

# Finis

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Dear Sergio,

I will make my reply to yours as brief as possible. I don't want to trespass further on our readers' patience (unlike you, I think the essence of translation is accuracy, an agreeable style and concision). And as I'm the one under fire, I think I should have the last word.

1. I imagine that UN interpreters must sometimes have trouble with sexist and prejudiced figurative language that offends human rights.

2. I don't expect you to find me "*satisfactory*". We are poles apart. However I do expect you not to distort me, even if you don't understand me.

3. I emphasize the difference between linguistic sense (the dictionary) and extra-linguistic reality or reference (the encyclopaedia). Neither of them, nor your "*linguistic meaning*" and "*extralinguistic sense*" are even mentioned on pp. 98-99 of *Approaches to Translation*, which however, just for the record, does include a condemnation of "*literalism*". As for the distinction between what people say and what they mean (or, if you must, the *dit* and the *vouloir dire*), or even the "*utterance*" and the "*intention*", I have never denied its existence and occasionally it triggers happy versions; but more often, it is arrogated by translators who think they know better than their authors, and therefore they produce distorted or inadequate translations such as those quoted on p. 98 of *Approaches to Translation*.

4. I do not "*advocate*" the literal approach on p. xi of *A Textbook of Translation*. I don't even

mention it! I have written that translation theory (in my sense) is mainly about cases where you can't translate literally.

5. *A Textbook of Translation* was written as a book. The rest is papers and "paragraphs".

6. My adaptation of Nabakov is acknowledged on p. 63 of *Approaches to Translation*. It is not, as you suggest, "lifted flint (?sic), stock and barrel", so please let's do without the unnecessary and, I find, thoroughly unpleasant sarcasm. By the way, I have also written against Nabokov as well as for him.

7. The quotation from me at your point 21 is a generalisation of your first sentence, not a contradiction. By the way, many "*theoreticians*" (sic) are sceptical about the possibility of translation (e.g. literary theorists).

8. As for your question about translating Dryden and a public notice, I really can't believe you're serious. Of course we would translate them differently. All translations are different.

9. I neither say nor imply that "*a communicative translation would normally be better than a semantic translation*". You really do dizzy me with your distortions, misinterpretations and at times outright misstatements.

*Finis*, I hope. I must just add that I much prefer you speaking to you writing and most of all I'd prefer for the two of us simply to listen to Janáček together.

Peter Newmark