"BOAT RACE NIGHT": P.G. WODEHOUSE AND HIS SPANISH TRANSLATOR

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In one not often acknowledged way P.G. Wodehouse is an especially interesting writer for discussion in a context of translation-theory: he writes English like a non-native. He assumes, that is, a freedom to pick out from any part of the English word-hoard just those words, phrases, or registers which serve his precise and immediate purposes. English writers in general do not do this: they work within some narrower *parole*, obedient or perhaps resistant to a specific social or educational conditioning. In any comparison with him, then, the often-praised ironic poise of an Evelyn Waugh or an Anthony Powell is bound to suffer, the former emerging as coarse and coercive, the latter as lymphatic and reedy. In Wodehouse the energies stem less directly from the pressures and dilemmas of class and cultural authority, and much more from the language at large, in its capacity as the cognitive store of these and many other paradoxes of experience. He stands out in such contrasts as one of the great twentieth-century masters of mannered English prose – his only rival, perhaps, that authentically non-native speaker, Vladimir Nabokov.

Writing like theirs – so clearly the product of choice, answering directly to the perceived energies of words – seems to impel its translator firmly towards that "servile path" which Nabokov famously advocated for the test-case of Pushkin.[1] The implied demand is that each facet of reference be understood, explicated, and recreated in close formal parallel with its original. Irrespectively of whether this method works with Pushkin, or whether it has even been applied to Nabokov's own writing, it is all too evident from most Spanish translations of Wodehouse that he is not getting that kind of treatment. As a popular entertainer of proven commercial potential, he was in any event scarcely in line for it. The imperative was surely to get more of him into print in time to meet demand. The history of his publication in Spain, however, adds significantly to that rather platitudinous assessment.

Before the Spanish Civil War, just one book of his was translated into Castilian. This was the comic thriller *Sam the Sudden*, published in 1935 as *Las genialidades de Sam* in a Barcelona series "La Novela Aventura", which also featured titles by Edgar Wallace, "Sapper", and Bram Stoker.[2] It was hardly mainstream Wodehouse, though one suspects that the name of the translator, G. López Hipkiss, would have pleased him. In the 1940s, however, translations of began to feature prominently in the lists of the Barcelona publisher Josep Janés. The background was one of extreme economic and political uncertainty. Spain in those hungry years was not an expansive market for publishing of any kind, and the official suspicions attaching to publishing activity in the Catalan capital were acute. Janés' strategic aims, however, went some way beyond the establishment of his own firm's fortunes. He sought to give work, through the commissioning of translations, to a number of more or less officially blacklisted intellectuals. He was also engaged in a campaign – encouraged and financed from British government sources by the ebullient and resourceful Irishman, Walter Starkie, head of the British Institute in Madrid – to bring before the Spanish public such works of modern English authors as might be expected to promote a favourable image of British culture.[3]

There were, of course, constraints. The books had, perforce, to go into Castilian; there was neither profit nor safety in a Catalan-language promotion of this kind. Again, it was necessary to avoid the tightly-drawn prohibitions of both political and moralistic censorship. And in commercial terms there was little room for loss-leaders: a promise of entertainment – the more freewheeling and extravagant the better in those drab times – certainly did not come amiss. Wodehouse qualified in all respects. His work was innocent of political or moral subversion; much of it had even passed muster in Mussolini's Italy, where a whole series of translations had appeared in the 1930s. His fictional England, a vastly attractive place in its own right, offered as ample an escape as could be wished from the gritty immediacy of post-war Spain. And his potential as an entertainer was quickly vindicated in terms of public demand. Between 1942 and 1950 Janés published forty-six Wodehouse titles; at one time or another during those years, the imprint had no less than sixteen translators working on him.[4]

Their public was, in the first instance, distinctively a middle-class one; in the early fifties, most of these translations retailed at 40 pesetas – not a negligible sum. It was only towards the end of the decade that 15-peseta reprints began to appear. But their popularity seems to have kept steadily apace of the modest rise in disposable incomes among Spaniards in that decade. Twenty-one titles came out in 1952; fourteen in 1955. By this time too, the author had his own special series, the *Colección Wodehouse*. Other publishers than Janés came to play a part, though always a relatively minor one, in his promotion.[5] In 1960, when I lived for a time in Madrid, he was still featuring prominently on the bookstalls; the middle-class family with whom I lodged signalled their recognition and approval of the paperback copies I brought home with me. The moment passed, of course: after the relaxation of censorship in the mid sixties, Wodehouse had to hold his own in terms of whatever intrinsic appeal those early translations could sustain. In no sense, however, did that amount to an eclipse of his reputation. A volume of *Obras* from the successor-house of Plaza y Janés had reached its fourth edition by 1974. In the years around 1990, Anagrama of Barcelona undertook a series of paperback reissues, presented as "traducciones revisadas".[6]

The effects of whatever revision that might imply are not, it must be said, obvious. The Anagrama texts still bear the marks of that earlier phase of their publication-history when the priority was to get popular humorous writing to the public which wanted it. On that level – which meant telling the stories and putting in the jokes – they certainly succeed. But the detail of their rendering is less assured: its limitations highlight the specific difficulties of translating an author of this kind.

The translation addressed here by way of illustrating these problems is *De acuerdo, Jeeves*, Emilia Bertel's version of *Right-ho Jeeves*, as revised by Julio Rodríguez for the Anagrama reissue of 1990.[7] Emilia Bertel – one of only two women, apparently, who worked on Wodehouse for Janés in the 1940s – also translated *The Inimitable Jeeves*, *Piccadilly Jim*, and two books in the Mulliner series. To contrast work produced under such real-world pressures, point-by-point and censoriously, with the ideal outcome of a conscientiously applied "servile path" principle would be profoundly unfair. That is one of several reasons for not drawing any such contrast.

One might, perhaps, best sum up the Nabokovian approach to translation in the widely-quoted words of the Victorian Alpinist, Edward Whymper: "Look well to each step". That maxim, it appears, was Whymper's response to the spectacular fall of a party of climbers from the Matterhorn. Even if delivered in time, it could scarcely be regarded as a sufficient piece of advice: at the very least it needs to be supplemented along the lines of "but remember that the way in which you get the steps together is also quite important". Much the same applies to translation: no servile inventory of functions covered and steps accomplished is going to deliver what is needed or to guide the translator towards reliable delivery. It is the "getting together" which is critical. It is that too which we find it hardest to characterize.

A concept which might well be helpful to us here is the cognitive linguists' notion of the "ground". In a paper published in 1996 I sought to show how, in general terms, this might be applied.[8] The suggestion was that in a decisive phase of the translation process all the translator’s knowledges – of the languages concerned, of the text, and of the world – were arrayed together with all the constraints and rules obtaining, to generate a sense of motivation towards a defined end. This motivating sense would then configure the translation, and energize it into being as a new target-language expression. This still seems to me convincing as far as it goes. But it does not go very far towards identifying the kinds of interaction which promote that qualitative leap from accumulated knowledge to relevant creativity. For some understanding of that aspect we need to look more closely at practical instances. And here examples which present a gap between what is there to be done and what is actually done can sometimes tell us more than more accomplished work might do. Hence the present interrogation of Emilia Bertel’s *De acuerdo, Jeeves*.

Whatever its shortcomings, this is a text which still entertains. Gussie Fink-Nottle’s drunken harangue at the Market Snodsbury speech-day, Bertie Wooster’s epic midnight cycle-ride, Madeline Bassett’s misapplied sentimentality – all these effects and many more remain in place. None of it would happen without considerable linguistic knowledge, effectively fused with knowledges of other kinds. The comic incongruities that count for so much in Wodehouse –tone against content; one textual layering against another – are by no means always written off. Certainly that does not happen in a paragraph like the following:

> The discovery of a toy duck in the soapdish, presumably the property of some former juvenile visitor, contributed not a little to this new and happier frame of mind. What with one thing and another, I hadn’t played with toy ducks in my bath for years, and I found the novel experience most invigorating. For the benefit of those interested, I may mention that if you shove the thing under the surface

> El descubrimiento de un pato de goma en la jabonera, presunta propiedad de algún joven visitador precedente, contribuyó bastante a esta nueva y más feliz disposición del espíritu. Absorto por mil asuntos, hacía años que no jugaba en la bañera con un pato de goma, y quedé muy satisfecho al repetir la experiencia. Para quien tenga interés en saberlo, diré que si se mantiene el objeto con

with the sponge and then let it go, it shoots out of the water in a manner calculated to divert the most careworn (*RHJ*, 69).	la esponja bajo la superficie del agua y luego se le suelta, salta fuera de un modo perfectamente estudiado para divertir a la más preocupada de las personas (*DAJ*, 71-72).

Bertie’s bathtime relaxation with a toy duck is embellished with pomposities of phrasing which are more than just lexical responses to the words of the source-text: they are generated from a target-language realization of what is going forward imaginatively and linguistically: “presunta propiedad”, “absorto por mil asuntos”, “perfectamente estudiado”. Again, in Gussie’s Market Snodsbury speech, the Spanish rendering has something like a full consequentiality of its own:

“… and we are all sorry that the Reverend What-ever-he-was-called should be dying of adenoids, but after all, here today, gone tomorrow, and all flesh is as grass, and what not, but that wasn’t what I wanted to say. What I wanted to say was this - and I say it confidently - without fear of contradiction - I say, in short, I am happy to be here on this auspicious occasion and I take much pleasure in kindly awarding the prize [*sc*. prizes], consisting of the handsome books you see laid out on that table” (*RHJ*, 163).	–… Todos sentimos mucho que el reverendo Comosellame esté muriéndose de adenoides, pero, después de todo, hoy acá, mañana allá, la carne se torna hierba o algo parecido. Pero no es eso lo que yo quería decir. Quería, en cambio, decir, y lo digo confiadamente, sin temor a contradicciones, digo, en suma, que me siento feliz por hallarme aquí en tan fausta ocasión y que estoy encantado de repartir los premios que consisten en los hermosos libros que aquí ven sobre la mesa (*DAJ*, 161).

The interweaving of the orator’s platitudes with the careless talk and over-careful syntax of the drunk is, as it were, already given in the original. But the last sentence, with its interlocking clauses introduced by an anaphoric *que* is the utterance of a Spanish-speaking drunk, and no linguistic calque.

There are many briefer instances of aptly-placed, fully-motivated target-language expressions: “he reflexionado y archirreflexionado” (*DAJ*, 61) [“I concentrated deeply”(*RHJ*, 59)]; “dos espléndidos ejemplares de cretino“ (*DAJ*, 79) [“a pretty soppy couple of blighters” (*RHJ*, 77)]. The way in which the translation renders

"Material, my elbow! As a matter of fact, I'm particularly spiritual" (*RHJ*, 64) illustrates a simple but very effective process of grounding. The semantics and syntax of this present no great problem; the knowledge which imposes itself as important is the pragmatic awareness of how the manner of the first sentence invalidates the claim made in the second. The translation, then, is motivated towards giving force to this. A piece of target-language pragmatics – the assertive weight of *yo* – offers a way to do it; the source-text hedge, "As a matter of fact…" comes to seem dispensable by comparison. All of which opens the way to the rendering "–¡Prosaico, un rábano! ¡Yo soy muy espiritual!" (*DAJ*, 65)

No translation which offers such effects can be called incompetent. Yet this is in other respects a palpably defective version. An obvious primary contrast with the original *Right ho, Jeeves* is its reduction of the latter's imagery to a more literal language. The technique, of course, as opposed to the mere habit, is a wholly licit recourse for the translator – a preferred option even, when conventional or lexicalized source-language metaphors have no obvious target-language equivalent, or when mixed metaphor presents a problem. But it is applied here to cases of the former sort which actually supply the cues for humorous glossing – "…go away and boil your head, Bertie"… "That, I replied, … is just what I am going to go away and boil" (*RHJ* , 186) – and to mixed metaphors which are plainly intentional. And it occurs in a host of other instances whose broad effect is twofold. In something like two-thirds of them it shifts the focus in a more abstract direction. More generally, because metaphorical language is in some sense always marked, it replaces marked by unmarked language. This indeed can and does happen in a closely-related way when one metaphor is replaced by another, of more conventional or less concrete character. While not much is sacrificed when "missed the bus" (*RHJ*, 72) becomes "fallé el blanco" (*DAJ*, 74), the shift from "piqued to the tonsils" (*RHJ*, 69) to "herido hasta lo más profundo de mis entrañas" (*DAJ*, 71) is an evident piece of unmarking.

The tendency is confirmed in a run of lexical choices: “Conversación” (*DAJ*, 18) is less focused than “gossip” (*RHJ*,15); “botas” (*DAJ*, 25), less so than “sea boots” (*RHJ*, 23); a “squawk” (*RHJ*, 54) is rather more specific than“unos gritos” (*DAJ*, 56), and to describe someone as a “tipo” (*DAJ*,128) conveys less about him than calling him a “bargee” (*RHJ*,128). Often the loss of marking stems from a simple failure to choose a sufficiently characterized Spanish wording; thus the chosen register of “comencé a ponérmelos” (*DAJ*, 72) – with reference to Bertie Wooster’s socks – scarcely does justice to his “I commenced to don” (*RHJ*,70). But the most obvious source of unmarking is the Spanish version’s normalization of Wodehousian slang.

This aspect of *Right ho, Jeeves*, of course, made prodigious demands on the translator’s knowledge: it is not surprising that some expressions – “very oofy” (*RHJ*, 54); “the little buzzard” (*RHJ*,114); “A frightful oik, and a mass of side to boot” (*RHJ*,128) – should simply have been left out, or that others should be misconstrued: “Gussie has been on a bender” (*RHJ*,155) becoming “ha hecho ejercicio” (*DAJ*,153). The great majority, though, are in one way or another rationalized. Sometimes this happens unexceptionably: “energía” (*DAJ*, 19) for “vim” (*RHJ*,16); “rostro” (*DAJ*, 55) for “map” (*RHJ*, 53); at other times, as when “subtle gosh-awfulness” (*RHJ*, 31) is reduced to “violencia” (*DAJ*, 33), there is significant loss. Important secondary effects are sacrificed when “tinkerty-tonk” (*RHJ*, 50) at the end of a telegram is rendered as “Respetos” (*DAJ*, 51), or when the implicit “Says you!” for which Jeeves is at one point reprimanded (*RHJ*, 73) comes out in Spanish as the ultra-deferential “Pero ¿qué dice, señor?” (*DAJ*,75).

These shifts towards the abstract, the unmarked, and the under-specified are so frequent that it becomes easy to overlook the wider phenomenon of which they are only a subset. This is the problem of unachieved focus, whose effects can – albeit less commonly – go the other way, towards an unacceptable specificity. It is not a question of achieving some exact measure of specification, authoritatively present in the source text. No particular problem arises, for example, when "mixed myself a beaker" (*RHJ*, 20) is further specified as "me escancié un poco de whisky" (*DAJ*, 22). But the more concrete focusing of Gussie Fink-Nottle's "strong newt complex" (*RHJ*,9) as "una gran colección de salamandras" (*DAJ*, 11) is clearly not acceptable in that way. There is a perilously uncontrolled kind of specificity about the statement that Gussie, who in the original text "used to keep newts" at school (*RHJ*,10), "las llevaba consigo" (*DAJ*,12), or about the description of the Market Snodsbury headmaster, speaking "como si tuviese una patata hirviendo en la boca" (*DAJ*,158) – a rare instance here of intensified imagery for what was merely a "hot" potato (*RHJ*,160).

In a handful of cases, one can even identify the conceptual shift which has drawn the whole rendering out of focus. The couple who inexplicably "parecían tan unidos como el papel al muro" (*DAJ*, 53) would have made instant sense had "seemed like the paper on the wall" (*RHJ*, 51) been fully conceptualized in terms of "papel de paredes", rather than worked through a single word at a time. Bertie's prediction that the new jacket he is to wear at a party will "be one long scream from start to finish" (*RHJ*,17) elides into "provocará un unánime grito de admiración" (*DAJ*,19), because *time uniformly filled* and *unanimous agreement* have mental representations that are (perhaps spatially) similar. The news that the Vicar "had strained a fetlock" (*RHJ*, 34) is taken literally as "se había dislocado un tobillo" (*DAJ*, 36) because the focus of attention has been on anatomy ("*Which part of the body has the Vicar damaged?*"), rather than on language ("*How is the Vicar's injury being represented?*").

On other occasions, the sources of the displacement are items of linguistic knowledge which have not been "screened out" from the grounding process. The bearded headmaster who stands for a moment "fumbling at the fungus" (*RHJ*,161) is seen, most oddly, as "atormentando su sombrero" (*DAJ*,159) because the unwanted term "hongo" for a bowler hat has momentarily blocked off the "fungus"/"barbas" connection which the translation elsewhere registers aright. [9] The two "sundered blighters" (*RHJ*, 61) of the broken engagement strike a note of unnecessary gravity as "desesperados sin ilusión" (*DAJ*, 63) because of a half-echo, one suspects, of "blighted hopes". Either source-language or target-language knowledge, it would seem, can have this sort of intrusive effect.

Items of world-knowledge too can become caught up in some quite intricate chaining of much the same kind. "A victim to the divine p." (*RHJ*,12) – Wodehouse is much given to this kind of abbreviation, but his Spanish translator is not[10] – becomes "víctima del divino infante" (*DAJ*,15), no doubt because "p." can be interpreted as standing for "prince", but also because "infante" can be either "prince" or "infant", and Cupid (who personifies the "divine passion") is represented visually as an infant. Unease about possibly unseemly religious allusions – "P." as a standard Spanish abbreviation for "Padre"; "pasión" in its reference to Jesus Christ – may have played its part in the confusion here. Such anxieties, precisely because there is resistance to acknowledging them consciously, can prove hard to screen out from the ground of translation and disruptive when they appear there.

Again, the cognitive frame can be distorted by knowledge which the translator believed to be reliable, but which was not. It can derive from a visual misreading, as in the reference to the supposed cannibal chief who was probably "alguna prominente vegetación local" (*DAJ*, 58) – what Wodehouse wrote was "vegetarian" (*RHJ*, 56). Or it can stem from an aural representation of the text, erroneously matched with that of another source-language form altogether. Thus, "a stuffed moose" (*RHJ*, 74) is mentally misheard as the equivalent of "un ratón embalsamado" (*DAJ*, 76), and through a precisely opposite mishearing, "as foul a pessimist" (*RHJ*,166) issues in "el pesimista más necio" (*DAJ*,164). Another source of such unfocused knowledge – recognizable in the experience of most teachers of language – can be the apparently contiguous mental storage of items of opposite meaning: "the Far East" (*RHJ*,104) / "el lejano oeste" (*DAJ*,104). And of course, outcomes can be similarly blurred when near-synonymous or etymologically similar items are involved. Particularly interesting here is the rendering "una concurrida estación provenzal" (*DAJ*, 89) for "a Provençal filling station" (*RHJ*, 88). Of the three terms as they appear, "station", in its most concrete and familiar sense, must have seemed the obvious head-word, though the collocation with "filling" ought to have invited a reassessment. It did not do so, presumably, because the leading adjective "Provençal", which would have been the next thing to attract attention, itself presented a problem, requiring to be discriminated from the more familiar "provincial". With that agenda of adjustments already present, it was all too easy for the translator to elide across the array of adjacent items – "filling"/"filled"/"full" – to produce the version given. Like the world-knowledge attaching to delicate issues of subject-matter, the generalized awareness of problematic linguistic texture can permeate the grounding of translation with anxieties which make specific cognitive slips more likely.

No translator, of course, is immune to such things, and no truthful picture of translation can be given which does not also embrace and account for their occurrence. It should be possible, even so, to characterize the more effective modes of grounding, and to point to those adjustments of the knowledges relating to translation which can help to eliminate these unwanted shifts. In this area too, *De acuerdo, Jeeves* has some instructive clues to offer.

In the first place, the problem is not, typically, about a defective knowledge of either source-language or target-language. Clearly that can arise, and does so with some of Wodehouse's colloquial usages, but even there most of the normalization which takes place proves adequate in terms of meaning. So too in the great majority of cases does the demetaphorizing process, while the lexical shifts, again preponderantly, confirm that what the text is *saying* has been well enough understood, and indeed conveyed. The area in which the translator's knowledge is either suspect or insufficiently worked up is that of what the language is *doing*. In the first place the fact of linguistic marking needs to have been registered; then the reasons for it require to be assessed; then there has to be an appraisal of whatever new dimensions this brings into the cognitive frame. Finally there will have to be strategies to cope with them. These indeed will include demetaphorizing and unmarking, refocusing, and even the sacrifice of entire items. But such techniques can only achieve a positive value when the translator has brought into the grounding of her version some view, not just of the source-text as it is, but of the alternatives to it. The problems of marking and of focus will be the more fully resolved the more that happens. It is not enough to know (with whatever degree of accuracy) what the source-text is. To know why it is as it is, we have to consider what it might have been, but is not. That is the only secure route to a target-text which actually has some reason for being the way it is, and not otherwise.

A second necessity is that any unexamined focusing assumptions, over-obtrusive minor items of knowledge, or half-acknowledged areas of unease should not divert the translation from a reliable grounding. The demand here, as so often in the practice of translation, is polarized and paradoxical. On the one hand there is an imperative to include as much as possible, to gather under our view all the factors which might motivate a translation – not excluding those things which it might be motivated *against*. On the other there is an evident need to select and prioritize. It is in mediating between these that the translator’s extra-linguistic knowledges – knowledge about the world; knowledge of the source-text and its organization – assume a special importance. We shall not readily translate without either.

Knowledge of either kind, but perhaps especially the world-knowledge which translation involves, can be both supportive and daunting. The richly-layered allusions of the Wodehouse text are an indispensable aid in defining what its author is doing at any one time, and thus in identifying what will matter for the effectual grounding of its translation. But those allusions have, in the first instance, to be recognized; eventually too they will need to be rendered in terms which the target-language can deliver to its own culture. In Wodehouse, the range of what needs to be recognized and recreated is exceptionally wide; *De acuerdo, Jeeves* remains at a loss with much of it.

The twenty or more references to sport, for example, suffer quite badly. “Snookered” (*RHJ*, 23) is reduced to “desconcertado” (*DAJ*, 25); “stymied” (*RHJ*, 82), just as limply, to “desanimado” (*DAJ*, 84).[11] “No indication whatsoever that he was about to round into mid-season form” (*RHJ*,79) becomes “signo alguno de mejoría” (*DAJ*, 80); “boat-race night” (*RHJ*,134) is rationally but wrongly “una noche de regatas” (*DAJ*,133). Phrases drawn from racing are consistently mishandled. Madeline Bassett, praised as “a winner” (*RHJ*, 20), is here “atractiva” (*DAJ*, 23) – “winning”, one supposes. Gussie Fink-Nottle, deprecated as “not everybody’s money” (*RHJ*,14), fares still worse in Spanish: “no todas le aceptarían como moneda buena” (*DAJ*,16).

Certain objects too go unrecognized: a “pincushion” (*RHJ*, 36) is not an“almohada” (*DAJ*, 38), nor is a “tankard” (*RHJ*, 94) precisely “un vaso” (*DAJ*, 95). The same thing happens with various items of food and drink: “the vital oolong” (*RHJ*, 32) is turned – very cautiously, one feels – as “la bebida vivificadora” (*DAJ*, 34), and the wafer biscuits on which Gussie imagines himself as pining away (*RHJ*, 82) are more Spartan altogether than “bizcochos” (*DAJ*, 83). In all these instances translation is impeded by the fact that the translator cannot draw upon a wide enough knowledge of “things in the world”.

Arguably, none of the individual impediments is in itself particularly grave. Yet there can come a point at which such an accumulation of small translation-losses must exercise a greater effect than the mere sum of its parts. Instead of a fictional world that can be known with a certain self-consistency and density through the identification of its details, we are then confronted with a fictional space in which not very much seems to be knowable at all. This is a loss of specificity at the level of the whole text. Erroneous choices of an over-specific kind can sometimes give the fiction an oddly arbitrary turn: I retain a clear, though undocumented, memory of another Jeeves novel, read in translation in the early 1960s, in which "boat-race night" was "la carrera nocturna de los buques". But this cumulative disablement at the textual level stems, in the main, from details that are not realized specifically enough.

Translators, then, will be concerned to recognize the point at which inevitable small lapses of world-knowledge begin to exercise this wider effect. Their basis for doing so will be markedly diverse in character. Clearly it will involve knowledge about the target-audience, its norms and tolerances, but that will not be the whole of the matter. Recognizing the extent to which one's own world-knowledge is defective is inescapably an aspect of one's knowledge of the world. And since an impact at the level of the text as a whole is in question, textual knowledge – knowledge of how the source-text is organized – must also play its part. Whether the assessment is made at some point in the course of translating or in fairly immediate retrospect seems rather less clear. But one would have slightly more trust in any translator – including oneself as translator – if that kind of reflection actually went into the translation process, rather than being a mere afterthought to it.

Such a simultaneity of localized and overall strategic awareness would seem likely to feature in any successful grounding activity. One would, after all, expect that activity to cope at need with issues of world-knowledge which arose in particular cruxes, with others distributed or diffused across the whole of the text, and with others again that were illustrated in intermediate stretches of it. The last of these categories can prove as demanding as any, especially when the things needing to be known have to be known in their own specific and complex relational structures. That requirement is what makes matters of culture and institutions so notoriously problematic for any translation. In Emilia Bertel's rendering of the Wodehouse world, the general incidence of "things not known" is perhaps better described as vaguely troubling rather than as disabling. On issues of this sort, though, the sense of disruption can become more acute.

A fair proportion of the cultural references in Wodehouse are American rather than English – as indeed is much of his colloquial language. In the Spanish text, at least one set of such items – the allusions to American cinema – are in general well taken up. Other culturally-rooted Americanisms lose specificity: this seems legitimate when "Old Home Week in Moscow" (*RHJ*,104) emerges as "una tempestad" (*DAJ*, 105), but possibly gratuitous when Tuppy Glossop compares his ravenous appetite , not to the Grand Canyon (*RHJ*, 97)but to "un pozo sin fondo" (*DAJ*, 98). Among the English references, there is some confusion over whether a butler is a "camarero"(e.g. *DAJ*, 214; *RHJ*, 216) or a "mayordomo" (*DAJ*, 221, where "camareros" is used for "footmen"; cf. *RHJ*, 223). And there was no warrant for asserting that Jeeves, insofar as he might purport to be "the only member of the household" with brains and resource (*RHJ*, 22) was claiming to be "el verdadero amo" (*DAJ*, 24). Wodehouse's ironic vision of master and servant simply does not see the two claims as synonymous. Yet matters of social class cause, on the whole, fewer difficulties here than might have been predicted – possibly because what Wodehouse offers is essentially a comic extrapolation of class, accessible to several cultures, not a documentation of the real relations existing in a particular one.

By contrast, culture-specific references to English education – itself profoundly structured by social class – abound, and in a whole series of passages the Spanish text misses or misconstrues them. A "precis" – that unlamented classroom exercise (*RHJ*, 46) – becomes what it can never be: "una exacta relación" (*DAJ*, 47). The weary over-familiarity implicit in "that stuff where that chap, Othello…" and what follows (*RHJ*, 56) is lost in "algo en que se hablaba de un tal Otelo" (*DAJ*, 58): Othello is now made to seem less than familiar, and only the vagueness of the expression survives. “An Exhibition… at Cat’s, Cambridge” (*RHJ*, 160) is now “un premio Cat, en Cambridge” (*DAJ*, 158). Market Snodsbury Grammar School, when described as “a grammar school” (*RHJ*, 33, 36), is presented as “una escuela primaria” (*DAJ*, 35, 38); knowledge of English educational institutions, or indeed of other references in the text, would have made it plain that it was not. Still more confusingly, Bertie’s dismissal of its pupils as “these young Borstal inmates” (*RHJ*, 48) is rendered as “esos jóvenes aplicados” (*DAJ*, 49). Individually these lapses of knowledge are trivial enough; yet from their accumulation a very strange picture emerges. Just how rapidly translation loss can accumulate over this kind of institutional detail can be seen from the example which follows:

having… sneaked off to the local pub, I entered the saloon bar and requested mine host to start pouring. A moment later, a tankard of their special home-brewed was in my hand… (*RHJ*, 94)	me dirigí al bar y pedí algo para beber. Me pusieron entre las manos inmediatamente un vaso de cerveza exquisita… (*DAJ*, 95)

In a handful of missed moves (for “pub”, “saloon bar”, “mine host”, “tankard”, and “special home-brewed”) a distinctively English institutional fantasy is reduced to a neutered blandness, evocative only of pasteurised lager.

One can envisage defensive strategies, at least, against that kind of reduction. Even these, however, must depend on the extent of the knowledge which the translator either possesses already or is willing to pursue. In the adequate grounding of such passages it is the latter aspect which counts for more. What is demanded is nothing like omniscience: no-one, for example, could reproach a Barcelona woman translator of the 1940s for not being aware of how or why an English “saloon bar” differed from the “public bar” alongside it. The obligation is, rather, to be curious about the language that is being translated, and responsive to the promptings which that curiosity reveals. Emilia Bertel *was* in a position to know that “requested mine host to start pouring” was different from “asked for / ordered a drink”, just as she knew – or should have known – that “sneaked off” conveyed more than “me dirigí”. That could have led to further interrogations: what is the effect of making Bertie Wooster talk like this? how does the orotundity of “requested mine host” square with the blunt injunction to “start pouring”? A similar curiosity, operating on the “special home-brewed”, might have elicited not just “exquisita” from “special” and “cerveza” from “brewed”, but “especialidad de la casa” or something like it; that too would have been something gained.

Yet these ongoing arguments with the text, set out thus in linear fashion, are time-consuming, often to no very obvious gain. The missing bits of world-knowledge may prove unforthcoming, or trivial, or impossible to make relevant in the target-language; the assessment and rejection of alternatives can be pedantic, weakening rather than deepening the sense of continuous textual engagement. Most translators will have their own cut-off point – responding in part, no doubt, to translation norms in the target-culture – beyond which it must seem unprofitable for these exchanges with the text to go on. Yet the paradox remains that postponing such a cut-off in dialogue with the text can often be shown to favour translation-effectiveness. Indeed, as was previously noted, there is also likely to be a recognizable point at which specific small losses in terms of world-knowledge are recognized as beginning to impair the rendering of the text as a whole. In any linear model of the explication and ordering of knowledges it becomes difficult to show how translators could respond coherently to these conflicting imperatives, one of which says “stop” and the other “go further”.

The “grounding” model as envisaged here will cope quite readily with that: the conflict is resolved as part of a larger process in which disparate knowledges, reviewed more or less simultaneously, motivate and configure the language of the translation. Language which appears as convincingly motivated and energized will do so because the relevant knowledges have been brought to bear on its making. That is not to say, of course, that every translator gets it right: in a passage like the one just analysed, interaction with the source-text is clearly underdeveloped, with typically anodyne results. The linear review of knowledges remains as something to which translators can have occasional, and indeed essential, recourse whenever revision or feedback demand it. And the broad accumulation of knowledges will naturally have been a part of any good translator's formation. But the central challenge will be that of accessing those knowledges relevantly in a largely non-linear process of grounding.

It is yet more acutely posed in an area which seems essential to any effectual rendering of Wodehouse: knowledge of other texts and other idiolects. The bracing versatility of his language is inseparable from the multiplicity of voices laid under contribution. The quotations and half-quotations – imperfectly recognizable, if at all, to the Bertie Wooster from whom we hear them, but perfectly well-known to his author – are one important part of that texture. Through them, a whole series of voices have their moments of dominance within the text: Shakespeare, Tennyson, Longfellow, Gray, the Bible, Bunyan, *The Rose of Tralee*, the idiom of popular 1920s and 1930s fiction – *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, or that archetypal best-selling novelist who figures transparently elsewhere in Wodehouse as "Rosie M. Banks". A translator who does not recognize them will not know what to do about them. A translator who does may well be in no better case, for they may still be hard to make recognizable for the target-audience in its own culture.[12]

The thing is not always impossible, and on at least one occasion, Emilia Bertel carries it off with some success. This is Wodehouse in his Rosie M. Banks mode:

> …like one of those chaps you read about in novels, who live in the great white house you can just see over there through the trees and shut themselves off from the world and have pained faces (*RHJ*, 94).

> …como algunos personajes de novela, que viven en grandes casas blancas, escondidas entre los árboles, lejos del mundanal ruido, y con unos rostros llenos de melancolía (*DAJ*, 95).

This works partly through a target-culture reference, “lejos del mundanal ruido” (itself triggered, apparently, by the use of the associated word “escondidas”). One suspects that it also works because a good deal of popular reading in the Spain of the 1940s was in any case still rather like that.

In general, the translator’s exploitation of world-knowledge can usefully run rather often to familiar quotations which are, or can be made, apposite in contexts like this. An awareness of broadly analogous textual genres has its uses too. The use of such knowledges can be read off simply as a case in which the norms prevailing in the target-culture happen to have been propitious. Even here, though, it matters that cultural knowledges relevant to the source-text were accessed, and that the new expression was appositely motivated: the embedding of Luis de León’s long-echoed phrase in that run of sentimental clichés achieves very much the sceptical distancing implicit in Bertie Wooster’s “one of those chaps you read about in novels”.

Where the target-culture is less propitious that kind of effort may not be forthcoming. It may not even seem appropriate to expect it of the translator. Yet its absence is by no means immaterial to credibly-motivated translation. If there are no quotations available for recycling, no obviously replicable text-types, then quite a large measure of translation-loss may be inevitable. But a translator concerned to know about such things will still be better placed to offer an adequate intertextual grounding. Even when actual lacunae in the target-culture render that impossible there is much that translators can do to make it matter less.

The difficulties of intertextual grounding are only one aspect of a wider challenge: that of representing the text as a plural entity of in terms of the several voices in play within it. Few if any texts – certainly few literary texts – can be thinned down to a monody, and yet represented credibly as themselves. With Wodehouse that is emphatically not the case: the textual layering, the polyphony of registers, are essential factors in keeping readers alert. These features are scarcely going to be replicated in any translation, but their presence does need to be conveyed. They need to be recognized and registered in a context of relevant textual and extra-textual knowledges. If the translator has not done this (or at least, done something towards it), it becomes harder to see why the text should be as it is – or in an extreme instance, why it should be there at all. So it remains a real reproach to Bertel's version that the attempt is largely not made.

Thus there is something palpably not translated when the Spanish remains passive before the mixture of formal and farcical language, business usage and inarticulate noise:

With these speculations racing through the bean, I tore open the envelope and as I noted contents I uttered a startled yip (*RHJ*, 51).	Con estos pensamientos, que formaban un torbellino en mi mente, abrí el despacho y, al leer su contenido, emití un grito ahogados (*DAJ*, 52).[13]

or achieves only a minimal recognition of the poised pomposity with which Bertie invests the trivia of his dressing for dinner:

For, during the above exchanges, I should explain, while I, having dried the frame, had been dressing in a leisurely manner, donning here a sock, there a shoe, and gradually climbing into the vest, the shirt, the tie, and the knee-length, Jeeves had been down on the lower level, unpacking my effects (*RHJ*, 15).	Mientras yo, después de haberme secado, me estaba vistiendo tranquilamente, embutiéndome en calcetines y zapatos, poniéndome camisa y cuello, Jeeves, doblado ante mí, vaciaba mis maletas (*DAJ*, 18).[14]

The nature of the loss is clearest in a passage like the following, where the systematic parody of a sentimental setting is allowed to become something perilously akin to the real thing:

What with all this daylight-saving stuff, we had hit the great open spaces at a moment when twilight had not yet begun to cheese it in favour of the shades of night. There was a fag-end of sunset still functioning. Stars were	Entretanto, la luz del día se iba apagando, y llegamos al aire libre en el momento en que el crepúsculo daba paso a la noche. Eran los últimos, leves resplandores del ocaso. Las estrellas comenzaban a refulgir; los

beginning to peep out, bats were fooling round, the garden was full of the aroma of those niffy white flowers which only start to put in their heavy work at the end of the day - in short, the glimmering landscape was fading on the sight and all the air held a solemn stillness, and it was plain that this was having the worst effect on her (*RHJ*, 87).	murciélagos a revolotear, y el jardín estaba saturado del perfume de esas flores blancas que empiezan a vivir al anochecer: en suma, el crepuscular paisaje languidecía cada vez más, el aire estaba dominado por una paz solemne, y se notaba que todo aquello le producía un efecto pésimo (*DAJ*, 88).

The final bathos of the "efecto pésimo" is inadequately marked because the Spanish version has not, like its original, lived dangerously between the established poetic canon ("the shades of night"; "Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight / And all the air a solemn stillness holds"), stock elements of the picturesque ("stars… beginning to peep out"; "the aroma of… flowers"), sundry incongruous idiolects ("daylight saving"; "the wide open spaces"; "put in their heavy work") and flippantly dismissive slang ("cheese it"; "fag-end"; "fooling round"; "niffy"). It is not the failure to identify, or even to find equivalents for some of these individual items which is damaging: "daylight saving", for example, is predictably but quite trivially mishandled. The real problem makes itself felt in the uniformity of tone of the equivalents chosen: it is a failure to ground the Spanish translation in a knowledge of what has gone into the original, what is going on there, and how something of the same sort might be made to go on in Spanish. The necessity for the paragraph to be there at all seems palpably lessened. Target-language readers, of course, could not judge it in terms of what they were missing. But they could be forgiven for wondering what the point of it was. Emilia Bertel's translation certainly contains better things than this. But the passage illustrates very clearly how the thinning out of knowledge can issue in a thinness in the eventual version.

Knowledge about the source-text, like world-knowledge, is by no means always the translator's friend. It can impose extra constraints of self-reference and self-consistency, which are just as exacting as those of contextualization in some wider frame. Perhaps the most intractable of all such instances are those textbook examples of “linguistic untranslatability” whose source-language establishes its point by reference to its own unique forms. When that happens, the source-text and the target-language knowledges forming the ground of the translation may simply contradict each other. In such cases the translator can be driven to some fairly arbitrary courses. In Emilia Bertel’s Spanish, the inebriated Gussie Fink-Nottle cannot be “reminded… by the word ‘what’ of the word ‘Wattle’” (*RHJ*, 162), because he has not, in fact, uttered the former: “recordando el nombre que le fuera atribuído” (*DAJ*, 160) is about the best that anybody could do. Aunt Dahlia’s all too colourable glossing of “Fink-Nottle” as “Spink-Bottle” (*RHJ*, 187) actually attracts that sure sign of desperation, a Translator’s Footnote (*DAJ*, 185). But, for the most part, this linguistic by-play is simply evaded. It is an approach which can bring losses, as with the “boil your head” passage, previously cited. But even that seems preferable to the dogged attempt at making something out of “Fat in the middle and thin on the top” (*RHJ*, 142) as “grueso de cuerpo y pequeño de cabeza” (*DAJ*, 141). Knowledge of what the source-text is doing still needs to be arrayed alongside knowledge of what the target-language will take.

Self-reference in the more general sense is, of course, a major feature of the Wodehouse text, built up (as farce so often is) on recurrent motifs, and constantly attuned to the comic potential of its own previously deployed language. The degree to which this constitutes a problem for the translator can vary a good deal. Consistency of usage across the text as a whole, for example, is a relatively easy function to match, requiring little more than an input of textual memory. In a writer as free with self-quotation as Wodehouse it is nonetheless something to be got right. Disconcertingly this Spanish translation habitually gets it wrong. It is true that the second thoughts are often better than the first, but the version itself is not the better for their being different. A translation grounded in an understanding of its own necessity would scarcely allow the “bearded bloke” (*RHJ*, 159-161 passim) of the school speech day to become successively “un barbudo ser” (*DAJ*, 157), “el ser barbudo” (*DAJ*, 158), “el hombre barbudo” (*DAJ*, 158), and “el hombre de la barba” (*DAJ*, 159). Matters of this kind can doubtless be attended to in a process of textual revision; here the pattern suggests a pressure of time too urgent for that to have taken place. But the need for such revisions can very largely be pre-empted if relevant textual knowledge is, as a matter of course and habit, brought to bear in the grounding.

In other respects too this version renders the self-management of the Wodehouse original less effective. There is a tendency to reduce hedging and formulae of mitigation. “And, as far as being in love was concerned, it had always seemed to me that you wouldn’t have been far wrong in describing them as…” (*RHJ*, 52) is cut briskly down to “Y su amor hubiera podido definirlo como…” (*DAJ*, 54) – even at some cost to the sense. Framing and structural devices are sometimes attenuated. This can take the form of unmarking in the syntactic domain: “A wash-out, I should describe him as” (*RHJ*, 128) becomes “Le definiría como un trozo de madera maciza” (*DAJ*, 128).There is a steady succession of overcorrections, whose effect is to eliminate tautologies, contradictions, and mixed metaphors, when such deliberate rule-breaking is very clearly part of the entertainment. The knowledge that the Wodehouse text does habitually entertain in this way seems largely absent from the grounding of its Spanish version.

If it were absent altogether it would be possible to argue that the notions of translation within which Emilia Bertel and her readers operated simply took no account of such matters: for them, a humorous text was sufficiently rendered if the incidents and characters in it were funny, and jokes were occasionally made. The back-cover synopsis of the Anagrama edition, with its emphasis on plotting and “personajes inolvidables” lends some support to this view. Against that, however, we have to set the fact that some passages of this translation do exploit a real understanding of how the source-text is put together. It is reflected in some pleasing repair-strategies, some good cohesive turn-taking in the dialogue, and some nicely-judged speech-rhythms:

“My dear Tuppy, does one bandy a woman’s name?”	– Mi querido Tuppy, ¿desde cuándo se revela el nombre de una mujer?
“One does if one doesn’t want one’s ruddy head pulled off.”	– Desde que no se quiere tener la cabeza separada del tronco.
I saw that it was a special case (*RHJ*, 139).	Comprendí que se trataba de un caso especial (*DAJ*, 138).

Effects like these remind us of the real nature of the problem. It is not that the translator does not know about such things, or follows a norm of taking no interest in them. Rather, it involves a failure – as with items of world-knowledge – to keep up the dialogue with the source-text which that knowledge implies, and so ensure that it is fed consistently into the ground of the translation.

The situation is very different when translators come to manage and prioritize their knowledges. Priorities of interest are not really in question here: in defining these, translators will usually fall into line with whatever norms obtain in their target-culture. But their operational priorities will be another matter. Here, what they know about the source-text will, in principle, be of direct concern and use to them. The basic grounding process, as we have seen, invites application at whatever linguistic rank happens, for the moment, to engage the translator’s attention: from the single lexical item through to the entire text. It has to be asked how the translator manages to hold that diversity together to some eventual purpose – and indeed to make interim decisions which further that purpose. The way in which the source-text is perceived as being organized offers clues as to where, on all those possible levels, translation needs to operate at any given moment. It also helps to define those interactions beyond the unit thus foregrounded which are likely to prove most relevant. Important too in this process is the way in which this knowledge of source-text organization is experienced. The translator, like any other reader, becomes aware of it not in piecemeal analytic terms, but as a more or less integrated overall shape which emerges in the course of reading. As well as defining the immediate focus of the translation in hand and its scope in terms of additionally relevant knowledges, that awareness has a trhird function: it is what ultimately ensures that the translation emerges as a translation “of” this or that specific text

Or rather it contributes indispensably to that outcome insofar as it happens. There will always be an input of other knowledges into the ground of the translation, and the final product will reflect the interaction of them all. Emilia Bertel’s version of Wodehouse clearly responds in part to the circumstances and expectations of its delivery in its own target-culture: pressures of haste, and priorities of entertainment at the level of diverting incident and eccentric character. The model of translation as a process of grounding – of cognitive overload, issuing in a reconfiguring of knowledges and a new, motivated linguistic expression – at least does some justice to that mixture of motives which is so much a part of every working translator’s experience.

It addresses that experience in other ways too, highlighting for example the issue of attentiveness – which is to say of mental energy, which can often raise the issue of disposable time. Most translators will recognize that their own practice involves some element of trade-off between attentive energy and time available. The grounding model, without renouncing the idea of a responsibility to source-text, allows this issue to be discussed in the light not simply of what is there to be known, but of what is knowable in the particular instance, and of what other knowledges compete with it for priority. It also brings to central prominence something which the partial success and grateful experience of very many translators confirms: the way in which, within the translation process, the creative energies of language extend and make good the defective energies of its individual users.

It cannot be claimed, though, that the present account has advanced very far towards accounting for that crucial effect. The

Wodehouse/Bertel example begins to illustrate how the various elements in the grounding process might operate together. But a much wider range of case-studies and some considerable refinement of categories will be needed before this model can lend itself to a fully cognitive theory of translation. Meanwhile, we are left with a hypothesis of some provisional value, as to how translation might work. This would present the business of accessing and arraying knowledges, and of capturing the new expressions which they motivate, as instantaneous rather than linear in character. It would see that process as being applied, in no externally predictable distribution, at the level of virtually any unit or sub-unit of expression within the text. We have, then, a set of cognitive moves – very rapid; very complex; part-unconscious, part-reflective – occurring at diverse, sometimes overlapping levels of generality in an overall text-handling process which remains sequential. Yet the outcome is expected to exhibit features of self-consistency and coherence, and to some degree – even when details (and perhaps larger aspects) are palpably mishandled – it can still do so. It is not a model which makes the activity of translating sound at all like a well-designed computer programme. On the other hand, it does make it sound uncannily like a stretch of actual living.[15]

Notes

1. Vladimir Nabokov, "The Servile Path", in *On Translation* , ed. Reuben A. Brower, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 23 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), pp. 97-110; also "Problems of Translation: *Onegin* in English", *Partisan Review*, 22 (1955), 498-512 .

2. Barcelona: Hymsa, 1935. Details in *Index Translationum*, First Series, 16, (1936), n°. 430.

3. See Jacqueline Hurtley, *Josep Janés. El combat per la cultura* (Barcelona: Curial, 1986), pp. 175-213 passim, esp. pp. 192-98, 209-13; also Marcos Rodríguez Espinosa, “La traducción como forma de exilio” in *Translation Studies in Hispanic Contexts”*, ed. Nicholas G. Round [*Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 75 (January 1998)],83-94, at pp. 90-91 on Janés’ employment of politically marginalized translators.

4. See Hurtley, p. 219 (publication by Janés; an additional title, *Spring Fever*, came out in 1957); also p. 313 for Catalan versions of Wodehouse commissioned by Janés, but not publishable at that time. Italian translations are listed in *Index Translationum*, First Series (e.g. 7 (1934), 838-47: ten titles in 1932-33; 8 (1934), 1099-1109: eleven more from 1933; 19 (1937), 701-12: twelve titles). Publication of *Index Translationum*, interrupted in 1940, was not resumed until 1948; from volume 2 (1950) onwards the New Series gives details of Janés reprints, from which a list of the translators can be reconstructed.

5. Details in *Index Translationum*, New Series, esp. 6 (1954), 5785-5805: twenty-one titles in 1952, nineteen of them from Janés (but Hurtley, p. 329 says that he published twenty-one in that year, and she is the more likely to have the figure right); 9 (1958), 5207-5221: fourteen titles in 1955); 12 (1961), 7090-7095 (first entries for cheap reprints, mostly by G.P. of Barcelona, 1958); other imprints publishing Wodehouse in the 1950s included Aguilar (Madrid) and Bruguera (Barcelona). See also Hurtley, p. 236 (on the relatively privileged social niche of the original target-readership); p. 221 (for the *Colección Wodehouse)*.

6. P.G. Wodehouse, *De acuerdo, Jeeves,* Traducción de Emilia Bertel (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1990), p. [4]: “Traducción revisada por Julio Rodríguez.” For the *Obras* see *Index Translationum,* New Series, 28 (1975), 3505.

7. Above, n. 6; cf. *Right ho, Jeeves* (London: Vintage, 1991; 1st edn, London: Herbert Jenkins,1934). References to the Spanish and English texts respectively are give in the form *DAJ* or *RHJ*, followed by page-numbers. For Bertel’s other Wodehouse versions see *Index Translationum*, New Series, 6 (1954), 5797; 9 (1958), 5213, 5217-8.

8. Nicholas G. Round, “Interlocking the Voids: The Knowledges of the Translator”, in *The Knowledges of the Translator*, ed. Malcolm Coulthard and Patricia Anne Odber de Baubeta (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), pp. 1-30, esp. 24-25.

9. Cf. *RHJ*, 19: “He grinned through the fungus…”; *DAJ*, 21: “El, a través de un espeso boscaje, sonrió…” The beard in question here is a different one – part of Gussie Fink-Nottle’s fancy-dress costume as Mephistopheles – and sharply-enough characterized as such for the translator’s memory to have stored it separately from the prototypical “beard” .

10. And perhaps was not likely to be: the late Professor Colin Smith used to remark, from his large experience of Spanish usage, on the manner in which Spanish-speakers tend to resist that improvised coining of acronyms which is so common a practice in modern English. Knowledge that the source-text at this point was going contrary to an immanent, but strongly-experienced, target-language preference may have added to the translator’s uncertainties.

11. A slightly more adequate focus is achieved in “Lo que a mí me molestaba” (*DAJ*, 17) for “The thing that had stymied me” (*RHJ*, 15), possibly because the contextual cues in the source-text are clearer. At *RHJ*, 82 “It seemed *hopeless* to go on trying to steam up such a human jellyfish” links back to “I *felt* a bit stymied” [italics mine] to suggest, misleadingly, a focus on emotion; the metaphors which follow make heavy demands on the translator’s attention, so that the connection is never made with the next sentence (“Then I saw the way”) where the notion of “progress blocked”, central to the profiling of “stymied”, becomes the salient issue.

12. Hurtley, p. 232 is alert to these problems as they affected the Spanish translators of Wodehouse.

13. The choice of “despacho” for “envelope” suggests an awareness at some level of the need for a repair strategy but it is insufficiently followed through.

14. Here again, though “embutiéndome” shows that the language is registered as eccentric, and “doblado ante mí” relevantly exaggerates Bertie’s sense of hierarchy, there is little or no awareness of why the sentence as a whole is as it is.

15. This article is a revised and much expanded version of a paper originally read to the Institute of Translation and Interpreting International Colloquium on “The Practices of Literary Translation”, held at the University of East Anglia in September 1996.