

**PRESENTATION FOR TRANSLATORS'  
CONFERENCE (August 29, 30, 31, 1988)**

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When the proposal to hold these meetings was presented, I must honestly say I was not convinced, nor did I express any conviction, that they would necessarily serve a use. Yet I believe they *could*, provided we are candid with each other. The work we are engaged in is a tremendous responsibility, a sacred work that we should be very serious about. This makes it all the more important, however, that we do not take ourselves too seriously and that we see some of these things on the lighter side.

When I was asked about the title of my presentation, I said it could be called "Varia," or "Miscellanea," but Professor Bruce Glenn brought me this book whose title I would like to plagiarize and take as the title of my presentation today: "ODTAA," by poet laureate John Masefield. The author did not explain the meaning, and this would have been completely lost were it not for the fact that Bruce found it revealed in one of the author's letters. (It seems that ODTAA means "One Damn Thing After Another.")

Well, let me return to serious matters. When we were discussing the words "Accuracy" and "Readability," I certainly did agree that "accuracy" is something we all strive for, but have very different ideas of. Another thought came to me, that there are subjective qualities required of the translator in pursuing these *objectives* of translation. In the pursuit of *accuracy*, he must have *humility*; and I feel that a quality which must be present in the quest for *readability* is *dignity*.

It was very good to hear from Ulf Fornander that the Elliott translation of *Arcana Coelestia* was of great help to him in his work of translating it into Swedish. That already makes a meeting of this kind worthwhile.

On reflecting about a presentation, I began to "*animadvert*" that my strongest thoughts were not funneled toward one single topic, but rather toward an assortment of odd items. I hope that you will take the comments I am about to make in the context of the deep respect for the translators now active in the field, who have come from near and far to attend this conference.

Let me start out by saying that I assume we're not here to excessively pat each other on the back, but rather, to discuss

problems—issues, if you will—of translation: issues touching both the philosophy and the practice of translation. *It would be most difficult, anyway, to form a mutual admiration society out of translators.*

1 As to "philosophy," I see some advances in the past several decades. I'm not certain that *all* of us accept the principle of addressing the target language in its idiomatic form; but we have as translators recognized the urgent need for linguistic *update*. Rev. Dr. George Dole is prominent in this context, but also controversial; and for these reasons, he will receive some attention in this presentation. While he has made laudable strides in his translations toward English idiom (or should I say American?), he has, on the other hand, made some innovations that seem to me unfortunate—such as rendering *in* as "involved in."

"Involved" means "wrapped up in," and at times, "entangled in." It also means "engrossed in," and in a general sense "to be involved" suggests a certain degree of interest and participation in something. This is not the meaning of the Latin word *in*. If someone is *in montibus*, he is not wrapped up in the mountains but located on them; or if he is *in cognitionibus* he is not engrossed in knowledges, but simply in possession of them. To be *in fide* is simply to have faith, not to be "involved in" faith! In *Heaven and Hell* paragraph 558a, among many other such examples, Dr. Dole's translation has the Lord "involved in" heavenly love, to me an erroneous connotation that the Lord "has a certain degree of interest and participates" in that love, as one might be "involved" in some project, in politics, or in an accident—or, in a negative sense, in a scandal or crime. "Get involved!" is a cry to solicit participation or interest, and in educational jargon, a word that has long been a victim of overkill. But it also conveys the often *involuntary* and *reluctant* character of "involvement": "Don't get involved!" (i.e. drawn into something).

In other words, we must look at current idiomatic usages in language in order to see what *tone* we are giving to the text by employing given words or expressions. The translator must keep abreast of the ever changing and vacillating nuances throughout his target language. How else could he know at a certain historic point-of-time NOT to use the word "gay," in almost no matter what context? *Ita in caeteris*.

What this really underlines is the need for consultation and debate. I could never accept a translation reflecting the philosophy of across-the-board adoption of such a term—so that if our meetings

prove to us that we need to meet each other more on this type of question, then I think they will have been useful.

2 Here I am tempted beyond the point of resistance to introduce a piece of history pertaining to The Hague society of "The Lord's New Church," of which I was pastor for a number of years.

The "appointed" translator of Swedenborg's Writings at that time in Holland was insisting on an exceptionless usage of the special Dutch word "vanuit" for *ex*, and of "van" for *ab*. The controversy around this model attained an intensity that raised it to an issue of unbelievable proportions—even to the point where some of the studies were translated into English. I'm distributing as a handout copies of my paper on the so-called "AB en EX Geschil"—the "AB and EX Controversy" (1956?)—both for your information and your possible entertainment. (I hope that never again such a ridiculous situation will arise. It is an example of a translator gone off on his own without restraints.)

His point in a nutshell was: *ex* = "out of," *ab* = "from." Now for the Holy City descending *a Deo ex Coelo*, this works very well! But you will see some of the problématique *out of* the proffered *dokumentatie*.

I don't mean that there should be legislation binding the translator, I am very much against that. But I do know for sure, we would all agree that anyone so lacking in humility that he/she ignores the reactions of others, should not be translating. I think I read somewhere that the Swedenborg Society has dropped "Guidelines." If this is so, it may be a good thing. I guess they're only making revisions. Whatever, it seems inevitable in even grudging recognition of the wild and woolly new frontiers of the translation field.

One thing that is beginning to emerge seems to be that the "insiders" are losing their monopoly on Swedenborg, both in the historical and in the theological context. Perhaps it's the beginning in the new dispensation of the fulfillment of the words of Matth. 21:43: "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Perhaps some of the things that have been adopted by "WE" in the name of translation, and which have not been looked at objectively, may only be weeded out when the kingdom has changed hands.

But the translation revolution in the New Church also tends toward exaggeration. The recent oratorio "The New Jerusalem," by Dillard, shows that even the "intellectual" language of Swedenborg's Writings can be embraced with the affection and sung out

with feelings of joy. I enjoyed seeing *intellectualiter* translated as "understandingly," although I think this is a distortion of the real current English meaning of "understandingly," which would be more like "sympathetically," And poetry: the language of Swedenborg's Writings in poetry! (How much these efforts actually represent artistic achievement, I am surely not the judge.)

3 Going back to specific odd items, I continue to consider it erroneous to apply the term "technical expression" to words like *conjugialis*, *coelestis*, *proprium*, *conatus*, and many more.

4 Some of the comparatives employed by Swedenborg have been no less than conundra, verily enigmatic, to generations of readers. Is *interior* comparative for *internus*? No, actually of *inter* or a hypothetical *+interus*, like *superior* is comparative for *superus*. For important reasons we know that *interior* is not as far inside as *intemus*. For identical reasons we know that *intimior* is not as far inside as *intimus* (which is hard to explain). The same applies to the ratio *exterior* : *externus*. No *extimior* exists to my knowledge (but then, look for *intimior* in Lewis & Short!), although we do have *extimus*.

This all brings me to one point: Dr. Dole's translation of *internum* and *externum* (*cf.* *Heaven and Hell* 32) as "inner" and "outer" gives me inexpressible pleasure, because I believe this is *exactly* what it means. Talk about climbing down from high-sounding terms into a *Jedermann* vocabulary! One can deduce this meaning from the converse: there are NO WORDS IN LATIN TO EXPRESS OUR WORDS *INNER* AND *OUTER* more suitable than *intemus* and *externus*. I was also glad to see that Rev. Bruce Rogers has favored "inner" and "outer" for *intemus* and *externus*, as in CL 46, 47. He also uses "inwardly" for *interim*, which I welcome, although further on, he has "inner (will and thought)" for *interiore*. To me, there is a distinction between *intemus* and *interior* like that between *inner* and *inward*. ("Inward" gives a direction "toward," and therefore corresponds with the comparative *interior*.) Of course there is also "deeper" as a candidate for *interior*, but one could hardly use "shallower" to contrast with it.

5 In regard to the translation of the word *conjugialis*, I intend to refrain from further commentary because there does not seem to be any possibility at this time of unemotional, objective discussion of this word. I would like only to go on record as an opponent to the theory that it suddenly obtains a distinctively different semantic

load when linked with *vere*. I am quite aware of some (not at all insurmountable) problems of English rendition in certain contexts, such as *conjugaliter*.

6 All this points to something very important: try going from English to Latin, if you want to know what translation is about. Which Latin words would you choose, for example, for such a *very current, colloquial* word as "feel" in English, as in:

- Feel* my muscle! (touch)
- He has a *feeling* for words (bent, aptitude, passion)
- He *feels* for his bereaved sister (sympathizes)
- She has a *feeling* for others (fondness, care, concern)
- He *feels* sick (senses physically)
- They hurt my *feelings* (sensitivities)
- Don't *feel* remorse (experience, entertain)
- His *feeling* for goodness and truth is strong (affection)
- We *felt* he was evasive (sensed, perceived)

Somewhere in this potpourri, one must admit there is the formula: *feeling* = *affectio*, but by no means in all of them. An across-the-board formula *affectio* = *affection* is simply naive.

7 I believe that at a meeting held in the home of Rev. Bruce Rogers some years ago, some of our translation committee members expressed the view to Mr. Arnold Chadwick that *Arcana Coelestia* = *Heavenly Secrets*. Strangely, this was also the view of Mr. John Merchant, who translated the 2nd volume of this work by order of Emanuel Swedenborg into English and used *both* the titles *Arcana Coelestia* and *Heavenly Secrets*. To cheer you, I present each of you with a few tricentennial envelopes bearing a reproduction of *one* of the six title pages of this volume. I should remind you that it was this volume that had a separate title page for each of the six chapters from the 16th to the 21st of Genesis. (These envelopes ought to be used this year 1988.)

What I'm coming to is my objection to the failure to translate. *Arcana Coelestia* is a good beginning example. Some more are *proprium* and *conatus*. Original Latin is a poor excuse for a translation. Are we translating, or not? Wrong though I must consider both the Elliot and the Dole versions of *proprium* (i.e., Elliot *proprium*, Dole *self-image*) to be, I would think the former one earns a zero. For *any* effort is better than *none*.

8 This word is very easily translated into German, Dutch or Swedish, since they can form adjectival nouns in quite a regular way. The translation "own" in English, though correct, seems to be too awkward to accept even when capitalized. In Dutch early translators added T to the word "own" (*eigen-ik*), bringing it close to "ego" in English. I remember discussing this with my dear departed brother, who insisted that "ego" was a psychological term. But even if it is, it is not by any means *exclusively* a psychological term. In the words "egocentric" and "ego[t]ism," the sense of *proprium* is very strongly present. Think of the colloquial expression, "He has an enormous ego." This is *not* a psychological term. It seems to me that "ego" is the best word available to express the properties of *proprium*. *Proprium* is certainly not a "self-image."

I would like to expand my comments on *proprium* a little with your indulgence (not expand my *proprium*, but my comments!). Comparing *proprius* with *suus*, we note that the latter, in referring to the subject, can usually be clarified by adding the word "own" in English. *Ejus* generally refers to someone other than the subject:

The thief killed his (the merchant's) son: *ejus*

The thief killed his (own) son: *suum*

*Proprius* also can convey this meaning, which shows the conceptual proximity to the word "self," or *sui*, the reflexive pronoun. (I would add that Swedenborg in first-draft writing often uses *ejus* or *eorum* where the rule calls for *suus*.)

My own conception of the word *proprium* sympathizes with one early translator's version: "selfhood." While I wouldn't want to adopt this term, I do think the man is right. *Proprium* is the "sense of being," which is of course an appearance because only "the Lord IS" (A C 20). It is the sense of "being oneself," or "one's own," or "the center"—which is the very gift of life. It relates also to the concept of "property" and "belonging," being derived from *pro privo*, meaning "proper to or characteristic of the individual."

9 Another of my ODTAA items is *animadvertentia*. This has been handled in many different ways. Unfortunately, few translators have animadverted its meaning in the Swedenborg sense. The Swedish would be "INSIKT" from "INSE," to *realize*. In the new translation, "became aware" comes the closest to it, but I still think the exact meaning is "realization." The 12th chapter of Genesis shows us the Lord *realizing* for the first time *His Divine origin and mission*.

10 At this point I would like to come back again to the matter of adjectival nouns and repeat what I wrote to George Dole some years back, because it still applies.

In his version of *Heaven and Hell*, this translator devised adjectival transformations to accommodate the adjectival nouns such as *bonum-bona*, *verum-vera*, *malum-mala*, *falsum-falsa*, and abandoned the words *good-goods*, *truth-truths*, *evil-evils*, *falsity-falsities* in favor of the English adjectival-noun paraphrases, "what is good," "what is true," "what is false," etc.— or at times "the good," "the true," "the false," or "f alses," "trues," etc. One of the supporting arguments, I suppose, is that the English substantive endings *-ty* as in *falsity* and *-th* as in *truth* correspond with Latin *-tas* as in *Veritas* and *falsitas*, for which (less frequently occurring) Latin words, one may wish to reserve the English words "falsity," "truth." But I'd like someone to show me meaningful semantic distinctions in the English language between "the true," "truth," and "what is true."

The fact that a use of "falsity" for both *falsum* and *falsitas* results in the loss of a fine distinction in no way counterbalances the damage done to English language by imposing upon it an artificiality that is not at all present in the Latin. What is not realized by translators enticed into this kind of trap, is 1) that the resulting translation does not convey the imagined distinction, but only a language distortion; and 2) that meaning is conveyed more powerfully by *context* than it is by *cognation*.

As an example of the case in question, please look at the following sentence in *HH* 539, and Dr. Dole's translation of it:

Quod prorsus nulla potentia sit falsi ex malo, est quia omnis est veri ex bono, & in falso ex malo est nihil veri ex bono:

The reason what is false resulting from what is evil has no power whatever is that it all belongs to what is true resulting from what is good, and there is no trace of this in what is false resulting from what is evil.

Compare the above with my rendition:

The reason why falsity coming from evil has no power whatever is that all power belongs to truth from good—and there is no truth from good in falsity that comes from evil.

When transforming these adjectival nouns into plurals, one meets with another problem. *Vera* and *falsa* have to be rendered either as

(un-English) "trues" and "falses"; or, ignoring the plurality, as "what is true" and "what is false"; or else, nominalized in the shape of "true things" and "false things"—equally un-English and failing to convey the Latin counterparts (because "things" is a too-heavy word in English to represent correctly the plurality of Latin adjectival substantivization and should therefore not be over-used).

An example of the clumsiness of this shape is found in paragraph 551:

Omnēs qui in Infernis sunt, in malis & inde falsis sunt, ac nullus ibi qui in malis & simul in veris:

This Dr. Dole renders:

All the people who are in the hells are involved in evil things and consequent false things; there is no one there who is involved in evil and in true things at the same time.

Compare this rendition with the following:

All in the hells are in evils, and in the consequent falsities; there is no one there who is in evils and at the same time in truths.

I repeat that I'm not sure all of us even accept the principle of addressing the target language in its idiomatic form.

11 An oddity that I came across recently that might be a case of "Swedishism" occurs in *SE* (i.e. *SD*) paragraph 2319, which I have transcribed from the *ms.* as follows:

*Quod hominum multitudo, quae simul in terra, seu in uno loco, usque tamen in mundo spirituum ita separati esse possint, ut distent valde*

2319. Quod in uno loco sint, in mundo, vel post vitam corporis, hoc non facit ad id, quod simul sint in altera vita, possunt unus esse ad orientem, alter ad occidentem et regi per spiritus unus per spiritus qui versus unam plagam sunt, et alter ab iis ad alteram plagam; nam qualitas hominis facit, quod ita vel ibi sit; sicut satis concludi potest, a spirituum locis in Magno corpore, aequae distantia in altera vita, quae non aliter se habet, ac secundum qualitatem hominis; quare infans in sinu matris jacere potest, infans est in coelo, mater potest esse in inferno, et sic porro. 1748, 13 Junius.

*A multitude of people that is together on earth, or in one place, can nevertheless be so separated in the world of spirits that they are very far apart*

2319. The fact that they are in one place, in the world, VEL POST VITAM CORPORIS, does not cause them to be together in the other life: one can be to the east, the other to the west, and be ruled by spirits, one by spirits toward one quarter, and the other by those at another quarter. For a person's quality causes him to be [thus or there], as one can conclude easily enough from the location of spirits in the great body, and from distance in the other life—which is determined by nothing else but the quality of the person: so that an infant can be lying at the bosom of the mother, the infant being in heaven, while the mother may be in hell; and so forth. 1748, June 13.

It is very difficult in view of the context given by statements following the phrase VEL POST VITAM CORPORIS, to interpret *vel* (which can have either of the two meanings) here in the sense of "or on the other hand/' rather than "or what is the same."

Long puzzling brought me to the possibility that *post* might have the sense of Swedish *efter*, with the same meaning as English *after* in the expression "after His likeness" ("according to"). Then we would have "in the world, or according to the life of the body."

Of course, we can take the view that Swedenborg is "making a slip" here, and means *in vita corporis*. I would be happy to hear what others get out of it. Also, the expression *it a vel ibi* that I have bracketed [thus or there] is a very interesting one, hard to interpret. Perhaps it means "as he is or where he is."

12 In closing, I thought you might be interested in looking at this note, written on a napkin in Tokyo early this month by Mr. Tatsuya Nagashima. He was asking which of these three Japanese representations of "Swedenborg" came closest to the Swedish pronunciation. Of course, the characters individually have meanings which are to be ignored. My choice was the third of the three, since the final *-gin* Swedish is pronounced more like *-y* or *-i*:

Svedenborgu スエデンホルク  
Svedenborwi スエデンホルイ  
Svedenbori スエデンホリ  
スエデンホリ —

¶ XXXI.

**Boiling of Salt, Recently Begun in Stockholm**

In 1726 an Englishman called O'Brien and his associates began a salt-boiling operation at Danvik, not far from the city of Stockholm. They make use primarily of rock salt brought there from England and Liverpool, for it is available to them at little cost. That rock salt is of a brownish-yellow color speckled with some blackness. There are also transparent pieces, but rather seldom. Around this salt there seems to stick a kind of reddish clay, or a kind of clod, and of stone similar to it, as well as a blue clay, which here and there gets into the inner structure of the salt.

This English rock salt goes into a large container of water, where it is dissolved and the solution is stirred constantly for six or seven hours. In the meantime salt is being dissolved, but still they test to see if the solution is saturated enough, using liquid wax or a glass ball, which float on the surface as a sign that enough salt is dissolved. When the brine is strong enough, a tap is opened with a handle, and it flows down into a container underneath, and from there is brought down to the pans.

The impurities remaining in the bottom are cast into another container, and they obtain a liquid from this, from which salt can also be boiled. If some other kind of impure salt is available, that also is boiled down and purified.

The pan is thirteen inches high and approximately seven and a half feet square, made of strong iron sheets firmly connected with iron rivets. The fireplace or wall on which the pan sits is three and a

half feet high. It has the same capacity inside as the pan itself. The fireplace is a double space: a cross-piece forms the floor of one space, and beneath that is the ash-pit. The inner walls lean in towards the sides of the pan. The bottom of the pan is three to three and a half feet above the cross-piece. The wood is put on the beam, so as to burn better. The fireplace door is about three feet square, and the smoke travels away from the front and up a well-constructed chimney. There are four pans in one building. The pan is filled with liquid to within an inch and a half of the top, and a moderate fire put under it to bring the brine to a boil. The boiling must begin gently, the level of heat being about the same at the beginning of the operation as at the end. Unless the liquid is kept at an even temperature, the crust sticking to the bottom [of the pan] will cool off and then it would take a bigger fire to heat the crust up again. The boiling goes on for twenty-four hours, sometimes thirty or forty-eight, and the salt gradually falls to the bottom. Meanwhile boiling continues, slowly and moderately, until all the water has vaporized. They then take out the salt and put it into baskets, where the liquid drains out of it. It should be noted that more water drains from it if the salt is in fine grains than if the grains are larger.

From each pan they obtain four to four and a half tons of salt, and use up a foot-and-a-half measure of wood, commonly called a cord (*stafrum*).

Next to the evaporating building is a shed (*casa*) where the salt is to be dried. The smoke and heat are conducted into it through pipes made of iron, and also of clay, on which they set the baskets, and the salt is dried in them. The salt is of a white color and fine-grained.

The bottom of the pan gets encrusted with salt, which can reach a thickness of half a foot within eight to ten weeks. The crust consists of pure salt mixed with black material that comes from the clay mixed with the rock salt. The crust does not appear in the middle of the pan where the fire is, but the farther away from the middle towards the sides, the thicker is the crust that forms.

The crust is the reason why the heat must be kept even throughout the process. If it is allowed to cool off, it cannot so easily be heated up again. It also reduces the volume of the pan, which at first holds four to four and a half tons of liquid, but eventually can hardly hold three. The boiling operation must be varied in proportion to the growth of this crust.

The crust is taken out and broken up finely with hammers, then dissolved and boiled into salt again.

From a ton of English rock salt they get one and a quarter to one and a half tons of boiled-down salt. There is an increase in weight, but since the rock salt is impure, consisting of clay, mud and other kinds of dirt, it cannot be known just how much the weight increases.

¶ XXXII.

**Boiling Salt from Hot Springs, According to Agricola**

Some people boil salt from salt water that flows seething from the earth, in the following manner: "In a bubbling pool they place pottery jars. Into these, they spoon the seething water, until they



A is the pool. B a jar. C a spoon. D a pan. E a forceps