THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

BILINGUALISM AND THE LINGUIST

by **Leonard Morin**

Bilingualism is a term in common use. In fact, one hears it more and more. But do we actually know what we mean by being bilingual? Does it imply native command or just fluency in two languages? What level of fluency does bilingualism entail? The following are my reflections on the topic from the perspective of a practicing translator and interpreter.

It is often assumed, and not just by people who themselves are monolingual, that the children of immigrants who are speakers of a foreign language are bilingual. Yet, any professional linguist knows that merely growing up in a household where a language other than the *lingua franca* (in our case English) is spoken is insufficient for native command of that language. Indeed, this conception seems to imply that the mastery of languages other than English (perhaps languages linked to certain ethnicities) requires less education than gaining native fluency in English.

It is absurd to assume that a young immigrant who has grown up in the United States and spoken Spanish, German, Chinese, or Igbo at home while being educated in English in the U.S. school system would be able to read and write competently in the language of his or her parents. Born-and-bred fluency in the language necessarily requires many years of exposure and use from an early age onward, in addition to years of study. And yet, this leaves open the question as to who really is fully bilingual.

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The lack of an accepted definition of bilingualism is not helpful to translators and interpreters. It insures that our profession will be poorly understood. Below, I lay out what skills I believe a translator or an interpreter must

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Guidelines for Submission
Please submit all contributions as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word format. Articles should be limited to 1500 words or less.

The Gotham Translator is published six times a year by the New York Circle of Translators, Inc., a chapter of the American Translators Association. The deadline for acceptance of contributions is the first day of the month preceding the month of publication. Articles and other materials should be e-mailed to the Editor at mystymy_@excite.com. The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or the policies of the NYCT or the ATA. All material submitted is subject to editing and becomes the property of the New York Circle of Translators unless accompanied by a copyright statement.

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have, to highlight the complexity of bilingualism and its relation to the language professions.

Intimate knowledge and understanding of both the source and the target languages are a basic requisite. In the case of translations, one must grasp the exact meaning of the source text and be able to seamlessly transpose it into the target text. One must devote many years of study and practice to the source language to gain linguistic, cultural, and topic-specific competence—in addition to superb native fluency in the target language. The translator must render the meaning into the target text in fluent and idiomatic prose while maintaining complete accuracy. Besides language, writing skill, and technical knowledge, this task requires specific education (whether or not via a formal institution) and experience in translation. For example, it is not necessarily intuitive to convert nouns into verbs, but it often makes sense for an idiomatic translation.

Those who have grown up hearing and speaking a language at home in addition to English have a definite advantage as translators, but especially as interpreters. They will naturally be more apt in their understanding of colloquial speech and idiom in the two tongues, as well as their pronunciation. Such exposure starting at an early age will also give them a head start in their cultural competence. Although writing does not figure as a component of interpreting, an understanding of written thought is crucial, and not only for sight translation. The spoken word is often prepared in written language. In other words, years of study are a must.

Those who have grown up hearing and speaking a language at home in addition to English have a definite advantage as translators, but especially as interpreters.

Yet, on their own, these components do not necessarily lead to flawless work. The crucial asset that makes translation possible is the translator's or interpreter's mind, which is an interface between education, experience, and articulation. It is an organic processor that is constantly interacting between input and output, both preparing for and actually performing translation or interpretation. A linguist might first be exposed to a term while leisurely reading the newspaper and later find occasion to implement it on the job. But this interface begins its development with one's first language.

When one learns to read, one improves through experience and learning over the course of a lifetime. The meanings of words and their uses crystallize over many years. For instance, the word "sentimental" has several connotations. Two are "sentimental value," which is generally positive, and "sentimental fool," which is more disdainful. For most people, using this word correctly requires significant exposure to it, seeing it used and reacted to in different contexts and media. There is actually quite a lot to it. Thousands of years of philosophy have not yet succeeded in conclusively defining "happiness" or "love," not to mention "bilingualism" itself. An effective communicator, of course, will rise to this never-ending challenge.

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NYCT Member Spotlight

Vigdis Eriksen

Vigdis Ericksen is the owner and president of Ericksen Translations, a New York based company that has won numerous awards and citations.

Q How did you begin in the industry? As a translator? Interpreter?

A I grew up on a small farm outside Fredrikstad, Norway, and left home to explore the world at age 20, once I had finished upper-secondary school. I studied drama in Paris and Amsterdam, perfecting my French and learning Dutch along the way, which came relatively easy to me since I had studied German in school. In 1977, I came to New York to continue my theater studies, but after a few years I caught the translation bug and never looked back.

Q Eriksen has become a successful woman-owned business with numerous awards, what inspired you to start your own translation company? What were the challenges when you started? What are the major challenges in 2012?

A I started Eriksen Translations as a natural consequence of wanting to work for myself. After learning the ropes during a two-year stint at a translation company in Manhattan, I became a freelance translator. Soon I had so much work that I needed to hire assistants, and in 1986 I founded Eriksen Translations Inc. and set up shop at 32 Court Street, where we have remained until this day.

From a business point of view, there was actually very little competition with only a handful of Norwegian translators in the U.S. at the time. This was before the internet also! Linguistically though, the challenge back then was coining the terminology that came with new advances in technology.

As my operation grew I became more preoccupied with building an organization, and entrepreneurship eventually took the place of translation. The challenge back then was to make this switch as successful as possible!

Q In what direction do you think the industry is going? What will the industry look like in five years?

A There are two major trends driving the industry forward at the moment – first, the demand for translation is growing greater and greater as more of the world wants to engage, and second, content is being created at an almost unimaginable pace. For much of this content, machine translation is the only viable option, and I expect that in five years the great majority of translation projects will involve some aspect of MT.

There is another trend emerging though, and that is that there is a renewed appreciation of the need for high-quality human translation on high-end projects. So, I do also see a future for HT, but standards will need to be kept high!

Q How has belonging to the New York Circle benefitted you in the profession? How would you advise new members or long-term members to utilize their membership to the fullest?

A I cannot imagine how I would have advanced in my career without The New York Circle and the ATA. When I first started out there was no Internet, and I craved information about the profession. I treasured the Gotham and the Chronicle and would read them cover to cover. During the monthly Circle meetings there was a lot of camaraderie and colleagues would become friends. Since those days, information has become abundantly available at our fingertips, but nothing can replace the face-to-face experience. Since translation is a solitary occupation, it's important to form alliances with fellow linguists.

Q What do you feel are the major differences between translators working here in the States and those working overseas? Training? Work conditions?

A There used to be some differences in how translation was viewed as a profession, and there were less training opportunities available for translators and interpreters in the U.S. than then there were in other countries. This has changed completely, and here in New York there are now many great programs for people starting out in the industry.

Q What Scandinavian traditions have you kept since you moved here?

A Scandinavian countries have a reputation for honesty, fairness, and egalitarianism, and I have tried to apply these traits to Eriksen Translations right from Day 1. I also still make a big pot of gløgg every Christmas – some traditions are just too important to be broken! ■

NYCT Officer Elections
Candidate Statements

Gigi Branch-Shaw
Secretary

This year I am serving as the Interim Secretary for the Board. I am truly enjoying serving on the Board and am honored and pleased to be nominated for the Secretary in the new year. The Circle has been an invaluable resource to my work as a translator. It is a place where I have been able to connect with other language professionals and develop friendships, which have benefited me both personally and professionally. As a freelance translator, I feel the Circle has enriched my professional knowledge of the industry, which in turn has benefited my business.

To give you a little information about me, aside from the fact that I have a passion for languages like many of our members….. I joined the Circle in 2006 after completing my Certificate from NYU in French to English Translation. At that time, I was working as a project/content manager for an international marketing and e-commerce firm, using my French language skills, including translation. I currently manage a website and am growing my freelance translation business. I live in Manhattan with my active fourteen year-old son who just started high school.

L Jennewine
Program Director

It's an honor to be nominated for the position of Program Director for the New York Circle of Translators.

Here's a little information about my background. I received my certificate in Spanish to English translation from New York University this past May after a long stint in the educational and ESL publishing industry. I've been a member of the Circle since 2011, and am in the process of getting to know all of you.

If elected, there are several initiatives that I'd like to take forward:

I'd like to make the Circle meetings as stimulating, productive, and useful as possible for all of you, who are translators and interpreters in one of the world's premier translation and interpreting centers--New York City. My goal would be to make sure that you receive the most current information about the trends and areas of rapid change--as well as maintaining our core competencies in translation and interpreting--that are affecting our careers now as well as within the next three to five years.

I'd work to increase the Circle's intake of new members by organizing more networking events, including sessions on getting started as a professional translator or interpreter in the New York City metropolitan area.

Thanks for your consideration! I hope you will give me the opportunity to serve as the Circle's Program Director.

Paolo Modigliani
Treasurer

My name is Paolo Modigliani and I am running for the position of Treasurer of the NYCT.

I am an Italian<>English freelance translator. I started about seven years ago, part-time at first. My main specialty is the financial/legal field. I have been a NYCT and ATA member for the past four years.

In these past few years, since I became a member, I have felt hugely appreciative of what the NYCT has meant to me in terms of invaluable support and source of information, which I have considered crucial to my ability to perform and grow in this business. When I recently learned that I had been recommended as a possible candidate for one of the Board positions, I was utterly surprised (and flattered), but I realized that, in fact, I would indeed be delighted to give something back to the Circle by serving as Board member.

Prior to becoming a translator – after I moved to the US, almost seventeen years ago – I worked as accounting manager for three different small companies. I was handling and supervising all accounting matters, and for this purpose I was using mainstream specialized software for small businesses (QuickBooks and Peachtree) as well as Excel.

Given my experience in accounting management, developed over several years, and being accustomed to carrying out such duties diligently and meticulously, I trust that I am suitably qualified for the position of Treasurer. If elected, I would honor my commitment with conscientious dedication, so as to fulfill the needs and expectations of the NYCT Board of Directors to the best of my ability, and thereby support the Circle and its members.

Edna Di Taranto
President

"The NYCT Nominating Committee has been working very hard in order to get candidates for the open board positions. Unfortunately, they were unable to convince anyone to step up for the President-elect position. That said, I would like to present my candidacy for such position since I will be stepping down from the position of President by year's end.

This will be my 4th term (1990 – 2014). I have to say that I enjoy very much being part of the NYCT Board. It is challenging at times, but it also gives me a sense of being part of something great, of giving back to the translation community for all the blessings I've received throughout the past 28 years (I joined the NYCT in 1984). It also gives me some recognition and respect (and the President gets a "Chapter President" ribbon at the ATA Conferences.)

We have a great Board and whoever is elected for Treasurer will be a great addition to it, and the future looks brighter for the NYCT. As President-elect, I will help our upcoming President, Leonard Morin, with the transition and with my experience, and as President for the year 2013-2014, I will gladly continue the wonderful work that Leonard will be doing in the coming year, and we will be handling over a stronger and more engaging NYCT to future Boards.

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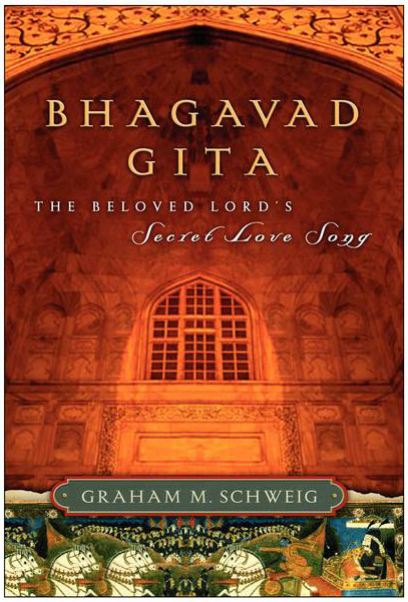
TRANSLATING SACRED SANSKRIT VERSES
My Approach to a New Translation of the Bhagavad Gītā

by **Graham M. Schweig, Ph.D.**, Professor of Philosophy & Religion, Director of the Asian Studies Program, Christopher Newport University

The third most read and cherished sacred text or scriptural writing, beyond the Bible and the Qur'an, is India's Bhagavad Gītā. Since Charles Wilkens first came out with his English translation of the text in England, well over a hundred translations of the work in English have been published. It is a work that has challenged as well as fascinated the Western world up to this very day, and thus newer translations have emerged so as to capture the text's deeply mysterious and yet profoundly influential message and to make sense of its multivalent messages.

In my translation published by Harper Collins, I have attempted to evolve a method of translation that would be most faithful to the original, and yet give the Western reader a powerful sense of what it feels like to read the work in the original Sanskrit. Since the Bhagavad Gītā (or simply "the Gītā" and abbreviated in places as simply "BG") is a work consisting of 700 verses of philosophical poetry, it requires special considerations for its translation. And since it was written in an ancient language in a different culture, it is imperative that a translation considers seriously a vision of the text within its *con*-text, which is the task of philology.



Anyone seriously engaged in the process of translation has a common hermeneutical interest: we want to understand what it is that is being expressed, what is being communicated, what it is that the author intended to say. Translation, as we know, always involves interpretations, and as translators we must make choices on how to transmit the meaning intended. Every human has written important messages to other humans that we so desire to be understood in the ways that we intended. As communicators, it is disheartening to be misunderstood and we try to communicate in various ways to avoid misunderstanding. Thus as translators, we try to avoid mistranslations and strive for accurate transmissions of meaning.

In the book itself, in the section entitled, "Textual Illuminations," I offer my readers the various ways that the text itself reveals how it wants to be understood. I unearthed an embedded hermeneutic from within the verses themselves by which every verse of the Gītā can be ultimately understood. However,

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what I have offered below in this article is my approach to translating the Gītā, something of my general vision and some of the particulars of my approach. It is my hope that my particular challenges in translating sacred Sanskrit verse may shed further light on the general task of translation.

Every verse of the Bhagavad Gītā is a meditation. Each verse should be translated so as to bring out its singular meditative richness, as well as its particular placement within the continuum of verses. I have attempted to make this English translation a "reincarnation" of the mood and feeling of the original Sanskrit verse. My goal is for the reader to receive a powerful experience of the original, to be able to hear something of the poetic form and qualities of the Sanskrit verse in the English rendering.

I view translating as something like the task of conducting a symphony orchestra. A poem in its original but inaccessible language is like an orchestral score that does not come alive until it is conducted and performed. The conductor must read the score and the musicians reincarnate the piece of music in performance. Similarly, the translator of poetry must conduct the complex piece, with all its movements and orchestral color, in a new and unique performance according to his or her appreciation and love for the music. Like musicians, the English words play their parts as they are employed to translate Sanskrit verse; their instruments of meaning are woven into the orchestral performance of the reincarnated poem.

Anyone seriously engaged in the process of translation wants to understand what it is that is being expressed, what is being communicated, what it is that the author intended to say.

The syntactical flexibility and lexical treasures of Sanskrit make the language ideal for poetic expression—each verse offers a special kind of music, a unique picture. Conveying even a modicum of these poetic qualities in the Sanskrit through translation would be an achievement. Even more challenging, epic verse may contain a blend of deep theological content woven together with subtle but very eloquent poetic or dramatic elements. Unlike English, Sanskrit prose does not depend on the ordering of words to form sentences; all syntactical information for sentence structure is embedded in the endings of nouns and verbs. That is, Sanskrit is a highly inflected language in which noun stems receive any number of endings that indicate gender, number, and case, whereas verb stems receive endings as to tense, number, and person. For this reason, a Sanskrit word often requires more than one word in English to communicate its sense.

Sanskrit is a language in which words find, as a rule, an extraordi-

nary spectrum of meanings, taking in much more of the universe than we are accustomed to finding in English. Connotative sense is more important in English than it is in Sanskrit since the latter casts a much wider lexical net for words, gathering an enormous range of denotative senses containing many shades of meaning. Context, then, for Sanskrit words is especially critical for understanding the precise denotative force of words. This is just one reason why it often takes more than one English word to transmit the particular sense of a single Sanskrit word.

In addition to all the particulars of the Sanskrit-to-English translation challenge, one wrestles with the greater issues that confront any translator whose efforts are more than a mere transfer of information—faithfulness to the original text and its literary values, rendering accurately the deeper cultural content of the text, and faithfulness to the spirit of the language into which the text is translated. These three are not easy to negotiate and must be weighed constantly throughout the translation process.

It would be impossible in the English language to imitate the tremendous poetic palette found in the Sanskrit. I believe, however, that there are certain epiphanic qualities of the text that can emerge in the process of translation, even while remaining faithful to the original text. I have endeavored to produce a very accurate reading of the original, while striving to convey mimetically some of the flow and cadence in the phraseology of the English rendition. Often this phraseology occurs naturally in compound word phrases in the Sanskrit, even phrases consisting of one or more compounds appearing as a unit, that is, a complex compound. This phenomenon that pervades the language is known as *samāsa*, in which words in related phrases merge without inflection, except for the last word of the simple or complex compound. In addition to phraseologies, I also have attempted to respect the order of words in verses. As mentioned above, Sanskrit word order is not important syntactically. But this freedom of word order makes the ordering of words in poetic verse even more crucial, as it allows such ordering to be all the more deliberate and purposeful. Thus, the particular revelational quality of each verse depends upon the ordering of its words and, further, the corresponding phrases that they form.

The verse type most often utilized in epic texts is highly structured in form and meter. Each of the many types of epic verse throughout the text is a quatrain, consisting of rhythmic long and short syllabic patterns within measured verse lines. End-rhyme is not strict, nor is it emphasized, as we often find in English; rather, internal rhyme composed of verse rhythms and patterns of assonance and consonance are a more prominent feature. Sanskrit is especially beautiful, in part because of its rules governing euphonic combination or sandhi, whereby endings of words coalesce with the beginnings of following words, creating conjunctions

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between words that produce a sonorous flow. Sanskrit, then, becomes an enticing language to hear.

Utilizing what I call "dedicated free verse translation" form, I have attempted, whenever possible, to remain at least roughly faithful to the original ordering of words and phrases. Furthermore, for the purpose of conveying the phraseologies of the original, I have endeavored to emulate an appearance of the original verse form: the quarter- or half-verse breaks found in the Sanskrit are indicated by, first, a single leading line beginning a verse, under which slightly indented phrases continuing that line appear, many times one on top of another, until the verse arrives at the next quarter line (in the case of all longer verse meters) or the half verse line (in the case of the *anuṣṭubh* meter). The indentation and line breaks in the English translation attempt to follow or mirror the four quarter line structure of the Sanskrit verse.

This approach is aided by the inclusion of supplementary undernotes, meant to give the reader an immediate grasp of the ideas of the Gītā. In these notes, readers can find the meanings of untranslated Sanskrit words retained in the translation and further explanation of names and ideas found in the verses. The reader will seldom need to leave the page to consult any other part of the book for better understanding, even during a first reading of the translation. With the new reader of the text in mind, as well as spiritual aspirants and students or scholars of religion, I have presented a translation that strives to be faithful to the original text and reflects some of the literary qualities of the original, yet which can be easily read and grasped.

This approach proves ineffective precisely because Sanskrit is a highly inflected language that requires more breathing room when reincarnated into English.

My approach to translating this famous work can be explained by contrast with the two other most common approaches. Other translations often either frees the original text, in what I call "free prose" style, or constrict the original Sanskrit verses, in what I call "constricted quatrain" verse. The result is too often a translation that either ignores the poetic qualities of the original by treating verses as if they were loosely assembled ideas, or one that loses important senses of the original by fitting the translation into a verse form that is necessarily constricting.

The free prose approach loosely embodies, at best, only a small sense of the rhythms and ordering of meanings and ideas as they present themselves, giving the text a random form very different from that of the original. On the other hand, the quatrain verse approach attempts to force the English translation to be as concise

as the original inflected words of the Sanskrit. This approach proves ineffective precisely because Sanskrit is a highly inflected language that requires more breathing room when reincarnated into English.

The poetics and ideas of each verse demand a unique treatment when translated into English—a very specific type of lineation that is sensitive to the subtleties of phrasing and cadence in the original Sanskrit verse. My approach, the "dedicated free verse translation," preserves as much of the poetic as possible, while also incorporating the full meaning of the original. This approach seeks to reap the advantages of the other two approaches yet avoid their shortcomings, thus attempting to reincarnate something of the power and spirit of the original verse.

Here, "free verse" is not as "free" as we might indicate in the Western poetic sense of the term. Rather, verse lines in the English are strictly and carefully "dedicated," or tied to the verse's original rhythms of meaning and epiphanic qualities. The ordering of ideas and words in the original is retained as much as is possible without sacrificing their appearance in the English. This approach gives the English reader a much fuller sense of the actual meaning and feel of the verse. For example, the original Sanskrit in the English transliteration of the first verse of the text appears in the following form:

Dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre,
samavetå yuyutsavaḥ ।

māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva, kim
akurvata sañjaya ॥

This verse in dedicated free verse translation is presented below, juxtaposed to the corresponding transliterated words of the verse:

Dhritarāshtra said:

On the field of dharma,
on the field of Kuru,
assembled together
desiring to fight,

Were my armies
and indeed those
of the sons of Påndu—
how did they act, O Sanjaya?

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

dharma-kṣetre
kuru-kṣetre
samavetā
yuyutsavaḥ

māmakāḥ
caiva
pāṇḍavāś
kim akurvata sañjaya

Note that the translation is dedicated to the original ordering of the words in the transliteration. One can also observe that it often takes more than one English word to translate a single Sanskrit word. This first verse of the Gītā is the most common verse form found in the work, known as *anuṣṭubh*, with eight syllables per quarter line. The two leading lines mirror the structure of the original. The leading lines and respective indented lines are carefully crafted to capture the feeling and phrasing of the Sanskrit verse to "trans-create" an overall sense of the poetic form in the original.

In translation, I have retained a few Sanskrit words, some of which have made their way into the English lexicon, as these untranslated words carry a certain lexical power and richness all their own that is too

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difficult to convey in the English. Their direct usage allows me to avoid either protracted or reductive glosses of such significant words within the verses themselves. Note that the word yoga is retained in the translation of the word's past participle form of *yukta* (derived from the verbal root *yuj*), which I have consistently translated as "absorbed in yoga." The word yoga is often translated as "discipline" and the verbal form as "disciplined" or "engaged," losing the sense that yoga is actively experienced. I utilize the word absorbed to intimate the ultimate act in yoga (*samādhi*), or a state of total absorption in the object of meditation.

Personal names are either retained in the original Sanskrit, with translated meanings provided in a note, or are translated within the verse. These various names for Arjuna and Krishna reveal intriguing aspects of their identities, as well as contributing added meaning, or even irony, to the expression of the verses. For example, Arjuna addresses Krishna as Madhusūdana, which means "slayer of the Madhu demon," when expressing his dismay over the prospect of slaying others: "I do not wish to slay them---even those who are about to slay, O Madhusūdana" (BG 1.35). In order to ensure that the fullness of the original is further illuminated, these special names are not simply ignored and replaced with antecedent primary names, as is often done; instead, they are preserved.

Additionally, pronouns are not replaced by their antecedent personal names, which is frequently the case. My assumption is that the Gītā's poetry and expression is deliberate, conscious, and erudite, and the original words in their ordering and presentation must be respected and preserved as much as possible. For easier reading, these Sanskrit names as well as all Sanskrit words are phonetically spelled, and only a very limited number of diacritic markings typically applied in conventional transliteration practices are utilized. Furthermore, most of the pronouns in the text, though technically found in the original in the masculine gender (or, in some verses, unspecified implied third person masculine), I present here in gender-free translation, as in the following verse:

One who sees me everywhere
and sees all things in me,
To such a person I am never lost
nor is such a person ever lost to me.
BG 6.30

Note how I have avoided the gender specificity of "he" with words such as "one" and "such a person." This gender-neutral way of translating verses preserves the more universal feeling that is subtly present in the masculine pronouns of the Sanskrit, and which is lacking in the English.

In Sanskrit, repetition is a powerful way of inducing a meditative-like state in the reader. Repetition conveys the depth and pursuit of a vision, but most translations simply avoid this recurring repetitive element. In my translation, however, I have not hesitated to repeat words or meanings that are found repeated in the original verse. Therefore, synonyms are not sought for words that

are repeated in the Sanskrit (what I call the "sin of synonyms"), or even for words that are repeated by virtue of being derivative forms, either from a common verbal root or noun stem. Instead, I repeat, with the same or similar English word, the Sanskrit word or its derivative that is repeated in the original:

One should raise
the self by the self;
one should not
degrade the self.

Indeed, the self alone
is the self's friend;
the self alone
is the self's enemy.

BG 6.5

In this verse, the word "self" is used to translate the important Sanskrit word *ātman*, which appears in this verse an astonishing seven times, more than any other word, appears in any given verse. In the verse below, "self" is again repeated several times:

The self is the friend
of that self
by whose self
the very self is conquered.

But for one who is not
truly one's self—
in enmity, that very self
would remain like an enemy.

BG 6.6

Although the word åtman can mean "soul," "body," "mind," "heart," etc., I have chosen to translate the word as "self," which embraces these various meanings. It has been the tendency of translators to lose the exact number of repetitions in favor of shifting between the word's different possible translations reflecting specific shades of meaning. Some translate particular instances of the word as a reflexive pronoun, most likely in order to attempt to make philosophical sense as well as to avoid repetition in the English. However, one hears and feels the power of the repetition of such a significant word in the original language. My choice of translation here, I believe, satisfies both the requirements of meaning and the power of repetition.

Even in instances in which there is great temptation to translate two words possessing the same noun stem differently, or words related to the same verbal root differently, Krishna's play on words would be lost if I chose to ignore their close relationship. In the verse quoted above, BG 6.6, the word *śatru*, or "enemy," occurs twice. First the abstract form of *śatru-tva* is found, translated in the verse as "enmity," and then the adverbial comparative form of *śatru-vat* is found, translated as "like an enemy." Again, in BG 4.42, Krishna tells Arjuna to "ascend to yoga," using the verb *uttiṣṭha*, and then immediately tells him to "stand up," using the same verb but with a different prefix, *uttiṣṭha*. Therefore my translation is as follows: "rise in yoga! Rise up, O Bhārata!" By retaining the word "rise" in both imperative statements, while providing different prepositions to express the force of the different prefixes, we can respect the original effect of the repetition that impacts the Sanskrit reader.

Furthermore, words with the negative prefix in the Sanskrit are not translated here into English as if they were a positive form; rather, such words reflect the absence of

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the word's positive noun stem. For example, the word *sukha* is "happiness," and its negative *a-sukha* is "un-happiness" or "without happiness." This negative form of the word, however, is often translated as "misery" or "suffering," meanings more suitable for the positive word *duḥkha*. Another example would be the word *a-siddha*, the negative of the word *siddha*, or "success." I translate *asiddha* as "without success," rather than the typically used translation of "failure." Again, when a reader sees or hears the word *ajñāna*, one does not hear "ignorance," as it is often treated; one hears "without knowlege" or *a-jñāna*. Note that when translators employ antonyms to translate negatives, a very different sense is conveyed.

Moreover, whenever possible I have engaged English cognates for Sanskrit words. Thus the word *sama*, often translated as "equal" or "impartial," I translate as "same." I have chosen the word's abstract forms, *samatvā* and *samatā*, which retain the cognate sense of *sama* in the translation of "sameness," rather than using the more removed senses of "equanimity" or "equality," so often engaged. Because certain words in Sanskrit are heavy with meaning, it can take several words in English to convey their sense. Frequently translators provide a simple translation for such words, which reduces the power of the word's presence or presents a meaning that does not reflect the word's complete sense. For example, the two cosmological words *prabhava* and *pralaya*, antonyms referring to the manifest and unmanifest states of the universe, are typically translated simply as "origin" and "dissolution," respectively. But in order to convey the richness of the language in the original, and to characterize cosmologically that to which these words actually refer, I have translated *prabhava* as "the coming forth into being" and *pralaya* as "the going forth into cosmic absorption," accurately reflecting the purāṇic cosmology.

With the English word "love," one finds the opposite challenge. The word "love" incorporates all varieties and intensities of affection, tenderness, endearment, passion, compassion, etc., and it is only its context that indicates a more specific nuance of love. Whereas in Sanskrit, a great array of words and phrases are used to convey the many nuances of love. Therefore any attempt to translate such words and phrases into English is problematic, since there are no comparable English words that relate the specific experience of love described by such Sanskrit terms. In English, we engage the word "love" constantly as the ultimate way to express our hearts, and there is no other word that can equal it or be substituted for it; therefore its usage is indispensible in the expression of the human heart.

My translation resorts to the ultimate English word "love," in combination with its specific sense expressed in the Sanskrit word, for any variety of Sanskrit words indicating a particular dimension of love. When translating any of these numerous Sanskrit words, I engage the word "love" so that the English translation is not deprived of love's absolute sense intended by the more particularized Sanskrit words. Therefore, the word *bhakta*, often translated as "devotee"

or even more literally, "the devoted one," is translated here as "one who has offered love."

The word's related verbal form *bhajāmi*, typically translated as "I worship" or "I honor," is translated as "I offer my love." The word *priya*, usually translated as "dear," is translated as "dearly loved," and in the Sanskrit carries a sense of the purity of love. And the word *bhāva*, literally "feeling," I translate as "feelings of love." The word *iṣṭa*, often translated as "desired," here appears as "loved" (BG 18.64). The result of this approach is that one discovers that the Bhagavad Gītā says much more about love than what we perhaps have appreciated up until now.

Finally, particle words such as "and," "even," "but," etc., are never ignored, passing them off as mere verse fillers or convenient words to complete the verse rhythm or meter. The assumption here is that each of these verses is a jewel that does not need to be altered in any way; rather, each jewel requires only to be polished until its natural glow is revealed. ■

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The interaction between active use of, and passive exposure to, language is more complex when additional languages come into play. If one is to gain fluency in two languages, one must be immersed in two universes. This takes a considerable investment of time and resources, which in turn accrues to the value of the mental interface.

When translation from one language to another comes into the mix, the linguist sets out to approximate the words and concepts of one language in the other. Since the two universes have developed autonomously, it will not always be possible to find an exact equivalent. "Sentimental" is a word in English and Spanish, but that does not necessarily mean that the English "sentimental" translates into the Spanish "*sentimental*." A capable and experienced translator, however, will find ingenious solutions through ongoing refinement of the mental interface.

I may not have succeeded in defining bilingualism. But I think that, if bilingualism were more widely and more seriously discussed, it would lead to a better understanding of the role of translators and interpreters. Only with this understanding can our value to society be fully appreciated. ■

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Hilda E. Shymanik
Treasurer

My qualifications include:

- More than 10 years of experience as a professional accountant and financial manager
- Five years of experience as an interpreter and translator (English/Spanish) in Chicago and New York
- Relevant skills including proficiency with QuickBooks and other accounting applications
- Training and education in interpretation at New York University and other institutions
- A strong work ethic, attention to detail, and a high level of responsibility

I recently relocated to New York from Chicago, where I worked as an interpreter in legal, medical, and business settings for Interprenet, one of the leading language services companies in the Midwest. Since arriving in New York early this year, I have interpreted for The Children's Law Center of Brooklyn, the Big Word interpretation and translation agency and Lionbridge Federal. I also recently completed the oral and written examinations for Federal Certification as a Court Interpreter.

Prior to becoming an interpreter, I owned and operated my own furniture business in Chicago and held a number of accounting-related positions in both the United States and Mexico. This provided me with hands-on experience in areas such as:

- Payroll administration
- Business taxation
- Accounts payable
- Accounts receivable
- Banking and financial management
- Bookkeeping
- Budgeting and cost control
- Financial reporting

I am confident that my combination of skills and experience in interpretation and accounting make me uniquely qualified for the position of Treasurer with the New York Circle of Translators. ■

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