of transporting meaning across cultures, a process that often results in reshaping or even rewriting the original. Some see literary translation as a form of manipulation of the original, while some see it as a creative act in which the translator assumes the function of a co-author. The translator's status can be one of invisibility, but it's mostly one of power in which he/she helps create an image of the culture of the text's origin. Lefevere calls translators "the artisans of compromise," "image makers, exerting the power of subversion under the guise of objectivity" (*Translating Literature* 6, 7).

In this thesis, I will analyze the process of translating the Bulgarian novel *Concerto for a Sentence* by Emiliya Dvoryanova into English. For that purpose, I will first review



the literature on how and why the translated text intentionally preserves or avoids words, expressions, syntactical structure, punctuation, and stylistic elements from the original. More specifically, I will use Berman's "negative analytic," or twelve-point classification of the different forms of deformation that may occur in the translation process, where the "deformations" are "the series of tendencies or *forces* that cause translation to deviate from its essential aim" (286). Berman considers the main aim of translation to be the preservation of the foreign, in a cultural but also in a strictly linguistic sense. Next, I will look into the most recent ideas of the involvement of the translator in that process and as a consequence, his/her visibility and positionality as a co-author.

The purpose of my analysis is to reach some creative decisions about the translation process of the novel, which regard possible foreignization practices or the intentional preservation of linguistic and cultural elements from the source text (ST) into the target text (TT). As a result, the two main questions that I will try to answer are: To what extent is foreignization of a literary translation from Bulgarian into English possible? How does the positionality of a translator change based on the ideological position of the particular language of origin in the receiving culture? The review of the theory and the hypothetical answers to the posed questions will prepare the grounds for the practical application of these ideas. In my analysis, I will use specific examples from my own translation of Dvoryanova's work to illustrate how I have employed the ideas from the theoretical literature to reach a specific practical solution. Then, I will discuss the novel, its translatability and the author's position on the Bulgarian literary scene. Finally, I will provide a sample of my translation from the beginning of the novel.

The novel that I am translating, *Concerto for a Sentence* by Emiliya Dvoryanova,

presents several challenges to the translator, mostly because of the text's poetic and musical nature. The book invites its readers to a poetic journey through music. Its structure resembles the organization of a musical piece and as such tries to blur the boundaries between the syntax of music and that of poetry. The whole novel claims to be one sentence, "concerto for a sentence," as the title insists. One sentence it is not; it is rather a series of sentence fragments that follow the flow of the musical piece. In addition, the fragmentation and musicality of the novel are instrumental to its plot and meaning. The musical language and the structure of the novel as concerto seemingly provide for an effective bridge between cultures: the language of music, which is universal. Yet, this feature of the novel presents the greatest challenge to the translator—the necessity to keep the structure of the concerto intact, preserve every single note, syllable, word, or sentence fragment—while transporting the sounds and their meaning to a different language, translating the text into English. Consequently, the possible deformations that may occur in Berman's sense are numerous. In my analysis, I will focus mostly on the deformations related to the syntactical structure and the rhythm of the original text since structure and rhythm are required for an adequate rendition of the concerto in a different language.

## **Translation and Its Socio-Cultural Context**

Before I discuss the main theoretical approach to translation that I use in my analysis, it is important to review the ideas that precede it. A very brief overview of the scholarship on translation in the last century will reveal how the theories have evolved over time to eventually incorporate as an essential variable in translation the social and cultural context of a text, both in the original and in the receiving culture.

Up until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., western translation theory was dominated by the debate over literal, free, or faithful translation, which George Steiner calls a “sterile triadic model” (319). Steiner asserts that before the 1950s, the question of the nature of translation was studied within the more general frameworks of language and the mind, and theory of translation pivoted around “undefined alternatives: ‘letter’ or ‘spirit’, ‘word’ or ‘sense’” (249, 290). He considers this to be an epistemological weakness, as a result of which arguments on translation were treated as trivial or resolved or of another jurisdiction, even though, Steiner observes, in those periods in history of thought epistemology was critical, and philosophers scrutinized the nature of the relationship between ‘word’ and ‘sense’ (290).

Susan Bassnett, a contemporary theorist, notes that the main problem with the writings on translation before the 20<sup>th</sup> c. was that the criteria for judgment were vague and subjective (137). Translation theory in the first part of the last century was mostly guided by the study of linguistics, as the word was the most important unit in the process of translation. Even later on, the theoreticians of the 1950s and 1960s focused on certain linguistic issues, one of them being that of meaning and equivalence.

In his famous work “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” published in 1959, structuralist Roman Jakobson studied meaning in translation based on the Saussurean

sign system. He focused on equivalence not of code-units, meaningful linguistic elements in a text, but of whole messages from one language to another (Jakobson 114). Jakobson theorized that, “[e]quivalence in difference is the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics” (114). He considered that the problems of equivalence in meaning stem from the different structures of languages. In his view, however, the differences in the relationship between phonemic and semantic elements of a unit or message in two languages do not present a problem in prose; messages and concepts can be rendered interlingually in prose. In poetry, on the other hand, form expresses sense, and “phonemic similarity is sensed as semantic relationship”; as a result, Jakobson finds poetry to be “untranslatable” (118).

The American theorist Eugene Nida took further Jakobson’s ideas on linguistic meaning and equivalence to create a more systematic approach to translation, incorporating recent work in linguistics, including Chomsky’s ideas on the syntactic structure within his theory of generative –transformational grammar. Unlike most of the preceding translation theorists, Nida did not study the orthographic word as the carrier of a fixed meaning but rather advocated a functional definition of meaning where a word “acquires” meaning through its context and can produce various responses according to culture (33). Nida developed a series of techniques to help the translator decide on the meaning of different linguistic units: hierarchical structuring, componential analysis, and semantic structure analysis (84-5). He moved away from the word-for-word equivalence, so popular among the theorists before him, to coin the categories “formal equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence” that introduce a more structural process in the production of meaning with an emphasis on the role of context and culture (Nida 159).

The leading concept in most translation theory during the 1960s-1970s was equivalence. As Lawrence Venuti puts it, “[t]ranslation is generally seen as a process of communicating a foreign text by establishing a relationship of identity or analogy with it” (*The Translation Studies* 121). In his book *Experiences in Translation*, Umberto Eco is definite:

Equivalence in meaning cannot be taken as a satisfactory criterion for a correct translation, first of all because in order to define the still undefined notion of translation one would have to employ a notion as obscure as equivalence of meaning, and some people think that meaning is that which remains unchanged in the process of translation. (9)

And yes, indeed, how is one to account for the changes that take place during the translation process in grammatical units, stylistics, etc? Some theorists from the 1960s attempted to solve this mystery by creating taxonomies of small linguistic changes or shifts that occur in the process of translation (Munday 56). Scholars like Vinay and Darbelnet developed one of the classical models to study such changes, identifying different translation strategies and procedures (Munday 56). In his essay “Translation as a Decision Process,” Jiří Levý sees translation as a pragmatic process, as a result of which a “gradual semantic shifting” happens in the target text (153). He gives several examples of experimental translations of one and the same text, showing that translators choose from a number of possible solutions to achieve different results in the target text.

In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars like Mary Snell-Hornby, Katharina Reiss, Justa Holtz-Manttari, and Hans J. Vermeer moved away from the static linguistic typologies of translation to create a functionalist approach, in which they focused on the receptor as a

central concept rather than equivalence and insisted on the communicative nature of the process. For instance, Reiss developed a typology to help the translator analyze a text and then find “functionally equivalent” solutions for translation (160). For the first time in the history of translation, the functionalists overtly considered the values of different languages and cultures as an essential variable in the translation process.

It was not until the 1980s when theorists became truly interested in the role of culture in translation. They studied its effect on the translation process but also accounted for the social and cultural factors influencing the choice of a particular text for translation and its consequent existence in the target culture. Beginning with Itamar Even-Zohar’s ideas, this group of scholars shifted the focus of translation studies toward the position of translated literature as a whole in the social, cultural, historical, and literary system of the target language (Even-Zohar 192-3). In the target culture polysystem—i.e. a heterogeneous conglomerate of systems—translated literature can occupy a central or a secondary position (Even-Zohar 193). The position of translated literature in the literary polysystem stems from its importance in it—if it helps in elaborating the new repertoire or if it is subordinate to “norms already conventionally established by an already dominant type in the target literature” (Even-Zohar 195). In a literature of a minor language, for instance, translated texts from a major language might occupy a more central position because they introduce innovative forces, and vice versa, in a literature of a major language, the translations from a minor language may be assigned a more peripheral place.

Mary Snell-Hornby uses the phrase “cultural turn” to describe the period when theorists moved away from viewing translation as text to translation as culture and

politics (Munday 125). Later on, S. Bassnett and Lefevere take up the term and use it as a metaphor for this cultural move but also to bind together theories that strive toward analysis of translation from a cultural angle: for example, the power exercised in and on the publishing industry in pursuit of specific ideologies, feminist writing and translation, translation as appropriation, and translation as rewriting.

André Lefevere's work presents a link between the polysystem theorists and the scholars associated with the cultural turn. In *Translation, Rewriting and Manipulation of the Literary Fame*, he examined factors that govern the reception, acceptance, or rejection of literary texts, "issues such as power, ideology, institution and manipulation" (2). Those who are involved in such power positions are the ones who "rewrite" literature and govern its consumption by the general public (Lefevere, *Translation* 3). Lefevere's ideas together with those of other scholars initiated a trend in translation studies that views translation as an act of rewriting the original and that studies its life in the target literature, culture, and language.

All of the concerns that stem from the theories of translation since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. bring forth an important observation: the position of any translated text in the target culture, and therefore its influence in it, is determined by the relationship between the culture of origin and the target one. Moreover, this same relationship, which determines the position of the translated text, influences the possibilities in the translation process, the translator's decisions. Can the translation carry more features from its culture of origin and sound foreign to its target readers, and thus be foreignized, or does it need to conform to the target culture by eradicating as much as possible the foreignness in it, and thus be domesticated?

### **Foreignness and Foreignization of Translation: From Theory to Practice**

The quandary “domestic” vs. “foreign” should rather address the appropriateness and the extent of foreignization, and therefore the above question should be rephrased: When does a translation need to introduce foreignisms—elements carrying features of the culture of origin— and when does it need to get “domesticated,” or be more “fluent” in the target language (Venuti, *The Translator’s* 1-4)? The translator’s choices therefore are ethical, and the proper decisions for foreignization or domestication are culturally variable and historically contingent.

In *Experiences in Translation*, Umberto Eco gives examples of right choices for domestication and foreignization (22-24). Respectively, he examines situations when one of the two strategies was used to decrease the readability of the translation by either introducing an incomprehensible cultural reference or destroying the historical consistency of the text. For instance, in the translations of his novel *Foucault’s Pendulum*, Eco feels that domestication becomes an indispensable tool in some chapters, while foreignization makes the text incomprehensible. At one point, there is a reference to a phrase pronounced by a character in one popular novel by Emilio Salgari from the nineteenth century that was known to the Italian audience but, if left in its original form, would be unintelligible to non-Italian-speaking readers (24). In another example, Eco recalls an American movie that he saw when he was little with “domesticated” names of its characters for the Italian audience; he naturally wonders why everybody in the United States had an Italian name (23). Foreignization would have been more appropriate in this case.

In his recent book *Is That a Fish in Your Ear*, David Bellos ponders the question of “foreign-soundingness” in translation (41). He enumerates all the different ways in which



a text sounds foreign — beginning from the obvious choice to leave foreign words in the target text to the invention of a mock-up language that recreates the way the language of origin sounds to the target audience. The most important observation of Bellos however is that, “selective or decorative foreignism is available only in translation between languages with an established relationship” (45). He gives examples with French translations into English and explains that the English-speaking readers for centuries have been exposed to French through their education. As a result, English speakers could at least identify words like *parbleu* and *ma foi* and even if they could not tell the exact meaning, the recognition still raised their self-esteem. Recognizing French words and expressions, therefore, has become a “hallmark for educated classes,” and the more French is left in an English translation, the higher the self-esteem of the reader, asserts Bellos (45).

The established relationship between French and English gives a chance to the translator to foreignize the target text. However, the case of French and English is a rare one. The English reader of today wouldn't be able to recognize many foreignisms even from popular languages like German, Spanish, or Russian. What about the other seven thousand languages of the world? Bellos concludes that, “the project of writing translations that preserve in the way they sound some trace of the work's ‘authentic foreignness’ is really applicable only when the original is not very foreign at all” (47).

In the first chapter of his book *The Translator's Invisibility*, Lawrence Venuti tries to define what English language critics consider a “fluent translation,” a term most often used as the highest praise for a work of translation. After studying a number of British and American critical reviews from both literary and mass-audience periodicals, Venuti

formulates a definition: “a fluent translation is immediately recognizable and intelligible, ‘familiarised,’ domesticated, not ‘disconcerting[ly]’ foreign, capable of giving the reader unobstructed ‘access to great thoughts,’ to what is ‘present in the original’ (*The Translator’s* 5). The dominance of fluency in British and American translational tradition reveals that domestication is a vital method for successful translation practices in the English-speaking world. Venuti goes further to dub the domestication practices, so popular in the English-speaking world, as “ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to receiving cultural values,” or more radically --“ethnocentric violence” (*The Translator’s* 15, 16). He suggests that foreignizing the translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of domestication and is “highly desirable today” (*The Translator’s* 16).

Venuti dedicates several chapters of his book to the practice of foreignization — theory, method, implications, ideological, and canonical significance. He meticulously discusses a lecture on translation methods from the beginning of the nineteenth century by the German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) (Venuti, *The Translator’s* 83). Venuti observes that Schleiermacher sees translation as an important practice in the Prussian nationalistic movement: “it could enrich the German language by developing an elite literature and thus enable German culture to realize its historical destiny of global domination” (83). Despite his nationalist and elitist agenda, which would naturally make one think that he is in support of domestication practices, Schleiermacher advocates for the methods of foreignization. He contends that it is exactly translation that provides the locus for cultural difference: the translator should invent discursive peculiarities to signify the foreignness of the foreign text (Venuti, *The Translator’s* 95).

As another example of a theorist in support of foreignization, Venuti analyzes Francis Newman (1805-97), a Victorian translator. In much the same fashion as Schleiermacher, sans the nationalist interests, Newman defends the foreignization of translation as a means to educate the target audience and recommends a translation practice that “signifies the many differences between the translation and the foreign text and their composition in different cultures for different audiences” (Venuti, *The Translator's* 101). To Newman, foreignized translation resists academic literary values—he considered them smothering to the acquisition of real knowledge—challenges the canon, and leads the way to a liberal education, whose underlying characteristic is the recognition of cultural differences.

In his analysis of contemporary perspectives on foreignization, Venuti sees the method as a dissident cultural practice, which “maintain...[s] a refusal of the dominant by developing affiliations with marginal linguistic and cultural values in the receiving situation, including foreign cultures that have been excluded because their differences effectively constitute a resistance to dominant values” (*The Translator's* 125). He advocates for foreignization practices that include not only the translational decisions but also the choice of a text for translation. The translator's solutions can deviate from the forms of fluent translating and he/she can also select a text for translation whose genre defies the canonical narrative forms in the literary traditions of the target culture (*The Translator's* 153). Thus, the translator can “revise receiving cultural values by casting strategically chosen foreign texts in the dominant language, standard dialect” (*The Translator's* 126).

Challenging the canon in British and American literature by an unorthodox choice

of text for translation, creating a dissident voice as a translator by resisting the tradition of fluency in translation — these are the main values espoused by advocates of foreignization. To what extent is it possible to apply them in the process of translation within a particular language pair? In the following three sections, I will try to answer this question regarding my translation of Emiliya Dvoryanova’s novel *Concerto for a Sentence*. For that purpose, I will first look more closely at Antoine Berman’s ideas of how to avoid unwanted domestication of the text, which he calls deformation, and use them as an instrument to study my translation. Then, I will review the writing on the ideology of selecting a text for translation. Finally, I will address the issue of the positionality of the translator as a result of his/her foreignizing strategies.

### **Trails of the Foreign**

Antoine Berman refers to translation as the “trail of the foreign”—an expression used by Heidegger to define one pole of poetic experience in Hölderlin—in two senses (284). First, translation establishes a relationship between the Self-Same (*Propre*) and the Foreign by aiming to open up the foreign work to us in its utter foreignness. And then, translation is “a trail *for the Foreign as well*, since the foreign work is uprooted from its own *language-ground (sol-de-langue)*” (284). Berman contends that this trail is often an exile, and as such, can exhibit the most singular power of the translating act: “to reveal the foreign work’s most original kernel, its most deeply buried, most self-same, but equally the most ‘distant’ from itself” (284). It is the task of the translator to identify the self-same of the work, render it into the target language, and if necessary, to accentuate it. Only in this way can the receiving audience get closer to the foreign work’s character.

Berman further tries to examine the system of deformations—different forms of domestication—that operates in every translation. He calls this examination the analytic of translation: a detailed analysis of the deformation tendencies that prevents translation from becoming the trail of the foreign and consequently prevents the reader from experiencing the foreign culture. Thus, in Berman’s terms, there is a negative analytic, the existence of these deformations, and a positive analytic, the attempt to attenuate them (Berman 286).

To provide a platform for the study of the negative analytic, Berman creates a classification of the twelve main deforming tendencies. *Rationalization* mainly affects syntactical structure and order. *Clarification* tries to make clear what is not explicitly stated in the source text. *Expansion* unfolds what in the original is “folded.” *Ennoblement and popularization* tends to either improve on the original by rewriting it in a more elegant style or, in the opposite case, to lower the register by using “pseudo-slang” or “spoken” language. *Qualitative impoverishment* is the replacement of words and expressions with equivalents in the target language that lack “their sonorous richness” or signifying features. *Quantitative impoverishment* is the loss of lexical variation in translation. *The destruction of rhythms* affects the rhythmic movement of any text, poetry or prose. *The destruction of underlying networks of signification* addresses the damage to the hidden dimension of the text where certain signifiers correspond and link up to form networks. *The destruction of linguistic patterinings* refers to the change of the types of sentences or the sentence construction employed in the original. *The destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization* is the effacement of vernaculars or their introduction in the target text in a stereotypical form. *The destruction of expressions and*

*idioms* addresses cases of ethnocentric replacement of linguistic and cultural images into the target language, or in Venuti's terms, this practice would be called domestication of idioms. *The effacement of the superimposition of languages* is the threat to the coexistence of dialect and one or two common languages, or koines (Berman 288-296). Berman also contends that deformations of translation are more accepted in prose than in poetry; it's easier to detect them in a poem, while in prose they do not immediately reveal themselves (287).

Dvoryanova's novel is written in a poetic form. Therefore, the deformations most relevant to the analysis of my translation are the ones regarding the preservation of syntactical structure—*rationalization*, *expansion* and *clarification*, and the preservation of rhythm—*the destruction of rhythms*. As a novel, *Concerto for a Sentence* can be “deformed” in some of the ways more commonly known to prevent prose from being the trail of the foreign. That is why tendencies like *the destruction of underlying networks of signification* and *the destruction of linguistic patternings* also have some relevance to the translation of Dvoryanova's text.

### **“Barbarizing” the Translation. Can *Concerto for a Sentence* Sound Foreign without Being Barbarized?**

David Bellos makes a great point about the way a foreign language sounds to someone who does not speak that language: it is all gibberish to them (43). Gibberish has been helpful to translators when they try to create a foreign-language feeling to the translated text; since most of the readers of the translated text would not know that this is not a language, especially if the original is written in a minor language, what matters is

the foreign feel in the target text. For centuries, people have viewed and even named speakers of other languages as speakers of gibberish, a language that is incomprehensible to them. Bellos gives as an example the ancient Greeks for whom the foreign sound was the “unarticulated, open-mouthed blabber of *va-va-va*,” which is why they called all non-Greek speakers *varvaros*, that is to say, barbarians, blah-blah-ers (43).

One folk theory on the etymology of the word Bulgarian claims that it is closely related to the word *varvaros*. Possibly, the Greeks called their Northern neighbors speakers of gibberish, blah-blah-ers, therefore they were to them *varvaros*, barbarians, or unsophisticated; eventually the word evolved to mean the name of the tribe—Bulgarians as speakers of gibberish. It does not matter if this is actually the real case of the word’s origin. What matters is the implicit suggestion that speakers of a major language<sup>1</sup> think of speakers of a minor language as unsophisticated lower class people—a typical hegemonic attitude both in a purely linguistic and in a broader cultural sense. Thus, in a translation from a minor to a major language, just like in the case of Bulgarian to English, any foreign elements that penetrated into the translated text will most likely seem “barbarian” to the general reader of the translation. The foreign-soundingness and the foreignization could be perceived as barbarizations of the target text. This could be especially true for a translated text in the British and American target culture, in whose tradition foreignization is perceived as deterioration of the text’s fluency.

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<sup>1</sup> I am using the terms “minor” and “major” in respect to languages after Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the terms in their theory on minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari reject the notion of “minority literature” as a refuge. According to them, this type of writing is political in nature and is concerned with the relationship of language and power (591). As I use “minor” and “major” to describe language, I imply the power relationship between those languages and their respective cultures. The major language could be a dominant language if the two cultures coexist in a territorial proximity.

To analyze the translation of Dvoryanova's novel with the purpose of attenuating the deforming tendencies in Berman's sense may well mean to find ways to "barbarize" the translation. Foreignization as a translational practice and barbarization of the translation in the discussed sense should yield related, yet different results. What is the fine line between them? When does the translation carry enough foreign elements and features to take the reader "abroad," as Venuti prescribes, but manages not to barbarize the text to the extent of incomprehension and cultural unacceptability (*The Translator's* 15)? Ultimately, can *Concerto for a Sentence* sound foreign without being barbarized?

### **Attenuating the Negative Analytic in the Translation of *Concerto for a Sentence***

In this section, I will analyze my attempts to attenuate four of Berman's deforming tendencies in the translation of Dvoryanova's novel: *rationalization*, *clarification*, *the destruction of rhythms*, and *the destruction of underlying networks of signification*. I will also discuss one foreignization practice that tries to reveal the "original kernel" of the foreign text (284).

#### ***Rationalization***

In Berman's classification, rationalization "bears primarily on the syntactical structures of the original, starting with that most meaningful and changeable element in a prose text: *punctuation*" (288). The result of such a deforming tendency could be recomposing sentences, changing their order, or rearranging them according to a certain idea or discursive order. Another aspect of rationalization is abstractness, which annihilates what Berman considers an inherent element of prose: "*its drive toward concreteness*" (289). This tendency can make the original pass from concrete to abstract



by changing the order in sentences, by translating verbs into nouns, and by generalizing (Berman 289).

As I mentioned above, Dvoryanova's text has a special relationship with music: it is organized like music, it is designed to sound like music, and is structured like a concerto. Therefore, any change of the sentence structure will hurt its flow, its musicality, its rhythm. The punctuation in the text designates the beginnings, the flows, the pauses, and the ends of the musical units in the concerto. The translator has to adhere as much as possible to the punctuation and the length of the sentence fragments as they are in the original. Any practice of rationalization in Berman's terms will be strikingly noticeable and will result in deformation of the music and poetry of the novel.

Avoiding rationalization in the most basic sense of Berman's term—changing the original punctuation—is essential to the preservation of rhythm, and with it the connection between the poetic and the musical. Punctuation, however, is different in every language: some of its forms are relatively easy to translate from one language to another, while some present a challenge to the translator. Dvoryanova's text relies heavily on the use of ellipses between the different sentence fragments. The use of the ellipsis, however, slightly differs in its use in Bulgarian and English. In both languages, it shares the meaning of intentional omission of a word, sentence or a section from a quoted text. Clearly, this is not the function of the ellipsis in the novel. In both languages, the ellipsis can indicate an unfinished thought, a silence that is to be filled by the imagination, and as such, it serves as an aposiopesis. Dvoryanova's novel promises a novel in one sentence, and the reader is likely to expect a heavy use of figures of speech

like aposiopesis to create the feel of unfinished thoughts that, with the help of the reader's imagination, string into "a sentence" the whole novel. But this is not the case either.

Dvoryanova's use of the ellipsis actually indicates both the transition from one phrase to another in the musical piece and the transition between the thoughts that accompany the musical units. In this way, the ellipsis serves as a divider between the musical phrases but also as a sign for change in the stream of thoughts of the character. Its proper rendition into English is extremely important for the preservation of the whole in both the musical and poetic sense. However, the ellipsis in English does not necessarily mean a change of the thought process of the character. By leaving it as it is in the original, I have avoided rationalization, allowing the reader to infer the foreign meaning of the well-known punctuation form. Here is an example:

а тя е с пуловерче...поради което днес мъжете са твърде нещастни,  
нещастници—просто няма жени...вече влезе в каденците, всъщност почти  
брилянтно ги сътвори, не мога да не призная... 23-24

and she wears a sweater...that's why men are so unfortunate today, ill-fated  
wretches — there are simply no women any more...he already entered the  
cadences, actually he almost brilliantly created them, I have to give it to him...

The ellipsis here does not indicate aposiopesis, or unfinished thoughts, as the English-speaking reader expects, but rather teaches that same reader to learn to read it as a shift in the stream of thoughts, an unusual meaning in an English-language text.

Direct speech also presents the translator with a challenge regarding the rationalization tendency. In a text composed of sentence fragments, the reader often has difficulty discerning between thoughts, dreams, reality, and flashbacks. Conversations in

reality mingle with imagined and remembered conversations. The indication for direct speech plays a major role for the fluid reading and accurate understanding of all these different epistemic levels of the novel. In English, direct speech is enclosed in quotation marks; in Bulgarian, however, direct speech is introduced by a dash. In the example below, one can clearly see the difference:

--толкова го прехвалваш--ми каза--не го прехвалвам, харесва ми как свири, въпреки че не разбирам кой знае колко, поне не колкото тебе--аз *вече* не разбирам, а него въобще не го харесвам, нещо ми е опротивяло всичко, а ако ми опротивее музиката...--опротивял ти е животът--точно така...31-32

I have decided to leave the dash from the original in the target text as an indicator for direct speech, avoiding rationalization by introducing a punctuation form with a foreign meaning to the English-speaking reader.

—you praise him too much—he told me—I don’t praise him too much, I just like how he plays, although I don’t know that much, at least not as much as you do—I don’t know *anymore*, and I don’t like him at all, I’m getting sick of everything, and if I get sick of music...—you will get sick of life—that’s right...

The reader of the target text has to decipher the new meaning ascribed to the dash—that of an indicator for direct speech.

### ***Clarification***

Paradoxically, there are several places in Dvoryanova’s translation where I have fallen into the deforming tendency of rationalization to prevent the occurrence of another deformation—clarification. Clarification in Berman’s article refers to the deformation, including explication and aiming “to render ‘clear’ which does not wish to be clear in the original” (289). In such cases, I had to prioritize and decide the effect of which

deformation is less desirable. For instance, at places I had to translate a verb into a substantive or reorder the sentence structure—rationalize the text—to avoid the deformation of clarification. Here is an example:

In the original text of Dvoryanova, one sentence fragment reads:

...единствено защото съм закъсняла след като има толкова много сняг,  
отвсякъде се е затрупало... 10

A faithful translation should read:

...only because I was late since there is so much snow, it has covered everything  
on all sides ...

My rendition of this line alters somewhat the literal translation to:

...only because I was late due to the tons of snow, everything is buried under the  
snow...

I have transformed the dependent clause “since there is so much snow” into a causal fragment — “due to the tons of snow.” Next, I have changed the subject in the sentence “it has covered everything on all sides,” where the pronoun “it” refers to the snow, with a passive voice structure where “everything” serves as the subject of the sentence. Thus, I have applied rationalization to avoid the clarification tendency. If the translator had to fix the awkward phrase in the faithful translation of the fragment, where no rationalization occurs, he/she would need to clarify that snow has covered everything and create a repetitive phrase ruining the rhythm of the text: “...only because I was late since there is so much snow, snow has covered everything on all sides...” To avoid this result, I have chosen to swap subject and object when translating the clause. In addition, the original text strings together elliptical sentences that are relatively independent, flowing like the

different tones in a musical piece, and aiming to represent the waterfall of thoughts of the character listening to the dynamic music of the concerto. My rendition of the fragment preserves the rhythm of the original, although it applies rationalization. The priority in this translation is clear: the preservation of rhythm is more important than the preservation of sentence structures.

### ***The Destruction of Rhythms***

The destruction of rhythms is another deforming tendency from Berman's list, which has significant relevance to the translation of Dvoryanova's novel. Berman states that, "the novel is not less rhythmic than poetry," and "[i]t even comprises a multiplicity of rhythms" (292). One way to destroy these rhythms, for instance, is "an arbitrary revision of punctuation" (292). In this sense and particularly in the case of *Concerto for a Sentence*, the tendency produces effects similar to those of rationalization.

Besides inadequate rendition of punctuation, there are other ways to destroy rhythm in a poetic novel. In Dvoryanova's text, the translator has to very carefully render the length of sentence fragments, since they respond to a phrase with a specific length in the musical piece. Shortening the fragments or extending their length not only happens at the cost of the deformations of rationalization, explication, and clarification, but also results in destruction of the rhythm, poetry, and music of the text. In the following example, one can see how important it is to preserve the rhythm of the novel in the target text.

Più presto

и се появява Andante-то...

Andante...по-бавно, още по-бавно...днес все забързват темпата, не могат да  
 устоят на времето, да му сложат юзди, то ги убива, завлича ги...по-бавно  
 ходете... (24)

Più presto

and here comes the Andante...

Andante...slower, even slower... today they always speed up the tempo, they  
 can't resist the time, can't tame the time, the time kills them, sweeps them  
 away... take it more slowly...

Preserving the length of both the musical and verbal phrases in the translation of  
 the novel is instrumental to its rhythm. Yet, rhymes set another dimension to the rhythm  
 in a poetic work: unlike the musical phrases, rhymes stitch together the text rhythmically.  
 Dvoryanova's poetic novel uses rhymes or half-rhymes as a bridge from one epistemic  
 level to another. The reader can listen to the thoughts of the characters while they are  
 listening to the music, and the (half-)rhymes often provide the link between what actually  
 is happening at the concert and the character's thoughts, dreams, or reminiscences. For  
 example, Virginia, the lover of the main character, and Maggini, the violin, create a half-  
 rhyme by the consonance of their middle sounds that transports the reader from the violin  
 concerto to the dream of the woman.

Маджини

Маджини

Вирджиния... просто едно име, но как се разгръща, показва се и е  
 единствено на света... няма друг такъв инструмент, сега съвсем сам ще

покаже какво може в каденците, ще изпълни сам себе си с неговите ръце...

(23)

Maggini

Maggini

Virginia... just a name, but how she unfolds, how she reveals herself, how unique... there is no instrument like her, now she will show on her own what she can do in the cadences, she will play herself by herself, only with his hands...

Both woman and violin become an object of admiration, adoration, and love; they both offer an aesthetic experience to their admirer; they are gentle and passionate, loved and loving; they are both desired. The connections made by the half-rhyme map a picture of the people and objects that interplay in a story told through this very interplay.

Following the (half-)rhymes as cues to cross the boundaries between reality and dream, and reality and reminiscence, the reader begins to patch together the story by compiling the fragmented pieces of the words, sentences, phrases, just as a listener to a concerto follows the tones, the phrases, the sentences to experience the whole musical piece.

### ***The Destruction of Underlying Networks of Signification***

When the reader of Dvoryanova's novel finds the links between the different epistemic levels, a whole new picture emerges. What lies on the surface ceases to be definitive. In Berman's words, "certain signifiers correspond and link up, forming all sorts of networks beneath the 'surface' of the text itself" (292). "These underlying chains," continues Berman, "constitute one aspect of the rhythm and signifying process of the text" (292). If these underlying chains are not transmitted properly into the target text, the signifying process is destroyed, and that results in another deformation.

Avoiding the destruction of underlying networks of signification in *Concerto for a Sentence* is a difficult task. The translator needs to be aware of the chains of words with corresponding meaning on several epistemic levels and try to find their proper equivalents that carry all or most of the connotations. As an example, I will go back to the character's admiration of the violin: he thinks about Virginia, his lover, as he thinks about the violin in the performance. In Bulgarian, violin has a feminine grammatical gender, and any pronouns used in reference to it coincide with the pronouns used for an animate female subject, a woman. The translation of these references is a delicate job. If left in their gender-specific form in the target text, can the English reader recognize that the pronouns used for an animate object of female gender refer to both a woman and a violin? Would a foreignization practice of that type, in which basic grammatical principles of English are violated, work? Here is an example from the fourth part of the novel-concerto where the reader should already have an established idea about the underlying networks of signification in the text:

[...]броени крачки остават, броени ноти, съвсем на финала се скъса струната, ужас някакъв, но не е в това проблемът, в цялата цигулка беше проблемът, и трябваше да я послушам, когато ми каза, *откажи се от този инструмент*, но пък беше толкова хубава, толкова истинска, и се сливаше с мене, имаше мигове, когато я усещах, че е мой член, членът ми, изстъпен нагоре и замахвах лъка, съвсем мъжки инструмент е, прави са тия които го казват [...] слях се с цигулката, съвсем слят бях, мислех, че наистина съм й хванал душичката... (151-2)



[...] only a few steps are left, just a few notes, the string broke at the very end, a horror of sorts, but that's not the problem, the problem was in the whole violin, I had to listen to her when she told me, *leave that instrument*, but *she* was so beautiful, so real, and *she* was becoming one with me, there were moments when I was feeling that *she* was a part of me, my member, standing straight up and I would raise the bow, *she*'s a man's instrument, people who say that are right [...]  
I became one with the violin, we were one whole, I thought that I have truly captured *her* soul... (italics of the pronouns mine)

The reference to the violin and the woman with the same pronoun creates a network of significations in which the body of the violin and that of the woman participate in an erotic relationship with the man, the violinist.

Another passage has a set of words referring to some parts of the violin, most of which correspond to the parts of the woman's body in Bulgarian:

...допира на дантелата и Вирджиния, удивено те гледам и двамата знаем,  
всичко това е за мен...целувка по *охлюва на ухото*, по *ключицата*, по  
*шийката*...и влизаше осветена в най-ярката светлина, която с началото  
изведнъж ще заглъхне и ти ще се потопиш...най-прекрасна, ухаеща...и  
*лопатките* под дантелата тръпнат...защото ти чуваш това...как потъва...  
(italics mine 26)

...the touch of lace and Virginia, astonished I'm looking at you and we both know, all this is for me...a kiss on *the curve of your ear*, on your *collar bone*, on your *slender neck*... and you would enter—light in the brightest of lights, which

will suddenly fade with the intro and you will submerge...most lovely,  
 fragrant...and the *shoulder blades* under your lace shiver...because you hear  
 this...how it sinks... (italics mine)

In this passage, I chose to translate most words referring to the woman's body with their English equivalents, although some of them did not refer to any parts of the violin as they did in the original. In the Bulgarian text, the expression "охлювът на ухото" unites a part of the violin with a part of the woman's body. The literal translation of the above phrase should be "the scroll of the ear." I decided to exchange "scroll" with "curve" in order to depict better the part of the woman's body. The motivation for this decision was two-fold: on one side, I believe that the particulars of the violin construction are less known to the general reader; on the other hand, the novel is using music as a medium to tell a story about human emotions, and therefore the relationship between the main character and Virginia needs to be emphasized more than the one between the violinist and the violin. This is not to say that the latter is not important, but once the underlying network of signification has been established, the inference of that relationship becomes a natural outcome of the reading process. Or else, once the reader has been engaged in the interplay of the different connotations, he/she cannot leave the game, he/she is compelled to continue reading with the set of secondary connotations in mind.

For the same reasons, I have decided to leave the literal translations of "ключица" and "лопатки" as "collar bone" and "shoulder blades," respectively. Once again, those words don't have connotations that refer to any parts of the violin, but are consistent with the description of the female lover and enhance the image of the woman's body as slender, sensitive, and desirable. "Шийка" is the only term in this passage that

has the same double connotation in both languages; it translates into English as “neck,” but rather “small neck.” In this case, I substituted the adjective “small” with “tender” to describe better both the neck of the female body and that of the violin. This practice can be considered as an attempt to foreignize the text since it attributes new connotations to the English words referring specifically to the human body. It also promotes the view of the violin as an animate object, which is one of the aspirations of the novel.

To promote the anthropomorphization of the violin, I have used a similar strategy in other places in the text. The soundpost of the violin is called “душичка” in Bulgarian, which literally translates into “little soul.” Often when Dvoryanova uses the term, she purposefully emphasizes its secondary connotation in order to anthropomorphize the violin and give a different dimension to the relationship between the violinist and his/her instrument. In these passages, I have intentionally foreignized the text. The name for soundpost in some other languages has the same double connotation of “soul” as it has in Bulgarian — *душка* in Russian, *anima* in Spanish and Italian — which gives the foreignization attempt an international validity. Here is an example of the emphasis on the connotation of soul as spirit of an animate object:

*не е виновна цигулката, почти година ти позволих да свириш на нея, **на моята цигулка**, за толкова време човек трябва да ѝ открие душичката, колкото и да е сложна... дори да е “Маджини”... (58)*

*the violin is not to blame, I let you play it for almost a year, play **my violin**, for that much time one should be able to find its soul, no matter how complex it is...even if it is a Maggini...*

### *Foreignization as Revealing the Self-Same of the Text*

Another great example of potential foreignization is the title of the novel. The literal, or “faithful,” translation of “Концерт за изречение” is *Concerto for a Sentence*. In English however, when one refers to a concerto written for one instrument, assuming that the book is written for/in one sentence, the name of the instrument precedes the noun “concerto.” For example, it is correct to say “a violin concerto” and not “concerto for a violin,” unless it is written for two violins, when one can reverse the structure and call it “concerto for two violins.” A domesticated translation therefore will render the title of the novel as *A Sentence Concerto*.

Let’s go back to Berman’s idea that besides the foreignization practices of the linguistic units, the trail of the foreign could be manifested in revealing “the work’s most original kernel, its most deeply buried, most self-same, but equally the most ‘distant’ from itself” (285). In this sense, it is extremely important how I will translate such an essential element as the title of a concerto-novel, which plays with form to create meaning and relies on a special connection between form in music and form in poetry to produce meaning. “A Concerto for a Sentence” or “A Sentence Concerto”? I believe that “A Concerto for a Sentence” is more musical, although it resists the canon in the target culture. The foreignization in this rendition is double: one that defies the commonly known linguistic structure in English, and one that accentuates the main feature, the self-same of the work, namely its musicality.

In the end, I decided to translate the title as *Concerto for a Sentence*. The question that ensues here is if the publishing house would approve of that title. I will address this issue in the next section where I will discuss the positionality of the translator and his/her

possibilities for making decisions of that nature.

### *Conclusion to My Analysis*

I have analyzed my decisions as a translator trying to attenuate four of the potential deformations from Berman's list in the process of translation of *Concerto for a Sentence*. As discussed earlier, the opportunities to foreignize a target text successfully are greater when the culture and language of origin have had a special relationship with the culture of the target reader. In the case of Bulgarian, the foreignization possibilities are limited due to the minimal exposure of the general English reader to Bulgarian culture and language. The translator can make some foreignization decisions, but the introduction of foreign elements in the target text needs to be done very carefully.

Using foreignization practices in the translation of a text from a minor language like Bulgarian could introduce certain risks. Some of these risks are associated with the set expectation of the English reader for fluent translations, i.e. domesticated target texts. As a result, instead of introducing a functioning foreign element, the practice might simply be destroying the flow of the translation. This is the case especially when the reader fails to understand these elements as foreign but sees them rather as a flaw in the fluency of the English text. A good example from the issues analyzed above is the use of gender-specific pronouns when referring to non-animate objects in English, like the violin: "she told me, *leave that instrument*, but *she* was so beautiful, so real, and *she* was becoming one with me." Potentially, a reader might not be aware that the first use of the personal pronoun "she" refers to a woman, while the second and third use of it refer to the violin.

### **Choice of Text for Translation. Positionality of the Translator**

André Lefevere sees translation as an important locus in the evolution and interaction between literatures and cultures (*Translating Literature: Practice* 114). Like the polysystem theorists, he contends that translations can exert influence on the canons in the receiving culture, depending on the level of centrality of the source culture to the target one — a matter of “comparative cultural prestige” (Lefevere 118). Translation is a form of rewriting, and as such it is the rewritten text that exerts that influence on the target culture. The translator as the mediator of this foreign culture is inevitably responsible for the effect. The selection of a work for translation has equal if not more weight on its life in the target culture than the act of translation.

In *The Translator's Invisibility*, Lawrence Venuti discusses at length the translational foreignizing practices of the Italian 19th-century writer Iginio Ugo Tarchetti (123-153). Tarchetti foreignizes the translation of Anglophone works into Italian by using deviant translation practices, but also, as Venuti stresses, by choosing texts that deviate from the dominant literary canons in the target culture (152). Venuti concludes that, “Tarchetti teaches the dissident translator [...] that the choice of a foreign text for translation can be just as foreignizing in its impact on the receiving culture as the invention of discursive strategy” (153). As a prescription, Venuti goes on to stipulate that “the literary translator should be familiar with the canons of foreign literatures in English as well as the canons of British and American literatures, set against the patterns of intercultural exchange and geopolitical relations” (267).

In the contemporary situation, however, the choice of a text for translation is not only subject to the translator's decision. It's the publishing house that makes those

decisions, and yes, often they are based on a translator's suggestion, but mostly they are dependent on the work's potential for fluency in the target culture. Venuti's observation cannot be better phrased: "transparent discourse is eminently consumable in the contemporary marketplace, which in turn influences publishing decisions to exclude foreign texts that preempt transparency" (97). Venuti uses the term transparency to refer to the illusionistic effect of a fluent translation strategy (1). Therefore, the choice of a text for translation is inevitably dependent on the ideological affiliations of the publishers.

Ideology inevitably plays a role in the selection of a text for translation, and in that context the position of the translator as a potential agent of social change is worth discussion. Maria Tymoczko begins her article "Ideology and the Position of the Translator" by reviewing some of the issues pertaining to the ideology associated with the act of translation (181-186). She recounts the philosophical ideas circulated in the field of translation studies regarding the ideological implications of the source text, the translator and his stance in relation to the target audience (183). Tymoczko pays special attention to one of the most influential recent explorations of the ideology of translation, namely that of Gayatri Spivak, who views translation as an activity "where meaning hops into the spacy emptiness between two named historical languages" (qtd. in Tymoczko 186). Her goal in this article is to find out why scholars talk about the ideology of translation and the position of the translator by using the metaphor of translation as "a space 'in between'"(186).

This metaphor of translation places the translator in the space "between" two languages, two cultures, and therefore sees him/her merely as a mediator who uses transparent translation practices in Venuti's sense. The transparency in translation meets

the reader's expectation that a good translation should read like the "original" and therefore will lack linguistic or stylistic peculiarities, which in its turn reinforces the position of the translator – he/she does indeed occupy the space between two languages and he/she should remain invisible. Tymoczko disapproves of this view of the translator. She tries to find reasons for the high popularity of the "in between" metaphor; one of her hypotheses rests within the dominance of the Western capitalist paradigm of the translator as "an isolated individual worker who independently acts as mediator of languages" (198). Moreover, Tymoczko reminds the reader that adhering to metaphors for a process as complex as literary translation can decrease our vision instead of enhancing it. The myopic look of those who see the translator as an occupant of an "in between" space misses an important role that the translator may have -- that of "an ethical agent of social change" (201). In conclusion to her detailed analysis, Tymoczko is definite: "[t]he ideology of translation is indeed a result of the translator's position, but that position is not a space between" (201).

Tymoczko has clearly outlined one of the most ticklish debates in translation studies regarding the position of the translator: Should the translator have the authority to emerge as a co-writer, or is he/she doomed to be invisible and occupy the space "in between" two languages, two cultures? A subsequent question should address the possibility for foreignizing practices in translation. Apart from the philosophical prescriptions, there cannot be one definite answer to these questions since every cultural situation has its own characteristics and norms, and the relationship between the culture of origin and the receiving culture is of extreme importance. When trying to reach an answer for a particular case, the most important variables to consider should be the



dominant ideology in the receiving culture, its capacity to tolerate dissident voices, and the relationship between the two cultures. With this in mind, let's look now into the case of Emiliya Dvoryanova's novel *Concerto for a Sentence*.

### **Positionality of the Translator in Translating *Concerto for a Sentence***

The question of positionality of the translator in translating *Concerto for a Sentence* into English takes us back to Bellos's point about the relationship between the two languages. Bellos insists that for the translator to enact foreignizing practices into the process of translation and therefore depart from the "in between" space, the languages should have a well-established relationship (45). In the case of one minor and one major language, it is actually less important to study the relationship as a mutual exchange of cultural artifacts, language being one of them, as much as it is imperative to view the relationship as one in which the minor culture has created an impression or left a certain legacy in the major culture.

Unfortunately, Bulgarian and English do not have a relationship of mutual exchange of cultural artifacts, and there's not a significant Bulgarian cultural legacy in English. In addition, the dominant ideology in the American and British traditions, as we established earlier, champions fluent translations and with them, transparent translation practices. The variable left to explore in this case is the possibility for foreignizing the translation as a dissident cultural practice. But how can one gauge the tolerance of the dominant system? My suggestion involves the attenuation of some of the deformation tendencies in Berman's list. And because of the lack of an established relationship between Bulgarian and English, foreignization can be practiced only with certain

limitations. The translator has to mostly occupy the space “in between” and hope to, at times, express dissident cultural and linguistic values – the sphere of the real creative endeavor.

### ***Concerto for a Sentence* As a Novel and Emiliya Dvoryanova As a Writer**

The creative moment for every translator is the time when he/she can practice foreignization by affiliating with the expression of the culture and language of origin. Emiliya Dvoryanova’s novel offers the translator a potential for creative moments mostly because of its nature. *Concerto for a Sentence* engages the reader in a poetic journey through music. The text resembles the organization of a musical piece—it is a cycle of five main parts plus two additional ones, an intro and a coda—similar in composition to the Roman Mass, which begins with *Introitus* and ends with *Ite missa est*. Dvoryanova’s text tries to blur the boundaries between the syntax of music and that of poetry. The sentences, or rather the sentence fragments, are elliptical, resembling musical fragments. The notes resonate with the feelings evoked by listening to them.

Dvoryanova’s play with sounds of words and the structure of sentences synchronizes with the soul vibrations of her characters when listening to the music. The human soul is stripped naked to respond genuinely to every note and variation and express its bare emotions: love, passion, hatred, trepidation, loneliness. Dvoryanova’s characters lure the reader with their longing to indulge in the musicality of both sound and text. The real world is foreign with its roughness and inability to resonate with the vibrations of the soul: husband and wife find a way to express their estrangement through the sounds of music/poetry better than through communication in their real life;

responding to the tempting sounds of music, the characters engage in amorous daydreaming. In short, Dvoryanova's "concerto for a sentence" gives hope in the construction of reality within a dream; it presents a feasible escape for a tortured soul by inviting the reader to indulge in the music/poetry of its sentences.

Emiliya Dvoryanova was born in Sofia in 1958. She graduated from Lyubomir Pipkov National School of Music with a concentration in piano. After that, Dvoryanova enrolled at the University of Sofia where she earned a PhD in Philosophy. Currently, she is a faculty member at the New Bulgarian University where she teaches courses in Creative Writing, Aesthetics of Christianity, and classes on the techniques and history of the novel and short story.

In 1992, Dvoryanova published her first book, *Естетическата същност на християнството* (Aesthetics of Christianity), followed by several works of fiction: *Къщата* (The House) (1993), *Passion или смъртта на Алиса* (Passion or Alice's Death) (1996), *La Velata* (1998), *Госпожа Г.* (Mrs. G.) (2001), *Земните градини на Богородица* (Virgin Mary's Earthly Gardens) (2006), and *Концерт за изречение* (Concerto for a Sentence) (2008). Her novel *Passion or Alice's Death* won the 1996 Bulgarian award for novels and was also translated into French and published in France in 2006. The book was additionally nominated for the 2007 Italian award STREGA in the category for foreign language literature. In 2007, Dvoryanova won the prestigious Bulgarian literary award Hristo G. Danov for her novel *Virgin Mary's Earthly Gardens*. Two of her novels are translated into French under the titles *Passion ou la mort d'Alissa* (2006) and *Les jardins terrestres de la Vierge* (2011). *Mrs. G.* is currently being translated into French under the title *Mme G.* One excerpt from *Passion or Alice's Death*

has appeared in English in the April-May 2012 issue of the *Absinthe* journal featuring the best contemporary European writers.

Dvoryanova has established herself as an influential literary figure and a respected author on the Bulgarian literary scene. Her fiction has been widely celebrated in Bulgaria. She has also published works of non-fiction: *The Aesthetics of Christianity* and a collection of essays titled *Освен Литературата* (Besides Literature) (2011). The renowned Bulgarian critic Milena Kirova sees Dvoryanova's works as emblematic for the *écriture féminine* in Bulgaria. Dvoryanova's fiction delves into the philosophical dimensions of the female subject and her body in a contemporary world; the text is dominated by the feminine on the outside—as central part of the plot and story—and on the inside—as expressed in the literary language (Antov). While the feminist type of writing has become a true trend in Bulgaria only since 1989, when the country opened up toward western influences in art, literature, and culture, critics recognized that Dvoryanova's works stand out as excellent examples of *écriture féminine* (Kirova). Dvoryanova's writing is feminine in all senses of the term: her sentences are elliptic and fluid; her phrase is verbose, polyphonic, exuberant, intoxicated, overflowing with detail, often repetitive; her words are sensual and poetic; the boundaries between dream and reality, present and past, physical and metaphysical are blurred.

According to the critics, much of the *écriture féminine* observed in Bulgaria is a form of foreignization—it introduces foreign trends into the national literature (Antov). Judging by the literary success of Dvoryanova, her works have managed to gain acceptance for her foreignized feminist writing style. With this observation in mind, it is interesting to think of applying foreignization practices in the translation of

Dvoryanova's text for an English-speaking and mostly western target audience when she has herself foreignized her writing with ideas originating from that same western culture. Let us now see how those two worlds come together with their respective attempts for foreignization.

**Part II: Excerpt from My Translation of *Concerto for a Sentence*****1.**

. . . it must be an *Amati* for the sound is engrossed in itself, muffled and inverted, carrying that strange patina that the E chord never makes, unless it is an *Amati*, and this trill would have sounded silvery, instead it dives into opaque whiteness, like a cream-colored lace, as though played in D . . . but it could also be a *Guarneri*, especially if the softness of the A is misleading and is due to his magic fingers that draw voluptuously the tone as if he were caressing the violin . . . it's so wonderful, it's divine . . . had it been a *Guarneri*, it would have sparkled in light blue . . . but I can't tell the kind of the violin because I was fifteen minutes late, and he became furious, he didn't even answer my question, although he didn't suspect anything . . . if he had even the least suspicion, I could see the reason for his rage and wouldn't have asked him at all—*Amati* or *Guarneri*?—moreover, it was not time for any questions, the hall had fallen completely silent, expecting . . . only our steps squeaked when the sound exploded from the string, and that motif uprooted me, it wrested me out of myself, and then, when it spilled over into the lower register . . . as though strings were picked inside me, it caressed me so tenderly, I have never experienced it before and I will tell him—I don't want it to continue that way anymore, I can't take his roughness any more, his lack of passion, the hand he placed on the chair beside me so that I have to sit on the other end in order not to touch him, but there, an awfully tall man is leaning his head toward my chair and I can't see . . . I will somehow put up with it, and when the concert is over I will simply admit to

it . . . I could bet that it is an *Amati*, but then he will ask me, “How much do you bet?”—and he will make fun of me, besides how could he afford to do it: not to answer when I ask him so politely, “*Amati* or *Guarneri*?”—after all, being married, we could also be friends—not to answer but to squint his eyes in an angry gesture of disapproval, only because I was late due to the tons of snow, everything is buried under the snow, but of course he does not know where I came from, and we crawled so slowly in that car, with no visibility on the road, crazy snowflakes wove blankets in the air, the kettledrums were late by a fraction of a second, but the oboe salvaged the moment—and as though nothing happened—the car almost got stuck, and it was awfully slick . . . how did he get back at all, did he make it after he left me at the corner, and it is still snowing heavily, and I imagine how I would have stayed there, at the foot of the mountain, snowed in together with him, I would even miss the concert in exchange for the fireplace, for that fireplace in which the wood crackled and spurted sparks like snowflakes on fire, I would let myself burn in these sparks, because his arms . . . this man has amazing fingers, look at how he touches the violin, as though he has captured its spirit, he slips into it in such a way that you forget to think about his virtuosity—*Amati* or *Guarneri* after all?—I hate so much when someone does not answer, but I would not allow it to ruin my joy of the concert, I only have to get rid of the unpleasant feeling that he’s sitting next to me, radiating rage—is it the case that even music cannot calm him down, and as a violinist he should feel the soul of the music, he should melt, but he is not going to hurt me, when the concert is over, I will tell him—the confession is the best way to go, at least he will have a good reason for his rage, and after all, he brought me on time, just a second before the beginning, so that I won’t have any troubles, we could not even kiss . . . I slammed the

car door and ran . . . —I'm sad because of that, without the kiss I feel as though I have sunk in an unexpected pause, silence charged with sound, and I can't get out of it, and now is the time for that theme that always corrals you with sadness, and he spilled it over, he took it as high as to embrace the whole orchestra, he literally absorbed the orchestra within the sound of the violin, sound that seemed opaque, but capable of penetrating everything, it penetrated me, I have never experienced that, his hands are barely touching the strings, lightly, with no effort, with no force, like magic that comes in waves—one after another, one and after another . . . and the pizzicati pulled away from above, they climbed up there where the musical wave broke—which cadences is he going to play? . . . of course, his own cadences, the music swells up in them, swells up to the point of that tremolo, after which it manages to wait for the phrase in an incredibly well-measured pause to lift it up as though it's wrenching it out from inside me, my God, what a sense of culmination, it takes my breath away . . . —no, I haven't experienced such a union in the last chord, beyond it there is no end, only the andante . . . I am happy that I hear it, I am happy and I will confess to him, I will tell him now that I'm in love with someone else and we must separate, because I can't live without him any more and I still carry his smell on my skin . . . everything is melting now, the air stands still, and in this prolonged sound his fingers shiver, barely touching the strings in a gentle vibrato . . . as if it will last forever and together with the clarinet it will lower itself in the deepest groan, but I know how the flute will wake it up—God, it's so beautiful! why do I have to suffer, why can't I simply tell him how the fire groaned in the fireplace and scattered light about, its warm reflections embracing my body, and my soul lit up, even now, only when I think about it, waves run down my body, then they go up again—listen to that flageolet, and not only to



this one, the whole series of flageolets lined up in the air, and one could almost see how they were perched on invisible lines in the air—amazing violin, amazing hands!—*Amati* or *Guarneri*?—it does not matter, I will find out, maybe it's even written in the program, but there was no time to check, and when we entered the hall, the lights were already out, and everyone was expecting the first tone . . . no, I don't want it to be over, the kettledrums will soon announce the end with that exhaling tremolo, and the last trill will resound on the A and the E . . . —it must be an *Amati*, yet the A does not carry the specifics of that timbre that always soothes and drags you down . . . maybe after all it is a *Guarneri* . . . I so much feel like crying because everything is over, and the people are already raving, applauding ecstatically, but I wish I could take back the time, again and again . . . what kind of an encore is he going to play . . .

. . . encore . . . encore . . .

--My God, darling, it was unbelievable, inconceivable, no one has ever got inside me like that . . . no, he did not simply penetrate me, he pervaded me—have you seen more gentle fingers? I don't feel like going home in this fairy-tale winter night, it's so romantic, do you want to take a walk for a while—my mother doesn't mind staying with the kids . . . by the way, when we were entering the hall, you didn't answer my question about the type of violin, I even thought that you were mad at me, now . . . *Amati* or *Guarneri*?

--*Maggini*, darling, *Maggini*, I did not tell you on purpose, so that you can try guessing by yourself . . . you will never learn to tell . . . you just lack the ear, sweetheart . . .

--After all, the pleasure is more important . . . the way it sounds . . .

2.

. . . here he is, finally live, this idol of my students tempted by unhealthy perfection, a seducer of sorts

how can I convince them?

I can see in the hall at least five of them enthralled by his beige shoes, beige suit . . . he looks like a clown and has no respect . . .

this world . . . this unconscious world . . . they applaud ecstatically . . .

. . . the first A of the first violinist, the first A . . . he responds:

a fourth,

a fifth . . .

a seventh . . . isn't the E slightly lower than it should be . . .

no, everything is exact, the sound is perfect, I have always thought that some *Maggini* are better than a *Stradivarius*, their color is different, the sounds that they make are cinnabaric, bloody, what sound can one extract from this violin . . . I'd like so much to touch the scroll, its pegs . . . the neck is perfect, the fingerboard is slightly upright, elevated and longer . . . by entire two centimeters longer . . . they say the magic hides in the F-holes and the belly . . . —I will die with my eyes open for not ever having had a chance to even touch one of those babies . . . there is just one here, but she has it hidden . . . and she does not even perform any more, although she was good . . . very good . . . perhaps because of the violin . . . and while my students scrape on some *Cremonas*, I

always tell them—the violin, the violin. . . its soul . . .

. . . he is about to begin, the beginning is the most important part, everything originates there condensed in the first tone . . . you can't make a mistake there . . . the first phrase, that's it, if you make a mistake . . . that's what I tell them . . .

. . . come on, lift your bow . . .

. . . he lifted the bow . . .

. . . damn it . . . it always happens like that . . . some total idiots, some dilettantes, slovens for life, why do they have to come in now . . . and make squeaking sounds in the seats in front of me, it is in the very beginning, and I can't hear the most important part . . . a man and a woman—she has a sweater on, pants, the world is resolutely going to hell, how can you be late, how can you come in a sweater, everyone has grown quiet, the most important is about to happen and all of a sudden . . . squeaking . . . the seats move apart . . . people's backs move up . . . no, they are not ashamed . . . the ignorant can't possibly know how important the first sound is, the second, the composition of the phrase, if you can only hear that part, everything else becomes clear—you fly away—the music has already fled and with it, the code—barbarians . . .

they finally take a seat, it's likely that they don't even realize it, next to them some young people continue whispering . . . scandalous . . . on the top of it all, I know the guy, a young violinist, a promising one, yet whispering . . . no, there's no hope, and after having waited for so long for this nuance, I missed it . . . how he was going to measure the fermata . . . it's so difficult to be able to feel the proper length . . .

he made a small pause, took a breath . . . yes, the violin's singing, it's the closest to the human voice, it breathes and breathes,

and the woman in front of me continues to move around, he, too, looks around for a moment, of course . . . it's not clear why *they* go to a concert at all, maybe to try to see who else is in the hall, and the sweater . . . how is such a lack of respect even possible, well, it's quite clear—just like his beige shoes, beige suit . . . he does it on purpose . . .

no class whatsoever . . .

no class . . .

The sound, however, is magnificent; if you listen carefully, you can immediately tell the violin apart, that beauty *Maggini* soars above everything else, she subjugates the whole orchestra, all other instruments are on their knees . . . and she sounds like a brunette, it has not occurred to me before, but *Guarneri*, for instance, sounds like a blonde . . . or maybe not . . . the gender here is misleading . . . the violin is actually a man . . . it is masculine . . . or is it not? . . . an ambiguity of sorts.

and the violin glides into the tones, as if she penetrates them—one should think about that: where is the tone, where is the violin, how do they merge and which one goes into the other . . . he did not do the slur well; he didn't even mark it and simply repeated the same tone, and it's definitely on the musical score . . . the young just don't conform with anything, I have to always remind them—fidelity, fidelity to the notes, students, they are the alpha and the omega—I try to impress it on them, but they are corrupted by jazz, as though everything is possible without any rules . . . no, I am not completely fair . . . this phrase . . . magical . . . it sent shivers down the spine even of the woman in front

of me as if she could listen, I saw that . . . the little sweater shivered . . . how is that possible?, as if she weren't in a temple, but in the mountains . . . she needs a fireplace and a bear skin . . . and how can the man sitting next to her take it, can he take it at all . . . these orchestras of ours will never learn . . . they will always mess up something, the kettledrums should not pound in that way, they have to be a little muffled, and the trombone, I'd say, does not live up to its reputation, it fails right before the culmination, right when the violin is getting ready for the most important part . . . exactly at that point all instruments need to be perfect, so that the violin can enter at full bore . . . here she is, she takes up the tenderness by storm . . .

*Maggini*

*Maggini*

Virginia...just a name, but how she unfolds, how she reveals herself, how unique...there is no instrument like her, now she will show on her own what she can do in the cadences, she will play herself by herself, only with his hands...

and she wears a sweater...that's why men are so unfortunate today, ill-fated wretches — there are simply no women any more...he already entered the cadences, actually he almost brilliantly created them, I have to give it to him...although something is still nagging me inside... it can't be that way — these are his cadences, the masters always write in cadences, he apparently thinks he is a master... no, no, that's not right... it's somewhat excessive, it lacks the classic feel, it lacks moderation... but it seems that everyone is delighted — the world must be over... only the technique is impeccable — I have to acknowledge that — the technique is impeccable, and just like in magic, the chase of the tones will snap, like the wind it will rustle by, in the end the orchestra will

moderately chime in, in harmony with the whole... yes, it just ingenuously confirms it...the music score is ingenuous and now...

everything is confirmed

Silence... for God's sake, don't you even move... who is this idiot who dares applaud? God, how profane... and why are so many people coughing in the most important silence?

Più presto

and here comes the Andante...

Andante...slower, even slower... today they always speed up the tempo, they can't resist the time, can't tame the time, the time kills them, sweeps them away... take it more slowly...

I don't know, but in these phrases the Maggini is perfect, what a sound...

...a perfect ritual. Virginia prepares the music in herself, warms up the bath, her concerto was to begin at two, from my office I can hear the water running

I complemented her with tones... — dear, I'm going to take a bath, don't you peek... but I was playing music and imagining her... Maggini, dear, you're gorgeous, I know, your hair is dripping with... the second theme, it's absolutely perfect, in this concerto the second themes in all the parts are bound together by their absolute beauty, in fact they bond to create the whole...

...if you were by me now Virginia you would be looking contemptuously at that little sweater, underneath which shoulder blades shiver, yes, I can see, underneath she is a woman after all...but today people don't get it at all...

...will you, darling, lotion my back please...

the softest skin and dress thrown on the bed cover—all this is because of the music and because of me...

classic, classic...Maggini, you did know how long it takes one to get ready for a communion with her, all day long until the evening, when one moves into the most important part...you need to touch so carefully here, the most difficult flageolets are extracted...

...a little bit of pomade...

...make-up...

...the touch of lace and Virginia, astonished I'm looking at you and we both know, all this is for me... a kiss on the curve of your ear, on the collar-bone, on the slender neck... and you would enter—light in the brightest of the lights, which will suddenly fade with the intro and you will submerge...most lovely, fragrant...and the shoulder blades under your lace shiver...because you hear this...how it sinks...here it is,

con sordino

...a perfect resonance...

there's no room for silence, no time...

Attaca

...well now. Applaud.

Encore.

What would he play...something light?... he doesn't seem to go for "light"...

I admit—he captivated me. But that’s not the end of it. They all are clapping—what do they understand? Yet, there’s something distorted in that performance, something isn’t right, as it is...I have to define it for the students. If only Virginia could be here, if she had not died so prematurely, I’d have shared it with her and because she was so perfectly able to simply listen, I’d have been able to explain...you need a perfect resonance...

The woman...

Encore.

### 3.

Mind-boggling, mind-boggling, mind-boggling, I keep repeating it until I feel weak, there must be some reason, a Freudian one as they say, when the word impresses itself upon you and you don’t know how to push it away, a virus in your consciousness, you keep repeating it, repeating it, I think I used it in the coffee shop before the concert, but the concert is mind-boggling too, mind-boggling in advance, because it has not started yet, *he* has not come up on stage yet, only the instruments in the orchestra let go a muffled sound waiting for the conductor, but it’s mind-boggling that I will listen to him live—you praise him too much—he told me—I don’t praise him too much, I just like how he plays, although I don’t know that much, at least not as much as you do—I don’t know *anymore*, and I don’t like him at all, I’m getting sick of everything, and if I get sick of music...—you will get sick of life—that’s right...and we ordered Garash cake twice—I love Garash cake, but imagine if we could order Sachertorte—in Bulgaria one can’t get Sachertorte, the real thing, it exists only in the books of Thomas Bernhard—but now even in Bulgaria we will be able to listen to this great master, it’s simply mind-boggling, it’s



great that you could find invitations, no matter that it was in the last moment, I almost had no time to get dressed...

but I used the word in a different context and now I can't get rid of it, even when the conductor is already in front of his stand, that's the mind-boggling thing, always in the beginning of a concert, when the lights fade, it seems like people fade for each other too, they respond solitarily to the raised conductor's baton as though they are getting ready to play, but he hasn't raised the baton yet, because *he* is not here, he is not here...any moment now...I so want to hear something mind-boggling...to have my mind boggled with the taste of the cake, which is not Sachertorte, unfortunately, he told me so much about Sachertorte after he came back—you know, why don't we go to Vienna—it's not impossible, but it's unlikely—and it will be mind-boggling to see St. Stephen, as his appearing on stage with his beige suit, his beige shoes—this is a tribute to the advertisement, disheveled violinist hipster—no, it's not a tribute to the advertisement—he attracts the young—we are young too—but I'm not interested in his shoes, nor his suit—I don't mind them, should we order a drink, it's terribly cold outside, it's snowing, and there's yet another half an hour...

*here he is...*

his hair sticks right up too, on his neck there's a mind-boggling spot from the violin, no, it's very big, mind-bogglingly big—the other violinists don't have that big of a spot...and he is amazed and looks at me—what a spot!—a big spot, all red, and now he adjusts the violin on the top of it...and la-a-a...an old geezer is looking at me angry, he must have heard me, silence...the orchestra tunes in after *him*, the conductor shivers slightly, the silence is complete and in that very moment here come some late idiots, it's

impossible, we have to get up from our seats, so they can pass by us, two seats are open on our left, and the first sound spills over, mind-boggling, the woman sits by me and her sweater, of camel yarn, smells awfully, very strange, of fire, no, of wood, who uses wood today, it's exactly that smell of the vase that broke on the stove and the water began sizzling on the plate, but this was a long time ago at my village, there's no wood here and I don't know if it is mind-boggling, I almost didn't hear him, those two distracted me, but I'm prepared to be as mind-boggled as with the Garashtorte taste and dry martini, he really ordered it, and while we were waiting for the drink I told him a story and said—it's mind-boggling!—but it isn't mind-boggling at all, his hands are what's mind-boggling, I have to be grateful, that we are sitting in the fifth row, you can hear so well and you can see his hands, his face, his eyes and most importantly his spot, a red spot like that wrings even your heart, he looks as though he's out of his mind, it feels as though the violin is playing *him*, he is so natural, he responds to her, yes, his hands are gorgeous, they say that the violin is unusual, recently I watched a movie, a thriller of sorts about a violin, whose bow was made with blood, the wife of the luthier died and he made a violin with her flesh, with her blood, ever since I see a violin and if its bow is red...she's playing, by herself, as though he is not there, which is a real virtue, men have a hard time disappearing, they just don't have the knack for it, I simply grab his hand, because the feeling has to be shared, and he contends, that he doesn't know anything about music anymore, that he is sick of everything after that competition when a string broke, and to be knowledgeable you need a sparkle, a feeling, love of some kind, I don't know, I don't trust him, maybe he overacts, because now he's captivated, he loves this concerto, his favorite Mendelssohn, he is certainly in love with the violin, he himself has played the

same one for a short time, almost the same but another one of course, he is totally hypnotized, and the woman who smells of fire next to me somehow shivers underneath her sweater and smells even more of fire, as if his hands mind-boggle her too, mind-boggling, like the bloody violin, this is not it, probably there isn't one like that at all, the story was made up like most things about love, except for music, music by itself is all love, although he wouldn't agree, he has his own convictions and he well may be right, because I know little about music, I only listen to it alongside him and even learned what a flageolet, pizzicato and trills are, but I'm never sure enough which one is exactly what, and that violin in the movie was unfortunate, it brings bad fortune, because it is sodden with the blood of love, was it love?, yes, love...now I remember the word, I told him while we were waiting for that dry martini which, he said, orchestrates magnificently the Garashtorte, I told him about the inquiry, the survey we did and as a result it turned out, love today takes *seventeenth* place! *seventeenth*, do you understand, mind-boggling, absolutely mind-boggling, I used that word and now it can't get out of my mind—what is so mind-boggling anyway—no, it can't be the case, things have changed so much, but it's not the same for men and women, it's an average, and if you separate the results between the tenth and twenty-seventh it's to the advantage of women, of course—that means to the advantage of men—it's mind-boggling!, in about ten years it will probably be on the sixty-seventh place, no, there are not that many values...and music...

it was mind-boggling, now a pause I shouldn't applaud it's not appropriate between parts, he has told me that, but some don't know or can't contain their amazement and applaud, somebody is chattering behind me, philistines, I will look back at him out of the corner of my eye that geezer with a spot—a violinist—and the second part began,

second parts are always sad, slow, a bit more boring, but otherwise it's pleasant, pleasant and tender, when you think about it music is convenient for thinking and it's really mind-boggling, that love is in the *seventeenth* position, after money and success, after children...no, they are not connected, and at one time it was all so different, but he told me—women—yes, it was first for women at one time, longing like music

some kind of longing

yet that man made a violin with the blood of the woman, that's right, she gave birth and died, and he took her blood out of sorrow and mixed it with varnish, that's how the violin turned out red, and he didn't create anything any more and the violin became an unfortunate violin, whoever owns it dies or something like that...I will ask, and the people from the survey lie after all, they are ashamed somehow—*seventeenth* place it's mind-boggling, even the career comes before...he finally finished, the end, everyone is standing up and before I knew it encore, encore, encore, how mind-bogglingly fast it ended, before I knew it, when and where do my hands start aching from the applause...and standing next to me he is so excited, so excited, before we entered he told me...

—he will play the Chaconne in the encore,

...what was that exactly...

and now he told me again,

—here it is, listen to the encore, he will play the Chaconne...

I'll be damned, but I don't remember what exactly that was...

Encore!

Encore and the woman next to me gets up on her feet, she smells weird, it's not simply the sweater and the wood...it's some kind of longing...

—Mind-boggling, darling, mind-boggling...thank you for bringing me along, it's good that your teacher passed up...and the violin seems to really be terrific, do you remember that movie? We saw it together, about the violin—the luthier, whose wife died, while giving birth and he took her blood...he couldn't get over it and made a violin out of love...

—I remember it, some kind of fable...only that was not out of love, he killed her because she was cheating on him...and took her blood...

—Well, that is still love...mind-boggling...

## **Chaconne**

### ***(Theme and Variations)***

*When we recover our consciousness, the faculties may remain, if the rapture has been deep, for a day or two, and even for three days, so absorbed, or as if stunned,—, so much so, as to be in appearance no longer themselves. Here comes the pain of returning to this life; here it is the wings of the soul grew, to enable it to fly so high: the weak feathers are fallen off... The soul now seeks not, and possesses not, any other will but that of doing our Lord's will, and so it prays Him to let it be so; it gives to Him the keys of its own will.*

Saint Teresa of Avila

(The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila by Herself, Chapter XX)

*In his[the cherubim's] hands I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out, I thought he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afire with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to loose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God. It is not bodily pain, but spiritual, though the body has a share in it—indeed a great share.*

Saint Teresa of Avila

(The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila by Herself, Chapter XXIX)

The moment she opened her eyes, she saw through the slightly drawn curtain the blanket of snow, which was descending from the sky, and she thought, *you see, they predicted right, they said, it would snow all day long today*, and she fell back asleep, she started dreaming of snow that was coming down heavily to the ground and reached her window sill, but despite that she had to go outside and when she opened the door, she walked into one of those labyrinths at Schönbrunn, that is always green, and now it was chiseled out of ice tunnels...Again she opened her eyes.

*I dreamed of Vienna.*

A month ago she visited Vienna, to attend a competition with her best student, and who knows why she fell in love with the city, nostalgically, tragically, wistfully, although she didn't like to travel and it'd been a while since she was enthusiastic about it—she already saw the same everywhere, Baroque, Rococo, Art Nouveau, a randomly

forgotten seventeenth century, gardens, fountains, and streets, streets with busy people... the music was still the same, because her ears, after so many years of listening to sounds forced into their precision, were on the verge of their sensitivity and only something amazing could excite them. And the silence of the snowfall. It will be snowing all day long. A perfect day—there's a concert tonight...

*I dreamed of Vienna.*

Something in the city disturbed her this time. It left her with an alarmingly unusual taste, unusual smell or view, that remained subconscious, was it those spikes on the window sills, designed to stop the pigeons from perching on them and from pooping on the praiseworthy cleanliness, or... no, it was not this, although it's terrible, cruel, spikes nailed in the middle of the electric beauty, which flows in front of you in a triple meter, of course, that was not it, she did not see it for the first time, it was rather something coming from the side, that simply joined in with the dance of this city and evoked uneasiness with the tart taste of amorousness... *I think I'm getting old... I must be entering menopause...* and she carefully pushed away the cover, as though she was afraid of the cold, but it was warm in the room, the windows were slightly sweaty, so that the snow blanket on the outside looked as though it was woven in two layers... *no, it's not the menopause, it's worse... much worse...* and Vienna was not the reason either, the reason that every morning she pushed away the duvet and stretched her leg up in the air, studied her cotton pajamas, her nails, the barely visible hairs, growing on her big toe, then she tucked the toe back under the down cover and decided that, there was no need to hurry, it was totally pointless, she could lounge a bit more, because it was snowing outside or something else was happening, which absolutely justified the lounging and

made unnecessary any attempt to engage in any activity but the inactivity, in which you just lie down and remember your dream, and you remember Vienna, and the labyrinth at Schönbrunn in icy colors, and you look for the reason of that unusual uneasiness, a little worm stuck at one moment in the chest, at another in the stomach, or even somewhere in the roof of the mouth with a taste of cake...—yes, *Sachertorte*, *that strange taste, unexpected, fine, barely perceptible, a taste of a sentence from Bernhard...*

*it's so strange that I dream of Vienna... and Schönbrunn...*

*A magnificent well.*

No, it was not strange. Only that it was difficult to admit that it was not strange.

*A magnificent well*, thought Virginia and as she felt that her thoughts were drifting her far away, so far away, from where returning is difficult, this time she pushed away the down cover with a certain decisiveness, rolled over in the big bed and let her foot reach the ground. The thick carpet welcomed her foot, it caressed her as if to create a feeling of security and she sat up abruptly, pulling gently the cover toward herself, to make the transition easier, although the temperature in the room was kind to her body and was embracing her as if with feathers, she might have sat up too abruptly, because for a moment the bed tuned into a boat gently rocking on the sea waves, her head was spinning and Virginia rested it on her hand, *no, not now, I won't be able to take it, if the Ménière's symptoms return*, but the moment passed, the world became stable together with the shapes on the carpet and her body rose this time slowly and carefully. She took several steps toward the window and drew the curtain all the way, the rollers glided along the curtain tracks and scratched the silence—in the spread-out snow blanket outside she saw in real time how the snow was persistently repeating her dream—*today the earth will be*



*covered in icy colors...* and the labyrinth at Schönbrunn emerged in the frosted figures on the window...

*A magnificent well*, thought Virginia, again facing the dream, and for a moment it seemed to her, that she was swept away through the window, and the snow playing in her eyes would simply engulf her...*no, not now, if again...the damned syndrome will kill me, I won't be able to take it...* and she turned her back to the window, took a good grip of the heater's fins and closed her eyes, to dispel the persisting repetition, in which her head was to lose its bearings and the world was to spin like crazy around her... The clock in the hall behind the door started striking in the thick silence and she carefully counted the strokes—one, two, three...—out of curiosity, because she had no idea what time it was, the white blanket outside created a feeling of absolute timelessness, endless flow and accumulation in a time-detached light...

*Oh My God, ten...*

Certainly she should have done something. Certainly she had missed something. The feeling of anxiety bore down upon her, it overwhelmed her like the snow and Virginia looked around, *yes, I have to remember, today is quite an ordinary day, not a Saturday, not even a Sunday, it's simply a day just like any other, only that I can't take it any more...* it was not clear what exactly she couldn't take any more, how, she didn't even ask herself, instead with extremely careful steps she approached the desk in the corner, switched on the computer, because the glowing screen and the barely audible buzzing made her feel connected, gave her some kind of path to recollection, which leads where the world throbs, completely lost at that moment, veiled in the impenetrable blanket of the persistently falling snow, that she as if could hear with her ears burdened by sounds,

and while she was waiting on this whole world to light up on the screen, she passed by the piano, pressed one or two keys, she stayed for a moment in that sound and even had time to contemplate, she might soon need to call a tuner...

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Ms. Kotzeva has had a diverse work experience. She was a news desk editor for Reuters Business Briefing, an instructor of Italian language at the College of Charleston, a freelance translator from Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak, and Italian into English. Currently, Ms. Kotzeva teaches in the interdisciplinary program Watauga Global Community at Appalachian State University.