The poetics of philosophy and the philosophy of translation

Philip Wilson

Published online: 08 Jul 2025.

Submit your article to this journal ⎘

Article views: 428

View related articles ⎘

View Crossmark data ⎘

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The poetics of philosophy and the philosophy of translation

Philip Wilson 🔳

School of Media, Language and Communication Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the poetics of philosophy by looking at poems by four philosophers – Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Simone Weil and Ludwig Wittgenstein – to explore the implications of a saying of Wittgenstein's that philosophy should probably be written as poetry. The poems are given both in the source language and in translation. The examination reveals that an awareness of the stylistics of philosophy can facilitate the reading of a source text for translation as well as its theorisation. The work of Antoine Berman is used to show that literariness cannot be divorced from philosophical enquiry. It is argued that there are three significant connections between poetry and philosophy: a poem can illustrate philosophical issues; it can be about philosophy; or it can do philosophy, which – again to follow Wittgenstein – may like poetry not be about imparting information. The translation of the work of Martin Heidegger and recent renderings of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* are used as examples to stress the relevance of this debate for practice, and the paper stresses that the skills of both the philosopher and the creative writer are needed to translate philosophy written like poetry. There are implications for how the philosophy of translation can be written.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Poetik der Philosophie, indem er Gedichte von vier Philosophen – nämlich Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Simone Weil und Ludwig Wittgenstein – betrachtet, um die Auswirkungen folgender Bemerkung Wittgensteins zu erforschen: 'Philosophie dürfte man eigentlich nur *dichten*'. Die Gedichte werden sowohl in der Originalsprache als auch in englischer Übersetzung angegeben. Die Untersuchung zeigt, dass eine Wahrnehmung der Stilistik der Philosophie das Lesen fürs Übersetzen des Quellentexts und dessen Theorisierung ermöglichen kann. Antoine Bermans Arbeit wird verwendet, um darzustellen, dass man das Literarische von der philosophischen Untersuchung nicht trennen soll. Es wird offenbart, dass es drei Hauptverbindungen zwischen der Dichtung und der Philosophie gibt, wie folgt: Ein Gedicht kann philosophische Fragen illustrieren; es kann sich mit der Philosophie befassen; es kann als Philosophie agieren, in dem Sinn, wie Wittgenstein gesagt hat, dass die Philosophie eigentlich wie die

---

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

Dichtung ist – sie scheint, Information weiterzugeben, aber tut wirklich etwas ganz Anderes. Die Übersetzung der Arbeit Martin Heideggers und drei neue englische Übersetzungen von Wittgensteins *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung* gelten als Beispiele für die Relevanz dieser Debatte für die Praxis, und der Artikel unterstreicht, dass die Fähigkeiten sowohl des Philosophen als auch eines kreativen Schriftstellers nötig sind, wenn die Philosophie als Dichtung übersetzt werden soll. Es gibt Auswirkungen darauf, wie das schriftliche Herstellen der Philosophie der Übersetzung geschrieben werden kann.

1. Legislators of the world?

This paper investigates the philosopher as poet and asks what implications philosophy as poetry has for the philosophy of translation and the translation of philosophy. I gloss foreign texts in accordance with good practice in translation studies and use my own translations and co-translations of poems, because I think it is important for theorists to be involved in the process of translation.[1] I aim in these renderings to play the same language-games as the source texts (cf. Wilson 2016, 57). I am not implying that we can set up common features in source and target text, but rather that it is possible to write a target text that stands in a family relationship of similarity to the source (cf. Chesterman 1997, 9).[2]

My examples are taken from Western philosophers and from translation into English because of my own research and linguistic background, but the method of enquiry is applicable to work from other philosophical and linguistic traditions. Placing philosophy into dialogue with stylistics serves as a reminder of the literariness of philosophy itself. All translation and translation theory begins with reading a text for translation, which is why it is important to pay attention to its style. Such an activity differs from reading for pleasure or for information. Jean Boase-Beier argues that reading for translation is a 'type of analytical reading' that 'involves constructing a sense of the poetics of the original text, that is, how its style provides evidence for the choices made by the original author' (2019, 27). Her theoretical stance chimes with that of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche:

> One thing is needful. – To give style to one's character – A great and rare art! ([1882] 1974, 232)

It is all too easy to forget this. Literariness is furthermore not just a feature of the text but also the product of how the text is read: Derek Attridge, for example, argues that it is possible to read George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* as fiction 'without at the same time reading it as literature', although it is not possible to read it as literature without reading it as fiction (2004, 96). The point is to become what Stanley Fish calls an 'informed reader' (1996).

Twenty-first-century professional philosophers are expected by their institutions to publish papers that advance their theses in a quasi-scientific manner. In turn, they require their students to write essays that adopt this approach and grade them on the quality of their argumentation. However, as Arthur C. Danto shows, these same academics and undergraduates read philosophy in a wide range of genres, observing that he 'cannot think of a field of writing as fertile as philosophy has been in generating

forms of literary expression' (2005, 55). The essay form, which dominates contemporary academic life in the humanities, only arrived on the scene with Michel de Montaigne in the sixteenth century. Within the Western canon alone we find a wide variety of genres: Plato and Hume compose dialogues; Aristotle offers lecture notes; Boethius juxtaposes prose thoughts with the verse wisdom of Lady Philosophy; Augustine and Anselm philosophise through prayer; Aquinas adapts the mediaeval disputation; Descartes pens meditations; Wittgenstein writes numbered remarks; Kierkegaard composes, amongst other things, a concluding unscientific postscript; and so-called Continental philosophers like Walter Benjamin or Jacques Derrida break all the rules. Socrates in *The Republic* demands that philosophers should become rulers (473d), which does not seem to have happened, but if Percy Bysshe Shelley is right that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world ([1840] 2002, 508), then it may be that philosophy can yet have an impact through its style.

2. Poetry, poetics and translation

For the purposes of this paper, I make a distinction between 'poetry' and 'poetics'. By the former, I refer to the form of literature written by, for example, Sappho. When printed, it tends to have a lot of white space on the right side of the page. (Oral traditions of poetry and the power of song lyrics should not be forgotten, but here I limit myself to published work.) By the latter, I refer to the use of heightened language that can produce cognitive effects in the reader by showing rather than telling (following Boase-Beier's understanding of the term above). Poetics is therefore not restricted to poetry, as is shown by the phenomenon of the prose-poem (cf. Noel-Tod 2019) or by how many readers of novels recall the way that the story is written. Alan Gopnik, in reference to *noir* fiction, notes:

> Few readers of Raymond Chandler can recall, or even follow, the plot of *Farewell, My Lovely* – Chandler himself couldn't always follow his plots. What they remember is that Moose Malloy on a Los Angeles street was as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel-food cake. (2009, np)

Chandler is a novelist, not a poet, but he writes poetic detective fiction. What is at stake here is creative energy. The boundaries between prose and poetry cannot be neatly drawn as if they were natural kinds. Anne Carson gets to the heart of the matter through metaphor: 'If prose is a house, poetry is a man on fire running quite fast through it' (2016). Both prose and poetry are dynamically configured within the same domestic scenario. The image of the burning man implies a sense of urgency that will demand a translational response.

Many translation theorists argue, however, that practice has failed to realise what is at stake. Antoine Berman, for example, identifies a tendency in Western translation to render literary works as if they were non-literary by producing a text that is 'more "clear", more "elegant", more "fluent", more "pure", than the original' ([1985] 2004, 288). This 'deforming' method of translation results in 'the destruction of the letter in favour of meaning'; he therefore proposes 'literal translation' as the way forward, using the term to denote attention to the stylistic qualities of a text in addition to the restoration of meaning ([1985] 2004, 288). Examples of deformation can be found in the

translation of philosophy. Gustav Emil Mueller, for example, introducing his translation of Hegel, writes that the source text is a work 'incomparable in its range, depth, clarity of thought and beauty of composition – but it must be decoded' (1959, 1), thus placing faithfulness to semantic transfer above any attempt to render Hegel's difficult and idiosyncratic style. The tendency to separate form and content as two different entities can be traced back to Plato's Socrates, who strips the style from Homer to find 'the pure narrative, which is free from representation' (*Republic* 393d). Signifier and signified are separated in the same way that Platonic dualism separates body and spirit. Socrates's legacy explains why texts get seen not as creation but as code, as Susan Sontag argues ([1964] 1996, 654). Contemporary literary theorists stress that style and substance are inseparable, even if it is convenient to refer to them separately (cf. Madden 2006, 1), and the growth of stylistic approaches to translation takes this insight into translation studies (cf. Boase-Beier 2019).

Debates around the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein illustrate the importance to philosophy of poetics. It might be felt that here is a philosopher who can safely be categorised within the analytic tradition. Wittgenstein, however, wrote to Ludwig von Ficker in 1919 that his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was 'strictly philosophical and at the same time literary' (in Monk 1990, 177). Critics have agreed: A.W. Moore states that the early *Tractatus* is 'not just a work of philosophy, it is a work of art' (2024), while Stanley Cavell argues that the style of the later *Philosophical Investigations* can similarly not be divorced from its content, because there is no 'aesthetic concern of the text that is separate from its central work' (2001, 250). The highly unconventional form of the *Investigations* has not stopped it being taken as a work of analytical philosophy and mined for its argumentation, but a more careful reading shows a variety of approaches rather than sustained discourse: addresses to the reader; dialogues; admissions of puzzlement; thought experiments; cognitive scenarios; extended metaphors; and so forth. We can therefore speak of the poetics of Wittgenstein, following Marjorie Perloff (1996). If I speak of his poetry, however, I refer to the formal verse he wrote, which is discussed in Section 6. Wittgenstein himself was a keen reader of verse. When in 1927 he attended meetings of the Vienna Circle, which held the *Tractatus* to be foundational for its anti-metaphysical project, he refused to participate in the discussions, turning his back on the philosophers and reading aloud the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. What might he have been trying to teach these logical positivists? It is worth considering a comment by Wittgenstein about how philosophy should be approached, which I give in the original German:

> Philosophie dürfte man eigentlich nur *dichten*. (*CV* 28)
> *philosophy might-be-allowed one in-fact only to-compose-as-poetry*

There are two translation issues here. First, as Perloff notes, the verb *dichten* is difficult to render in English, because it means both to create poetry and to create something fictional in the wider sense (2012, 716n.).[3] (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe uses the cognate noun *Dichtung* [poetry, literature] in the title of his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, which might be translated as *Fiction and Truth*. Thus, *dichten* also implies the production of literature, poetic composition across genres.) Second, the main verb *dürfte* is the imperfect subjunctive form of the modal verb *dürfen* [to be allowed], which distances Wittgenstein from his words in a way that is hard to show in English. I therefore suggest the following translation:

> Philosophy can (in fact) probably only be composed like poetry.

Appropriately for a dictum about poetic composition, Wittgenstein's words demand work from the reader, who – like the interlingual translator – is forced to ask what the philosopher might have meant. Perloff interprets Wittgenstein to be asserting that it is not what one says that is the key to doing philosophy, but rather '*how* one says it', although this would not involve writing poems (2012, 272). However, some philosophers *have* written poems. Boethius was referenced above, and the Pre-Socratics, Lucretius and Dante Alighieri can also be mentioned, while non-Western traditions make significant use of verse, including such canonical works as the Sanskrit *Bhagavad Gita* [Lord's Song] and Nārgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* [Fundamental Verses on the Middle way]. In this paper, I undertake a grammatical investigation of the philosopher as poet to see what lessons can be learned. The philosopher-poet becomes an object of comparison in a Wittgensteinian sense (*PI* 130), much like the stories in the *Investigations* about a shopping trip for apples (*PI* 1) or the beetle in a box (*PI* 293), which indicate similarities and dissimilarities in order to shed light on our language. (The former indicates how a simple transaction reveals varying uses of language. The latter shows that language must be public not private. Both parables have generated an immense amount of exegesis.)

Let us start by imagining that I, as a teacher of the philosophy of religion, were to take Wittgenstein as literally advocating the writing of verse. I accordingly compose a poem for my students, a limerick that deals with Thomas Aquinas's third proof of the existence of God:

COSMOLOGICAL

If nothing can come out of nothing,
If life cannot come from the coffin,
   Then this world all around
   Must have had a sound ground,
And that is our God, the great boffin.

The metrical rules of the genre are followed, and the thrust of Aquinas's argument is maintained: the universe must have a cause, which can only be God. Like most limericks, it is easily committed to memory and would be useful as an undergraduate mnemonic.[4] But is it philosophy? In an investigation of film's relevance to philosophy, Jerry Goodenough argues that there are three significant ways of linking the two phenomena (2005, 2–3), and I hold that the same connections can be made between formal verse and philosophy:

(1) A poem can *illustrate* philosophical issues.
(2) A poem can be *about* philosophy.
(3) A poem can function *as* philosophy.

The limerick above fits the second descriptor: it is about philosophy. It represents Aquinas's argument but does not function *as* philosophy and therefore does not fulfil Wittgenstein's recommendation, nor is it a thought-experiment. In the next four sections, I look at poems by four canonical philosophers from the Western tradition: Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Simone Weil and Wittgenstein. By turning to philosopher-

poets, we can come to conclusions about the poetics of philosophy that will be of interest to those involved in its translation and reflection on that translation.

3. The philosopher as poet: Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)

Nietzsche was a master of the German language whose work is studied on both philosophy and literature courses, because of the way that he blurs boundaries. *Also sprach Zarathustra* [Thus spoke Zarathustra] ([1887–1892] 2011), an extended meditation on the *Übermensch* [over-person] who will take humanity to its next level, is often described as a prose-poem because of the richness of its descriptive language.[5] Nietzsche was also a prolific writer of formal verse. *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* [The Gay Science] (1974) begins with Prelude of 63 poems and ends with an Appendix of 14 songs. The following poem, one of his most anthologised, is taken from that text and helps to set the mood for what follows. Coincidentally, it embodies Carson's vision of a man on fire:

> ECCE HOMO
> *behold man*
> Ja, ich weiß, woher ich stamme!
> *yes, I know from-where I originate*
> Ungesättigt gleich der Flamme
> *unsated like the flame*
> Glühe und verzehr' ich mich.
> *glow and consume I myself*
> Licht wird alles, was ich fasse,
> *light becomes everything that I seize*
> Kohle alles, was ich lasse:
> *carbon everything that I release*
> Flamme bin ich sicherlich. (Nietzsche [1882] 2021, 28)
> *flame am I surely*
>
> ECCE HOMO
> Yes, I know from where I come!
> Never sated, like the flame
> I glow and am consumed.
> All I grasp must turn to light,
> What I leave must turn to dust:
> Flame is surely what I am.

Does it make a difference if the reader is aware that this poem was written by a philosopher? The reader with some knowledge of Nietzsche can read it as an exemplification of his thought that would work very well in an introductory lecture on the great prophet of atheism. It philosophises with a hammer, to adopt the subtitle of Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* ([1989] 2008). The Latin title is an intertextual reference to Pontius Pilate's description of Jesus of Nazareth at his trial: 'Behold the man' (John 19, 5). Pilate's words are, by implication, transferred to the narrator of the poem and perhaps also to its reader. The divine founder of Christianity is to be replaced by something human and yet more than human, even if not divine, something that is not just like a flame but that *is* a flame. Fire both purifies and destroys and thus points towards the *Übermensch*. This poem burns bright. It shows the spirit in which Nietzsche wrote and forms a way into the mind of the philosopher. The first descriptor above, it illustrates

philosophy. Those who want to know what the *Übermensch* is can be shown this poem, and they will behold somebody on fire. The style reveals the author's mind.

4. The philosopher as poet: Karl Marx (1818–1883)

The young Marx aspired to a literary rather than a philosophical career. Over 120 poems from his student years survive, many of them love lyrics to his future wife Jenny von Westphalen, heavily influenced by Heinrich Heine. Some are on philosophical themes, such as the following self-styled epigram:

> EPIGRAMM
> Kant und Fichte gern zum Aether schweifen,
> *Kant and Fichte gladly to-the ether soar*
> Suchten dort ein fernes Land,
> *would-seek there a distant land*
> Doch ich such' nur tüchtig zu begreifen,
> *but I seek only competently to grasp*
> Was ich – auf der Strasse fand! (Marx 2022, 38)
> *what I on the street found*
>
> EPIGRAM
> Kant and Fichte like to soar to the aether,
> Seeking there a distant land.
> But I just seek to be a scholar
> Of what I … found upon the ground! (Marx 2022, 39)

The poem points to the resolute materialism and rejection of metaphysics that would characterise Marx's thinking when he turned from literature to devote himself to the practice and theory of politics. It is written with the stinging satire that he directed on his philosophical enemies. Marx can be a very funny writer, and in this poem his acerbic wit meets the philosophical abstraction that he associates with Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. True to its genre, the poem is concise and forthright. It is written in elegiac couplets, an elevated form that clashes bathetically with the earthy image of the last line: philosophy is to be done not in the clouds, but on the ground. It provides an insight into how Marx's mind was working in his youth, but it cannot stand alongside the theoretical writings, because it does not *do* philosophy. There is no engagement with Kant and Fichte. It is *about* philosophy, like the limerick above. To read Marx the poet is not to find a second Lucretius but the rhetoric that he would later use to great effect in his philosophy. Gareth Stedman Jones remarks, for example, that the phrases of *The Communist Manifesto* 'have resonated in literature and the political imagination long after the disappearance of the circumstances which originally brought them into being' (2016, 241). The literariness of the later Marx is forged in the poetry of the early Marx. Marx's verse shows why Wittgenstein places such stress on the way that philosophy is written.

5. The philosopher as poet: Simone Weil (1909–1943)

Weil also had literary ambitions, but unlike Marx she persevered in literary activity to the end. She composed a verse play, *Venice Saved* (2019), as well as a handful of poems

(2023), which she hoped to publish, but her early death prevented literary success in her lifetime. She wrote to the poet Paul Valéry in 1937 asking for advice and sending him her poem about Prometheus. He replied that he liked it but found it too didactic, a versified piece of exposition. In her final poem, 'La porte' [The Door / Gate], written in 1941–1942, Valéry's advice has been taken, and the poem eschews didacticism. Here are the two final stanzas:

> La porte est devant nous; que nous sert-il de vouloir?
> *the gate is before us what to-us is-of-use-it of to-want*
> Il vaut mieux s'en aller abandonnant l'espérance.
> *it has-value better oneself away to-go abandoning the hope*
> Nous n'entrerons jamais. Nous sommes las de la voir.
> *we not shall-enter never we are weary of it to-see*
> La porte en s'ouvrant laissa passer tant de silence
> *the gate in itself opening let pass so-much of silence*
>
> Que ni les vergers ne sont parus ni nulle fleur;
> *that neither the orchards not are appeared nor no flower*
> Seul l'espace immense où sont le vide et la lumière
> *only the space immense where are the void and the light*
> Fut soudain présent de part en part, combla le cœur,
> *was suddenly present of part in part brought-down the heart*
> Et lava les yeux presque aveugles sous la poussière. (Weil, 2023, 128)
> *and washed the eyes almost blind under the dust*
>
> The gate is before us; what's the use of our desire?
> It is better to leave and to give up on all hope.
> We shall never get in. Watching it has made us tired.
> So much silence came out when the gate was once opened
>
> that neither the orchards nor the flowers have appeared;
> only the immense space of the void and of the light,
> which then became present and that overwhelmed the heart,
> and bathed our eyes at last, almost blinded by the dust. (Weil, 2023, 129)

As translators Silvia Caprioglio Panizza and Philip Wilson comment:

> For Weil, the ability to contemplate contradiction – which is inherent in human existence – is the essence of philosophy … Poetry is the perfect vehicle for presenting aspects that are incompatible with each other … It is metaphorically possible for Weil to see a gate as a barrier and as a way through at the same time, and to explore this contradiction over twenty lines. (2023, 34)

The poem *does* philosophy. It enables Weil to embed her metaphysics within a tight poetic framework, following the third descriptor above, making it paradigmatic of 'a sort of attention' that can 'enlighten the understanding and ameliorate the affections' (Diamond 1982, 30).[6] No wonder she kept on writing until her untimely death in London in 1943.

6. The philosopher as poet: Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951)

In Section 2, I noted how critics such as Perloff and Cavell redirect scholarship to the way in which Wittgenstein wrote. Wittgenstein himself notes that his sentences are designed to be read slowly (*CV* 77), which is a mark of literary writing, just as reading slowly is a

mark of literary reading. When I buy a thriller, I want a page-turner, but a literary novel asks its readers to attend to the manner of its telling and will typically be read more slowly (Mullan 2011). It is time to turn to Wittgenstein the poet. Even though he only wrote one poem, the appropriately named 'Ein Gedicht' [A Poem], it offers clues about the activation of meaning in philosophical writing:

EIN GEDICHT
a poem
Wirfst du mir der treuen Liebe
throw you to-me of-the loyal love
      duftigen Schleier übers Haupt,
      fragrant veil over-the head
wenn die Hände sich bewegen
whenever the hands themselves move
wenn die Glieder sanft sich regen
whenever the limbs softly themselves stir
ist die Seele sinnberaubt.
is the soul sense-bereft
Kannst du's fassen wenn sie wehet,
can you-it grasp whenever it blows
sich beweget leise nur
itself moves gently only
und ins Herze präget tiefsie ihre Spur.
and into-the heart presses deep its trace
Wenn der Morgen seine Glocke läutet
whenever the morning its bell rings
Zieht der Gärtner durch des Gartens Raume
goes the gardener though of-the garden space
Rührt mit leichten Füssen seine Erde //dann die Erde//
touches with light feet his earth // then the earth //
und die Blumen wachen auf und sehen
and the flowers wake up and look
fragend ihm ins helle,
questioning to-him into-the bright
ruhige Antlitz:
peaceful countenance
Wer wob um den Fuss Dir doch den Schleier
who wove around the foot to-you then the veil
der uns zahrt berührt wie Windesfächeln
that us tenderly touches like wind-breath
Stehet Zephir selbst in Deinen Diensten?
stands Zephyr itself in your services
War's die Spinne, war's die Seidenraupe? (*CV*, 100)
was-it the spider was-it the silkworm

In my translation, written for this paper, I have rationalised punctuation and adopted the first textual variant in the eleventh line:

POEM
If you cast upon my head
      of truest love the fragrant veil,
then, when hands are softly blurring,
and when limbs are softly stirring,

my soul's senses seem to fail.
Can you grasp it as it's blowing,
as so soft it moves apart,
marking deep within the heart?
When the morning rings aloud its bell,
the gardener passes through the garden's space
and touches with light feet the ground he owns,
and the flowers all wake up, beholding
with questions his bright
peaceful countenance:
who wove round your foot this veil, then,
which touches us tenderly, like the wind's breath?
Does Zephyr itself stand in your service?
Was it the spider? Was it the silkworm?

'Ein Gedicht' is a love lyric in which lover and beloved are united in the setting of a garden.[7] It is reminiscent of the poetic world of Eduard Mörike (1804–1875), whom in a letter to Bertrand Russell of 1914 Wittgenstein describes as 'really … a *great* poet' whose poems are 'among the best things we have' (in McGuinness 2008, 65). To read it only to garner biographical information about Wittgenstein would be to miss the literary point, however; therefore, let us look at the poetics. Following relevance theory, Adrian Pilkington sees poems as characterised by weak implicatures (2000, 75–83). A weak implicature leaves meaning open. If you are playing the board game *Cluedo*, and Vildan states that Miss Scarlett committed murder in the conservatory with the revolver, then the implicature is strong. Vildan expects you to eliminate possibilities by confirming or refuting her accusation, perhaps by showing a card that proves that Miss Scarlett was elsewhere in the house. If, however, Wittgenstein asks you who wove the veil around your foot and speculates on whether it was the west wind, the spider or the silkworm, then the implicature is weak. It would be a category error to wonder which of these entities really did the weaving and to try to answer the question. More important are such factors as: the recurrence of the word *Schleier*, which takes the reader back to the second line, where the 'veil' is an image of 'true love'; the possibility that the natural world may serve the beloved; the near alliteration of *Zephir*, *Spinne* and *Seidenraupe*, which is preserved in the English 'Zephyr', 'spider' and 'silkworm'. Wittgenstein is opening possibilities when he asks us who wove the web – the west wind, the spider or the silkworm – not closing them. He is trying to make us see the world differently. That is the point of the poetic language-game (cf. *PI* 23). It is also the point of Wittgenstein's philosophy (cf. Monk 1990, 533).

Is this then a great poem, to be put in the canon of German literature alongside the lyrics of Mörike? I do not think so. It reads more like a skilful imitation of a genre, a competent pastiche, unsurprising in view of the efficiency that Wittgenstein brought to everything he undertook: engineering, logic, aeronautics, philosophy, architecture, whistling, and playing the clarinet. It reads as if it were a translation itself, an unfinished draft of a missing source text, with Wittgenstein initially reproducing the rhythm and rhymes of that text, and then abandoning formalism, perhaps in the attempt to foreground imagery. Brian McGuinness describes 'Ein Gedicht' as one of Wittgenstein's jokes in a high-flown manner, revealing that it was written to say thank you for a gift of socks when Wittgenstein was working as a gardener (2011, 21). However, it does have literary features, and their importance can be brought out if we choose to read it

as a literary artefact rather than as an exercise in retrieving information. This poem manifests itself as literary when we read it in a certain way: slowly; repeatedly; making links between Wittgenstein's choices of words; allowing the rhymes to lead our reading; and so on. In brief, when we read so that linguistic stimuli within the text can trigger cognitive events in us (Pilkington 2000, 189). We find ourselves engaging poetically with a very serious joke, which is again in the spirit of Mörike, many of whose poems are comic but are expressed earnestly enough.

A literary reading of this poem allows us to better appreciate arguments that Wittgenstein's style is not ornamental but essential. To read the *Investigations* as a set of strong implicatures is to go astray. To read it as a set of weak implicatures, demanding aesthetic effort, is a better way of approaching the text. Wittgenstein himself stresses that he wants readers of his work to think their own thoughts (*PI* 5). Terry Eagleton claims that Wittgenstein is 'the philosopher of poets and composers, playwrights and novelists' (1994, 153). Perhaps the prevalence of weak implicatures in his writing can account for this popularity with artists. Poems are not there to be decoded but to be interpreted. The same is true of philosophy, which has implications for its translation and the theorisation of that translation.

7. The poetics of philosophy

This paper has presented four poems by canonical philosophers, each of which illustrates a different aspect of philosophical poetics:

- Nietzsche's 'Ecce Homo': a poem can embody the spirit of a philosopher's writing.
- Marx's 'Epigramm': a poem can be about philosophy while not doing philosophy. 'Epigramm' also illustrates the literary talent upon which Marx would draw when he turned to philosophy as a career.
- Weil's 'La porte': a poem can do philosophy. 'La porte' instantiates a philosophical dilemma within the constraints of verse. It is a self-contained exercise in attention.
- Wittgenstein's 'Ein Gedicht': philosophy can be read in terms of a weak implicature, that is, how philosophical work needs to be completed by the reader.

The four texts show how philosophy is embedded within linguistic choices. Translators and translation theorists who can reconstruct the poetics of a philosophical text will be better placed to translate it or describe it, respectively.

Let us now return to Wittgenstein's advice that philosophy is to be undertaken as poetry. No single interpretation can capture what he means, and this multiple resonance is to be celebrated. Perloff (1996, xix) links his words to another remark he made about poetry:

> Do not forget that a poem, even though it is composed in the language of information, is not used in the language-game of giving information. (*Z* 160)

Poetry looks as if it is playing the language-game of giving information, but it would be a category error to read, say, Homer's *Iliad* as a historical account of the Trojan War, or Sappho's lyrics as versified autobiography. To use Wittgenstein's terms, the surface grammar of poetry deals with the world of facts, but the depth grammar explores a

more mysterious world (cf. *PI* 664). Poems can, of course, supply important details for scholars, but their function is discerned in the effects they have on their readers, not in the information that they present. Hence, Aristotle defines Athenian tragedy by its evocation of pity and terror and their subsequent purgation, rather than in terms of what the spectators learn about Greek history or mythology (*Poetics* 1449b). Angus Fletcher builds on Aristotle to argue that rather than seeing literature as 'a species of argument' about what is true or false, we should see it as a technology for generating 'mental uplifts' (2021, 395). Poetry is expressive of human subjectivity. It is 'the language of the spirit and the soul and not of the discursive mind', as Roger Housden puts it (2009, xiii). People turn to it when everyday language is no longer enough. (It is noteworthy how often poems are used at weddings and funerals, and anthologies of suitable texts are now readily available on the market.)

To do philosophy as poetry would therefore be to write a philosophy that is not about giving information. As Oskari Kuusela argues, a philosophical representation is not about empirical accuracy, because its truth depends on 'whether it clarifies the issues and enables one to solve relevant problems', which is why it resembles 'composing a poem rather than recording facts' (2023, 27). Poems are artefacts that readers must meet half-way. If a poem gives away too much, it will be shallow and not worth reading. However, if it refuses to give anything away, it will be obscure and similarly not worth reading. Good poems typically reward the effort made by readers. Gerard Manley Hopkins, for example, states that lines in his poetry that appear 'dark' at a first reading may later 'explode' into meaning (1935, 90). If the purpose of philosophy is to make things clear, then we can go further and borrow a mantra from creative writing: it must tell by showing. Readers make poems their own. Or they reject them. Similarly, the poetics of philosophy allows readers to come to their own conclusions by making them meet the author half-way. Jan Westerhoff, for example, argues that the versified form of Nārgārjuna's philosophy 'often leads to a very condensed expression of arguments which requires a variety of details to be filled in' (2009, 6).

Wittgenstein's words about philosophy as poetry should not be taken as dogma, which would be against the spirit of the *Investigations*. He is sketching one possibility, as is shown by his use of the subjunctive modal *dürfte* (see above). Similarly, philosopher-poets find one possibility of writing about philosophy and stand as a reminder that there are other approaches to reflection apart from the analytic. William Fitzgerald argues that Lucretius composed *De rerum natura* [On the Nature of Things] in verse because 'it is not enough for us readers to throw our arms in the air and surrender; we must also see the world as Lucretius wants us to see it' (2013, 235). In Robert Pirsig's 1974 novel, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, the narrator comes to realise that it is necessary to take a holistic view that goes beyond division into form and content. We need:

> to break down the barriers of dualistic thought that prevent a real understanding of what technology is – not an exploitation of nature, but a fusion of nature and the human spirit into a new kind of creation that transcends both. ([1974] 1999, 291)

Not to see a motorcycle as more than the sum of its parts is to fail in maintaining one. Applying this attitude to philosophy will sometimes involve turning away from abstract discussion and reading the words of a poet, as Wittgenstein did with the Vienna Circle:

Charles Taylor's latest monograph (2024), for example, is a philosophical exploration of modernity through Romantic poetry. And it will sometimes involve composing philosophy as poetry. What are the implications of this debate for those who research philosophy and translation? The next section begins with two brief case-studies by way of practical illustration.

8. The poetics of the philosophy of translation

Debates rage around the translation of Martin Heidegger, a philosopher notorious for the difficulty and (deliberate) obscurity of his writing. His lecture series *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)] is available in two English translations commissioned by the same press around the same time (see Greaves 2019, 60–61). The first translation by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly ([1989] 1999) imitates Heidegger's style, paying attention to the phenomenologist poetics of the lectures. It is, however, very difficult to follow the target text without reference to the German source. The second translation by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu ([1989] 2012) is accordingly designed to eliminate what the translators considered the excesses of the first. Tom Greaves argues that both approaches have their dangers, and that:

> The movement through and between familiar and unfamiliar senses may not be possible in a single translation, and to follow the movement of thought that Heidegger initiates may require us to work between translations. (2019, 61)

The 1999 translation should not be seen as a failure, but as part of a larger project of the representation of Heidegger in English. It is a mistake to think that any one translation of a thinker as complex as Heidegger could possibly capture all that is being said, therefore multiple translations are to be welcomed. Great poets such as Sappho similarly exist in many renderings, and the more the better. (See Jay and Lewis (1996) for an overview of Sappho in English translation.)[8]

Now that Wittgenstein's work is in the public domain, new translations are being commissioned of the *Tractatus*, which can stand beside the authorised translations by (as it was thought) C.K. Ogden (Wittgenstein [1921] 1990), and David Pears and McGuinness (Wittgenstein [1921] 2001).[9] The latter forms the basis of a centenary edition by Luciano Bazzocchi (Wittgenstein 2021) that presents the text in a tree-form to restore the inner logic of Wittgenstein's numbering system. English-language versions have recently appeared by Michael Beaney (Wittgenstein [1921] 2023), Alexander Booth (Wittgenstein [1921] 2024a) and Damion Searls (Wittgenstein [1921] 2024b), with a fourth soon to appear by David Stern, Katia Saporiti and Joachim Schulte (Wittgenstein [1921] forthcoming). In a review of the first three, Moore comments:

> Beaney's may be the best, but Booth's is the most stylish, and Searls's has a fluency which sometimes brings the ideas to life in a way that neither of the other two, nor either of the two older translations, does. (2024)

It is significant to see a professional philosopher paying attention to the poetics of translation in this way, looking at issues of stylishness, fluency and liveliness. The *Tractatus* is a work of crystalline beauty, and it is reasonable to expect that a translation should show that to readers. However, Moore sounds a note of caution:

> There is a risk that translators will try so hard to preserve its aesthetic merits that they fail to remain faithful to Wittgenstein's philosophical intentions. (2024)

He goes on to discuss some serious concerns that he finds in the three versions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate further, and the reader is referred to Moore's review for a full discussion, but two considerations ought to be put forward. First, all translations will have errors. Willis Barnstone notes that translation mistakes are as inevitable as typographical errors in printed books, but that this does not necessarily destroy the value of the whole: 'Better a magnificent translation by a Borges or a Camus with a few mistakes than an "accurate", ponderous translation unredeemed by art' (1993, 121). As Greaves argues, the readerly ideal is to work 'between translations', and Anglophone readers of the *Tractatus* will soon be able to work between seven. These renderings may thus – like the philosopher-poet – function as Wittgensteinian objects of comparison (*PI* 130). There is never a final translation as such. Any new translation will bring out aspects of the source but obscure others (cf. Wittgenstein on aspect, *PPF* 111–261).[10] Second, however, even if we accept that errors will get made, a larger problem arises if – as Moore asserts – the style is communicated at the expense of what the work is trying to do. In her introduction to Searls's translation, Perloff argues that '*what* is said is never as important as *how* it is said in the translating language', which for her means that the ideal translator of the *Tractatus* is 'perhaps not a professional philosopher at all, but what we call a creative writer' ([1921] 2024, xvii). The dualistic split between form and content again raises its head. This time, form is privileged over content, rather than the reverse. It should be recalled that Wittgenstein's dictum stresses *both* the philosophy *and* how that philosophy gets done, just as he stressed to von Ficker that the *Tractatus* was both philosophical and literary (in Monk 1990, 177). Meaning cannot be divorced from style, and neither should take precedence in translation. In order to decide how something is to be said, we simultaneously need to be aware of what is to be said. It makes practical sense to speak of the literary in different ways, but it is necessary to recall that we are not thereby positing independent entities. Eagleton notes how: 'People sometimes talk about digging out the ideas "behind" the poem's language, but this spatial metaphor is misleading … the language of the poem is *constitutive* of its ideas' (2007, 2). This approach from literary criticism chimes with a reading of the *Investigations* as showing meaning found not in the Platonic Forms, but in forms. So, who would be the ideal translator of this masterpiece? Perhaps we can follow Johann Gottfried von Herder who argues that it would be a blend, the translator who is 'at once philosopher, philologist, and poet' ([1766–1767] 1977, 207).

We can now go further and argue that the philosophy of translation can also be done as poetry, while recalling that other approaches are not ruled out. An insight from New Area Studies shows what this might mean in practice (cf. Wilson 2021, 19). Roman Milutinović argues that researchers must change their approach by offering insights that are 'metaphorical rather than metonymical', because a 'metaphorical model of knowledge would abandon all pretence that a total, integrated knowledge is possible' (2020, 169). There is never going to be a complete philosophy of translation that captures all aspects of an ancient and complex phenomenon. Rather, there will be many attempts to come to terms with different aspects, some of which will succeed and some of which will fail, just as poets try to envision the

world with various degrees of success. The world needs poetry, which can hold contradictions and ambiguity, show things in a new light, and allow readers to solve problems for themselves. As Sontag argues: 'We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more' ([1964] 1996, 660). Or as Nietzsche puts it in his 1886 preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*:

> It should have been singing, this 'new soul', not speaking! What a shame that I dared not say what I had to say then as a poet: I might have been able to do it! ([1872] 1993, 6)

9. Concluding poetic postscript

It is an interesting time in philosophy. Boundaries blur as philosophy is composed as poetry. Peter Hacker writes philosophical dialogues and Lars Iyer writes philosophical novels. Books aimed at a popular market bring philosophy into dialogue with The Avengers, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Mad Men, and many other cultural icons. David Chalmers's analytic enquiry into the possibility of virtual worlds (2022) is full of thought experiments, engaging commentary and wonderful illustrations by Tim Peacock.[11] Meanwhile, supposedly non-philosophical fields such as sport are drawn into the philosophical language-game: Simon Critchley has written a 'poetics of football', considering why it is often termed a 'beautiful game' (2018). And enquiry into the philosophy of translation is only just beginning, as evidenced by this journal. This new research field must reach out to other disciplines as it establishes itself in the academy. By paying attention to the literariness of the philosophical, translators will be able to improve practice, and theorists will better understand what it means to reflect upon the translated world.

Walter Benjamin argues that works of art live on in the afterlife of translation ([1923] 2021, 90). I argued above that Wittgenstein's 'Ein Gedicht' can through its afterlife teach us how to read philosophy, and I close this paper with another translation (Wilson 2012, 352). My intention is not to displace either Peter Winch's published version (*CV* 100) or my own translation above, but to offer a further variation on a theme. Wittgenstein's sprawling poem becomes a rhymed sonnet. The more translations the better, as we struggle to come to terms with people on fire, doing philosophy, running quite fast through a house.

> POEM
> Whenever you wrap my head in the veil
> that they call TRUE LOVE
> and your hands start to move,
> the fragrance is such that all my senses fail.
> The morning rings its bell: in the breeze
> I trust you sense the stirrings of the heart,
> the calm west wind of the gardener's art
> and the flowers looking up into his face.
> They question which weaver wove
> the veil that flutters in Eden
> round the feet that walk through the garden
> and your face shines out and I am alive.
> Does Zephyr stand in your command?
> Does spider or silkworm wrap when you demand?

Notes

1. I include unglossed versions of the four source texts as the Appendix, to allow holistic reading.
2. If a line in a German poem alliterates on 'f', for example, that does not imply that the English translation must do so. The language-games of poetry and of poetry translation themselves are neither homogeneous nor constant in place and time.
3. It is sometimes asserted that *dichten* comes from *dicht* [thick] and thus connotes 'thickening' (cf. Perloff 2012, 725). This is, however, a false etymology. For an extended discussion of *dichten* and its translation, see Schalkwyk (2004, 56–59).
4. An internet search will reveal many philosophical limericks, ranging from individual examples to sequences that take the reader through the entire history of philosophy. In this sense, Wittgenstein's advice is being enthusiastically followed. Verse composition is also of course a way of enabling texts to be more easily learned by heart (cf. Westerhoff on Sanskrit philosophy 2009, 6).
5. The term *Übermensch* raises translation issues, therefore I leave it in German.
6. Cora Diamond is here writing specifically about the novels of Charles Dickens within a discussion of literature in general, but her words are particularly apt in reference to Weil, for whom attention was a central philosophical theme.
7. For a discussion of the importance of the garden as a metaphor in Wittgenstein's writings, see Schalkwyk (2004, 61 ff.)
8. There are other issues here that I cannot discuss in detail. The second translation, for example, can be held to be more accurate than the first. The point is that writing like Heidegger's will generate many translational responses.
9. The former is now known to be mostly the work of Frank Ramsey. It also incorporates suggestions made by Wittgenstein himself.
10. It is similarly necessary to consider work across the whole of a philosopher's career. Wittgenstein's *Investigations* do not say the final word, for example: *On Certainty* (1969) offers another object of comparison.
11. What could be more poetic than the thought experiment? Analytic philosophers have introduced readers to: trolley problems; dying violinists; brains in vats; scientists who live in black-and-white worlds but do research on colour; bored teenagers who create our world on their computer on a rainy afternoon; and many other exotic scenarios. Creative boundaries are again fuzzy.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Bloomsbury for permission to reproduce lines from:

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Philip Wilson http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1207-3912

References

Aristotle. 1996. *Poetics*. Translated by M. Heath. London: Penguin. (Original work written c. 335 BCE.)

Attridge, D. 2004. *The Singularity of Literature*. London: Routledge.

Barnstone, W. 1993. *The Poetics of Translation*. London: Yale University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1923) 2021. "The Translator's Task." Translated by S. Rendall. In *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by L. Venuti. 4th ed., 89–97. London: Routledge.

Berman, A. (1985) 2004. "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign." Translated by L. Venuti. In *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by L. Venuti, 2nd ed., 276–289. London: Routledge.

Boase-Beier, J. 2019. *Translation and Style*. London: Routledge.

Caprioglio Panizza, S., and P. Wilson. 2023. "Simone Weil as Poet." In *Mirror of Obedience: The Poems and Selected Prose of Simone Weil*. Edited and translated by S. Caprioglio Panizza and P. Wilson, 1–43. London: Bloomsbury.

Carson, A. 2016. "I Do Not Believe in Art as Therapy." *The Observer*, October 30. (Interview by Kate Kellaway.)

Cavell, S. 2001. "The Investigations' Everyday Aesthetics of Itself." In *Wittgenstein in America*, edited by T. McCarthy and S. Stidd, 250–266. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chalmers, D. 2022. *Reality+: Virtual Worlds and the Problems of Philosophy*. London: Allen Lane.

Chesterman, A. 1997. *Memes of Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Critchley, S. 2018. *What We Think about When We Think About Football*. London: Profile.

Danto, A. C. 2005. "Philosophy and / as / of Literature." In *A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature*, edited by G. L. Hagberg and W. Jost, 52–67. Oxford: Blackwell.

Diamond, C. 1982. "Anything but Argument?" *Philosophical Investigations* 5 (1): 23–41.

Eagleton, T. 1994. "My Wittgenstein." *Common Knowledge* 3: 152–157.

Eagleton, T. 2007. *How to Read a Poem*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Fish, S. 1996. "What Is Stylistics and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things about It?" In *The Stylistics Reader*, edited by J. J. Weber, 94–112. London: Routledge.

Fitzgerald, W. 2013. *How to Read a Latin Poem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fletcher, A. 2021. *Wonderworks: Literary Invention and the Science of Stories*. London: Swift.

Goodenough, J. 2005. "Introduction I: A Philosopher Goes to the Cinema." In *Film as Philosophy*, edited by R. Read and J. Goodenough, 1–28. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gopnik, A. 2009. "Talk It Up." *The New Yorker* 85 (3).

Greaves, T. 2019. "Heidegger." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Philosophy*, edited by P. Rawling and P. Wilson, 49–62. London: Routledge.

Heidegger, M. (1989) 1999. *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning*. Translated by P. Emad and K. Maly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Original work written 1936–1938)

Heidegger, M. (1989) 2012. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Translated by R. Rojcewiz and D. Vallega-Neu. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Original work written 1936–1938)

Herder, J. G. (1766–1767) 1977. "The Ideal Translator as Morning Star". Translated by D. Robinson. In *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche*, edited by D. Robinson, 207–208. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Hopkins, G. M. 1935. *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Housden, R. 2009. *For Lovers of God Everywhere*. London: Hay House.

Jay, P., and C. Lewis, eds. 1996. *Sappho through English Poetry*. London: Anvil.

Kuusela, O. 2023. "Wittgenstein, Nietzsche and Future Philosophers: The Notion of Truth in Philosophy." In *Wittgenstein and Nietzsche*, edited by P. Zambito and S. Takagi, 147–166. London: Routledge.

Madden, M. 2006. *99 Ways to Tell a Story*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Marx, K. 2022. *Evening Hour*. Translated by P. Wilson. Todmorden: Arc.

McGuinness, B., ed. 2008. *Wittgenstein in Cambridge*. Oxford: Blackwell.

McGuinness, B. 2011. "Wittgenstein and Biography." In *The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein*, edited by O. Kuusela and M. McGinn, 13–23. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Milutinović, Z. 2020. "Comparative Area Studies without Comparisons: What Can Area Studies Learn from Comparative Literature?" In *The Rebirth of Area Studies: Challenges for History, Politics and International Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Z. Milutinović, 151–176. London: I.B. Tauris.

Monk, R. 1990. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*. London: Vintage.

Moore, A. W. 2024. "A Tove on the Table." In *London Review of Books*, Vol. 46, No. 15. https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n15/a.w.-moore/a-tove-on-the-table.

Mueller, G., Trans. 1959. *Hegel's Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. New York: Philosophical Library.

Mullan, J. 2011. "Midnight's Children." *The Guardian*, February 26.

Nietzsche, F. (1882) 1974. *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House.

Nietzsche, F. (1872) 1993. The Birth of Tragedy. Translated by S. Whiteside. London: Penguin.

Nietzsche, F. (1882) 2021. *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Hamburg: Nikol.

Nietzsche, F. (1887–1892) 2011. *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Hamburg: Nikol.

Nietzsche, F. (1989) 2008 Twilight of the Idols. Translated by D. Large. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Noel-Tod, J., Ed. 2019. *The Penguin Book of the Prose Poem*. London: Penguin.

Perloff, M. (1921) 2024. Foreword: Why a New Translation of the Tractatus? Translated by D. Searls and L. Wittgenstein.*Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. New York: Norton.

Perloff, M. 1996. *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Perloff, M. 2012. "Writing Philosophy as Poetry." In *The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein*, edited by O. Kuusela and M. McGinn, 714–728. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pilkington, A. 2000. *Poetic Effects*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Pirsig, R. (1974) 1999. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. London: Vintage.

Plato. 1988. *Republic*. Translated by R. Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Original work written c. 375 BCE)

Schalkwyk, D. 2004. "Wittgenstein's 'Imperfect Garden'." In *The literary Wittgenstein*, edited by J. Gibson and W. Huemer, 55–74. London: Routledge.

Shelley, P. (1840) 2002. "A Defence of Poetry." In *Shelley's Poetry and Prose: Authoritative Texts, Criticism*, edited by D. H. Reiman and N. Fraistat, 2nd ed., 478–508. New York: Norton.

Sontag, S. (1964) 1996. "Against Interpretation." In *20th Century Literary Criticism*, edited by D. Lodge, 652–661. London: Longman.

Stedman Jones, G. 2016. *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*. London: Penguin.

Taylor, C. 2024. *Cosmic Connections*. London: Harvard University Press.

Weil, S. (1955) 2019. *Venice Saved*. Edited and translated by S. Caprioglio Panizza and P. Wilson. London: Bloomsbury.

Weil, S. 2023. *Mirror of Obedience: The Poems and Selected Prose of Simone Weil*. Edited and Translated by S. Caprioglio Panizza and P. Wilson. London: Bloomsbury.

Westerhoff, J. 2009. *Nārgārjuna's Madhyamaka*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, P. 2012. "Wittgenstein as Poet." In *Ethik – Gesellschaft – Politik*, edited by M. G. Weiss, and H. Greif, 351–353. Kirchberg am Wechsel: Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society.

Wilson, P. 2016. *Translation after Wittgenstein*. London: Routledge.

Wilson, P. 2021. "Not Only Rivers and Mountains: Why Story Matters in New Area Studies." *New Area Studies* 2 (1): 7–38.

Wittgenstein, L. (1921) 1990. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by C. K. Ogden [F. Ramsey]. London: Routledge.

Wittgenstein, L. (1921) 2001. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by D. Pears and B. McGuinness.

Wittgenstein, L. (1921) 2023. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by M. Beaney. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1921) 2024a. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by A. Booth. London: Penguin.

Wittgenstein, L. (1921) 2024b. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by D. Searls. New York: Norton.

Wittgenstein, L. (1921) Forthcoming. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by D. Stern, K. Saporiti and J. Schulte. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953) 2009. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. [*Philosophy of psychology – A fragment*.]

Wittgenstein, L. 1969. *On Certainty*. Translated by D. Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, L. 1980. *Culture and Value*. Translated by P. Winch. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. (1921) 1981. *Zettel*. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, L. 2021. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by D. Pears and B. McGuinness. Edited by L. Bazzocchi. London: Anthem.

Appendix. Source text poems

1. ECCE HOMO

Ja, ich weiß, woher ich stamme!
Ungesättigt gleich der Flamme
Glühe und verzehr' ich mich.
Licht wird alles, was ich fasse,
Kohle alles, was ich lasse:
Flamme bin ich sicherlich.

Friedrich Nietzsche

2. EPIGRAMM

Kant und Fichte gern zum Aether schweifen,
Suchten dort ein fernes Land,
Doch ich such' nur tüchtig zu begreifen,
Was ich – auf der Strasse fand!

Karl Marx

3. From LA PORTE

La porte est devant nous; que nous sert-il de vouloir?
Il vaut mieux s'en aller abandonnant l'espérance.
Nous n'entrerons jamais. Nous sommes las de la voir.
La porte en s'ouvrant laissa passer tant de silence

Que ni les vergers ne sont parus ni nulle fleur;
Seul l'espace immense où sont le vide et la lumière
Fut soudain présent de part en part, combla le cœur,
Et lava les yeux presque aveugles sous la poussière.

<div align="right">Simone Weil</div>

4. EIN GEDICHT

Wirfst du mir der treuen Liebe
      duftigen Schleier übers Haupt,
wenn die Hände sich bewegen
wenn die Glieder sanft sich regen
ist die Seele sinnberaubt.

Kannst du's fassen wenn sie wehet,
sich beweget leise nur
und ins Herze präget tief sie ihre Spur.

Wenn der Morgen seine Glocke läutet
Zieht der Gärtner durch des Gartens Raume
Rührt mit leichten Füssen seine Erde // dann die Erde //
und die Blumen wachen auf und sehen
fragend ihm ins helle,
ruhige Antlitz:
Wer wob um den Fuss Dir doch den Schleier
der uns zahrt berührt wie Windesfächeln
Stehet Zephir selbst in Deinen Diensten?
War's die Spinne, war's die Seidenraupe?

<div align="right">Ludwig Wittgenstein</div>