

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING CENTRE

TRANSLATION AS BEARING WITNESS
IN ARVED VIIRLAID'S POETRY
MA thesis

KUDRUN TAMM
SUPERVISOR: ASST. LECT. EVA REIN

TARTU
2013

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Abstract | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| 1 On Trauma and Translation..... | 10 |
| 1.1 On Trauma: Knowledge of Unbearable Things | 10 |
| 1.1.1 The Essence of Trauma | 10 |
| 1.1.2 Trauma and its Paradoxes | 11 |
| 1.1.3 Trauma and the Workings of Narrative Memory | 14 |
| 1.1.4 Classification of Trauma; Absence and Loss | 17 |
| 1.1.5 Issues Concerning the Misinterpretation of Absence and Loss..... | 20 |
| 1.1.6 Witnessing and Testimony in View of Trauma Texts..... | 22 |
| 1.1.7 Conclusion on Trauma | 27 |
| 1.2 On Translation..... | 29 |
| 1.2.1 On Poetry Translation: the Provision of a Faint Echo, Dictate of Intention and Translator’s Power..... | 29 |
| 2 Poetry analysis | 36 |
| 2.1 “The Wanderer” | 38 |
| 2.2 “I See” | 45 |
| 2.3 “A Plea” | 49 |
| 2.4 “Outcast” | 52 |
| 2.5 “Let Them Keep Silent” | 57 |
| 2.6 “Silence” | 60 |
| 2.7 “So What” | 63 |
| 2.8 “My Heart is Still Pounding” | 65 |
| 2.9 Conclusion on the Basis of Individual Poems..... | 71 |
| 3 The Interrelations of Trauma, Translation, and Testimony..... | 76 |
| Conclusion..... | 88 |

References 93

Resümee 98

Abstract

This thesis views a selection of Arved Viirlaid's poetry in translation with regard to trauma and testimony. The purpose of the thesis is to explore whether trauma and testimonial qualities in a text survive or alter in translation. Questions of poetry translation and presentation in case of a small source language and large target language are also addressed.

The first chapter of the thesis is concerned with trauma and translation theory, the focus being on the core notions of trauma and witnessing, as well as poetry translation and power. The second chapter offers close readings of selected poems from the 2001 *Selected Poems* translated by R.W. Stedinger and T.E. Moks, whereas the analysis proceeds from the theories presented in the second chapter. The third chapter contextualizes the findings of the previous chapter in the framework of poetry, trauma, and translation.

Introduction

In Arved Viirlaid's poem "A Thousand Times", the narrator states in the third stanza: "A thousand times in tangled history/ my tongue cut off and lost without a trace/ the more it sings, the more the story/ burns its scars into my face" (Viirlaid 2001: 65). This may well be considered a representative example of Viirlaid's poetical works and his momentum as a poet. His narrators and protagonists present the reader with testimonies on facing the most difficult times in the history of 20th century Estonia, surviving long enough to speak of them, and evidently, struggling with the hardships of expressing such events, memories, and ideas. It presents a paradoxical story of a compulsion to sing of one's nearly impossible history against the will of those who would fain stop it and one's own pain in remembering.

Viirlaid was born on 11th April, 1922 in Harju County. He attended the Tallinn State College of Fine Arts, where he published his first works. After graduation in 1941 and the outbreak of war, he fled compulsory conscription to the Red Army by first, escaping to the forest, whereafter he went to Finland and joined the Finnish Army. (Kruus and Puhvel 2000: 669, 670) He is, therefore, what the Estonian collective memory recognises as a *soomepoiss*¹. In 1944, the army of the Third Reich was retreating from Estonia, and Viirlaid returned with the Finnish volunteers to participate in a number of desperate defensive battles that were to no avail due to the political circumstances prevalent in the world and the sheer outnumbering forces of the Soviet Army. In the complex and dire times that ensued, fearing persecution, Viirlaid fled to Finland, thence to Sweden, wherefrom he, like many Estonians moved on for fear that Sweden may send

¹Estonian volunteer in the Finnish Armed Forces in 1940-1944. Most served in the 200th Infantry Regiment (JR 200) of the Finnish Army. Many also joined the Finnish Navy. (Suomen-poikien perinneyhistys ry 2010: para 2)

refugees back to the Soviet Union. In 1946, Viirlaid arrived in the United Kingdom, where he spent months in an internment camp and began writing his first novel. At the time, he worked in various consecutive jobs, mainly as a simple labourer. In 1954, he moved to Canada, where he established a literary career and still resides now. (Kruus and Puhvel 2000: 669, 670)

When one thinks of Viirlaid's literary career, the first text that one most probably recalls is *Ristideta hauad* [*Graves without Crosses*] that has been translated into several languages and eloquently conveys the plight of the Estonian nation in the 1940s. One may claim that Viirlaid is more known and acknowledged as a prose writer, the author of 12 novels and short story collections, than as a poet. Moreover, the poetry of Arved Viirlaid has received less critical attention than his prose works, which have been discussed by, e.g. Tiina Kirss (1997), Arne Merilai (2012), Jüri Talvet (2012) and Janika Kronberg (2009). Like Arne Merilai has stated in his article "Arved Viirlaid: A Fighter without Compromise", "[...] Viirlaid has become famous primarily for his active resistance epic, which describes the selfless struggle of Estonians against the Communist conquest during and after World War II" (2012: 13). Accordingly, coverage of his prose works focuses on his explorations of patriotism, hard and impossible choices, principles (both unwavering and otherwise), and Truth – the truth of events that it was the purpose of those who survived them to make known in the West (Talvet 2012: 19). He is identified as a realist with a mission, always linked with the concept of freedom and betrayal instilled deep within his generation (Kronberg 2009: para 7, 8). Tiina Kirss also emphasises the epic-like qualities of *Graves without Crosses* (by extension, most of his prose on a similar subject) and points out that the novel accommodates both the ideas of community and individualism that should be united under a common noble cause (Kirss 1997: para. 9).

Although Viirlaid has published seven poetry collections since 1948, there is little critical scholarship on it, one of the most notable examples being Jüri Talvet's review of the 2001 *Selected Poems*. Yet, never before has it been viewed from the perspective of trauma theory, a relatively new approach in the field of literary criticism. Viirlaid is a member of the 'Betrayed Generation' (Kangro 1978: 130) – those born at the beginning of Estonia's independence, who had to witness the nation's dissolution in World War II. Rejection, guilt, heart-weariness, impossible hopes, indignity, personal and Estonian national experiences of war, violence, loss, fear, exile, deportation etc. and phantasmagorical flashes of traumatic memory are all characteristic features of his poetical works. Therefore, in addition to identifying his poetry as that of war and exile, I would also call it trauma poetry. Accordingly, it is the purpose of this thesis to explore previously unstudied aspects of Viirlaid's poetical works in view of trauma theory, especially historical trauma and loss, as well as witnessing.

In order to establish a background and a theoretical framework for the specific analysis of Viirlaid's poetry, the theoretical part of this thesis explores issues pertaining to trauma and translation. The first subchapter is concerned with trauma. It focuses on the definition of trauma and its several types. The actual mechanism of trauma and its influence on narrative memory is explained. Moreover, I also discuss the expression of trauma through witnessing and testimony, and the trauma text. Close attention is paid to the concepts of absence and loss that help to distinguish between types of trauma and prove a significant feature in connexion to the poetry analysis. The relevance of trauma narratives, testimony and the role of the witness are also discussed.

The second subchapter explores questions of translation. The chapter focuses on the idiosyncrasies of poetry translation with regard to its difference from other types of (literary) translation and from the point of view of the demands set for a good translator of

poetry. The issues mentioned above have also guided the selection of the theoretical texts I have employed, all serving the purpose of contributing to the narrow theoretical focus of this thesis. The section also addresses the issues of the presentation of poetry in translation that are closely bound with the explored variety of translator's choices and power.

The second chapter provides a close reading of eight poems by Viirlaid. The chapter begins with a short overview of all the poetry collections from which I have selected the poems to be analysed. The section then commences with a detailed analysis of the poems, which were chosen on the basis of the prominence of trauma and/or significant shifts with regard to it in the target text. Firstly, the English target texts are explored with special attention to the issues of trauma and its accompanying features, as well as witnessing. The images, possible historical background, cultural references and nation-specific details are analysed. Secondly, the analysis turns to the source texts and brings out the meaning-related differences that can be detected in the comparison. The focus is on whether elements of trauma have disappeared, been diluted or altered.

The third chapter brings together the elements of poetry, trauma, and translation. It begins with a conclusive exploration of the findings of the second chapter, i.e., I shall point out how trauma is rendered in Stedingh's and Moks' translation on the basis of the poetry analysis. The possible outcomes to the aforementioned tendencies with regard to witnessing and the testimonial qualities of a text are also discussed. The second section of the third chapter is concerned with the issues of intercultural translation, based on the analysis outcomes of the second chapter. Firstly, it discusses the translator Stedingh's (2001a) account on Viirlaid, his poetry, and poetry translation in general. This, as well as an examination of the translator's note (Stedingh 2001b) also illuminate his translation choices and certain tendencies that emerge in the poetry analysis section, therefore providing the consequences of the translator's choices.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore whether and to what extent the elements of witnessing and trauma evident in the source texts stay intact in the target texts, i.e. whether Viirlaid still is a trauma poet in English, as he is in Estonian. I am primarily interested in two aspects. Firstly, how trauma is borne across in translation – whether the personal is downplayed and the universal emphasised, whether trauma survives the process at all? Secondly, I explore the issue of translating poetry from a small language to a large foreign language and for an international audience. This derives from the fact that while I see much of Viirlaid's poetry stemming from and haunted by a historical trauma, the translator R.W. Stedinger identifies him as a modernist. The latter perspective definitely has its merits, but it seems to gloss over the specificity of experience grounded in the trauma of WW II and its aftermath for Estonia and Estonians and may be accounted with the meaning shifts that become evident in the poetry analysis.

1 On Trauma and Translation

1.1 On Trauma: Knowledge of Unbearable Things

The past influences the interpretation of the present (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 178). One is not to presume that there is an objective, simple version of it available in a fully referential unfailing linguistic form. However, (trauma) texts offer one a glimpse of the past in fractured, confused pieces that present a resisting narrative that is more akin to images than words. In order to comprehend and, if need be, vanquish the hold the past has over the lives of those who have lived it, as well as those who are influenced by it, we need to pay attention to trauma narratives – acts of witnessing and testimony. Study and contemplation of trauma, mourning the traces it has left on personal and national psyches should not become the main occupation of a culture, but still possess a righteous place within its limits for the purposes of remembrance and working through. Otherwise, the overflowing emptiness that is trauma shall undoubtedly leave its mark on a society that chooses to serve as its vessel.

1.1.1 The Essence of Trauma

What is trauma? In order to be truthful to the many directions of trauma studies that support several approaches, but generally agree on the following statement, one has to begin from the bewildering acknowledgment that *it cannot be fully known* (my emphasis) (Caruth 1995b: 4). This chapter focuses on and makes a difference between what trauma is, i.e., its subtypes and defining features, and its expression and recognition, i.e., witnessing, testimony, and the characteristics of a trauma text. Owing to Dominick LaCapra's classification of trauma and due to the issue's relevance with regard to the analysis of

poems and the interpretation of trauma narratives in general, I shall explore the question of absence and loss in connexion with the subtypes of trauma. Moreover, the thesis discusses the relevance of trauma narratives/testimonies to the traumatized individual, as well as the role of the witness in the process, in recognition of the fact that this thesis is, to some extent, an act of secondary or third level witnessing, while the poetry of Viirlaid can be seen as testimony.

1.1.2 Trauma and its Paradoxes

For the purposes of this thesis, trauma is generally identified as a crisis of truth, perception, knowledge and memory (Caruth 1995a: 6). These are the four concepts that make up the harrowing core of trauma and contribute the most to its defining features discussed later in this chapter. What is more, one can also claim that trauma is a paradox on many levels. Firstly, while trauma involves “a repeated suffering of the event” (Caruth 1995a: 10), the constant looping replay of an unspeakable memory that, strictly speaking, is not even there, it also constitutes an attempt of struggling against and trying to cope with the unspeakability that a person has been presented with by personal or general historical circumstances.

The second paradox of the concept consists in its characteristic of sublimity or excess (Vogler 2003: 182). In order to explain this feature, it would be useful to draw attention to the metaphor of the human-mind-as-vessel or memory-as-vessel that many trauma scholars implicitly use (most notably Maclear 2003, Caruth 1995, Laub 1995). Namely, traumatized individuals seem to become overflowing vessels unable to hold the excess of trauma, leaking, firstly, because they are damaged, and damaged, secondly, precisely because of the pressure trauma exerts on them. Through this, they become containers of trauma, haunted and inhabited vessels of a sublime event, as trauma is identified by Caruth as “the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits”

(Caruth 1995a: 5). Its sublimity is to be identified with the Burkean terror-inspiring strain (Burke 1756: part IV, section 5), rather than with the benign, uplifting, and awe-inspiring kind employed by so many Romanticist poets. According to Thomas A. Vogler, the subject matter of trauma encompasses both “an idea of the event, and an idea that evokes the magnitude of the event precisely through an inability to encompass it fully” (2003: 183). Vogler’s observation aptly underlines the excess bound up in both the sublimity and the vessel metaphor invoked about the concept.

However, another paradox is that the excess produces an absence or a loss. When a person is faced with a traumatic occurrence, the mind is presented with two options (that involve an unconscious choice): i.e. either to remember an event fully (and endanger one’s sanity) and to perceive oneself within the event, or to impress the gravity of the event upon the mind, but be utterly oblivious to its details. All of this would be too overwhelming, so a choice is made. (Caruth 1995a: 7) While the first option is discussed later in this chapter, it is the last that falls to the category of paradoxical features of trauma. To proceed with the earlier image of the vessel, one can claim that the vessel is overflowing with nothing – “the excessive and untranslatable dimensions of loss” (Maclear 2003: 246). Trauma is able to wreak havoc within the limits of one’s knowledge and perception exactly since the originating event leaves behind a phantom space that denotes the awesome dimensions of the shock to one’s system – the extent to which one is not able to incorporate something into one’s memory (Caruth 1995b: 152, 153). What is left behind in terms of conventional narrative memory is a void (Caruth 1995a: 6). What is more, it can be said that the seeming un-presence of this gap contributes to a trauma’s self-perpetuation. i.e., the void keeps the trauma intact – as a container, it inhibits the verbalisation and assimilation of the event, keeps it “literal” (Caruth 1995a: 8).

Another aspect of this spatial absence produced by excess (in the context of this thesis identified as a symptom accompanying the previously mentioned second option) is belatedness. The phenomenon refers to an event's suppression after its occurrence, only to see its return in the form of "intrusive phenomena" after a period of latency (Caruth 1996: 11, 17). The fact that no human memory could contain a trauma-inducing event all at once (Caruth 1995a: 6) and, instead, a phantom space is left behind, would not in itself start to traumatize a person. The profound unrootedness of the occurrence together with its unfamiliarity and horrendous dimensions, on the other hand, will. As was mentioned before, the human mind records the gravity of traumatic events, but leaves them out of narrative memory (Caruth 1995b: 153). As a result, the event is not assigned a place in the ordinary chronology of one's existence. Thus, trauma is timeless in that it exists outside time (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 177). Moreover, this facilitates belatedness, the delayed (and repeated) recollection of a memory repressed as it occurred. According to Caruth, in Freudian terms, trauma can be seen as a sequence of an event followed by repression, a period of latency, and return. (Caruth 1995a: 7) Therefore, it can be said that the horror of trauma and traumatic memory derives mainly from two aspects: unfamiliar sublimity and belatedness that comes with its own implications of profound inconclusiveness.

I consider that what makes trauma so difficult and, in some cases, nearly impossible to cope with is the profoundly human and Promethean desire to know it all. It is both an innate and survival-driven need to know the world one lives in and all the possible circumstances that can arise from one's surroundings, as well as the modernist and Eliotian refrain familiar from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": "Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all" (Eliot 1920: line 95). This embodies the difficulties innate in the aforementioned paradoxes that obstruct three vital human desires: those of telling,

remembering and knowing. All of those have to be relinquished in the face of trauma, its incomprehension, ungraspable truths and realities, the whys and hows of its very existence. Instead of obtaining and possessing conclusive, identifiable and easily processable knowledge or perceptions, a person must grapple with a desire for coherence, order, omniscience (Maclear 2003: 237), and is therefore, in most cases, bound to fail. There is always a gap between perception and reality (if there is an objective reality at all) but more so with trauma, as perception breaks down instead of recording a traumatic event, be it even in an inadequate way (Maclear 2003: 234). Traumatic memory, or the absence of it, turns into “individual, unpredictable, often harrowing moments” (Bermann 2005: 264) the abhorrence of which is multiplied by the profound unfinality of trauma: initially, there is no time frame in which it is to be placed, as they do not resemble any existing experiences (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 160). Neither are there any conclusions to be drawn from the experience, it is always fresh in its terror of the unfamiliar and unincorporated (Caruth 1995b 153).

1.1.3 Trauma and the Workings of Narrative Memory

In order to elaborate on the above discussion on the essence of trauma, as well as gain a comprehension of traumatic memory, it would be useful to give an overview of the working mechanisms of narrative memory under normal and traumatic circumstances. Van der Kolk and van der Hart claim that “narrative memory consists of mental constructs, which people use to make sense out of experience” (1995: 160). This again evokes the previously discussed idea of order, comprehension, familiarity and the desire to uphold those values for the purposes of coping in life and being an agent in the social world. Human memory thus rests on sorting and categorising previous experience, organising it into a more or less coherent narrative that would serve as a reference in future situations of miscellaneous nature. What is more, the same authors state that narrative memory has a

social function: owing to its coherence and the internalisation of knowledge or experience it has facilitated, concepts and events incorporated into the narrative memory may be relayed to others. They are relatively easily described and analysed, while also comprehensible to those listening. (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 163)

However, what will happen to experiences outside the safe and ordered categories available for a particular mind? These events, tentatively identified with trauma in this thesis, afford two options: they “either may be remembered with particular vividness or may totally resist integration” (van der Kolk and van der Hart: 160). What happens is that a moment or even a period of time in the life of a person may go by so to say unattended by the person him/herself (Laub 1995: 65). An experience of horrendous qualities is noted, especially its momentous dimensions, but it is not processed in any way. A memory is directly stencilled off life and subjected to no adaptation or interpretation. As such, it also lacks any social component (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 163) since while a person may be aware of possessing such a memory, they will struggle to make any sense of it and are unable to communicate it directly. It can be claimed that a traumatic event is, firstly, not recorded in the usual sense, secondly, not ordered in relation to existing experience, thirdly, fails to fit into the chronology of the mind (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 160, 177). Due to this, the occurrence remains literal and unaltered (Caruth 1995a: 5). At this point, it is necessary to emphasise a quality of traumatic memory/ies that will prove prominent in the poetry analysis section in the second part of this thesis. Elaborating on the image of stencilled memories, and the claim of literality, one can argue with a degree of certainty that memories marked with trauma are not remembered in verbal terms.

In critical moments of uncertainty when previous experiences are either unavailable or fail to live up to the terrible sublimity of an event, a person switches from thinking in

words to thinking in/recording images. Van der Kolk and van der Hart have concluded from Jean Piaget that “[a]s the external world is solely represented by images, it is assimilated without resistance. (1995: 172, 173) Due to the fact that one needs to deal with images instead of a string of verbalised thoughts that may be compared to the previous elements of a person’s inner narrative, the emergent memory remains loose, unattached and painfully literal (Caruth 1995a: 5). Thus, the result is an unyielding and unchangeable dissociated display of imagery that may be triggered to replay by the slightest of impulses. It numbs the suffering person to any emotional content available in the ‘real’ life, the existence that runs parallel to and overlaps with the recurring traumatic memory. (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 172, 173, 177) I think it is precisely the image-thinking, storing occasions on the iconic level, as “somatic sensations” (van der Kolk and van der Hart: 176) that gives rise to the startling and profuse metaphor-play and imagery of trauma poetry in general, and the poetry of Viirlaid in particular. Although one does realize that the translation of trauma into the language of poetry presupposes a certain degree of analysis, acceptance and overcoming, it can be still claimed that it is easier to express stencilled impressions left on the mind in ornaments and pictures of the language, i.e., metaphors, metonymy, etc. One also needs to take into account the fact that traumatic images fight back due to their very incomprehensibility and horror-inducing qualities that partly emerge from the fact that they are not grounded in language. According to Caruth, a flashback encompasses “the truth of the event and the truth of its incomprehensibility” (1995b: 153), it is a repeated attempt to adapt the original traumatic event (van de Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 160). Still, one must emphasise that the indomitable, emotionally void or simply horrendous automatic replay that the traumatized mind subjects a person to is a failing effort, a graspable understanding of the event being locked within the lacuna. An analysis of trauma, the reworking of it into language and incorporation to memory,

although achievable only to a limited extent, may arise from the repeated exposure to the memory (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 176) accompanied with the belated witnessing of the event, the creation of an internal witness to oneself or an external witness in the person of a listener (Laub 1995: 69, 70, 71). One must underline that traumatic memory is not something that will simply fade or run its course on its own. Since “past meaning schemes determine the interpretation of the present” (van der Kolk and van der Hart: 178) it can be said that if a past trauma is not recaptured, it shall continue possessing a person.

1.1.4 Classification of Trauma; Absence and Loss

As was mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, it would be necessary to specify the concept of trauma employed in this thesis. For the purposes of this chapter and the later poetry analysis, this thesis distinguishes between two basic types of trauma as brought out by LaCapra in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* 1999. An understanding of the types of trauma and their specific characteristics is essential to the fathoming of the directions of trauma theory advocated by this thesis as well as to the comprehension of Viirlaid’s poetry and its translation.

LaCapra identifies structural and historical trauma that emerge from markedly different circumstances, the confusion of which may have potentially grave consequences both for the traumatized and a particular culture in which the persons are located. Firstly, LaCapra outlines structural trauma, which is general by definition (1999: 50). According to LaCapra, it is “related to [...] transhistorical absence (absence of/at the origin) and appears in different ways in all societies and all lives” (1999: 77). Under this category, one may forbisen the biblical concept of the Fall; the separation of mother and child at birth; even the Portuguese concept of *saudade*, a complicated and indescribable state of longing for something distant, inexistent, etc. The danger of generalising this type of trauma, of

conflating its cause, i.e., absence, with loss and attributing structural trauma with a specific event would lead to a “wound culture”, where everyone in a society is assigned a role of victim, survivor, or perpetrator (LaCapra 1999: 77). Historical trauma, on the other hand, is specific (LaCapra 1999: 49). It is related to a certain historic event and may most likely even be assigned a date of emergence (LaCapra 1999: 49). Its underlying cause is loss. Thus, one may categorise the deportation of 14th June, 1941; Katyń; and the destruction of Carthage at 146 BC under events giving rise to historical trauma.

What is more, LaCapra identifies another subtype of historical trauma especially relevant in the context of Viirlaid’s poetry and that of his generation at large, i.e., founding trauma. LaCapra defines this type as “the trauma that paradoxically becomes the basis for collective or personal identity, or both.” (1999: 81). The identification of Viirlaid with founding trauma is supported by Bernard Kangro’s view of Viirlaid and his contemporaries in his essay collection *Äitsmemehi ja pärlipüüdjad. Esseed ja märkmed pagulaskirjanikest* (1978). Kangro’s essay on Viirlaid is titled “Reedetud generatsiooni nägu” [The Face of the Betrayed Generation]. Viirlaid is called the face, and, as it is to be explored later in this thesis, the voice of a generation of men born in the 1920s, who saw and/or witnessed the destruction and dissolution of a world they had known to be safe (Kangro 1978: 130). Moreover, many of them were forced to act as unwilling parties to the events, while their efforts to influence history came to nothing. They recorded the atrocities of the times on their own bodies and marked the course of history by the shedding of their blood, but failed to bear witness to themselves within time. All of that returned to haunt later and can be traced in the works of Viirlaid and others who shared his destiny. While it could be simply called war poetry, or that written by former soldiers, expatriates, refugees, I think it would be appropriate to identify a portion of Viirlaid’s poetry as marked by trauma.

Although this thesis has already associated Viirlaid with historical (founding) trauma, and therefore, by extension, with loss rather than absence, it would be necessary to discuss the two concepts at length, as they serve as the crucial difference between structural and historical trauma, the tension between which shall prove a defining feature in the interpretation of the original and translated texts of Viirlaid's poetry, especially those advocated by the translator R.W. Stedingh. The differences between absence and loss can be considered the same as those brought out in connexion with the two types of trauma discussed above. However, to elaborate on the characteristics, one can firstly claim that since loss is historically specific, it is attached to a tense (LaCapra 1999: 49, 64) that, nevertheless, shall melt into the present continuous of the double time frame of historical trauma. On the other hand, the event may most likely be reconfigured in the past, present, and future (LaCapra 1999: 49). Loss implies a lapse from a more or less beatific state at some point in the past. Thus, loss has a specific object of desire, a yearned-for prelapsarian state to which a person wishes to be restored. (LaCapra 1999: 59) In connexion with historical trauma, this characteristic tends to take over a person's identity, which explains the desperate yearning for a restoration or replacement to the original state (LaCapra 1999: 59). Finding a surrogate to what has been lost would "legitimate the self" (LaCapra: 59), i.e., bring back authenticity of identity that had been yielded to trauma in a person's life (this is not as unproblematic as the previous sentence implies, and is to be discussed later with respect to witnessing). Secondly, it may be said that absence is universal and may not be confined to a single point in history: "[It] is not an event and does not imply tenses (past, present, and future)". (LaCapra 1999: 49) By extension, it may be called existential, a fixed element of human life (LaCapra 1999: 79). To rephrase a well-known modernist quote: absence is absence is absence – admitting that requires "recognition of both the dubious nature of ultimate solutions and the necessary anxiety that cannot be eliminated

from the self or projected onto others” (LaCapra 1999: 58). What is lost can theoretically be regained (or at least yearned after, as a concrete object of desire can be identified), what is absent simply is not there, and never has been (LaCapra 1999: 57).

1.1.5 Issues Concerning the Misinterpretation of Absence and Loss

There are several problems that may arise due to the misinterpretation or misidentification of absence and loss that also affect significantly the interpretation of poetry. This issue shall also be addressed in the following sections of this thesis, especially the analysis of the introduction to Viirlaid’s selected poems and the poem analysis itself. However, it should be hereby pointed out that there is a fine line between absence and loss, while conflation of the two may be attractive to interpreters and critics of trauma texts, especially as absence particularly allows an unprecedented degree of liberty in interpretation. Identification with either of the characteristics is immensely context-sensitive. Together with supposed biographical facts about the author, a critic often brings his/her personal context and preferences into the interpretation of a trauma text marked by loss (or absence), as was also noted by Vogler (2003: 190, 201). However, one must keep in mind that the interpretation should not deteriorate into, e.g., annexing biographical trivia to a poem or, on the other hand, a hunt for alleged silences and gaps that may or may not prove the presence of an absence in a text. According to Vogler, “to claim [an author’s] silence about any particular topic ‘invokes’ that topic, is to trope on the trope, to create a ‘silence’ that allows the critic to assume the sublime of language” (2003: 203). After all, how does one know for certain that a writer is silent about one or another topic, without possessing a direct link to the person’s mind? Although a personal circumstance may prove a defining feature in the identity of an author, bringing it into an interpretation as the key characteristic probably tells more about the analysing scholar than the author.

What is more, identification with an alleged absence may also give rise to self-righteous universal victimhood that allows pointing a finger at an Other, who is supposedly the perpetrator of the fall from grace. This goes hand in hand with the assumption that “there was (or at least could be) some original unity, wholeness, security, or identity that others have ruined, polluted or contaminated, and thus made “us” lose”. (LaCapra 1999: 58) Furthermore, when absence takes precedence over loss, this leads to diminishing and impoverishing individual traumatic events and instances of loss (LaCapra 1999: 82). In comparison, it is also dangerous for a person or a society to conflate loss with absence: the result is impossible mourning (LaCapra 1999: 58). Life will turn into a shifting of the ashes, now and then punctured by exclamations on the absurdity of the dimensions of the ashes.

However, identification with either of the aforementioned features may potentially lead to a simplification of not only avoidance or acknowledgement, but also analysis and constructive handling. According to LaCapra, one can only deal with a loss, not an absence, which will simply remain there and has to be lived with (1999: 65). Losses, on the contrary, allow one to mourn/work through or engage in melancholy/acting out, which are two ends of a scale (LaCapra 1999: 65). A person who mourns is able to make a difference between the past and present, which facilitates the dissolution of the overlapping time frame of trauma versus actual life (LaCapra 1999: 70). The act of mourning allows life to continue and the addressing of problems to take place (LaCapra 1999: 70). However, it is not always that simple: “possession by the past may never be fully overcome” (LaCapra 1999: 70) since trauma will always resist interpretation and is truly unavailable for full comprehension. While the first way of dealing with trauma provides an alternative for suffering from it, the second is rather a feature of trauma itself that contributes to the haunting. Namely, when loss leads to either melancholy or acting out, this constitutes a

pathological, compulsive possession by the past. It is a static state, a performance and reliving of the past. (LaCapra 1999: 70)

1.1.6 Witnessing and Testimony in View of Trauma Texts

Having discussed the type(s) of trauma relevant in connexion with Viirlaid and the specific characteristics that give rise to them, this thesis moves on to the exploration of the witnessing and testimony of trauma, first and foremost through a discussion on trauma texts. This is relevant in the context of this thesis, as I classify the analysed poems of Viirlaid as testimonies and acts of bearing witness both to oneself and historical circumstances that initially passed without the possibility of witnessing.

One can claim that art inspired and generated through and due to trauma reflects reality as no other art form. According to the platonic view on art, it is a copy of a copy, an emulative description of the images one sees on the cave wall. Traumatic/traumatized art is stencilling off those shadows from the cave wall: first onto the mind, then through less processing than any other medium receives, into literary form. Sandra Bermann argues with respect to Rene Char's works that "[he] clearly saw poetry not only as memorial or mimetic, but also as an act of signification" (2005: 265) and adds that his poems presented "their own intervention in the world" (2005: 267). I would like to extend that claim to the poetry of Arved Viirlaid as well.

Another relevant statement one could make within the double framework of trauma and translation theory employed in this thesis is that in case of trauma texts, both memory and language resist. In a sense, interpreting traumatic memories into language is as valid a translation act as any other and involves as much linguistic violence as any other translation (Venuti 1995: 18). What is more, having been produced by a haunted individual, trauma texts are haunted, the seats of an omnipresent, but often elusive and invisible harrowing event that either crams words into an author's mouth or demands

painful silence that the person endeavours to overcome and express through image-play, meaningful lacunas and the occasional implicit reference. There is a plurality of viewpoints in such a text, since a single one would be, firstly, impossibly painful, and secondly, most likely impossible, as the author failed to place him/herself within the event in an adequate way or, when the opposite is true, to record the event in a satisfactory manner. Therefore, a written trauma narrative presents fraction, bits and pieces, but never the stark full on view, where “the event narrated is as absent as present” (Bermann 2005: 262).

The resistance of language to the expression of impossible-seeming events manifests mainly in the failure and refusal of signifiers to signify. Due to this, it can be said that trauma texts are essentially quests for meaning. The failure, however, may be attributed to the fact that signifiers are unable to bear the burden set on them: they are too insignificant to contain the abundant excess that life presents a person with and the equal of which has never before been verbalised with the linguistic resources the person possesses. On the other hand, signifiers start to overflow with meaning – especially within a certain historical context (as is the case with Viirlaid), specific words become too ubiquitous. This tendency can be viewed in Viirlaid’s poetry, where the image of singing oneself speechless is frequent (see, e.g. “A Plea”, section 2.3 in this thesis). Two corners of the meaning triangle, i.e., signifier+sign, weigh down on the third, i.e. signified, so as to make it almost insignificant, numb people to the knowledge of it, and lose both relevance and meaning due to that. This is why trauma narratives are, to an extent, marginalised and even dreaded. Kyo Maclear claims that there is a fear of the breaking down of language due to the “excessive and untranslatable dimensions of loss” (2003: 246) contained in trauma narratives. Notwithstanding, I believe that the “generic language” (Maclear 2003: 239) thought to suffer is all one really has for verbal or written self-expression and the struggle that is the verbalisation of trauma. There is no new lingua of trauma, nor is there a

special-purpose vocabulary that would leave ordinary language unscathed. It is the purpose of language to aid one in conveying the internal and external world, thus making it inevitable that language itself should be influenced by the process. Still, meaning and language are elusive and fluid, what is vocalised or written by one is not necessarily what is perceived by another. Thus, we need not fear that trauma narratives would disintegrate language; trauma still needs to be transferred from images into language in order for a person to bear witness and/or find a witness in another individual or themselves. It is a question of balance, as according to Maclear, trauma texts and witnessing contain the “tension between the desire to “know” something [...] and recognition of the limits of that knowing” (2003: 234).

Moreover, while trauma texts have to uphold the tension created by the difficulties and dread of expressing the impossible, discussed above, they are also marked by the fear of the unsaid (Vogler 2003: 204). Those bearing testimony through the medium of text often feel a burden of responsibility towards those, who did not survive the traumatic event, the ‘real’ witnesses (Vogler 2003: 203, 204) – also a frequent phenomenon in Viirlaid’s poetic works (see, e.g., “Let Them Keep Silent”, section 2.5 in the thesis).² The other side of the burden of the unsaid is made up of the fear for one’s own sanity and wholeness. The traumatic story that will undoubtedly resist needs to be struggled with to be vanquished (Laub 1995: 64). Although trauma is a defence mechanism, it is also a tyrant – it possesses and self-perpetuates (Laub 1995: 64). It will numb a person and contribute to the feeling that nothing ever could be more important than that past event; nothing ever could be invested with a meaning as enormous.

² This fear comes with its own reservation, namely, the traumatized may also be afraid of “losing the force that characterises traumatic recall” (Caruth 1995b: 153) – a person may feel they are betraying those who can no longer speak/testify by ‘giving up’ his/her trauma (Laub 1995: 73).

Trauma cuts one loose from reality in a temporal sense, thus it will also detach one from human interrelations. A person is preoccupied only with the story. Laub explains that survivors' guilt derives from the fact that a person was unable to act as witness to oneself and discusses this in terms of "the imperative to tell" (1995: 65). According to him, a traumatic event can be rationalized, assigned a place in one's personal chronology, and structured through the act of telling (1995: 69, 71, 74). I attribute these positive tendencies to the fact that narrating requires a certain level of ordering, and, certainly, the transition from images into words. Nevertheless, Laub also underlines that there will always be too much excess in the story for it to be told completely. (1995: 63) The affect in any trauma text or induced by it is never sufficient if one considers the event(s) that gave rise to it (Vogler 2003: 183). Testimony is a process, a passage, a juxtaposition, an act of partial repossession, but it will not work miracles and vanquish the trauma entirely (Laub 1995: 70). Moreover, the process of testifying does not necessarily produce a coherent, ordered story – it may instead convey the impossibility to speak (Caruth 1995b: 151). Although full knowing through witnessing oneself is unavailable in most cases, it has to be underlined that testimony is not simply a re-enactment: via it, there may emerge events/circumstances that the person did not comprehend at the time of the events (Caruth 1995b: 151).

Essentially, witnessing oneself and helping others to bear witness to themselves enables one to "remain authentic to [oneself]" (Laub 1995: 71). Traumatic personal histories rarely come in the form of coherent ordered narratives. They are incredible, horrid, unbelievable and fragmented, but nevertheless true to that one person. However, when there is no witness and no testimony from the part of the traumatized person, even s/he may begin to doubt the veracity of the story, and feel inauthentic for having such memories, it is what Caruth refers to as "belated uncertainty" (1995a: 6). A narrative, a testimony will authenticate and legitimize the personal history as well as the person. A

version of this can be viewed in Viirlaid's poem "I See" (section 2.2 in the thesis). If the story is not told, it is as if the event did not take place at all (Laub 1995: 67). Thus, the traumatized person tells the story to another person, who becomes the original witness (just as if the event took place only after its telling) because the narrator never had been a witness to him/herself during the event (Laub 1995: 69). Through that, the narrator is able to reclaim his/her past, and contain the loose-cannon event, at least to a certain extent. S/he is able to position/repossess him/herself, as there is now an Other to whom one may turn (Laub 1995: 70). An alternative example is brought out by Laub and involves the creation and maintaining of an internal witness: an object or imaginary/idealised entity to whom one may tell one's story in times of hardship, where actual witnessing is unavailable. (Laub 1995: 71)

Caruth claims that "the history of trauma in its inherent belatedness can take place through the listening of another" (1995a: 11). This places a great responsibility, as well as a burden on the witness. While the author of a trauma text "first must savour to the fullest the cataclysms of reality" (Bermann 2005: 258), s/he needs to attain a somewhat detached viewpoint in order to become a first level witness (Laub 1995: 62). A first level witness needs to be entire in oneself, which is not possible during a trauma-inducing event. Secondary witnesses, readers or listeners, are drawn "into the realms of cinematic memory" (Bermann 2005: 261) and, to an extent, put themselves in the position of an Other. Nevertheless, they do not take the other's place, as the difference of the position needs to be recognised for any witnessing to happen. (LaCapra 1995: 78) The role of empathy is important, as it facilitates the creation of a common space, where the traumatized story may begin to unfold, where the existence of trauma is not denied, and where working through the trauma becomes at least possible. (LaCapra 1995: 78) The empathy of the witness, however, must not cross the line of traumatization. Historical

trauma is contagious to those whose experience, memories, understandings and personal background or structural trauma may overlap with that of the original witness. Therefore, a secondary or third level witness must resist appropriating others' trauma and recognise that "another's loss is not identical to one's own loss". (LaCapra 1995: 78-79)

1.1.7 Conclusion on Trauma

The full extent of trauma is always unknowable, since it is one of the psychological phenomenon's key characteristics that one is not able to grasp its influence over oneself fully. The sublime and terror-inducing influence of a traumatizing event influences a person's mind in a particular way that can be said to transform it into a metaphoric vessel to the trauma. The mind may begin to hold the excess of trauma in mainly two ways: the person may remember the event somehow, but is not aware of its horrid dimensions, or, there is an imprint of an event in the mind, but the person is unable to recall any of its details (Caruth 1995a: 7). However, trauma leaves a void in narrative memory and self-perpetuates through that mechanism of uncertainty and terror (Caruth 1995a: 8). It is intrusive, elusive to definition and recall and works against the very human desire for coherence.

The mechanism behind trauma is that while normal memory relies on categorising past events and enables one to narrate them for a person's incorporation into the society, traumatic events are not stored into narrative memory (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 163). This makes them unavailable for recall, retelling and cohesion with previous experiences. Traumatic memories are loose, not pinned to a specific point in a personal timeframe – they remain literal and more often than not cannot be recalled in verbal terms. (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 160, 177; Caruth 1995a: 5) Together with their belated return as unattached flashbacks, this contributes the most to their disastrous influence. It also has to be kept in mind that traumatic images of the mind do not simply

fade and need to be worked with in order to be vanquished. This may be achieved through analysis, repeated exposure to the image, accompanied by the creation of a witness in oneself or another. (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 176; Laub 1995: 69, 70, 71)

According to LaCapra, trauma can be divided into roughly two types: structural and historical trauma (LaCapra 1999: 50). Structural trauma emerges from absence and is general, historical trauma is specific and derives from loss (1999: 77, 49). A subtype of historical trauma especially relevant for this thesis is founding trauma (1999: 81). Loss is connected to a specific event, object, etc. in the past, to or with which a person wishes to be restored (LaCapra 1999: 49, 64, 59). Absence is the void left by of something that has never been there and it is general (LaCapra 1999: 57). The two concepts are not to be confused, as the outcome would be undesirable for both a society and an individual. When absence is confused with loss, it diminishes the grief, confusion and right to mourn for those experiencing an actual loss (LaCapra 1999: 82), while if absence is identified with loss, it leads to impossible mourning (LaCapra 1999: 58). On the other hand, constructive handling of losses that do not disintegrate into melancholy or acting out, may help to address one's problems (LaCapra 1999: 65, 70).

Traumatic art reflects the non-verbal and immediate nature of traumatic memory. In case of trauma texts this means that both language and memory resist the level of interpretation and comprehension that is necessary for recording something in writing. Language itself fails to signify. What is more, according to Laub, trauma texts and testimonies contain a fear of the unsaid (Vogler 2003: 204). On the one hand, the traumatized feel to be in debt towards those, who did not survive the traumatizing experience (Laub 1995: 73); on the other hand, they need to struggle with their own trauma in order to overcome it (Laub 1995: 64). This can be achieved through the act of telling and thus, creating a witness to the event (Laub 1995: 69, 71, 74). If the story is not told, it

is as if the event did not take place at all and a person is never able to take possession over one's mind (Laub 1995: 67, 70) – they continue to feel inauthentic (Caruth 1995: 6). Through telling comes reclamation (Laub 1995: 70), while witnessing creates a space for it to take place (LaCapra 1999: 78).

1.2 On Translation

In 1540, Etienne Dolet outlined five requirements for good translation in *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre* [On the Way of Translating Well from One Language into Another]. The points mentioned were: firstly, “understanding to perfection the meaning and the subject matter of the author [being translated]”; secondly, knowing the source language very well – likewise, fluency in the target language is required; thirdly, when translating “[one] should not enter into slavery to the point of rendering word for word”; fourthly, not submitting to the lure of fanciful foreign loan words; fifthly, and most importantly, according to Dolet, a translator “should never object to harmony in language”. (Dolet 1992: 27-28) To an extent, categories of translation competence have remained rather similar. The former instructions can be partially linked with the principles of fidelity, acceptability/adequacy, accuracy, and adaptation that can be considered some of the central concepts in translation (studies) (Palumbo 2009: 5-9).

1.2.1 On Poetry Translation: the Provision of a Faint Echo, Dictate of Intention and Translator's Power

While the translation quality and assessment of consumer texts, and even literary prose is subjected to certain fluid categories and the processes can be achieved in a conceivable manner, poetry translation is considered something far more nebulous and imaginative even by those, who engage in it. The late Paul Selver, a long-time translator of Czech literature into English, identifies three main “ingredients” of a poem: the actual

contents, i.e., subject matter; rhythmic structure; and verbal effects, “including such features as musical qualities, subtleties of style, and so forth” (1966: 21). Accordingly, a translation strategy is to be chosen on the basis of “which of the three sets of ingredients looms largest in [the poem]” (Selver 1966: 21). Like Dolet, he puts linguistic abilities first on the list of skills of an able translator (Selver 1966: 47). He is very particular about reproducing the most important features in a given poem, (decided upon, presumably, by the translator). However, in his opinion, one is only able to produce a “faint echo” (Selver 1966: 21, 23) of the original. His thorough musings on the art that he himself practiced do, still, reveal one of the central and, to my mind, most controversial issues of poetry translation. Namely, analysing the thoughts of Ludwig Lewisohn, Selver concurs with the statement that “[the aim of a translator of poetry] should be clearly, first of all, to produce a beautiful poem” (1966: 28).

Thus, a poetry translator is charged with a paradoxical and awe-inspiring task: firstly, fidelity to retaining “the content of the original poem, [and the] specific means of embodying that content” (Selver 1966: 29), and secondly, sculpting this into an attractive poem. One of the reasons for this is the perceived need for presenting the poem in a reassuring and attractive manner to readers. As André Lefevere claims, it is regarded that poems can be successful if a translator makes the text conform to the maximum extent with what his/her readers expect a poem in their native language and pertaining to their time to be like (1997: 68). Furthermore, translated poems are subject to “translation poetics” i.e., poems are translated in a certain manner due to a previous tradition; translators cater for already acquired tastes (Lefevere 1997: 68).

This is reasoned with the claim that the reader may not know how to read the translated text, “where it fits into its culture and what its relationship is with other texts of the same and, especially, different kinds” (Lefevere 1997: 76), in its turn leading to the fear

that “if readers do not ‘receive’ translations in any meaningful way, the originals of those translations will not enter into the culture of those readers” (Lefevere 1997: 79). The most common device of achieving that kind of identification and familiarity from the reader is employing analogy. This strategy found favour already with Ulrich von Willamovitz – Moellendorff, German philologist and translator (1848 – 1931), who advised translators to “look for a German form analogous to the original in mood and style” (1992: 33). A translation choice involving analogy is safe for the translator and comforting for the reader, who is provided a way of looking at and interpreting a poem. Likewise, it is a choice based on power structures (Lefevere 1997: 76-77), which elevate one half in the equation of source and target language above the other (Aixela 1996: 55). Often, it works in the way that the ‘receiving culture’ is spared of the anxiety of encountering a puzzling Other, while the target text may be produced via “transcreation” that involves editing, altering and reconciling the concepts of one culture with that of another (Halström 2006: 34).

Furthermore, the combination of analogy and fidelity give rise to another phenomenon in poetry translation that I identified as the dictate of intention in the title of this subchapter. On the one hand, it is granted that a translator of poetry should be thoroughly acquainted with his/her original material and grasp the possible meanings and connotations embedded in the source text (of which there are undoubtedly several). This is why Susan Bassnett emphasises that intelligent reading is the first step to a good poetry translation. For her, a translator is first a reader, then a writer. (1998: 60) On the other hand, the apology of “being true to the spirit of the original” (Lefevere 1997: 78) often covers extensive liberties taken with an original poem in translation, causing the emergence of a variation on the theme of the source text author. Like T.S. Eliot and by his influence, I consider a poem a living and individual organism that, in normal circumstances, should be viewed from a reasonable distance from its author (Eliot 1921:

para 11, 18). That is to say that it is not only the celestial authorial intention expressed in poetic language that makes up the essence and core of a poem. In his dissertation, Fredrik Hertzberg writes of “poetic materiality” (2002: 2). He claims the existence of a “material unconscious” (Hertzberg 2002: 6) of a text: a poem is often divided into pure language and the actual physical presence or construction, while the latter is viewed as less important, even a necessary evil (Hertzberg 2002: 6-7). However, I concur with Hertzberg in the claim that the “superstructure”, i.e., the poetical and the “base”, i.e., the lay of lines, employed grammar, intentional errors etc. are perhaps equal contributors to a poem (2002: 7). To rearrange lines unadvisedly or imprudently is to change an inner landscape, for “the mode of intention cannot be easily distinguished from the thing intended” (Hertzberg 2002: 11). Bassnett puts it very aptly: “If, instead of looking closely at a poem and reading it with care, we start to worry about translating the ‘spirit’ of something without any sense of how to define that spirit, we reach an impasse” (1998: 60).

One of the evasive strategies that acts as a solution to the complex and many-faceted issue presented above is to consider the placement of the target text after translation. Namely, a translator may situate a poetry translation “in a no-man’s-land between two literatures/cultures, and as such [force] the reader to come to terms with the original nature of the original” (Lefevere 1997: 78). This way, one could follow Lakshmi Halström’s example of hoping to “translate a non-native reader into a native one” (2006: 36). One way of achieving this would be bilingual poetry collections that reveal the very physical difference of the source and target languages, as well as texts (especially if the source text is written in non-Latin characters, an example of which is provided in Lefevere 1997). Yet, in connexion with this, I would like to elaborate on my earlier thought of poetry translation and conforming, as well as the necessity of a poem to be viewed alone. While I believe that acculturation for the benefit of a reader is a step too far,

I would also claim that both because of catering for a poem's reception in another culture and underlining its unique otherness, it needs to be accompanied by paratexts. According to Gerard Genette, these are "liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs, and publisher's jacket copy [which] are a part of a book's private and public history (Genette 2001: 1). Be it the paratexts, pre-selection of the texts to be translated, the actual book or the canonization of an author by drawing attention to his/her work, etc. these are all questions connected to translation and power, the category to be explored next in this thesis.

Every translation features the question of power, even if it is not explicit, even if it is not viewed as such by the translator him/herself. The simple choice of selecting a piece of poetry for translation, and thus, publicizing and presenting it to the attention of foreign audiences, even potential canonization, is a position of power in itself from the point of view of a translator. Granted, this kind of decision-making authority is more often than not conveyed or assumed by publishers, whose choices reflect canon or that which is to be canonized (an extension of Lefevere's claims on anthologies) (Lefevere 1996: 140). This pre-selection, as well as the manner of packaging and presenting the text-product, which it undoubtedly is for the publishing industry, has a significant effect on the reception of the text. As was already mentioned above but perhaps in a less radical manner: without accompaniment, familiarization or explication, the text is not received. When it is not received by readers, the text does not enter the target culture and leaves no trace on it. The cover image, title, placement of the author's name (infrequently also that of the translator's), careful selection and organization of sentences from reviews on the front and back cover – all elements unaffected by translation decisions but perpetuated by the very physicality of the book and its presentation are instruments of power. Even more so in case

the text proves to be successful and all aforementioned elements follow to the back cover of the author's next book.

Yet, a more considerable amount of decision-making power and power over discourse falls upon a translator in actual translating and making respective choices throughout the process. If one is to agree with Lefevere's claim that "translations create the 'image' of the original for readers who have no access to the 'reality' of that original" (1996: 139), i.e., to believe that "translation is [...] rewriting" (Bassnett 1998: 74), the translator is elevated to the position of a writer. In a way, the role of the translator has come full circle: according to Bassnett "in Dolet's time, the power of the translator was recognised as a force that shaped the source text into something other, a force that could be highly subversive" (1996: 20). Today, many writers of translation theory support the point of view of translators as authors in their own right (see, e.g., Bassnett 1998, Lefevere 1996, Carbonell 1996, Aixela 1996). All that there is in a source text: meanings, metaphors, innuendos, dogma, etc. is filtered through a translator's personal views, reading experiences, and educational background and rewritten in another language. There is no neutrality and transparency involved in such a process. It is a "redefinition of the Other's meaning according to one's own representational context" (Carbonell 1996: 91). Taking into account the various constraints: economic, poetic, ideological, (Lefevere 1996: 139) as well as readers' expectations, the original context, and various linguistic pitfalls, a translator-writer has to negotiate two languages and cultures not in order to translate one into another, word for word, line for line (for the process implies the hegemony of one of the sides in the transaction (Aixela 1996: 55)) but to "[construct] a third space of meaning" (Carbonell 1996: 91). Thus it is that instead of the still ubiquitous public image of a shadow-like half-computerized figure engaged in mechanical substitution and torn between fidelity and fluency, one is to consider a translator of literary texts who is first a reader and

interpreter of meanings, and then a writer, who does not produce a copy, but the same text transmuted into another language (Bassnett 1998: 66).

For want of more apt or less clichéd images, I compare poetry translation with negotiations held on a tightrope because the activity often seems nearly as impossible. In an ideal world, to engage in it, one needs fluency in at least two languages, the compassion and empathy to recognise the so-called poetical essence of a text, while not forgetting its texture and structure. At the same time, a careful translator refrains from acculturation, Lefevere's example of imagining a "local scene" and being true to one's native poetic diction, not that of the translated poem (1997: 72). S/he has the daunting task of keeping "the integrity of the translated text as a whole" (Halström 2006: 44). A poetry translation is expected to be faithful, while at the back of one's mind, there remains the still-resonating sentence of Dolet: "I shall not pass over in silence the folly of some translators who bow to servitude instead of acting freely" (1992: 27). In all of this, a translator works on the playground of ideological and economic forces that assert power over the reception of a translation even before its publication. Moreover, a translator wields power intrinsic to the process of translation itself. This manifests in the hegemony or equality of the source and/or target language, considering and asserting one's role in translation and the ramifications of the translation choices arising from that.

2 Poetry analysis

The poems analysed in this section of the thesis originate from three poetry collections: *Hulkuri Evangeelium* [*A Vagabond's Gospel*] published in 1948, *Jäätanud peegel* [*Frosted Mirror*] published in 1962, and *Igaviku silmapilgutus* [*A Blink of Eternity*] in 1982. Before turning to the close readings of specific poems, it would be necessary to outline the aforementioned poetry collections in general and point out some tendencies that were referred to already in the first chapter of this thesis and that are also present in the analysed poems.

The collection *A Vagabond's Gospel* was published in London right after WW II. On the one hand, it is a straightforward and painful response to atrocities, escape, forced and reluctant roles the narrator was compelled to take during the war, inability to change the events one was dragged into, guilt before ancestors and the dead. The verses abound in startling images that may be interpreted as traumatic flashbacks fresh emergent after a period of latency. I consider this collection the first in a line employing stencilled images brought about by trauma, literal in that the author has described them with intensity nearly unbearable, but still somewhat worked through, as they have been verbalised. As Merilai claims in his article "A Fighter without Compromise", "[*A Vagabond's Gospel* and *A Summer Evening's Smile*] clearly reveal the post-traumatic bipolarity that characterised all of exile literature: conflicting expressions of euphoric fighting energy and lyrical moods of tenderness or depression" (2012: 12, 13).

On the other hand, the collection presents a sophisticated and meditative backward glance on the personal past of a generation of Estonian men born at the beginning of the Estonian independence, voicing the troubles, concerns, and tragedies of numerous

contemporaries rendered speechless (both due to trauma and circumstances, e.g. the Soviet censorship and fear of prosecution).

This collection, above all, can be called an act of testimony, or an attempt at it, as all the memories impressed upon the mind have not yet been fully comprehended at the time of writing and publishing the poems. Lending this thought from Bermann, who wrote about Char, this poetry is “an act of signification” (2005: 265). Firstly, it facilitates staying authentic to oneself – a story voiced legitimates the events conveyed (Laub 1995: 67). Secondly, through this, the author tries to invest some kind of a new meaning into the world that had lost all order and comprehension during the unspeakable events. However, it is an endeavour, as it has to be kept in mind that here, as well as in later collections, memory and language still resist: the desire to know and signify and the limitations to that are at odds with each other.

Frosted Mirror, Viirlaid’s third poetry collection, is a mellowed version of *A Vagabond’s Gospel*. It is pervaded by bitterness, desperation, and desperate hope. Its tone is indignant and many of the poems deal with exploring alternatives and reasons behind past events: what if large history or the individual small scraps that constitute it had gone differently. Consequently, poems present juxtapositions, contradictions, paradoxes – they are enigmatic in their plots, plurality of viewpoints and way of expression. The alternative and highly poetical forms of words used trace the poet’s footsteps on a quest for a new meaning. Like in the first collection, the poems seem to burn the pages; they seem to have been written due to an urge, an imperative to write and pour out certain impressions, unaired feelings, experienced or witnessed events. The topics are the same, yet different: there still remain glimpses of the war, prison camps, brothers in arms, ancestors and the homeland. Yet, there is a maturity to dealing with the issues. What we see is no longer only

a mental image penned down (although an element of this remains) – it has been accompanied by meditation and bitter irony that serves as a defence mechanism.

A Blink of Eternity is Viirlaid's sixth poetry collection and the most varied in terms of tones employed and subjects engaged from the three discussed in this thesis. There are poems that jest like a teenage boy, those that burn from the inner fire of hurt patriotism, ones that discuss the ways of world politics, or dream over the beauty of reciprocal emotions. The reason why I chose to explore one poem from that collection in the current thesis is that there are still texts that cower in a mental corner and try to block out certain images. Yet again the reader witnesses fear of the unsaid (Vogler 2003: 204), nearly impossible contrasts and flashes of a past that refuses to settle and remain within its proper time. Instead, as I have mentioned before, it becomes timeless.

2.1 "The Wanderer"

The poem comprises four parts and was published in the collection *A Vagabond's Gospel*. In English, the text sounds stunningly Anglo-Saxon, like a cry of an old retainer who has lost his liege lord. In a way, however, it is so, although the liege lord is not a person, but a mythical home of rootedness, warmth and the certainty of familial relationships. Thus, this un-presence can be identified with that of loss.

The first part echoes with a pretended carelessness of the protagonist's footsteps on an endless road. The man whistles to fend off thoughts about dying on that selfsame pathway. Yet, there is an undercurrent of thoughts and events too painful to think about: "wishing something which happened/ did not happen" (Viirlaid 2001: 53). The first part also introduces the juxtaposition between *nothing* and *everything* that is to continue throughout the poem. This can be said to be a representation of the paradoxical double identity of trauma that contains both the unrecorded emptiness on un-being and the overflowing burden of its sublime presence.

The second part of the poem goes on to explore and describe the magical, bewitched qualities of the road. The road *compels* the wanderer to walk ahead listlessly like a fairy circle that will make a person walk until s/he bleeds. The *ignis fatuus* at the end of the road take the form of “everyone/ whom you still dare/ create in your dreams” (Viirlaid 2001: 54), while the previous stanzas have informed the reader that the road is never to end for the wanderer. The first stanza of the second part contains an important element of characterisation that is to determine the identity of the wanderer throughout the poem. The man is called “the dark riddle/ they fear” (Viirlaid 2001: 54). This is a manifestation of a common tendency in Viirlaid’s poetry, i.e., due to historical trauma and a substantial loss, the protagonist, often also the narrator, are Othered. They become unknown to themselves, as they lose the capacity to position themselves within their personal history and present life, as well as to bear witness to both of the former in relation to themselves. What is more, the tendency of Othering is discussed by Laub, who claims that the victims of a certain traumatic event are barred from witnessing history and themselves within it to such an extent that they start to consider themselves the perpetrators (1995: 66). As a result, their existence turns into a nameless mourning for the loss and the state that preceded it, whereas the persons turn into containers haunted by the past.

The ways in which the self in the poem is characterised are quite notable: firstly, the man is befriended by animals and children, which would indicate him to be kind and not dangerous. The next lines introduce a juxtaposition, which was discussed in this thesis above: he is a riddle that does not have an answer, thus something that is fractured, missing a part, unknowable even to himself. The third part of the poem attributes features of (living) stone to him: he is ageless like a rock, the “wind cuts grooves/ into [his] flat face” (Viirlaid 2001: 54). This would indicate the emotional numbing and loss of social dimension that a trauma brings about. Moreover, the poem describes him to be hollow like

a cave, which is consistent with the wide-spread image of the traumatized as a vessel that is overflowing with nothing or unable to contain the darkness within them, as it is expressed in the poem: “the night ails in you/ like a song” (Viirlaid 2001: 55). The very plurality of these descriptions is evidence of a troubled and confused individual, who has lost the hold on his identity.

On the other hand, numbness is described in a nearly positive manner in the text. The wanderer is fragile in his path of exile: winds, sand and night can hurt him and tear him apart. Emptiness, lack of emotions, thoughts and words are his refuge and escape: “you weep/ yourself empty and clear”; “you curse your mouth clean” (Viirlaid 2001: 55). Moreover, unavailable human relations (the distance arises both due to actual physical circumstances as well as because of the character’s inner exile) seem to him like a cabaret, a pastiche, a hopeless parody. The third part ends with a paradox: while his humanity is torturing him, he keeps searching for it, as it comprises a part of his lost selfhood, the answer to the riddle, which can be interpreted as the actual working through of his trauma or, instead, as a modern quest for the self in an indifferent and incomprehensible world.

In the fourth part of the poem, the road finally succeeds in leading to nowhere. As even the illusory destination is gone, the wanderer stops rushing ahead, “[goes] where [he] is flung” (SP 2001: 55) and transforms from imperishable materials into scraps, like sawdust and wood shavings. He can no longer support any kind of identity, not even that of a wanderer. “The living” dispose of him because he is useless that could be identified with the post-war ideology of utility. The poem ends with a sense of relief that after him, no one will have to bear such a fate or retrace his footsteps.

The Estonian original of this poem is titled “Rändur”. There are a number of significant differences in the Estonian and English versions of this poem, which will be discussed in the following section. Firstly, I would like to explore the reasons behind the

abovementioned identification with Anglo-Saxon poetry that is relevant in connexion with the translation, but not so with the original. Namely, there are a number of culture-specific references that have been diluted or completely lost in English that are to be discussed further. What is more, due to this, the poem is somewhat domesticated, placed into a more universal-state-of-man-related and anglicised context that facilitates the parallel with the images of the journey and loss of a trusted liege lord abounding in Anglo-Saxon poetry³. As it can be seen, the English title also favours this comparison.

However, it would be necessary to turn to specific examples of discordances between the two versions, which shall be pointed out stanza by stanza. The first instance can be found in the third stanza, but it exemplifies a tendency throughout the poem: the English text sounds more definitive, the conditionalities and hesitations of the Estonian text, i.e., the Estonian “juba sa tead nagu kõik,/ juba sul on nagu kõik” (Viirlaid 1948: 47) have turned into statements in English: “you know everything/ have everything” (Viirlaid 2001: 53). This is also evident in part IV stanza one, where “Ja lõpuks,/ sa ei lähe vist kuhugi” (Viirlaid 1948: 50) morphs into “finally nowhere/ you go where you are flung” (Viirlaid 2001: 55). These lines are problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, the aforementioned certainty and finality conveyed by the “finally nowhere” (Viirlaid 2001: 55). Secondly, the statement implies that a destination has been reached, even though it is nowhere – this, however, is a direct controversy with the Estonian version that thoroughly insists on the fact that the wanderer is always on the road and shall die there. The Estonian line is a representation of the slow and painful winding down of an entity that has been moving from inertia and with a delusional destination. As the English line has been

³ See, e.g. *The Wanderer*, available at <http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=get&type=text&id=wdr>

rearranged, it instead conveys stagnation chosen freely, while the inability to reach the idealistic destination driven by a loss induced by trauma is downplayed.

Another thing is that in English, the text strives for a greater level of abstraction. An example of this can be found in part II. The English wanderer is a “dark riddle” (Viirlaid 2001: 54), the Estonian one a “must mõistatuslik mees” (Viirlaid 1948: 48). Although one can see why the translator chose not to employ the obvious option – dark mysterious man – due to its connotations of blatant melodrama, it should still be pointed out that this increases the sense of alienation, dehumanisation, and Othering present in the Estonian original, but not to such a great extent.

Beginning from the second half of the second stanza, the translator(s) have opted to reorganise and shift the lines allocated into stanzas. In some cases, it is marginally justified, e.g., uniting the third and fourth stanza of part II into one sentence. However, choosing to do so in the second half of the third stanza, thereby leaving out a relevant part of both, strips the target text of a profound exploration on emotional and physical exile conveyed to the reader in Estonian cultural references. Moreover, the deletion can be said to be utterly arbitrary. The source text reads: “Seisad kumiseval rannal,/ mis on sulle kõle./ Seisad lokkaval põllul, mis ei ava sulle hinge.// Uidad virgate lainete kaharais,/ pärlipüüdjate keskel,/ haige öö lauludest,/ mis on nagu pettus” (Viirlaid 1948: 49). The target text is: “The bleak shore/ echoes where you stand;/ the field waves and waves/ among pearl divers:/ the night ails in you/ like a song” (Viirlaid 2001: 55). The target text is missing two lines. Moreover, it fails to bring out the (inner) seclusion of the wanderer (“sulle kõle”) brought about by a total emotional numbness and inability to relate to the social world, and replaces it with a bleakness emanating from the circumstances and environment (“bleak shore”). The line left out, the last of the fifth stanza, further emphasises the unique and lonely position of the protagonist, as well as contains an image

of great emotional power in Estonian. It depicts a field (of grain), an image which, in my opinion, has a direct link to the Estonian soul, even the most urbanised one. It is therefore of the utmost significance that the field in the original poem does not speak to the wanderer and closes him out. It is a foreign field, but the reader of the target text will not know this.

Instead, the deletion of the two lines creates a peculiar, cryptic and confusing link between fields and pearl divers (sic!). Pearl divers, the night and songs may all be interpreted as references to August Gailit's *Toomas Nipernaadi* (first published in 1928), more specifically the short story entitled "Pärlipüüdjad" (Pearl Divers). Therefore, "the night ails in you/ like a song" (Viirlaid 2001: 55) can be said to be inaccurate for a number of reasons. In the short story, Toomas Nipernaadi, a voluntary vagabond in his homeland, tells a farmer's daughter that once upon a time, a community of pearl divers lived on the shores of her native stream, while pearls could still be found there, if one looked for them carefully enough. With this, he wishes to persuade her not to marry the serious limping village pastor. Nipernaadi is kind and jolly and believes every fairy story he invents the second he voices it. He spends his summers treading the roads of Estonia, singing and storytelling to girls sleeping behind barn doors. (Gailit 1967) Keeping all this in mind, one could say that the lines in Viirlaid's poem underline the emphatic difference between the Wanderer and Nipernaadi, whose nightly warbled songs would make the road-weary wanderer ail. He is supposed to be the pastor and all those farmers, who eventually marry all the girls Nipernaadi falls in love with. Yet, he has been severed from such a life. The target text, the translator most likely being unfamiliar with the reference, does not reflect this, as could be detected from the earlier analysis of the target text.

Another small controversy can be found in the closing stanza of part III. Lines "mis on seitsme maailma taga/ paekivide all" (Viirlaid 1948: 50) and "caked/ under ages of limestone" (Viirlaid 2001: 55) contrast in the time-spatial sense. The English line evokes

the sense of geological aeons, great lengths on prehistoric time. The source text, however, employs an expression similar to that familiar from fairy tales – *seitsme maa ja mere taga* – which can be interpreted as very far indeed and that has the additional connotation of near unattainability, again consistent with the interpretation of a lost promised land.

The opening of part IV was discussed already earlier in this section in connexion with rearrangement of lines and the resulting meaning shifts. Another thing is that the translator has engaged the source text and added some additional details via the interpretation necessary in translation. At the same time, they have again left out some relevant cultural references. Firstly, I agree with the expression “shaving of wood” (Viirlaid 2001: 56) that eloquently represents the Estonian “*laast*”. In the next stanza, however, the translator has of their own accord extended the metaphor, and the source text’s “*kasutult*” has turned into target text’s “useless as sawdust” (Viirlaid 2001: 56). The same stanza sees an introduction of agency with regard to the fate of the wanderer. In the original, it is life that drags the person along – “*lohised ainult/ elu hõlmas*” (Viirlaid 1948: 50) underlines the fragile and precarious nature of the wanderer’s connexion to life, while “the living/ drag you along” (Viirlaid 2001: 56) seems to imply that he has become a burden for the society with which he has little in common, as was already mentioned earlier in relation to the question of utility.

The last detail to be pointed out about this poem is the difference between “*hingepuu*” versus simply a tree in the last stanza of part IV. Although the English ‘tree’ does also represent rootedness, familial relationships and social ties within a given society to an extent, as does “*hingepuu*”, the Estonian word has additional relevant connotations that can only arise in a culture, which has only recently and partially shifted from the countryside to the city and in a country still full of forests and family orchards. Even more so, when the poem was originally written. “*Hingepuu*” may be both physical and spiritual –

Estonians think of the word, when we plant a tree in the garden after a new baby has been born into the family or someone has married. We also think of this in connexion with ancient sacred groves and stories of benevolent tree-spirits, who brought happiness to those, who would be kind to the forest. A “hingepuu” is a representation of all that, which a traumatized person lacks or is severed from: unity, (relative) certainty, cohesion, sense of time and space.

2.2 “I See”

“I See” was published in the collection *Frosted Mirror*. It is at the same time a poem marked by relief, hope, and the harrowing traces of traumatic recall. The last stanza can be said to be referring back to the unidentified trauma-inducing event that has caused the narrator to be oblivious to his surroundings, as implied with the lines “The white bark of birches/ shone only through dreams” (Viirlaid 2001: 107). Nevertheless, a reader, as well as the protagonist may not be entirely certain that what one sees is not a patchwork-landscape, fashioned out of memory and reality (Bermann’s “out of joint” reality (2005: 261)). The dreams mentioned in the second stanza are dubious and elusive to definition. One interpretation is that they may be seen from the perspective that trauma (and the presence of traumatic flashbacks that also emerges later in poem) caused the normal time-frame and social dimension of the narrator’s life to collapse, leaving him to perceive life and surroundings as if through a dream. Another way of interpretation identifies the objects presented with the dream, where they constitute a part of the yearned-for pre-trauma reality, the world that became unavailable through the emergence of historical trauma. Thus, the birches become an implicit reference to the narrator’s homeland, a location where the person was yet untroubled and unimpeded by thoughts of darkness. The collapse of the dimension of time is also indicated by the first stanza: “The morning sun/ shines

after ten years” (Viirlaid 2001: 107), while the narrator looks in awe at the world and the actual/symbolic morning.

The second part of the second stanza, however, seems to be a reintroduction and reaffirmation of the self, and the witness-within-self that had been lost, presumably for the past ten years. “I can only touch/ myself with a welcoming hand” (Viirlaid 2001: 107) may be read as a reintroduction of witnessing to one’s life: the person has regained, to an extent, the control over the passage of time, and will now also newly perceive himself and his actions within the larger framework of actual existence, the ‘real’ life that had been overshadowed by the overpowering reality of traumatic recall. The two lines are also a resignation; nothing can be done about the lost time. The claim about witnessing is supported by the first line of the fifth stanza: “Now it is clear enough to see” (Viirlaid 2001: 107), which may refer to a certain acceptance and working through of the trauma that has newly revealed a fresh view on the person’s past and present existence. It is a brave, hopeful, and relieved one, but, nevertheless, still not entirely untroubled.

Namely, on the one hand, the poem is simply inundated with light and whiteness: it is in the sun, the white birch bark, and the white flower. However, a substantial portion of the light can be attributed to the past: it lingers on the traces of distant landscapes, fractured bits of the narrator that had gone missing since something that cannot be gleaned from the poem happened. Like the first lines indicate, the sun emanated its rays ten years ago, and the person is afraid that he who has become a container of darkness and a vessel of shadows will not be able to hold all that light anymore. Although the third stanza is jubilant: “Will the light really fit/ into me/ to the last ray?” (Viirlaid 2001: 107), it is also marked by anxiety that returns in the fourth stanza: “Are there really no shadows/ to bury hope today?” (Viirlaid 2001: 107). Therefore, the poem is a constant juxtaposition of past and present, light and darkness, perceiving and being blind to one’s surroundings,

knowledge and oblivion (of the self). The so-called new light that has entered the existence of the narrator in the poem lives in awe and fear of the trauma that inhabits the person.

The “glacial night” (Viirlaid 2001: 107) may be said to represent the continuing presence of trauma in the protagonist’s life and is a reminder that although one may succeed in overcoming a trauma to an extent, as seen in the relished new beginning of the poem, one may not be able to vanquish the shadows entirely. The second part of the fourth stanza “Will this glacial night/ grinding within me/ ever melt?” (Viirlaid 2001: 107) seems to refer to a hardened and materialised darkness, a vicious and active presence that claws its way through the narrator to both fill him, so that no light would fit into him and, at the same time, hollow him out and strip his selfhood. It is a menacing presence to cope with within oneself, but the fifth stanza sees another reaffirmation of hope and the self.

With the lines “Now it is clear enough to see:/ wherever my life fell into dust” (Viirlaid 2001: 107), the narrator acknowledges and has tentatively identified the presence and location of trauma in his life. This is, in itself, a positive tendency that indicates working through. The second part of the last stanza, however, possesses a curiously paradoxical and dubious nature: “and the sword broke with a scream,/ bravely, a white flower blooms” (Viirlaid 2001: 107). One way to interpret this is that the fifth stanza sees all that is usually threatening humanised and redeemed: the sword broke with a *cry* (my emphasis), while the broken life in the dust was renewed through transformation, which is embodied by the white flower. As this analysis has also claimed earlier, the flower is part of the whiteness of light, and, therefore, a representation of hope. However, the other interpretation available for this section of the poem is the exact opposite. The sword that broke with the cry is a dehumanisation of the narrator and, thus, constitutes another Othering of the protagonist by himself. Although the narrator has been able to witness himself in the narrative present of the poem, he is still unable to bear witness fully in the

past; that is why the sword broke. The white flower, however, becomes a symbol of nearly-impossible commemoration, indomitable in its bravery.

“Ma näen” was first published in the collection *Jäätanud peegel*. The first difference one notices between the Estonian source and English target text is that the original rhyming has been substituted with *verse libre*. In case of this poem, it is not a disturbing development. However, there are some marked differences arising from grammatical issues that shift the intentions of the original text to an unintended direction in the target text.

The first example of this emerges in the second stanza. The original reads “Seni läbi une helkind/ kasetüve valget koort/ mina ise, mina võin/ puudutada tere-käega” (Viirlaid 1962: 61), while the target text is: “The white bark of birches/ shone only through dreams:/ I can only touch/ myself with a welcoming hand” (Viirlaid 2001: 107). While one can claim that the dimension of trauma does not disappear when comparing the texts, it is evident that the emphases have shifted significantly. Whereas in the analysis of the English text I brought out the traumatic flashback aspect of the poem and the unreality of the landscape, it can be said that the original features a physical vista and the quality of the birches is not to be doubted – the narrator in fact asserts his presence through being able to sense the reality of the trees, not himself. The jubilant tone of the poem emanates not only from the fact that the narrator is finally able to place himself within the framework of time and social existence (although this is fortunately the case both in the source and target text). He rejoices rather over the regaining of senses that had been previously numbed by trauma. It is the symbiosis of “mina ise, mina” (Viirlaid 1962: 61) and birch bark, not only the repossession of self that produces the light that inundates the poem. Moreover, the light is therefore new and not a remnant of the distant past, as could be gleaned from the translation. Similarly, the essence of the darkness discussed in stanza four of the poem

could be said to have shifted in the translation process. Namely, while I described the target text's glacial night as an active evil, the Estonian "öö, mis minus lasub,/ jäik ja igavesti tardunud" (Viirlaid 1962: 61) is passive, a sleeping unanimated and will-less presence that causes harm without being aware of it. This, moreover, increases the capacity of the narrator's own free will and agency in overcoming the trauma that can be identified as such, not as a random hazy decade induced by existential issues, which is an alternative interpretation of the target text.

The juxtapositions described earlier, on the other hand, still apply: past and present, light and darkness, overburdened and oblivious selfhood rail against one other, while light permeates the surroundings and the person.

The last significant difference between the target and source text can be brought out with regard to the last stanza and the two possible ways of interpretation explored in the previous section of analysis. While the English text enables one to consider two possible and equally viable interpretations, the shifts in emphasis revealed in comparison legitimate the first. This thesis therefore claims that more often than not, the white flower is a symbol of hope, overcoming and new beginnings.

2.3 "A Plea"

"A Plea" was published in the collection *A Vagabond's Gospel*. There are two main themes in "A Plea": (impossible) witnessing and survivor's guilt. The first three lines are a justification, plea and confession before an unseen jury, who is as harsh as only a person can be to oneself. The opening line employs an image very common in Viirlaid's poetry both in its metaphorical and nearly literal sense: the author describes a sword that has been broken (see also "I See", section 2.2 in the thesis). In this case, it was broken in a fight, presumably following a cause that would justify and legitimate both the breaking and the first person narrator holding the weapon. The second line "I sang myself speechless"

(Viirlaid 2001: 39) is also a recognisable element in the author's work. It is the combination of battling, protecting what is dear to one in a desperate fight, and singing, proclaiming the beauty of one's homeland and nation, as well as the injustice done to them, that characterises best what Viirlaid seems to consider the features of dignified humanity in his poetry. Another thing is that it symbolises the inability to speak in the face of circumstances, where words fail due to the signifiers' failure to signify. Nevertheless, the first stanza, three short lines delivered *in medias res* have an apologetic and sincerely confessional feel, while the addressee of the poem: "ancestors rising like a jury/of shadows before me" (Viirlaid 2001: 39) is introduced only in the second stanza.

The ancestors, partly a perceived threatening presence, partly a phantom conjured up by traumatic guilt, can be said to find fault with the narrator for two juxtaposing reasons: firstly because he survived (yet, does not *live*), and secondly since he succeeded in fulfilling all what is mentioned in the first stanza, and by accomplishing this, at the same time failing. "A Plea" is one of a number of poems by Viirlaid, where the survivor can never be the hero or the real witness exactly because s/he still lives and has been rendered more speechless than those beyond the grave (see also "Let Them Keep Silent", section 2.5 in the thesis). Therefore, the "sallow face,/ deadened eyes,/ a silent mouth" (Viirlaid 2001: 39) of the third stanza are more signs of legitimation to the narrator before his conjured judges than indicators of the fact that his body is exhausted and his existence abandoned to shadows and speechlessness. However, the claims of defence the narrator makes are confusing and opposing, which gives the poem an air of constant teetering between extremities – a feature of a traumatised existence. The second stanza describes the protagonist's past light, child-like and happy self as one with the nature: "I was a child of light,/ [...] happy as pollen in a rye field" (Viirlaid 2001: 39). These features contrast sharply with those listed in the third stanza and the narrative present. Yet, before

describing both, the narrator implores his jury not to condemn him, thus self-indicting both his lost innocent childhood and present wasted, shadow-like life. The tension that builds up between the comparisons in the second and third stanza – light and shadow, restlessness and standing still, elation and deadened eyes – culminates in the fourth stanza that further complicates the intricate pattern of the survivor’s guilt.

The core of the stanza again revolves around speech. It is the duty of the narrator to sing and speak, although he is unable to do so because he has exhausted his words and is not in the position to speak for the shadows, they being the actual witnesses owing to their greater suffering. What little voice the narrator has managed to retain, he has given over to the lark. The line of the lark “above the swamp, above the graves” (Viirlaid 2001: 39) links the presented self-images of the second and third stanza and facilitates a certain unexpected wholeness in a poem that otherwise sports only a fractured humanity. Nevertheless, a union of the two sides and, thus, a tentative link between the past and present is a weak substitute for an actual witnessing in the life of the protagonist. His promise of returning to his lips (Viirlaid 2001: 39), i.e., gaining speech, once his brothers in arms have awoken, is an appeasement, an offering to both his own all-consuming and irrational sense of guilt and the silent congregation of ancestors that partly emerges from it. The concluding four lines that repeat the familiar refrain “So don’t condemn me” (Viirlaid 2001: 40) do not disperse the ambiguity prevalent in the poem. One may not be entirely certain whether the narrator’s guilt lies in that he stands before the ancestral jury still alive, yet not living and bearing witness, or is his existence sufficient a trespass.

The Estonian title of the poem is “Ära mõista mind hukka!” A comparison of the source and target text revealed that little can be argued with in the translation. The English text eloquently conveys the contrasts of the original – the somewhat culturally conditioned images of agricultural landscapes and flora have not been converted in any way. The

English text still echoes amidst the marshes and below the low skies of Estonia. Neither has the translation moved towards greater universalizations, it is clear from the text that the battles of the protagonist of the poem do not involve taking up arms against an anonymous sea of troubles, but a specific war that leaves one to mourn for one's brothers in arms and lost peace of mind. What is more, the translation succeeds in copying the atmosphere of and adding a certain tinge to the poem simply by being a translation. Namely, one could claim that the landscape presented in the poem is a vista of the mind: both the "shadow/ rising from the lowlands" (Viirlaid 2001: 39) and "vari/ kodu madalatest soodest" (Viirlaid 1948: 15) are cast off fractions of the narrator, projections of him on a mental screen where a perpetual motion picture of the past is always playing. The target text increases the sense of alienation and guilt evident in the text: it presents a copy of a copy of a copy: a reflection of a shadow against a mental landscape in a foreign tongue.

Unlike in other cases mentioned previously ("I See" and "Wanderer", sections 2.2 and 2.1 in the thesis respectively), the translator has also not decided to merge or rearrange lines or interpret consecutive but otherwise unrelated lines as constituting a single unit. Owing to this, the ambiguity of the original is intact, but no translation-generated cryptic elements have emerged. The only alteration on the part of the translator that may be questioned is the title. A full phrasal interjection in Estonian, it has turned into a laconic noun in English. It may be that the translator wished to clarify the tenor of the poem from the title onwards. If he had used "Don't condemn me", the first stanza may have been interpreted as defiant and militant statement instead of the explicative imploration it is in Estonian.

2.4 "Outcast"

"Outcast" was published in the collection *Frosted Mirror*. The poem is essentially a description and exploration of a person influenced by the double realities and timeframes

of traumatic recall and actual life, iconic imagery that may trigger trauma at any moment, and exile. “Singing on the road” again employs the recurrent image of impossible witnessing, which in this case is also connected to exile that is evoked by the metaphor of the road. The first stanza features a first person singular narrator and a second person singular listener, who witnesses the transformation of the former. Although it may be also claimed that the other is a fractured part of the ‘I’ who at first serves as an internal witness to the hardships and realities of the narrator, but later disappears, as any kind of witnessing becomes impossible and the metaphor of singing is discontinued in the poem as well. The atmosphere of the poem is hostile towards speech and bearing witness from the beginning. This claim is supported by the first two lines: “Singing on the road, thistles/ thrust into your hands” (Viirlaid 2001: 100). It seems that it is because of the singing, and doing so on the road, an unfamiliar, if not uninterested territory, that causes the injury. However, at the same time, one can claim that as a natural phenomenon, the thistles may stand for unpremeditated and ignorance-driven hostility that one may face in any society.

Despite the perhaps unintended nature of the wounds delivered by the bristles, they help to bring about a profound change in the already torn character. Thistles that wound the Other of the poem alter the I as well: “you saw from my eyes, from my mouth,/ you heard passion vanish” (Viirlaid 2001: 100). While the other disappears together with the possibility of the first person singular narrator’s capability of perceiving himself within the narrative environment, he is also stripped of emotions. As was discussed in the theoretical part of this thesis, people suffering from trauma and traumatic recall fail to adapt to the social dimension in life (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 163). What is more however, trauma, by turning a person’s life into a constant shuttling between unidentifiable, sublime, and non-verbal traumatic flashbacks and actual everyday existence, erodes one’s emotions. As van der Kolk and van der Hart have argued by drawing on Pierre Janet, that a

traumatized existence is numb and devoid of feelings of the positive variety (1995: 161, 162).

The violent intrusion of flashbacks also explains the variety of imagery presented in the third stanza: “I staggered among the unmapped,/ crooked roads, an endless way,/ and never noticed when it started/ a snake was hissing on my zither” (Viirlaid 2001: 100). The staggering movement indicates deeply rooted confusion and incoordination that emerges from the fact that the narrator is more preoccupied with the attempts of rationalising his past than attending to his mental wounds. In addition, the estrangement of the roads is conveyed to the reader with the adjectives “unmapped” and “crooked” (Viirlaid 2001: 100).

The identity of the snake remains dubious in the poem. It may be that foreign, thistle- and snake-like qualities entered the virtually non-existent speech of the narrator, so that he became even less able to resume witnessing of himself. Another possibility is that the snake symbolises the actual impediment to the protagonist’s creative powers and wholeness that lie in the image of the zither.

The last stanza contrasts to the rest of the poem in that it switches from past simple to present simple, the accepted tense of trauma, which is timeless in that it inundates the entire mental timeframe of a person. The lines “Lightning divides the dark/ but does not clear my vision” (Viirlaid 2001: 100) can be interpreted as a traumatic flashback, which seem to cast light on a past event, but fail to give meaning to it because it still remains an image, a picture without an explanatory caption, thus, vision does not become clear, as unresolved past issues remain. The closing lines “only the flash of a knife/ brings a senseless glow to my eyes” (Viirlaid 2001: 100) are the epitome of mental and emotional isolation that develops in the poem. The knife becomes iconic to the person, as it must

remind him of an element he has encountered in one of his flashbacks, but which he is unable to name or recognize in any other context.

The Estonian original of the poem is titled “Hüljatu”. The dissonance between the source and target text begins from the title in the case of this poem. The Estonian title “Hüljatu” has the connotations of being left behind and forgotten, there being a feel of innocence, lack of guile and cozenage to the word. The English noun ‘outcast’, on the other hand, comes with a stigma attached: to my mind, it refers to a person shunned by society for violating certain accepted norms or taboos, be they reasonable or not. This may be a question of personal perceived connotations, however, the first two dictionary meanings of the latter are “a person who is rejected or excluded from a social group” and “a vagabond or wanderer” (“Outcast”), the first supporting my aforementioned explanation, its suggested synonyms being ‘pariah’ and ‘heretic’, and the second implying freedom of choice, which is not the case with the protagonist of this poem.

There are a number of other issues to be discussed with regard to the translation choices in this poem. While it can be said that the comparison of source and target text leaves intact the earlier interpretation of the metaphor of the road and impossible witnessing, there are details that have not been regarded by the translator and that alter the significance and/or meaning of some images. The first image of this kind to be mentioned is that of the thistles. While the target text allows one to interpret the thistles of the first stanza as injurious, vicious and character-changing due to the fact that they are “thrust into [his] hands” (Viirlaid 2001: 100), the source text reveals that “Lauldeski **päevi** kui ohakutuuste/ tee äärest pisteti pihku” (my emphasis) (Viirlaid 1962: 15). The translation has left out the aspect of time, days entirely. My interpretation of the original in this light, however, would be that the thistles are nonchalantly thrown at the singing vagabond. This combined with the fact that thistles can be regarded as weed would thus mean that the days

lived on the road by the castaway are worthless like thistle blooms plucked from their stems. They are also worthless due to the fact that they are not counted or recorded – all of them are the same, which could again refer to continual present tense of trauma.

Even though the character tries to justify his existence by singing, his attempts are thwarted by the preconditioned worthlessness of his wandering existence, his dwindling ability to sing, and thus, bear witness. His singing is, in a way, empty even before it discontinues, as it is marked by the passive (instead of active, as can be gleaned from the target text) thistle-worthlessness embedded in his refugee life that is to be discussed further in connexion with the second stanza. Moreover, as in “A Plea”, the singing is empty due to a crisis of signification.

The second stanza is equally marked by emotionally handicapped listlessness in the source and target text. On the other hand, there is a significant difference. While the English outcast staggers alone, unaccompanied and blindly on empty roads, the “hüljatu” is one of many in a “küürus käijate nimetus salgas” (Viirlaid 1962: 15), i.e., in a band of stooping wanderers without a name. Everything in this line (and the next) points to exile and violently reduced circumstances. The people are stooping, as if the wind is against them, or the road is rising. The emotional erosion, numbness and solitude are enhanced by the fact that every individual in the group is alone. The companionship provides no solace or social support, indicating a common, but unshared bereavement that is exacerbated by the silence within the group that is lost in relation to the lone English wanderer. The lack of solace may be interpreted as a feature of historical trauma and its unspeakable nature. No one in the group may feel as an authentic witness: the story remains untold and burdening. This tendency was also discussed by Laub in connexion with Holocaust victims (1995: 66). The intrusion of flashbacks and confusion still applies, but it is to be interpreted in a wider framework within a group of exiles. The same could be said about the image of the zither,

possibly a symbol for obstruction to speech and the falseness or shortcomings a trauma victim may feel in his/her attempts to bear witness.

I would also not make any significant changes in my previous interpretation of the third stanza in light of the comparison with the source text. There is, nevertheless, a small but important detail that has been left out in translation, thus making the atmosphere of the target text more generalized. The original clearly states that it is a soldier's knife that brings about another flashback and eruption of iconic mental images, "sõduri puusa päält välgahtab nuga" (Viirlaid 1962: 15), while the translation only features "the flash of a knife" (Viirlaid 2001: 100). I feel that this is a relevant element in the third stanza, placing the poem in a wider context both in relation to the protagonist's timeframe and the presumable context. It is, after all, not a generic knife the author is talking about. It carries all the connotations of the author's circumstances and links with war poetry this collection undoubtedly has (starting from the book cover featuring a helmet on a rifle). Moreover, leaving this specification out is, at best, an arbitrary decision.

2.5 "Let Them Keep Silent"

"Let Them Keep Silent" belongs to the collection *A Vagabond's Gospel*. The poem is an eloquent example of the tension between the imperative to speak and the feeling of helplessness emanating from the enormity of what should be spoken. There is also an undercurrent of survivor's guilt and a sense of inadequacy before those, who the narrator believes to be the real witnesses. The first person singular narrator grapples with his own lack of words: "I wanted to speak" (Viirlaid 2001: 64), while remaining curiously impersonal within the limits of the poem, as if the person's only proper function was to act as a medium to the stories of others, who bore witness to the impossible and are no longer able to give voice to those events. At the same time, it is paradoxical that although 'they'

lack an actual voice, their identity as legitimate witnesses is never questioned, while the living narrator feels utterly inadequate in his attempts of testimony.

Although the narrator calls upon his brothers, he is a detached figure, separated from human companionship by death, silence and alienation. The protagonist is overwhelmed by his impossible testimony, an act of witnessing that would, in his mind, bring peace, retribution, or understanding not only to him, but to those who keep silent within the poem. However, the desired witnessing is not achieved, as the speaker realises his own speechlessness and positions himself as the silent and inadequate entourage to a group of dormant heroes: “But folly is blind,/ like my own,/ and helpless am I,/ not my brothers” (Viirlaid 2001: 64).

While the fractured bodies of the companions are returning to nature (“over whose eyes the marsh has grown” (Viirlaid 2001: 64)), similarly to a number of Nordic/Estonian mythological heroes (e.g., Suur Tõll whose body melts into the landscape), the protagonist is alone with his impossible knowledge, the voicing of which he has handed over, in effect silencing himself even further. However, there is surprisingly little anxiety in this conferral of rights and witnessing: “So let them keep silent” (Viirlaid 2001: 64). Already the first stanza of the poem places the narrator within an eloquent talking landscape that contains the remains of his companions, and thus makes every rock, water body or the simplest gravel invested with heavy meaning. Thus, the physical silence of the brothers is partly cancelled out by the chronicle of the landscape that holds multiple meanings to the narrator. The silence of the dead is not absolute, both the mental and physical rearrangement of the vista bears traces of their actions and choices, which, by extension, come to define and express the speaker, as the silent holder and cryptographer of the latter.

“Las nemad vaikivad” is a perfect example of the aspects of Viirlaid’s style that involve rootedness in the Estonian folk and literary tradition. The original features

occasional alliteration, subtle references to Estonian folk tales and epic stories that link unmistakably with the perceived reality of the late 1940s – the publication date of the poem. The translation has managed to retain the atmosphere of tension between speaking and the insignificance of words before the enormity of death. All stated in the above analysis applies and it is commendable that some of the culture-specific references are still detectable from the target text. In case of this poem, it is rather a question of subtle emphases that have somewhat shifted in translation.

Still, firstly it would be necessary to point out the intertexts that lie in the first stanza and colour the rest of the poem, adding shades of meaning to the ensuing silence of the first person singular narrator. The third and fourth line that close in alliteration ‘sõmer – soo’, remind one of an Estonian fairytale (see, e.g., Kreutzwald, “Kuidas kuningatütar seitse aastat oli maganud”), where a father asks his three sons to guard his grave for three consecutive nights after the funeral. Every night, only the youngest and silliest son fulfils this promise. The story revolves around the father’s thrice spoken lines “Kelle sammud sõelunekse/ sõmerliiva silmadesse,/ musta mulda kulmudelle?” (Kreutzwald 1971: 70). Every night, the father speaks with the boy from the grave and offers both advice and reward for obedience. As a result, the boy’s life is guided by the words of the deceased father. A similar tendency can be viewed in this poem. The narrator is, in a way, the youngest and silliest son, who finds himself unable to speak in a truthful and representative manner about what has happened in his life and the world as a result of the war. The dead, cast as (older) blood brothers, speak for him and have a greater part in deciding over his life than he does. I find it laudable that the probable intertext of dormant heroes discussed above is there in the translation, reinforcing the sense of belittlement felt by the narrator.

Quite another thing is, on the other hand, the lack of anxiety mentioned earlier in connexion with giving up one’s voice to the dead. One can glean from both the source and

target text that while the narrator's unspoken testimony bears down on him, he is disturbed by what he has already voiced. This is present to an extent in the translation, but is somewhat silenced – the original line related to this issue is “Mina, kelkija,/ tahtsin kõnelda nende eest” (Viirlaid 1948: 92), the translation simply “I wanted to speak/ for those” (Viirlaid 2001: 64). The word “kelkija” embodies and embraces all the self-loathing and disparagement expressed by the poem, it strips the narrator of the relative dignity afforded to him in the translation, where no ‘boaster’ or ‘braggart’ has been mentioned. Similarly, the emotional climate of the next stanza is equally more subdued in the target text than in the source text. While the lines “Oo mina sõge,/ [...]Oo mina mannetu” (Viirlaid 1948: 92) come with a suggestion of traditional lamentations, “But folly is blind,/ like my own” (Viirlaid 2001: 62) resembles more a thoroughly meditated statement of final capitulation. This does not, on the other hand, change the interpretation of the poem's conclusion. Despite the difference in the emotional atmosphere of the narrator's statements, it is the landscape holding the true knowledge possessed by the dead that takes over the voice and the identity of the narrator.

2.6 “Silence”

“Silence” was published in the collection *A Blink of Eternity*. This poem may be interpreted as an example of the need for an external witness and shared knowledge. Its subtle lines of implicit meanings are sparse, and plenty of space and air have been left in between. As in other poems by Viirlaid (see “Apparitions” in 2001:95 and 1962: 12), the two stanzas contrast each other sharply, whereas the core of the text consists of identifications and juxtapositions, the multiple viewpoints and confusion being a characteristic of a traumatized mind. In this case, the main source of tension in the text is provided by shared and solitary silences and their respective characteristics.

As personified entities, shared and solitary silences basically possess the same features. However, it is the essence of the two that differs. While both of the former are described as having large eyes and a glance of considerable intensity, it is shared silence, which has presumably been dissolved in speech for it to become common, vanquished, defused, that carries positive overtones. It has “huge eyes”, “soft hands”, and the narrator professes to be fond of it (Viirlaid 2001: 173), due to its similarity to an unidentified other, whose presence tames the quiet and succeeds in attributing content to its terrifying unknowable blankness. This silence is a lack of words that theoretically may be overcome, as it is familiar and internally worked through. The silence will not resist, as it already possess a witness to its meaning and, implicitly, content.

Unaccompanied silence, on the other hand, is a strange and unknown entity of “death-like eyes” and “icy fingers” (Viirlaid 2001: 173), behind which the iconic un-said and the fear of it lurks. Its identity is based not only on the lack of words, but the impossibility of them. The second half of the second stanza proclaims: “and his icy fingers/ pick from my lips/ the last warmth of life” (Viirlaid 2001: 173). Firstly, this may be interpreted as a literal cessation of existence. Secondly, it can be said to be a death-of-verbality, loss of “the warmth of life” (Viirlaid 2001: 173) that facilitates one a position within the context human relations.

The poem “Vaikus” was translated into English by T.E. Moks. The source and target text can be said to be basically identical. However, there is an interesting language-conditioned aspect to the translation that it would be necessary to explore. The aforementioned accompanied and solitary silences are attributed a gender. The translator had to make a choice in favour of one or the other gender pronoun, as it is not possible to use a neutral version such as the Estonian “tema” in English. What is rather fascinating from the point of view of gender studies perspective is that the soft, kind, and loveable

silence of the first stanza is most likely feminized, although no gender pronoun is affixed to it. It has to be mentioned that the poems in the collection *Igaviku silmapilgutus* are predominantly male in tone: there are glorifications of the female body, fishing and hunting stories, descriptions of a first person singular narrator's wife, etc. Therefore, it would be safe to presume that the silence of the first stanza is identified with a woman. The cold and active quiet that provides a dangerous and menacing occasional presence in the narrator's life is unmistakably male, due to the fact that the translator has chosen to use a male pronoun.

It is quite a classical and perhaps even unconscious choice to allot the two divergent silences such genders, if genders needs must be attached to them. The feminine in the western culture is often associated with the bodily: it is soft, passive, benign, related to emotions and intrapersonal relationships. One sees that the first stanza silence is first and foremost delineated in terms of appearance and softness of nature. By being subject to description, it is also passive and the object of a gaze. The traits associated with the masculine in western thought are acting, existing in solitude, aloofness, coldness; it is rather connected to the mind than the body. (Cixous 1997: 91) The silence identified as masculine in the second stanza is not the object but the controller of the gaze (Mulvey 2001: 397). This marks it as an active, if malignant presence. It is also an autonomous unknowable entity since it is not juxtaposed with anything familiar to the narrator. Following from my previous remark on the predominantly masculine tenor of the poetry collection, it may be that the translator made a conscious choice to differentiate between the two silences in such a manner. Taking into account the above exploration, and despite the certain reservations that may arise from it (e.g. stereotypical gender roles), I agree with the translator's choice.

2.7 “So What”

“So What” was published in *Frosted Mirror*. This poem patterns the role of poetry according to the author in a number of startling images. The poem also contains elements of the indignance, pride and defiance familiar in the poetical works of Viirlaid. This can be gleaned already from the title: so what – an exclamation that stands alone and unaccompanied by any other statement. The first stanza makes the claim that comes to define and stand as the basis for the entire poem. According to the stanza, poetry is the thread used for “stitching patterns of a shroud/ into the bridal gown” (Viirlaid 2001: 115). With it, the author both idolises poetry and identifies its insignificance in the face of the sadness of the world.

Furthermore, the author also points out that poetry is a tool for recording and identifying matters that merit mourning and that would be otherwise lost in the folds of the wedding garment that this thesis tentatively identifies with the fabric of ordinary life. The whiteness of it could be read to represent the forgetfulness and oblivion of day-to-day existence, which tends to blot out all crises in a matter of time. It leans towards positive emotions, for negative and painful ones are difficult to recall and need special recording to be remembered by those directly unaffected. For it has to be kept in mind that someone is holding the needle and the thread used for patterning. The defiance can be partly explained by the fact that the person doing such a mournful handiwork is in a defensive position. This entire poem can be viewed as an argument of defence against those who wish poetry and life to be a wedding feast for the senses and body, and who would reprimand the poet for spilling patterns of mournful experiences all over their uninterrupted existence. There is a distinct undercurrent of anger and anxiety caused by the sound of witnessing drowned out by the progression of time.

The author feels a responsibility to point out the shadow and reverse side of life, without which the bridal gown would forfeit much of its whiteness. This comes out especially well in the second and third stanza. The English version of the former: “The road runs ever toward silence/ like a cheerfully yapping puppy” (Viirlaid 2001: 115) reads as an effective *memento mori*; a dry, ironic and contrastive reminder that life ends in death, no matter how much *joie de vivre* one packs into it. A certain undercurrent of mild derision may also be detected from the second part of the stanza and the identification of utter carelessness with a yapping puppy. The third stanza returns to the image of the bridal gown and its transformation into a shroud. It points out that it is not the poetry that affects the metamorphosis, which is ever present; verse simply makes the reverse side of the garment visible and serves another purpose discussed in stanza four. However, the same stanza also contains another relevant image: whereas the bridal gown has completely turned into a shroud by the third stanza, the third line still features a bridegroom, which this thesis interprets as a thinly veiled metaphor for death. It is curious how close life and death interact and intertwine in this poem and in the mind of its writer. Life rests in the “always open” (Viirlaid 2001: 115) embrace of death, the metaphorical lace of life deteriorating into “trickles of blood and worms” (Viirlaid 2001: 115) within fleeting moments, and in the background of all this, the endeavour to record and create something lasting of the moments lived and suffered.

This is what mostly concerns stanza four of the poem. It reveals that thought, to an extent, equals remembrance. “For thought carries fire into the earth,/ its roots full of dynamite” (Viirlaid 2001: 115) discards the veiled metaphors of the previous stanza, but retains a link with the discussed subject. Thoughts become rooted presumably after they are born to earth and the embrace of the eternal bridegroom. The thoughts and remembrances of the dead, who have seen so much unsettling during their lives, are

transferred to the earth after their decease. This way, the earth itself becomes conscious through the thoughts, which can in their turn be identified with the stiches sown on the shroud, i.e., traces of the grievous past. The heartbeat of earth, pulsing with the unfinished lives and unsettled minds of those that rest in it “pumps fire/ to sleep in granite” (Viirlaid 2001: 115), thus making the remembrance eternal. Fire, the essence of life, is born into the earth. The last line evokes a particular image in my mind: it seems as though large granite monuments, lists of those missing or killed in action in gilded letters etched on them, grow out of the soil on their own. However, I do realise that this must be a culturally conditioned image, as the type of monuments I described tend to be, curiously enough, Soviet war memorials. This, on the other hand, does not change what they represent: dormant lives cast into granite.

“Ja mis siis” was published in the collection *Jäätanud peegel* and continues with the book’s line of thought meditating on loss, witnessing, exile, and forced aimless wandering, witnessing, remembering and mourning. The poem is one of the poetical works of Viirlaid that, in my opinion, actually does deal with the subject of universal human condition, still possessing a certain undertone of more specific and individual bereavements. It may be for this very reason, i.e., its more general nature and broader base of reference that the translation does not feature any shifts in meaning, unnecessary rearrangements in form or loss of significant details.

2.8 “My Heart is Still Pounding”

“My Heart is Still Pounding” was published in *A Vagabond’s Gospel*. The English translation of this poem presents a nearly biblical, apocalyptic, and hopeless image of a war- and plague-ridden world. The narrator of this poem is a reluctant seer, who would close their eyes to shut out the images, only to witness them bloom behind their eyelids.

This could be interpreted as the return of repressed and half-conceived memories via flashbacks that inundate a person's entire sense of time and place.

From the beginning of the first stanza, the protagonist identifies himself as a killer: "My heart is still pounding/ from the last kill" (Viirlaid 2001: 59), yet the reader is aware that it is not him that has created this harrowed and scorched world presented in the narrative of the poem. One gets the feeling that this person has been turned into a killer by blind circumstance, a vortex dark and grinding, over which no one has influence. The protagonist has been reduced and diminished, he has detached himself from the rest of his body and is only willing to identify himself with his heart, a caged bird that is still affected by the atrocities surrounding him and announcing his lasting humanity.

The poem goes on to give both an explicit and allegoric image of the narrative present and future. The type of language employed emphatically underlines the fact that the person has no influence over the events to come, a circumstance considered to induce trauma (Laub 1995: 68). He is a cog in a machine, collectively referred to as "trained executioner" (Viirlaid 2001: 59) who is haunted by "stiffened faces" (Viirlaid 2001: 59) that scream in his dreams at night. What is more, the anguished visions of the future are exacerbated even more by the fact that the protagonist does not doubt even the slightest about their emergence: "there *will* be others" (my emphasis) (Viirlaid 2001: 59). The images are, therefore, both projections of the present and nearly palpable visions of the future.

The images employed by him are both cryptic and instantly recognisable as attributes of war (specifically WW II) and its lurid entourage. It is a reality of sharp contrasts and no sides – there can be no good or evil to choose from, light and darkness are equally menacing: "long autumn nights" and fear grow dark and heavy (Viirlaid 2001: 59), while the sun is also "without mercy" (Viirlaid 2001: 59). The protagonist is a blind and

all-perceiving seer, who stumbles through places “where people/ neither have names/ nor are counted” (Viirlaid 2001: 59), which this thesis would identify with prison and concentration camps, as well as tentatively with the large, mechanised armies of WW II that clashed against each other, leaving countless dead in their wake. The desert, dead city and ravens may signify nearly any European town or village after or during WW II. Nothing blooms in war-time. One is reminded of poetry from the Great War, which started with flowers in the field and the glory of death and quickly turned to mud and ruin, as there was little else left (c.f., e.g. Rupert Brooke, Wilfrid Owen, John McCrae).

The “red desert” (Viirlaid 2001: 59) of stanza six first brings into mind the inevitable connexion an Estonian has with the colour red in a negative context: the Soviet army and/or state, the more so, as the stanza continues with a reminder of home. “The plague [dragging] its belly/over empty streets” (Viirlaid 2001: 59), like some of the other images of this poem, may be interpreted literally as any of the number of epidemics that spread during WW II, e.g. epidemic typhus, also referred to as ‘war fever’(Encyclopaedia Britannica 2012: para 2,4). On the other hand, this may also refer to the war itself: we see that those remaining are holding their breaths so as not to be noticed, while all the streets in ruined, deserted cities are empty. “Endless fields/ full of corpses” (SP 2001: 60) is unmistakably a battlefield, but, in keeping with the vision/reality atmosphere of the poem, one would not identify it with a specific battle, but with the collection of fields scattered all over Europe, e.g., Stalingrad, the Tannenberg Line, etc. The identification with actual battlefields is also supported by the second half of the stanza, where the narrator hopes that the fields “after many years, perhaps,/ will be redeemed/ by the lush growth of green” (Viirlaid 2001: 60), thus losing the physical traces of the war.

The penultimate stanza sees a collapse of the dimension of time, as well as of reality and vision, both highly characteristic of Viirlaid: “I see/ my own eyes/ under white

flowers/ where once I collapsed,/ gazing toward home” (Viirlaid 2001: 60). At the beginning of the poem, the reader perceived that a certain lessening has taken place with regard to the narrator. Now one can see that the self of the protagonist is fractured: he distinguishes between the part that collapsed, the trained soldier and the caged bird. What he sees covered with white flowers (in the context of Viirlaid’s poetry, often signifies remembrance and endurance) in the future is what he has left behind.

The English target text of the final stanza is peculiar. After announcing numerous atrocities present and to come, exposing one’s own fear over one’s self and soul, the closing lines state: “and a new calm/ carries me/ into a future” (Viirlaid 2001: 60). The new calm may signify the emotional void and indifference brought about by trauma, which juxtaposes sharply with the rest of the poem, which is not, despite its traumatized nature, marked by emotional lethargy. What is more, one is intrigued by the use of indefinite article, which seems to indicate a number of possible futures – a development inconsistent with the previous stanzas. However, this shall also be discussed in connexion with the analysis of and comparison with the original Estonian version.

“Süda peksab veel” is the Estonian title of the poem. There are quite many inconsistencies between the source and target text, some of them produce a curious and confusing effect and in my opinion, also cause noticeable meaning shifts. The first difference of this type can be identified in the third stanza, where “Aga ma näen ees veel suuremaid tapmisi” (Viirlaid 1948: 64) is translated as “But there will be others” (Viirlaid 2001: 59). In a way, this interpretation is justified – the stanza before spoke of dying groans. It can be implied that death is involved, when ‘others’ are referred to. On the other hand, this creates a conundrum – is the reader to think that there will be more people that the trained executioner, the narrator is forced to kill. The Estonian version does not imply this. The “tapmised” of the original are not connected to the witness-narrator, who is

but a horrified onlooker, identifying more and more with his caged heart-bird, not the executioner's hands.

Moreover, the same tendency can be viewed in the next line, the beginning of the fourth stanza. In Estonian, “Ma näen/ kohutavat hävingut” (Viirlaid 1948: 64) is translated as “I see fear grown dark”, which matches nicely with the prevalence of darkness and light in the poem, but is still a somewhat interesting choice. I do not see a legitimate reason to choose ‘fear’ over ‘destruction’. As a unit and sentence, the stanza makes sense in the target text – both “having” and fear afford the interpretation presented above, but while the original tends to concentrate on providing sweeping and biblical illustrations of mindless destruction, there are at least two cases in the target text, where the translator has taken the viewpoint of an individual, projecting fear and breathlessness. This is the first instance, while the second is to be explored below with regard to stanza six.

The first difference one notices in stanza six is that, similarly to stanza three, the translator has relied on an analogy and similarity with the previous paragraph. Stanza five contained a description of a desert that is not continued into the next paragraph in the original. While the source text speaks “Ma näen/ punaseid põuavälke/ hingetus kodumaa öös” (Viirlaid 1948: 65), the target text features “lightning over the red desert” (Viirlaid 2001: 59). My earlier interpretation saw the red desert as the soviet army that destroys everything and leaves a veritable desert behind. “Punased põuavälgud” is, perhaps, again a culturally conditioned image. Although it can be argued that the more generally understandable image of a desert basically amounts to the same impression as “põuavälk”, it would be necessary to explore the background to this. As the colour red is still present in the aforementioned line, the identification with the Red army stays the same. Nevertheless, “põuavälk”, i.e. heat lightning, a meteorological phenomenon that produces discernible flashes of lightning without the accompanying sounds of thunder is, to an extent, a symbol

of futility. Lightning flashes in a night breathless from the heat, the air is not cleared – nothing shall become of this witnessed war, and the homeland of the narrator is not freed. It is true that the homeland is, in a way, a desert to the narrator in both occasions, but the gap between the two texts and possible interpretations is still considerable.

Another issue in this stanza is the question of breathlessness. In the Estonian original, the lack of air is produced by the heat and it is the night and the atmosphere that is heavy with all its connotations, as discussed above. The English target text, however, again introduces the element of the individual sufferer, formulated in a rather cryptic and curt manner: “breathless in homes at night” (Viirlaid 2001: 59), which I interpreted as terrified survivors trying to escape discovery. As a result, the first two lines of stanza six seem somewhat incompatible with each other and produce a mesmerising effect. On the other hand, the element of homeland has been completely left out, opting for a generic “home”.

The greatest dichotomy in this poem lies in the translation of the last stanza to which I already referred above. The lines that concern this analysis are, in Estonian “aga ma olen rahulik/ seda nähes,/ mis on minu ees” (Viirlaid 1948: 65), and in English “and a new calm/ carries me/ into a future” (Viirlaid 2001: 60). It is granted that the calmness in Estonian and new calm in English may mark the onslaught of emotional numbness, a recognisable feature of trauma. It is a paradoxical stanza – if one is to claim that the images the narrator sees are induced by trauma, he should never grow accustomed to them, the terror of trauma is always renewed through repetition. Yet, I would argue that the calm is not to be connected to the future – the visions presented are of the past and present. The calm is not that of acceptance nor results from anything dynamical capable of supporting the individual in continuing his life. That, which is before him, i.e., “see, mis on tema ees” is a panoramic and broken vista of his unspeakable reality. The calm, therefore, is more a defence reflex, his mind turning off as a response to unprocessable stimulation.

2.9 Conclusion on the Basis of Individual Poems

Since the analysis section of this thesis focused on the testimonial qualities and features characteristic of trauma in the poems, it would be necessary to point out the most notable shifts, erasures and additions with regard to the aforementioned topics.

“The Wanderer” features a number of differences in the source and target text that may be considered significant in terms of trauma and witnessing. Firstly, one needs to bring out the general atmosphere of the target text that I identified as Anglo-Saxon and descriptive of a general human state of alienation. This indicates that the translation rather points to a universal absence, a figment of a structural trauma that cannot be coped with in any way and leads to listless, but voluntary wandering. The question of agency arises several times in the juxtaposition of the original and translation. The translation tends towards describing “*the living*” (my emphasis) taking an active role in dragging the protagonist along or guiding him in ill-advised ways, whereas the Estonian version explicitly emphasises the wanderer’s detachedness from all human connexions: a product of forced exile and the social incohesion of a traumatized mind that are thus downplayed.

Another thing is that the target text deals in certainties – it has opted to erase the (admittedly grammatically difficult to convey) conditional speech of the source text. What this does, however, is that the fractured, delusional, uncertain identity and existence of a trauma victim seem to turn into a question of life choices and the will to fit into a society. Moreover, changing the original organisation of lines and, thus, leaving out a key exploration of physical and mental exile that can be said to be the paramount issue in this poem affects the testimonial quality of the text negatively. This applies not only with regard to the descriptions of nature and environment, but to the concepts they represent, which are mostly culture-specific references.

A comparison of the original and translation of “I See” revealed mainly shifts in emphasis, as both the source and target text do remain testimonial. What is, however, similar to the findings of the previous poem, is that the landscape and atmosphere undergo certain changes in translation. In this case, it is a question of ambiguity. Whereas in “The Wanderer”, the organisation of lines and interpretation of references led to a generalized bleak vista, in “I See”, one is confused about both the reality and timeframe of the setting. Although this may be interpreted as uncertainty arising from the collapse of the dimension of time characteristic of a traumatized individual, an analysis of the original proves the opposite. “Ma näen” rejoices in a new-found certainty free of traumatic recall. The setting is not haunted, but the protagonist fears to see the ghosts where they used to reside. Yet again, the question of selfhood also proves important. (Partial) reclamation of one’s life, assertion of one’s self is the core of the poem. The target text describes a number of active and vicious evils that have blocked out the light emanating from the past. The source text emphasises the agency of the narrator in regaining selfhood. On the one hand, the target text can be said to contain a nostalgia for the past that has never been there, dangerously similar to identification with an alleged absence. On the other hand, it diminishes the gravity of the historical trauma and actual loss suffered and partially worked through by the narrator in the source text.

“A Plea” is an entirely commendable example of the translation of a testimonial text. It also proves to be nearly the only text included in this analysis, where translation does not diminish witnessing and shift its emphasis, but, instead, adds to it. As I also pointed out earlier, the target text copies the atmosphere and setting of the original successfully. I would describe this process as the application of a water picture to paper. The source text is the actual picture that is not available for full view since it is covered with a thin layer of paper through which the picture can be discerned. The translation,

peeling off the paper after immersion in water, brings out the true image consistent with the emotional tenor of the source text. Although the translation is, strictly speaking, a copy, in this case it brings out the most relevant aspects of the original.

The source and target text of “Outcast” stand against each other in an unsolved crisis of testimony, trauma and a denied compulsion to bear witness. A smaller issue is that the translation has failed to convey the continual presence of trauma, i.e. the collapse of time for a traumatized individual. This is exemplified by the issue of the thistles discussed earlier at length. Following from this, the translation also downplays the preconditioned emptiness and futility of the protagonist’s attempts to sing. With regard to testimony, however, the greatest shortcoming is the elision of “küürus käijate nimetu salk” (Viirlaid 1962: 15). The fact that the outcast is in a group sharing a similar fate emphasises the collective speechlessness, hopelessness and emotional erosion of founding trauma that, in the target text, is denied to the outcast and the stooping, nameless people with him. They are twice Othered and silenced: firstly by themselves due to the influence of trauma (and its perpetrators), secondly by the physical omission of the line in the translation. It is further exacerbated by two small translation choices that alter the identity of the outcast: namely, the translation of “hüljatu” as outcast, and the generalization that is the transformation of “sõduri nuga” into just a knife.

In case of “Let Them Keep Silent”, one can claim that witnessing, as well as other key elements and characteristics, e.g., imperative to speak and the conferral of one’s voice, are intact. Similarly, the target text resonates with the source text’s animism and subtle ethnological meanings that contribute to a context and setting relevant for the creation of a space for speaking. The only shift with regard to testimony can be noted in the two last stanzas and it is a question of the narrator’s reaction to the already spoken. While the first person singular narrator delivers his closing lines in a self-disparaging lamentation-like

manner in the source text, the same lines are more emotionally subdued and seem to belong to a person either numb or well-balanced, which is not the case in the poem. Nevertheless, it is a subtle change and does not affect the witnessing or, rather, conferral of witnessing initiated in the text.

The poem “Silence” is a subtle and delicate meditation on shared witnessing, which included an interesting but well-founded translation choice. The translator had to decide between the male and female gender pronouns in a number of times. Although the version created in the target text does bring up gender issues, the kind female silence and harrowing male silence fit into the range of subjects and the overall atmosphere in *A Blink of Eternity*.

“So What” is the only poem discussed in this thesis that can be identified with mainly structural trauma and actual absence – the fact that everyone is mortal. Yet, there are still undercurrents of personal loss and historical reverberations that the translator has treated with great compassion and insight.

“My Heart is Still Pounding” is a tortured poem with many explicit images of violence. Tendencies prevalent in the translation choices of this text have already been mentioned. Curiously enough, while in previous analysis I pointed out either generalisations and loss of specificity or introduction of (foreign) agency within one text, it can be said that these are combined in the poem in question. The elements most often substituted with more general expressions are explicit descriptions of war and destruction. Moreover, in one occasion, “kodumaa” translates into simply “home”. One has to take into account that the translator has wished the English texts to be of high literary value, in which he has frequently succeeded. Nevertheless, making this type of changes that includes the substitution of key words, while the imagery itself is fighting back against verbalisation, is a dubious choice in terms of witnessing that is silenced due to loss of

context. On the other hand, the translator adds an individual sufferer to the text, presumably to humanize the terrible imagery. This is problematic because the original narrator's stance is that of a detached seer or a fractured and traumatized person. The images are not intended to be vanquished. In this case, they are probably trying to convey the excess of horror. This thread can be followed throughout the poem, and it culminates in the last stanza where the Estonian and English calm are markedly different. One signifies the onset of a period of latency, and the other apathy.

3 The Interrelations of Trauma, Translation, and Testimony

This chapter is concerned with connecting and contextualizing the findings of the first and second chapter: theory and the analysis of selected poems, with special attention to the choices of the translators T.E. Moks and R.W. Stedingh. Firstly, the thesis shall turn to the tendencies regarding trauma and testimony in the translations.

The first and one of the most prevalent tendencies that can be pointed out in connexion with the juxtaposition of the Estonian originals and English translations with regard to trauma and testimony is that the translations strive for a greater level of abstraction. As a result, direct references to and implications of historical trauma get diluted and replaced with structural trauma. As one could view from the beginning of “The Wanderer”: the English-speaking reader is presented with an exile of unknown origin severed from social connexions and unable to re-establish them – a shell-shocked modern(ist) man of disillusionment. His world is a pastiche of “one-night cheap motels/ and sawdust restaurants” (Eliot 1920: line 6-7) just because it is so for nearly everyone. Everyone is walking around with their personal issues of alienation and incohesion, while the wanderer is one of a multitude later identified as “the living” (Viirlaid 2001: 56).

At the same time, the originals tend to underline the hollowness of the world and existence for the protagonists of the poems alone. Yet, the issue of exile is never specifically addressed in any of the translations, wanderers never yearn for a *homeland* (my emphasis), but a mythical and unattainable home. Moreover, Estonian cultural references go missing in deletions, the shuffling of lines and translation choices that grant a greater literal value to the target text, but do little for the emphasis of historical trauma. E.g. see the issue of “hingeppuu” in the “The Wanderer” (section 2.1 in the thesis). The

ways in which this affects witnessing via the poems are twofold. Firstly, it silences the cause and origin of trauma, which therefore cannot be divulged and worked through. Secondly, the narrator is stripped of a legitimate voice, while the compulsion to speak is exacerbated. In essence, *loss* is substituted with *absence* with all the consequences that were discussed at length in the first chapter, the most important being, in this case, undifferentiated victimhood that will deny trauma experiences to those who suffer from them.

Another aspect concerned with this abstraction and silencing of exile is that the environments and settings of the poems, often rendered more dream-like by the translation, tend to dominate the narrators or protagonists. While this may be so in the case of, e.g., “Let Them Keep Silent” and “A Plea”, it is a somewhat undesired change in “I See” and “Wanderer”, where, if not the birches, then the lost grain fields address or affect the protagonist in a particular manner in Estonian, but fail to do so in English. Therefore, one can claim that the landscapes speak to, and in one case, even for (“Let Them Keep Silent”) the narrator, while the translated vistas, often rendered more fractured by grammatical issues and translator’s choices, contribute an overall sense of active hostility. Moreover, the agency of the person is invested into objects and abstractions (e.g. darkness in “I See” and thistles in “Outcast”), i.e. manifestations of trauma take precedence over the traumatized person. In terms of witnessing, it firstly harms the grounds and basis for the possibility of a testimony. Secondly, as the influence is overpowering and a link with exile is denied, it leads to a crisis of agency, which poses a serious question of whether the protagonists choose to suffer and yearn for a lost state of grace or do so due to circumstances thrust upon them. Many of the analysed poems pattern the question of will, determination and its deterioration within time in a traumatised person in forced exile. Selfhood – fractured, under pressure from both external and internal harm and suffering –

should always be the focal point of the translations. This focus is also shifted and the sharpness of the questions or images blunted by choosing to transform specific images or words as abstract notions that may indirectly contribute to the perceived atmosphere of the poem, but serve to manipulate with the context of historical trauma by eroding it. One can observe this in “My Heart is Still Pounding”, where “Aga ma näen ees veel suuremaid tapmisi” (Viirlaid 1948: 64) is translated as “But there will be others” (Viirlaid 2001: 59) and “Ma näen/ kohutavat hävingut” (Viirlaid 1948: 64) as “I see fear grown dark” (Viirlaid 2001: 59)

It would also be necessary to point out that the translations tend to erode silences. Even though I am, to an extent, resorting to the same slippery road I criticized in the first chapter, I would still claim that singing oneself speechless, a wide-spread image in Viirlaid’s poetical works, is one of the elements that encompasses and carries the type of historical trauma experienced by the protagonists of the author. By silencing the issue of exile, pangs of conscience that have arisen due to leaving one’s homeland, lost battles, and surviving, transferring those subjects to a more universal setting of general existential anguish in the face of an unforgiving and indifferent world, the translations remove the *raison d’être* behind the impossibility or unwillingness to sing, i.e. silences. This, in its turn, again leads to questions of selfhood and agency, around which the harrowing core of trauma revolves. Namely, identifying silences is a step on the way to explicating and unravelling them, thereby legitimating one’s self and the narrative that comes with it. In this case, that story tends to be intertwined with those of others of the similar kind.

That leads to the next issue with regard to erasure in translations – the disappearance of founding trauma through the disregard to group dynamics. This critique applies to only some of the poems. While identification with and homage to brothers in arms can be observed in “Let Them Keep Silent”, it has been utterly deleted from

“Outcast”, where in English the protagonist finds his way on the crooked roads alone, without the group of staggering silent shapes clearly identified in Estonian. Through this, one can claim that a reader no longer perceives the implicit Othering of the group by themselves – another feature of historical (founding) trauma, in fact, one that fuels and contributes much to its self-perpetuation within an individual.

Yet, while I claimed earlier in the poetry analysis that the translations create ambiguities and move toward the general, it can be, nevertheless, said that there is also a tendency towards greater identification and loss of ambivalence in the target texts. A manifestation of this is, for example, the translating of hesitations and conditional sentences as simple statements. Words of emphasis have also been left out in e.g., “Let Them Keep Silent”. Moreover, the protagonists’ utterances, self-images and views of their condition and status within a social framework are shifted from the anxious, ambivalent and detached in the source texts to determined, poised and defiant in the target texts. What this does in terms of trauma is that it subdues and/or hides the fracturing and deep unsettlement of the self that a trauma victim undergoes. It fails to exemplify that trauma never simply abates and stops to renew its horrors as time passes – it is always there, which this thesis is also anxious to convey. The reader no longer perceives the paradoxes, contradictions and attempts at self-legitimation engaged in by the traumatized individual. Greater identification, on the other hand, features the introduction of agents or physical notions in the target text instead of abstractions in the original. An example is “My Heart is Still Pounding”, where, as I have already pointed out, the element of the individual sufferer is introduced twice, the more exceptional example being the unidentified and faceless “breathless in homes at night” (Viirlaid 2001: 59).

Therefore, as a result of pointing out the previous prevalent tendencies with regard to trauma and witnessing in the target texts, it can be said that in most cases, Viirlaid

remains a trauma poet. However, it seems to be that the translations tend to shift the focus from historical to structural trauma, from loss to absence. As a consequence, the testimonial quality of the texts is lessened, while the universal takes precedence over the personal, certain subjects are eroded and given less regard, while the very origins of trauma are silenced due to the aforementioned tendencies.

Having presented my opinion of the treatment of Viirlaid's poetry collections analysed in this thesis, it would be necessary, in view of the links of trauma and translation theory, to explore the claims and choices of the translator(s) that are available both via an introduction, a note on the translation provided in the 2001 *Selected Poems*, and the poems.

The introduction is a subjective account of Viirlaid's life up to the publishing of *Selected Poems*. It offers autobiographical facts and short explanations of historical events that served as the main reasons for the author's plights and exile. Stedingh's choice of words is undoubtedly emotionally laden, and compassionate. His account would give an English-speaking reader a relatively graspable and thorough view of Viirlaid's circumstances. However, in analysing literary influences, tradition, themes and subjects in the poetry of Viirlaid, Stedingh seems to discard the formerly forged connexion with the author's personal past. In a manner that must be familiar and reassuring to the Western reader, Stedingh bases his arguments only on similarities with literary predecessors and contemporaries, and on what I perceived to be dogmatic views of Modernism, rather than taking into account the individual background of the author. Besides being a case of using analogy (see Lefevere 1997: 76-77), this can be viewed as creating a safe and recognizable context for the reader in order to secure 'safe passage' for the collection. In many ways, Stedingh also valorises times and influences over circumstances, thus underestimating the impact of exile and the multiple entourage it keeps on the poetry of the author.

Yet, if one is to take the Eliotian view that no author's value could be seen alone, but only in comparison with his/her predecessors, and preceding texts (Eliot 1921: para. 4), then it can be claimed that Stedingh has placed Viirlaid in a becoming company (in view of the literary canon tentatively created in the introduction). Stedingh introduces to the foreign reader the firmly canonized and highly esteemed literary movements *Siuru* and *Arbujad* (Logomancers, in Stedingh's translation). Stedingh also helpfully provides a wider context for the movements, identifying their views with those of Acmeism, Symbolism, Imagism etc., with which the implied reader might be more familiar. Although there is no doubt that those movements that were very influential in Estonia at the time of Viirlaid's literary development influence his later texts, if not in contributing subject matter, then at least in providing certain accustomed and familiar forms, the identification of these movements serves a different purpose. Essentially, it is that of domestication. No short introduction could explain to the full the creative impulses of one person. Any writer of an introduction has to make a conscious choice. And Stedingh has made a conventional one, which would be a familiar strategy of description and identification.

Namely, Viirlaid is fashioned to be a Modernist. The introduction notes that the examples of *Siuru* and *Arbujad* threaded through his work concepts such as describing personal feelings and experiences (Stedingh 2001a: 13); "graphic sharpness of outlines" (Stedingh 2001a: 14); symbolism. Although loss of homeland is mentioned on several occasions throughout the introduction, it always seems that Stedingh has added it as a near-compulsory afterthought, while he himself sees Viirlaid as a thinker on matters universal that affected all humanity in the post-war world. The strategy chosen by Stedingh is almost paradoxical: first to emphatically align Viirlaid with the strongly associative names of Eliot, Akhmatova, Under etc., and then accompany it with the claim of "pantheistic transcendentalism" (Stedingh 2001a: 15). One explanation is that he sees Modernism in the

individual manifested in Viirlaid's texts, while the "largesse universal, like the sun" (Shakespeare 2008: 205) is attributed to the native, folk, mythological Estonian reverberations.

The following part of this analysis will look at how Stedingh characterises the specific poetry chosen for the collection. Firstly, in most comments concerning the *Vagabond's Gospel*, one notices Stedingh paying homage to the universal and transcendental qualities in Viirlaid's texts. It is implied that the author's world is, much like the world of any other modern man, a bleak, insecure place marked by death and loneliness. Viirlaid's role is set out to be that of the "craftsman" (Stedingh 2001a: 16), who, similarly to the way familiar to us from Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", acts as medium in which the consciousness of those that came before merges and hybridises with what has influenced the author (Eliot 1921: para 12, 13). However, the translator tends to attribute a Romanticist strain to Viirlaid as well, which can be gleaned from the frequent referral to the poetry having "its roots in man and nature" (Stedingh 2001a: 17).

What is more, Stedingh tends to see universal concerns, the abstract human condition as more important than any individual issues derived from exile or personal traumatic war experiences. This is also manifested by his views on a theme recurrent in Viirlaid's poetry: struggle for freedom. Although he brings out examples that are unmistakably born out of a very specific experience (necessarily not unique to Viirlaid), his interpretation sees the loss of freedom as a product of egotism, "self-seeking" (Stedingh 2001a: 17) ambition and living life in an unknowing manner. Stedingh also praises Viirlaid for carrying on a poetical battle for liberty, for holding on to a commitment to what he sees as the core values of the Western culture (Stedingh 2001a: 17).

More Romanticist tendencies are revealed by Stedingh in connexion with Viirlaid's second poetry collection *A Summer Evening Smile*. Namely, he supports the idea that Viirlaid sports a holistic world-view in which all things take their natural course: everything begins and has an end, while a new beginning "is found in a new natural form" (Stedingh 2001a: 19). What also serves to reinforce his Romanticism hypothesis is the emergence of paradox in the second collection: although the circularity of everything natural (a feminine quality according to Stedingh) is said to be the proper order of things, the poems are still said to have a deep undercurrent of loss, while the natural is at war with itself (Stedingh 2001a: 19). Yet, Stedingh's analysis is a constant careful dance between the accepted conventions of two literary movements. Having pointed out the importance of the natural world as well as the use of paradox, his analysis of the poem "Strangers" retraces its steps back to modernism. As an Estonian reader, who is somewhat informed about the historical background of the poet in question, I simply cannot ignore the personal (traumatic) dimension that seems to emerge from the poem. Yet, in terms of modernism, I would be mistaken, for the poem should have a life of its own, independent of its author. When one would see things from such a vantage point, then Stedingh's analysis is undoubtedly valid and correct: "Strangers" is about romantic yearning, the desire to become one played out against the ubiquitous backdrop of nature. The desire is doomed to remain unfulfilled because the lover is always an Other, a different entity. Understanding this leads to a state of alienation, a Remarquesque realisation that one is ever alone and especially so when in love. Nevertheless, to me, the two "aimless strangers" (Stedingh 2001a: 19) of the poem, whose "souls weep" (Stedingh 2001a: 19) are speechless because of the unspeakable and the wind is literally *foreign*, while the people are both held apart and united by the rootlessness that robbed them of words and of meaning. There should be

a way to unite these readings, since in a way they do spring from the same source. It is more of a question of moving from the universal to the particular, from absence to loss.

Stedingh's analysis on *Frosted Mirror* focuses on the notion of the (poetic) self. His claims place the 'I' of the poems onto a magnificent scale of nature, time, world and paradox (Stedingh 2001a: 20). A selfhood at one with the universe, but constantly in flux is said to be the main theme in the collection. The negative impulse in those texts is said to be provided by the imprisoning human consciousness. Interestingly, in supporting his claim of pantheistic transcendentalism, Stedingh glosses over the instances of fragmentary selfhood, traumatic repetitive memory and certain cases of the collapse of time. What is more, Stedingh again makes Viirlaid the advocate of "traditional values and norms in the West" (Stedingh 2001a: 21) that are threatened by erosion, which could only be avoided by knowing *oneself* (curiously, he never mentions any causes for the loss and erosion: their existence is simply stated). However, it would be a cruel demand on the poetic narrator, who is troubled by both having an identity, although a troubled one, and the fact that it is in constant peril due to him being uprooted. Erosion, and alienation are undoubtedly important aspects of Viirlaid's work, yet neither can be exactly identified with the prevalent ideas on the state of post-war Western culture. The dimension of personal grief and grievance cannot be left out.

I do agree with Stedingh's expressed opinions on *Songs of Longing* and *Hand in Hand*, collections that are lighter in thought and tone and that explore/express familial feelings, untroubled childhood memories, humour. The translator emphatically identifies this new set of subjects with ethnicity and tradition (Stedingh 2001a: 23), but also with experimentations in form.

It is only in connexion with Viirlaid's sixth volume of poetry *A Blink of Eternity* that Stedingh underlines the specifically Estonian context of many Viirlaid's poems. He

‘catalogues’ the poems, but compared to some texts that were highlighted from the previous collections, he pays less attention to them, perhaps owing to the fact that these subjects would be unfamiliar or even offending to the English-speaking reader (see, e.g. “Kätepesijad” and “Paralleele” in *Valgus rahnude all*). *Light Under the Reefs* is dealt with in a similar manner; the thread of the freedom-theme with all its accompanying indications is still followed, but only tentatively linked with the topics of exile and oblivion.

The conclusion of the introduction is somewhat contradictory in view of Stedingh’s prior analysis. It identifies Viirlaid as a humanist visionary (Stedingh 2001a: 26), whose cultural past and ancestry (in the form of myths, legends and folklore) contribute to his texts in a substantial way. The influences, in their turn, enable him to forge a link between the *generic* past (my emphasis) and the contemporary society according to the translator.

The introduction thus reveals that in terms of literary canon and author presentation, Stedingh has chosen to use the safe option of analogy and acculturation. The note on the translation, however, shows him as a considerate translator who has pondered on the questions this thesis presented in the translation theory section. I would like to praise him for remarkably good transpositions and also for taking up the task of introducing Viirlaid – an author from a literature in a small language – in English. Yet, there are some issues regarding the translations that it would be necessary to point out. Although on the basis of analysing the translations of the poems one can claim that Stedingh has engaged in occasional linguistic violence, it can be said to be unintentional. He recognizes the translated text as the original for a foreign reader and the position of target text as equal to the source text (Stedingh 2001b: 30). He also supports the idea of translator as author, which can be gleaned from his use of the noun “poet-translator” (Stedingh 2001b: 30). The small troubles of his texts mainly stem from the fact that his

work was a relay translation. His original was already an English one, which made him the reader of an interpretation.

This is partially redeemed by the fact that he professes to be against the “literalist view”, which is “oppressive” (Stedingh 2001b: 29), whereas he “[found] it necessary to maintain literalness unless it obfuscates the spirit of the original” (Stedingh 2001b: 31). This brings us to another main issue with regard to Stedingh’s translations. As can be gleaned from the aforementioned quote, he has opted to follow what I previously called the dictate of intention. It is the relentless pursuit of intention that produced some of the greatest errors in the poems analysed above (see, e.g. the corn fields and pearl divers in “The Wanderer”, section 2.1 in the thesis), while no concern was given to poetic materiality and the unity of content and form. The former is combined with a clear preference for the “correctness of the English” (Stedingh 2001b: 31), mapping out a hegemonic relationship where the source language receives the submissive position (Aixela 1996: 54): a power relation he clearly does not recognize. Furthermore, near the conclusion of the “Note on the Translation”, one finds the curious statement that he attempted to “retain the flavour of these [poetic devices] without their becoming obtrusive in good English poems” (sic!) (Stedingh 2001b: 32). This honest claim places Stedingh in Selver’s school of translators interested in producing ‘beautiful’ poems in the target language. This tendency can most probably be attributed with producing the Anglo-Saxon echoes in “The Wanderer”. On the other hand, Stedingh shows extensive knowledge of the fundamental differences in Estonian and English rhyming, confesses to have acquainted himself with Estonian grammar and scholarly material (Stedingh 2001b: 32-33), while also having consulted T.E. Moks, a native speaker of Estonian, and Viirlaid himself. Despite the central theoretical and practical issues outlined above, R.W. Stedingh has produced

excellent texts that do justice to Viirlaid's poetry and, in the most part, retain the very specific national and personal elements embedded in them.

Conclusion

In reading Arved Viirlaid's poems, both in Estonian and English, one encounters abysmal desperation, terror nearly beyond human tolerance, hardship and hope entwined with the necessity to speak of it all, and, by speaking, to (re)experience the events that gave rise to the emotions. There is more, as the six poetry collection written by the author offer a variety of subjects. Nevertheless, the selection explored in this thesis is trauma poetry, a thread of unspeakability, belatedness, and the repressed patterned through it. My purpose has been to study Viirlaid's poetry in terms of historical trauma and witnessing, paying a special attention to whether the trauma present in the source text survives in the target text, and the changes affected in the poems through translation. In addition, I have discussed questions of translation from a literature in a small language for the benefit of a large foreign audience.

The theoretical part of this thesis comprises two subchapters. The first subchapter explores tendencies and concepts in trauma theory relevant in the context of Viirlaid's poetical works. In terms of trauma subtypes, the thesis identifies Viirlaid firmly with historical trauma and loss, as defined by LaCapra. The features that emerge in, e.g. *A Vagabond's Gospel* are connected to specific events, as well as remembering and/or grieving for them. Identifying this with general universal grievances, i.e. structural trauma and absence would belittle the personal traumatic experience and lead to impossible mourning (LaCapra 1999: 58, 82). What is more, on the basis of the theory explored, one can claim that Viirlaid's works show other eminent features of trauma texts and traumatized minds: loss of cohesion, collapse of the dimension of time, manifested in loose memories that emerge years later after occurring, and the very literal texture of language and images. One can see the language resisting signifying and the author struggling to

depict events that are half-verbalised, half-iconic. This leads to the testimonial quality of trauma texts and Viirlaid's texts in particular. Namely, it can be claimed that a mind haunted by trauma contains an immeasurable extent of the unknown, working against the desire for coherence. The only way this could be vanquished and possibly laid to rest is to retell the story that was not originally witnessed or only partially comprehended (Laub 1995: 70). This belated witnessing facilitates self-authenticity (Caruth 1995a: 6) and reclamation of one's mind, a struggle visible throughout Viirlaid's poems analysed in this thesis.

The second subchapter discusses questions of translation in general and poetry translation in particular. The section commences from identifying translation competencies already discussed by Dolet and, in the most part, still valid today. Among others, these include questions of acceptability, accuracy, and fluency. However, on the basis of consulted sources, it can be claimed that poetry translation is subject to quite more rigorous and competing demands. While linguistic skills should still rule supreme, and the most important ingredients of a poem be reproduced, the product is often claimed to be only a slight resemblance (as claimed by Selver 1966). Likewise, according to a seemingly quite widespread school, it is to be a "beautiful poem" in the target language (Selver 1966: 28). One of the translators of the *Selected Poems*, R.W. Stedingh, claims affinity to that principle (2001b: 32). A poetry translator is thus tasked with hopeless fidelity, and a beautiful target text, one, which is tailored for the tastes of the receiving audience. Namely, a poem that does not find a space in the target culture due to its original characteristics is not received by the readers (Lefevere 1997: 79). Creating an analogy and acculturation are common and safe translation strategies used by poetry translators, and can be observed in *Selected Poems* as well. While these may ensure the poem's success in the target culture, they may also prove to be abusive. Although acculturation is compensated with the

apologetic retaining of the spirit of the original (Lefevere 1997: 78), instead of paying attention to the poem as a whole, it privileges the target language and, as such, is an issue of power. Moreover, it avoids dealing with the question of original/translation. These aspects also prove to show how translation is closely intertwined with power. Firstly, and on a more visible scale, the issue of power is manifested in the publication industry that wields influence over the way a text is presented, packaged, canonized or discarded. Secondly, a translator has power in making actual decisions and choices throughout the translation process. According to Bassnett, “translation is [...] rewriting” (Bassnett 1998: 74), involved with shaping meanings filtered through their prism of personal and social experience and circumstances. Translation leaves a trace and can no longer be considered transparent.

The second chapter of the thesis was concerned with the in-depth analysis of individual selected poems, while the results were contextualized with regard to the interrelations of trauma, translation, and testimony in the third chapter. Whereas one can claim with a degree of certainty that Viirlaid is a trauma poet in English as he is in Estonian, analysis revealed that a number of significant shifts have taken place in the process of translation both in the context of trauma and translation theory. In general, the changes pertaining to trauma can be categorized under the tendency of moving from historical towards structural trauma, from loss to absence. An example of this is the fact that Stedingh’s and Moks’s translations strive for a greater level of abstraction. Often, the solitude of the protagonist in an inexplicably and mesmerizingly unforgiving and empty world is emphasized, while the specific context of forced exile, war, and impossible knowledge is either downplayed or silenced. The same applies to specific Estonian cultural references evident in Viirlaid’s texts, as well as to founding trauma. Since individual alienation is underlined and context eroded, this harms the legitimate witnessing voice

emerging from the poetical works. The tendency is further exacerbated by the crisis of agency that arises due to overpowering environments and manifestations of trauma taking precedence over the traumatized person. What is more, a profound issue is that the target texts tend to erode silences, thereby hindering the identification of the origins of trauma, and, by extension, the possibility for testimony. Interestingly, introducing specificity not present in the source text to the target text subdues the deeply unsettling nature of traumatic memory and its presentation in a text. Proceeding from all of the noted changes affected in the translation process, I can conclude that trauma survives translation, although perhaps in an altered form, while testimonial qualities are considerably impeded.

With regard to poetry translation, both the introduction to the *Selected Poems* and the translator's note reveal Stedingh to be a considerate and careful translator who has produced remarkably good results that are also the 'beautiful poems' discussed above. However, if one is to consider the issue of translating from a small literature into a large one and the reservations of the process of poetry translation, one must point out certain aspects of Stedingh's work. According to Bassnett, a translator is firstly a reader (1998: 60, 66). Stedingh reads Viirlaid as a modernist and humanist, writing to express his concern over the general human condition in the post-war Western world, while the very culture-specific and individual side of his works, here identified as stemming from trauma, is not taken into account. For this reason and also because some of the observed translation choices, one can claim that Stedingh has employed acculturation, placing Viirlaid in the company of acknowledged Modernist authors and paying homage to what Lefevere referred to as "translation poetics" (1997: 68). It may even be claimed that he tends towards cultural hegemony manifested by his implicit preference for the target language, little alleviated by the dictate of intention.

This thesis has explored a selection of Viirlaid's poetical works with regard to trauma, testimony, and translation with which I hope to make my small contribution to Estonian translation and literary studies. It has been my purpose to discuss and exemplify the complexity, richness, and importance of the subject in and for Estonian literature. Viirlaid sings against adversity, both from without and within, to open up a chapter of Estonian history still painfully locked in its own silence; a daunting task he has accomplished.

References

Primary sources:

Viirlaid, Arved. 2001. *Selected Poems*. Trans. by R.W. Stedinger and T.E. Moks.

Vancouver: Lyre Press.

Viirlaid, Arved. 1948. *Hulkuri evangeelium*. London: Dragon Press Ltd.

Viirlaid, Arved. 1962. *Jäätanud peegel*. Lund: Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv.

Viirlaid, Arved. 1982. *Igaviku silmapilgutus*. Lund: Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv.

Secondary sources:

Aixela, Javier Franco. 1996. Culture-Specific Items in Translation. In Román Álvarez and

M. Carmen África Vidal (eds). *Translation Power Subversion*, 52-79. Clevedon:

Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Bassnett, Susan. 1996. The Meek or the Mighty: Reappraising the Role of the Translator.

In Román Álvarez and M. Carmen África Vidal (eds). *Translation Power*

Subversion, 10-25. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Bassnett, Susan. 1998. Transplanting the Seed: Poetry and Translation. In Susan Bassnett

and André Lefevere (eds). *Constructing Cultures. Essays on Literary Translation*,

57-76. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Bermann, Sandra. 2005. Translating History. In Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (eds).

Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation, 257-273. Princeton and Oxford:

Princeton University Press.

Burke, Edmund. 1756. *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime*

and Beautiful. Available at <http://www.bartleby.com/24/2/>, accessed 10.01.2013.

- Carbonell, Ovidio. 1996. The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation. In Román Álvarez and M. Carmen África Vidal (eds). *Translation Power Subversion*, 79-99. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Caruth, Cathy. 1995a. Trauma and Experience: Introduction. In Cathy Caruth (ed). *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, 3-12. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, Cathy. 1995b. Recapturing the Past: Introduction. In Cathy Caruth (ed). *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, 151-157. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, Cathy. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Cixous, Hélène. 1997. Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/ Ways Out/ Forays. In Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (eds). *The Feminist Reader. Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, 91-103. Malden: Blackwell.
- Dolet, Etienne. 1992 [1540]. From “On the Way of Translating Well from One Language Into Another”. In André Lefevere (ed). Trans. by Paul Horguelin. *Translation History Culture. A Sourcebook*, 27-28. London and New York: Routledge.
- Eliot, T.S. 1920. *Prufrock and Other Observations*.
Available at <http://www.bartleby.com/198/1.html>, accessed 10.01.2013
- Eliot, T.S. 1921. Translation and the Individual Talent. In *The Sacred Wood. Essays on Poetry and Criticism* by T.S. Eliot. Available at
<http://www.bartleby.com/200/sw4.html>, accessed 10.01.2013.
- Gailit, August. 1967 [1928]. *Toomas Nipernaadi*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.
- Genette, Gerard. 2001 [1987]. *Paratexts. Thresholds of interpretation*. Trans. by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Halström, Lakshmi. 2006. Let Poetry Win: the Translator as Writer – an Indian perspective. In Susan Bassnett and Peter Bush (eds). *The Translator as Writer*, 33-46. London, New York: Continuum.
- Hertzberg, Fredrik. 2002. *Moving Materialities: on Poetic Materiality and Translation, with Special Reference to Gunnar Björling's Poetry*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press.
- Kangro, Bernard. 1978. Reedetud generatsiooni nägu. In *Äitsmemehi ja pärlipüüdjad. Esseed ja märkmed pagulaskirjanikest*. Lund: Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv.
- Kirss, Tiina. 1997. Arved Viirlaiu looming rahvuslikus perspektiivis. *Sirp*. 2 November. Available at <http://www.sirp.ee/archive/1998/22.05.98/Kirjand/kirjand1-2.html>, accessed 1.01.2013.
- Kreutzwald, Friedrich Reinhold. 1971. Kuidas kuningatütar seitse aastat oli maganud. In Eno Raud (ed). *Tark mees taskus*, 68-78. Tallinn: Kirjastus Eesti Raamat.
- Kronberg, Janika. 2009. Eesti lugu: Arved Viirlaid „Ristideta hauad“. *Eesti Päevaleht*. 30 April. Available at: <http://www.epl.ee/news/kultuur/eesti-lugu-arved-viirlaid-ristideta-hauad.d?id=51167171>, accessed 1.01.2013
- Kruus, Oskar and Heino Puhvel. 2000. *Eesti kirjanike leksikon*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.
- LaCapra, Dominick. 1999. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Laub, Dori. 1995. Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle. In Cathy Caruth (ed). *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, 61-75. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lefevere, André. 1996. Translation and Canon Formation: Nine Decades of Drama in the United States. In Román Álvarez and M. Carmen África Vidal (eds). *Translation Power Subversion*, 138-156. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

- Lefevere, André. 1997. Translation and The Creation of Images or ‘Excuse me, is this the same poem?’ In Susan Bassnett (ed). *Essays and Studies. Translating Literature*, 64-80. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer.
- Maclear, Kyo. 2003. The Limits of Vision: *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and the Subversion of Representation. In Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler (eds). *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*, 233-249. New York and London: Routledge.
- Merilai, Arne. 2012. Arved Viirlaid: A Fighter without Compromise. *Estonian Literary Magazine*, 34 Spring, 12-15.
- Mulvey, Laura. 2001. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In Meenakshi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (eds). *Media and Cultural Studies. Key Works*, 393-403. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.
- “Outcast”. 2013. The Free Dictionary. Available at <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>, accessed 09.01.2013.
- Palumbo, Giuseppe. 2009. *Key Terms in Translation Studies*. London: Continuum.
- Selver, Paul. 1966. *The Art of Translating Poetry*. Boston: The Writer, Inc.
- Shakespeare, William. 2008. *The Oxford Shakespeare: Henry V*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stedingh, R.W. 2001a. Introduction. In Arved Viirlaid. *Selected Poems*, 11-27. Trans. by T.E. Moks and R.W. Stedingh. Vancouver: Lyre Press.
- Stedingh, R.W. 2001b. Note on the Translation. In Arved Viirlaid. *Selected Poems*, 29-33. Trans. by T.E. Moks and R.W. Stedingh. Vancouver: Lyre Press.
- Suomen-poikien perinneyhdistys ry. 2010. *Soomepoisid – The Finnish Boys*. Available at: <http://www.suomenpojat.fi/en/soomepoisid-the-finnish-boys.html>, accessed 1.01.2013

- Talvet, Jüri. 2012. Arved Viirlaid's Story of the 'Finnish Boys'. *Estonian Literary Magazine*, 34 Spring, 16-21.
- "Typhus". 2013. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Available at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/611812/typhus>, accessed 12.01.2013
- Venuti, Lawrence. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel A. and Onno van der Hart. 1995. The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma. In Cathy Caruth (ed). *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, 158-182. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Vogler, Thomas A. 2003. Poetic Witness: Writing the Real. In Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler (eds). *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*, 173-207. New York and London: Routledge.
- Willamovitz – Moellendorff, Ulrich von. 1992 [1924]. From "The Art of Translation". In André Lefevere (ed). Trans. by Paul Horguelin. *Translation History Culture. A Sourcebook*, 33-35. London and New York: Routledge.

Resümee

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
TÕLKEKESKUS

Kudrun Tamm

Translation As Bearing Witness in Arved Viirlaid's poetry. Tõlge kui tunnistus Arved Viirlaiu luules.

(magistritöö)

2013

Lehekülgede arv: 98

Annotatsioon:

Antud magistritöö käsitleb traumasid ja tunnistuslikkust Arved Viirlaiu luule tõlgetes inglise keelde. Minu eesmärk on lähte- ja sihtteksti võrdluse ning teoreetiliselt toetatud analüüsi läbi välja selgitada, kuidas traumasid tõlkes edasi antakse ning kas teksti tunnistuslikkus saab kannatada. Samuti uurin väikesest keelest pärineva kirjandusteksti tutvustamise problemaatikat suures keeles kirjutatud kirjanduses. Töö esimene peatükk käsitleb traumateooria, luuletõlke ning tõlkimise ja võimu keskseid mõisteid, mis on enim seotud käesoleva töö uurimisprobleemidega ja fookusega. Teises peatükis analüüsin valitud luuletusi, lähtudes esimeses peatükis välja joonistunud teoreetilisest fookusest. Kolmandas peatükis arutlen eelneva osa analüüsi tulemuste üle trauma, tunnistamise ning tõlketeooria raamistikus.

Töö esimesest, teoreetilisest peatükist selgub, et antud töös analüüsitavat Viirlaiu luulet võib liigitada traumatekstide alla, kuna selles ilmnevad mitmed klassikalised ajaloolist traumasid kajastava teksti tunnused: ajadimensiooni kokkukukkumine ja nihked, mälestuste fragmentaarus ja ikoonilisus, pidev võitlus väljendada keeleliste vahenditega sõnuseletamatust. Tekstide tunnistuslikkus annab omakorda aimu nende läbi traumaga töötamise ning selle leevendamise soovist. Teoreetilise peatüki teises osas välja toodud luuletõlke nõuded ning üldisemad suunad näitavad, et selles ilukirjandustõlke liigis on kodustamine ja analoogia kasutamine sage strateegia, et tagada tõlkele sihtkultuuris soodsat retseptiooni. Kuigi tõlget võib pidada teksti taasloomiseks teises keeles, on ülemäärane akulturatsioon siiski vägivaldne ning seostub otseselt tõlkija võimu küsimusega, milles on oma osa ka kirjastusprotsessil. Teise peatüki tulemuste analüüsi tulemusel töö kolmandas osas võib väita, et tõlkes on traumateooria seisukohast toimunud rida muutusi ning tähelepanekuid on ka seoses luuletõlkega. Enamik muutusi on nihutanud luule sisu ajaloolisest traumast struktuuralse trauma valda, mis on vaigistanud oluliselt tekstide võimet tunnistada. Trauma on tõlkes alles, kuid tekstide tunnistuslik iseloom on muutunud. Tõlkes võib samuti märgata Viirlaiu kanoniseerimist paljude tuntud modernismi autorite kõrval, samas kui luule kultuurilis-spetsiifilisele taustale pole ehk niivõrd tähelepanu pööratud. Võtetena on tõlkija R.W. Stedingh kasutanud ka kodustamist ja analoogiat. Samas tuleb rõhutada tulemi kõrget kunstilist kvaliteeti ja tõlkija tänuväärset tööd Viirlaiu tutvustamisel.

Märksõnad: Arved Viirlaid, R.W. Stedingh, T.E. Moks, luule, traumateooria, tõlketeooria

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina _____ Kudrun Tamm _____

(*autori nimi*)

(sünnikuupäev: 11.09.1988)

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

Translation As Bearing Witness in Arved Viirlaid's Poetry,

(*lõputöö pealkiri*)

mille juhendaja on

Eva Rein,

(*juhendaja nimi*)

1.1. reprodutseerimiseks säilitamise ja üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemise eesmärgil, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace-is lisamise eesmärgil kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni;

1.2. üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks Tartu Ülikooli veebikeskkonna kaudu, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace'i kaudu kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni.

2. olen teadlik, et punktis 1 nimetatud õigused jäävad alles ka autorile.

3. kinnitan, et lihtlitsentsi andmisega ei rikuta teiste isikute intellektuaalomandi ega isikuandmete kaitse seadusest tulenevaid õigusi.

Tartus, _____ (21.01.2013)