

Dublin City University

School of Applied Language
and Intercultural Studies

Manfred Gregor's *Die Brücke*:
An Exercise in Literary Translation

A thesis submitted to Dublin City University
for the award of M A in Translation Studies

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of M A in Translation Studies, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work

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Please note the German source text has been integrated into the translation (pgs 90-125) for ease of reference. In Chapter 4 (Commentary), I have referred to the German source language text as 'S' and the translation as 'T'. These letters precede the page references for the respective source and target texts, e.g. on p 129

"Einzig und allein' (S1, L 5) was translated as 'nothing more and nothing less' (T91, L 6) "

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Abstract

This thesis is a practical exploration of literary translation. The novel chosen as the focus for this research is Manfred Gregor's *Die Brücke* ('The Bridge') (1958). This is a fictional anti-war novel, written about a group of seven sixteen-year-old schoolboys who are drafted in the final days of the Second World War and sent to the front to defend a bridge. A section of the novel (the preface and chapters one to five) was selected for translation.

The thesis consists of three main parts. The first is a detailed text analysis section, the purpose of which is to explore likely difficulties which will be encountered during the translation process. The central section of the work consists of my own translation into English of the novel's opening chapters (9,700 words). The final section offers a translation commentary, in which the reasons for certain translation decisions and solutions are outlined.

The issues which are examined include shared assumptions (knowledge which Gregor could assume his readership to have, but which cannot be assumed of a contemporary English-speaking readership), military terminology, cultural references, slang and colloquial language, swear words, paragraph and sentence boundaries and nicknames.

There is also a short introductory section which provides a short biography of Manfred Gregor and examines some basic issues in literary translation theory. This section also contains a brief discussion of the 1960 published translation of the novel (*The Bridge*, translated by Robert Rosen), and outlines the reasons for which chapters one to five were selected as the focus for this translation project.

Foreword

I chanced across *Die Brücke*¹ while browsing at an open-air book sale in Innsbruck in the summer of 1996. At the time my primary motivation for buying the book was the likelihood that the novel would provide me with ample contextual fragments for the terminology section of my undergraduate project. However, as I read the story I found it both engrossing and disturbing.

Die Brücke is the story of seven sixteen-year-old German schoolboys who are sent to hold a bridge against the advancing American army in the final days of the Second World War. It is a deeply tragic story, a strongly anti-war novel which seeks to lay bare the sheer pointlessness of war and in which the considerable destruction and death do not achieve anything. The story is all the more effective in conveying its anti-war message by the flashback technique which Gregor uses throughout the book to contrast the horror of what the young boys experience with images of their innocent childhood.

The novel begins and ends with what would appear to be the author's thoughts, which suggests that the story is not entirely fictional, but rather that the events which are depicted bear at least some semblance to the author's own experience of the war. However, the novel does not make clear to what extent the story is based on factual events.² It is impossible to tell whether Gregor closely based the characters of the seven boys on particular childhood friends, though it does seem likely that the novel was written in memory of friends he lost in the final days of the war. Nor is the town in which the events unfold ever actually named, although there are numerous clues which suggest southern Bavaria, which is where Gregor grew up.

¹ Gregor, M., 1958. *Die Brücke*. Köln: Naumann & Gobel Verlagsgesellschaft mbH.

² It should be pointed out that just before the final credits of Bernhard Wicki's 1959 screen adaptation of the novel, a brief postscript claims that the film is indeed based on factual events.

“Dies geschah am 27. April 1945. Es war so unbedeutend, dass es in keinem Heeresbericht

During the course of the novel, all but one of the characters - Albert Mutz - is killed. The reader can deduce that this character must be the narrator of the preface, who also concludes the novel, when we return to find him standing on the bridge ten years later. His verbalised thoughts - *Auch diesmal fand ich keine Antwort auf die Frage, wo denn der Sinn all dessen lage, was damals geschah* (p 287) - strongly suggest that it is in fact Gregor who is speaking to us. He is still trying to come to terms with his experiences and with the loss of his friends.



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Manfred Gregor

Manfred Gregor was born on March 7th 1929 in Tailfingen, in Württemberg, the son of a railway manager. He attended school in Bad Tölz, in the very south of Germany, until 1945. In the last month of the war, Gregor, then just 16 years old, was drafted into the *Volkssturm* and sent to the front. It was this experience which was later to prompt him to write *Die Brücke*.

Gregor sat his *Abitur* in 1946. He worked with a building firm until beginning his studies in 1948, and later spent his semester holidays working in a plywood factory. He studied theatre, journalism and philosophy for four years. While still a student he worked as an editorial trainee with a Munich daily newspaper for which he also did occasional reporting. From 1954 he worked as an external editor with the *Münchner Merkur* - first in Tegernsee, then in Miesbach from 1957 and from 1960 in Bad Tölz.

However, he gained his fame as an author. The *Kurt Desch* publishing company published his first book, *Die Brücke*, in the spring of 1958. He had spent many years working on this novel, writing no less than six versions, none of which he was happy with. Finally, after reading Norman Mailer's classic World War II novel *The Naked and the Dead*, he found the form he needed for his novel and wrote the seventh, and final, version. Only four months after publication 17 foreign editions were secured with leading publishers in Europe and the USA. *Die Brücke* was translated into 16 languages. Robert Rosen's English translation (*The Bridge*) was published by the Cresset Press, London, in 1960. By 1961 sales in Germany had exceeded 100,000. It came out in eight editions as a *Heyne-Taschenbuch*, and was again reprinted in 1985 with photographs from the film of the same name, which Bernhard Wicki had shot in 1959.

Gregor's second novel *Das Urteil* (1960) was also translated into several languages, and was filmed as *Town Without Pity* in a German-American co-production in 1961. This book portrays the problem of the relationship between the population and the

occupying forces Gregor's third novel *Die Straße* (1961) examines young people and their problems

In the following 20 years, Gregor was a journalist with, and head of, the *Tolzer Kurier* Outside his job, Gregor became involved in counselling for mentally and physically handicapped people He was awarded the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (Order of the Federal Republic of Germany) in 1981 He married Franziska Staab in 1952 Their son, Frank, was born in 1957

(Biographical information taken from the *Munzinger Archiv*, an Internet resource)

1.2 Literary Translation

“For as long as individuals have communicated with one another through the mediation of someone else, there has probably been a realisation that mediators do something more complex and more interesting than simply substitute their own words, one by one, for the originals [] In particular, it is now understood that translators do not simply ‘say’ in one language what somebody or some piece of writing has ‘said’ in another Whatever translation is in its entirety, it seems to involve semiotic, linguistic, textual, lexical, social, sociological, cultural and psychological aspects or elements, all of which are being studied nowadays as determining factors in whatever the translator does ” (Hickey, 1998: 1)

The above quotation illustrates the enormous complexity involved in translation of any type It is widely recognised - at least among translators and translation scholars, if not by the wider public - that translation, far from being a mundane and straightforward task, requires considerable skills and cultural, as well as linguistic, sensitivity As Vermeer has written

“In recent years we have come a long way from the traditional approach to translation as a mere linguistic transcoding of a text [] It has become common sense to integrate translation into a wider network of social interactions ” (Vermeer, 1994 10)

The reality of this ‘wider network’ is evidenced by the enormously broad range of disciplines which have been embraced by what has become known as ‘Translation Studies’, a term first proposed by André Lefevere in 1978

“A distinguishing feature of work in Translation Studies has been the combining of work in linguistics, literary studies, cultural history, philosophy, and anthropology ” (Bassnett, 1991 xi)

However, Translation Studies has also been characterised by long-running and bitter debates over such questions as the notion of equivalence or ‘literal’ vs ‘free’ translation. Indeed, Translation Studies has arguably been as much a source of conflict as it has of progress. As Vermeer writes

“Whenever one takes the trouble to peruse the hundreds of publications on translation theory and practice today and in former times, one cannot help being assailed by a feeling of frustration. The same problems and the same affirmations about the same problems are repeated again and again – whether it is better to translate literally or freely according to the meaning (or sense) of words or sentences or texts, whether form or meaning (content) of a source text are more important, whether rhyme and rhythm are to be preserved and substituted and so on ” (Vermeer, 1994 3)

Bassnett is similarly dismissive when dealing with the question of trying to make distinctions between translations, versions and adaptations

“Much time and ink has been wasted attempting to differentiate between *translations*, *versions*, *adaptations* and the establishment of a hierarchy of ‘correctness’ between these categories.” (Bassnett, 1991.78-9)

Neubert and Shreve have described the current “lack of consensus in translation studies” as “deplorable” (1992: 9), while Savory has written that

“Translators have freely contradicted one another about almost every aspect of their art” (Savory, 1992 in Neubert, Shreve, 1992: 9)

The aim of this section is to seek to avoid such argument as much as possible, and instead to briefly examine some of those aspects of literary translation theory on which there is general consensus - such as the importance of reading and the closeness with which a translator reads a text - and also to look at some views on a number of the main problem areas in literary translation, including culture-specific terms, the translation of idiom and metaphor, and text type

1.2.1 Reading: The first stage in the translation process

To say that translation begins with reading the text to be translated is to state the obvious, but the translator is no ordinary reader. The translator must of necessity analyse the text in the most minute detail. It is not just every word which counts, even punctuation assumes the greatest importance when it comes under the translator's eye. In fact, it is frequently the translator who discovers ambiguities, imperfections or inconsistencies in a text - these would escape the notice of the average reader. Biguenet and Schulte have written that

“All acts of translation begin with a thorough investigation of the reading process. Translators, by necessity, read each word and sentence at least as carefully as the critic or scholar. Even the smallest detail in a text [] cannot be neglected” (Bigenet, Schulte, 1989: ix)

Indeed, this seems to be one of the (relatively few) issues in Translation Studies which enjoys general agreement among scholars. Rabassa writes that

“I have always maintained that translation is essentially the closest reading one can possibly give a text. The translator cannot ignore ‘lesser’ words, but must consider every jot and tittle.” (Rabassa, 1989: 6)

In *After Babel*, Steiner asserts that

“To read fully is to restore all that one can of the immediacies of value and intent in which speech actually occurs.” (Steiner, 1975: 24)

while Oittmen, who examines numerous theorists’ views on the translator as reader, writes that

“[] the translator is a very special kind of reader. He or she is sharing his or her reading experience with the target-language readers.” (Oittmen, 1993: 234)

Following on from this is the notion that, since the act of reading necessarily involves interpretation, and since the translator is first and foremost a reader, the translator must interpret a text before translating it. This is no longer considered particularly controversial, but the consequence of this is to undermine the notion that a text has only one meaning - or that it is not the translator’s place to interpret. In fact, the number of interpretations of any given text is only limited by the number of people that read that text. The ‘making of meaning’ is a subjective process - and so is translation. As Bassnett has written

“It is [] quite foolish to argue that the task of the translator is to translate but not to interpret, as if the two were separate exercises. The interlingual translation is bound to reflect the translator’s own creative interpretation of the SL text.” (Bassnett, 1991: 80)

1.2.2 Translation and culture

Translation is as much a cultural as a linguistic phenomenon, the cultural implications which arise from moving a piece of literature from one language into another are considerable. The translator must attempt to render a source culture accessible to a target culture. However, this is potentially quite a dangerous manipulatory process, since the final product - i.e. the translation - will be a powerful force in influencing the target readership's perception of the source culture. Venuti has written of the "violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation", going on to write that

"Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language reader [] The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar, and this aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text []" (Venuti, 1995: 18)

Similarly, Álvarez and Vidal describe the translator as effectively being an 'authority' who 'manipulates'

"The translator can artificially create the reception context of a given text. He can be the authority who manipulates the culture, politics, literature and their acceptance (or lack thereof) in the target culture." (Álvarez, Vidal, 1996: 2)

This inherent risk involved in the crossing of cultural boundaries requires particular care on the part of the translator. It is for this reason that Newmark, in discussing some general considerations for the translation of cultural words, tells the translator

"[] your ultimate consideration should be recognition of the cultural achievements referred to in the SL text, and respect for all foreign countries and their cultures." (Newmark, 1988: 96)

Regardless of how cultural issues are approached by the translator, it must be taken as a given that decisions in this regard can only be taken by someone with an intimate acquaintance of the two cultures. A translator must master cultures as well as languages, in order to mediate between national literatures

“In my understanding, translation is a culture-sensitive process [] Translation as a cultural product and translating as a culture-sensitive procedure widen the meaning of 'translation' and 'translating' beyond a mere linguistic rendering of a text into another language” (Vermeer, 1994: 10)

1.2.3 The importance of function

When it comes to looking at specific problems of literary translation, such as the translation of idiom, the question of function comes to the fore. In a case where a particular idiom proves problematic, it is generally recommended to seek to establish exactly what the function of that idiom is in its particular context. By isolating an idiom's function, the translator can then attempt to substitute a TL idiom which most closely achieves the same function. Bassnett takes the example of the Italian idiom *menare il cane per l'aia*, which literally translated would read 'to lead one's dog around the threshing floor' - a translation which lacks the meaning of the Italian. However, we have a more or less corresponding idiomatic expression in English, which is to 'beat about the bush'. As Bassnett writes

“Both English and Italian have corresponding idiomatic expressions that render the idea of prevarication, and so in the process of interlingual translation one idiom is substituted for another. That substitution is made not on the basis of the linguistic elements in the phrase, nor on the basis of a corresponding or similar image contained in the phrase, but on the function of the idiom. The SL phrase is replaced by a TL phrase that serves the same purpose in the TL culture, and the process here involves the substitution of SL sign for TL sign” (Bassnett, 1991: 24)

This is common sense, but it is helpful in reminding us of the primary importance of function, which is a recurring priority when dealing with a whole range of translation problems

Another example of a translation problem where function becomes important is metaphor. Depending on how one views translation, one can argue that metaphor cannot be translated as such, but rather only reproduced. This is the view of Dagut, who writes that

“Since a metaphor in the SL is, by definition, a new piece of performance, a semantic novelty, it can clearly have no existing ‘equivalence’ in the TL. What is unique can have no counterpart. Here the translator’s bilingual competence [] is of help to him only in the negative sense of telling him that any ‘equivalence’ in this case cannot be ‘found’ but will have to be ‘created’ ” (Dagut, as cited in Bassnett, 1991: 24)

In other words, what is important here is the fact that language is being used in an original way. This in turn requires the translator to use his/her own language - the target language - in an original way. In so doing, the function of the metaphor will be retained.

1.2.4 Presupposition

Presupposition - described by Fawcett as “the background assumptions made in the process of communication” (1998: 114) - is a particularly problematic issue in translation studies. Essentially the problem arises because any given author will most likely have a particular readership in mind when writing a literary text, and will assume certain knowledge - often cultural knowledge - of that readership. Since the target readership of the translator is entirely different, separated both by time and space, there is an immediate problem: what can be assumed of one readership cannot necessarily be assumed of another.

As a first step, the translator must establish where presuppositions have been made, and must then decide whether the target readership requires additional information in order to facilitate their understanding of the text. The next question then becomes “how is this to be achieved?”

“If the target audience is assumed not to have access to the presuppositions which will enable them to understand what is being talked about and if the translator decides in consequence that they need to be told, then the next question becomes what is the best way, in other words the optimal translation technique, to pass on the information with a minimum of disruption if at all possible ” (Fawcett, 1998 121)

1.2.5 Text type

The answer to questions such as that posed by Fawcett, above, will be influenced or indeed determined by considerations of text type. For instance, in the case of a literary text such as a novel, the translator is most likely to opt for unobtrusively inserting additional information into the text proper, rather than using footnotes, when dealing with presuppositions. This decision would be based on norms of literary writing and target audience expectations of such a text type.

Text type is a major consideration for the translator and a determining factor in the translator’s translation strategy. Attempts to produce a useful typology of texts, however, are beset by problems. As Hatim and Mason have written

“[] when attempts are made to narrow the focus of description, we run the risk of ending up with virtually as many text types as there are texts ” (1990 138)

In recent years translation studies has seen a move away from attempts to ‘pigeonhole’ texts according to text type – in other words, to classify texts as being of one type to the exclusion of all others – towards an acceptance that, while any given text will have a dominant textual focus, all texts are hybrids and will display characteristics of other

text types. This is described as the *multifunctionality* of texts. However, these other features of the text are secondary to the dominant focus:

“It is sometimes claimed that texts are too fuzzy to yield distinct typologies, and that more than one purpose is always being attended to in a given text. However, although we recognise multifunctionality as an important property of texts, we submit that only one predominant rhetorical purpose can be served at one time in a given text. This is the text’s dominant textual focus. Other purposes may well be present, but they are in fact subsidiary to the overall function of the text.” (Hatim, Mason, 1990:146)

Identifying the function of the text (e.g. argumentative, expository, instructional) and its main characteristics is an essential part of text analysis – a process which begins as soon as the translator starts to read the source text. As Newmark puts it very simply:

“You begin the job by reading the original for two purposes: first, to understand what it is about; second, to analyse it from a ‘translator’s’ point of view, which is not the same as a linguist’s or a literary critic’s. You have to determine its intention and the way it is written for the purpose of selecting a suitable translation method and identifying particular and recurrent problems.” (1988:11)

Under the model outlined by Newmark¹, *Die Brücke* is essentially an *expressive* text. Newmark describes the expressive function as follows:

“The core of the expressive function is the mind of the speaker, the writer, the originator of the utterance. He uses the utterance to express his feelings irrespective of any response.” (1988:39)

Newmark cites ‘serious imaginative literature’ (including novels) as being characteristic of this type. It is quite clear that this novel falls into this category, but the strong persuasive nature of this book as an anti-war novel means that *Die Brücke*

¹ Newmark proposes three main types of texts: Expressive, informative and vocative. (1988:39-42)

also has a strong *vocative* element, since it seeks to elicit a certain response from the readership

“I use the term ‘vocative’ in the sense of ‘calling upon’ the readership to act, think or feel, in fact to ‘react’ in the way intended by the text []” (1998 41)

These considerations of text type are of importance to the translator in analysing the source text for a number of reasons. Firstly, the text type of the ST is a major factor in determining how the text was written in the first place. Certain conventions may be associated with certain text types in certain literatures at particular times. This is of significance for translation since such conventions may be different in the target culture. In the case of *Die Brücke*, a major implication of the text type analysis for the translator is that the underlying vocative (specifically persuasive) function will need particular attention. One of the main functions of the novel is to persuade the reader of the futility of war, and of the added tragedy of war when children become involved. The translator will have to bear in mind the fact that - though of course this is at no point explicitly stated in the narrative - this is an anti-war novel written as an indictment of armed conflict.

1.2.6 Conclusion

One thing one can say for certain about much of contemporary translation studies is that it is essentially descriptive, as opposed to prescriptive, in the manner in which it examines translation. This is a welcome change to former attempts at drawing up lists of ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’. Translation does not easily lend itself to the formation of such rules.

“Scholars have propagated endless lists of rules about how to translate. Many of these declarations are *prescriptive*, in that they claim to tell us how to translate. Translation studies in its empirical form is primarily *descriptive* and should be based on the observation of translation practice.” (Neubert, Shreve, 1992 8)

This point is also made by Bassnett, who writes:

“Discussion of literary translation within the terms now being outlined by Translation Studies may well assist to improve the quality of translations, but if this happens it will not be because of any prescriptive formulae. Rather it will be due to an increased awareness of the complexity of translation and a raising of the status of the translator and of the translated text.” (Bassnett, 1991:xviii)

In conclusion, it can be said that the literary translator is faced with an enormous task: they must remain sensitive to the needs of their readership, they must usually conform to target culture text-type norms while at the same time bringing the target literature closer to the source literature, and they must take into account a whole range of temporal, cultural and stylistic factors. This requires not only considerable linguistic, cultural and literary knowledge, but also keen judgement.

1.3. 1960 Robert Rosen translation

It has become axiomatic in translation theory to say that any literary work should be re-translated every fifty years. Colloquial language and swear words can quickly go out of fashion, with the result that any translation will eventually sound dated. Words such as ‘devilishly’, ‘goat’ (used as an offensive word to insult someone), ‘brother...!’ (used to express incredulity), and phrases like ‘why the devil...?’ or ‘gone to the devil’ - all of which are used in Robert Rosen’s translation of the novel, published by the Cresset Press, London, in 1960 - sound somewhat old-fashioned and out of place in a modern context. Furthermore, by re-translating a literary work, the translator can allow the work to be reappraised and reinterpreted, since interpretation is an integral part of the translation process.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a detailed comparative analysis of this translation and my own. However, an analysis of a number of points of interest in the Rosen translation, where I would question certain translation decisions, should serve

to support the case for a re-translation of *Die Brücke*. Clearly, this thesis assumes that there is such a case to be made. At the same time, it should be stressed that, despite this somewhat negative approach, the comparison with Rosen's translation was a fascinating one. His solutions to certain translation problems posed by the source text were frequently interesting, while I can also readily admit that there were occasions where I found Rosen's translation to be more idiomatic, or simply - in my own judgement - better. Nonetheless, there were also shortcomings, of which the following is a brief exploration. By and large, I have restricted my comments on his translation to the preface and chapters one to five, since it is this part of the novel which is the focus of this thesis.

1.3.1 Military terminology

Rosen's translation of a number of the military terms in *Die Brücke* suggests a lack of familiarity with related subjects. Overall, it would seem that Rosen did not possess sufficient background knowledge to deal adequately with this important aspect of the novel's subject-matter. The following examples should illustrate this.

- Rosen repeatedly translates the term *Sturmgewehr* as 'storm-gun'. While he is at least consistent in doing so, his literal translation unfortunately results in a term which does not exist in English.²
- Scholten addresses Schaubeck as 'sir' (p 11). Schaubeck is an NCO and not an officer, it is therefore quite wrong that he should be addressed as 'sir'. Furthermore, Schlopke replies to the general with the words "Yessir, General!" (p 34). This translation has clearly been influenced by the German (*Jawoll, Herr General!*). However, in English the rank of an officer is not included as part of the 'term of address' between non-commissioned and commissioned ranks, "Yes, sir!" is therefore sufficient.

² Correct equivalent: Assault rifle

- Rosen's translation of the term *Koppelzeug* as 'swordbelt' (p 20) is curious 'Swordbelt' is somewhat archaic, since it literally refers to a belt with an attachment for a sword ³ Furthermore, the correct spelling is 'sword belt' (i.e. the words are written separately)
- In chapter 19, *Granaten* is mistranslated as 'grenades' ⁴
- The word 'cannons' (p 26) is a somewhat inappropriate translation of *Geschütze* ⁵, since it is suggestive of very old-fashioned weaponry
- Similarly outdated and/or uncommon are the words 'field-drill' ⁶ (p 9), 'noncom' ⁷ (p 10, used repeatedly), and 'on furlough' ⁸ (p 23) Admittedly, this could simply be due to the fact that almost forty years have passed since the translation was published Nonetheless, this temporal factor is one of the primary arguments supporting the case for a re-translation of the novel Language use changes steadily over time, as do our perceptions and interpretations of both historical events and literary works A new translation can give a new lease of life to a novel, even allowing it to be 'rediscovered' and reappraised, while also making it more linguistically appropriate for a contemporary readership

³ Correct equivalent Webbing

⁴ The mistake is easily made *Granate* can function in two ways in German It can be used as a shortened form of *Handgranate* (hand grenade), i.e. a small, hand-held explosive device thrown by a soldier at a nearby target Usually, however, this German word is used to refer to artillery shells and mortar bombs, which are fired over much greater distances The net effect of this mistranslation, therefore, could be to suggest that the enemy forces are close at hand, rather than several miles away

⁵ More appropriate Artillery pieces

⁶ Source term *Übung* More appropriate translation Exercise

⁷ Source term *Unteroffizier* Preferable equivalents 'NCO', as abbr for 'non-commissioned officer', or specific rank - either Corporal or Sergeant

⁸ Source term *auf Heimaturlaub* Preferable translation 'on leave'

1 3 2 Americanisms

In a number of instances Rosen has tended towards using American words or has used words of American origin as equivalents. Examples include ‘gal’, ‘saloon’ (both p 13), ‘bazooka’ (p 21), and ‘jeep’ (p 28)

1 3 3 ‘Domestication’ of source text

There are cases where Rosen appears to engage in the kind of ‘domestication’ of the source text of which Venuti has written. For instance, the word *Waldfrevel* is translated as ‘vandalism’ (p 11), while *Null-Acht* (a reference to the German *Luger* pistol) is translated as ‘45’ (p 32)

1 3 4 Retention of source text words

Rosen also tended towards the opposite approach on occasion, retaining German words such as *Zwieback* and *Winnetou*, which are unlikely to mean anything to an English-speaking readership. The onomatopoeic *trapp-trapp-trapp-trapp* is retained (p 21), as are, curiously, German words referring to the Russian and American enemy. Hence the sentry shouts the warning “The Ivans!” to his comrades (p 23) (a direct translation of *der Iwan*), while the general considers how he should deal with ‘the Amī’ (p 36). Occasionally Rosen retains German terms of address such as *Herr Oberleutnant!* (p 23) and *Herr General!* (p 27), though this is clearly a conscious effort on his part to lend his translation a German ‘flavour’

1 3 5 Mistranslation

There is a clear mistranslation on page 31, when the line *In zehn Minuten bin ich zuruck, und dann geht’s ab nach Kassel!* is translated “I’ll be back in ten minutes,

and off we go then To Kassel ” Rosen has taken this idiomatic expression literally Kassel lies in the north of Hessen, some 250 miles from the scene of the action

1.3.6 Apparent misunderstanding/misreading of the source text

There are a number of instances where it would seem that Rosen misread or misunderstood the source text

- The word *Hugh*, in Scholten's line *Hugh, ich habe gesprochen!*, is translated by 'Ugh' ("Ugh, I have spoken" p 20) This seems somewhat inadequate and meaningless Admittedly, it is difficult to find an equivalent for this exclamatory word, and it may take the cultural knowledge of a native speaker (i.e. in relation to the writings of Karl May and the novel's Indian theme) to unearth the usage and meaning of the word in the first place
- *und das alles kurz vor Mitternacht* is translated by Rosen as 'till way past midnight' (p 20)
- In chapter five, the general's thoughts - *Wahrscheinlich geht es ihnen dreckig auf der Brücke* - are translated as 'Most likely they're wretched on the bridge' (p 36), which suggests that Rosen misunderstood the German This is unfortunate, as this particular line is of considerable significance, since it constitutes a private acknowledgement on the part of the general that the boys are likely to die in carrying out his order
- Rosen translates *sie haben noch nicht die richtige Angst* as 'they still have the right kind of fear' (p 36) which somewhat distorts the meaning of the German

1 3 7 'Language interference' and umdiomatic English

There are occasions when Rosen's language is umdiomatic, this is frequently as a result of being influenced by the source language ⁹ The following are some examples

- 'He kept on talking m on Heilmann' (p 27) (*Er [] sprach leise, eindringlich auf Heilmann ein*)
- 'He thought once more of the seven' (p 36) (*Er denkt nochmals an die sieben*)
- 'Under all circumstances' (p 27) (*Unter allen Umstanden*)

1 3 8 Rampe

Rosen translates *die Rampe des Wagens* as 'the platform of the truck' (p 22) However, in English we would be more likely to say that the boys jumped off the *back* of the truck - or simply, off the truck The word *Rampe* is also repeatedly used in the context of the bridge itself, as part of the compound word *Bruckenrampe*, which Rosen translates as 'bridge-ramp' However, this term is not used in English

1 3 9 Nicknames

In light of the discussion later on in this thesis concerning the numerous nicknames used in *Die Brucke*, and the various difficulties which are presented by their translation, it should prove interesting to note Rosen's translations *der Verein* - 'The Gang', *Zack* - 'Chop-chop', *das Vieh* - 'The Beast', *Winnetou* - 'Winnetou', *der Schweiger* - 'The Silent One', *der Spatberufene* - 'Johnny-Come-Lately'

⁹ Newmark has examined what he describes as the 'level of naturalness' in translation, and writes

1.3.10 Conclusion

I believe that *Die Brücke* deserves to be read and remembered. As a translator, this would be not only my primary motive for translating the novel, but it would also be my justification for translating a piece of literature which has in fact already been translated.

As regards the Rosen translation, it is important to point out that this translation was not consulted until I had completed my own translation of the first five chapters. In this way, I was able to produce an original translation which was not influenced by Rosen's translation.

1.4 The decision to translate chapters 1-5

There were essentially two main reasons why I chose to translate the first five chapters of this novel. The first is the fact that these chapters are crucial to the novel as a whole in that they set the scene and establish all of the main characters. They also provide the foundations of the plot - the central plot of the whole novel - seven sixteen-year-old soldiers are left on a bridge and must defend it without any leadership (Corporal Schlopke will leave them to fend for themselves in chapter six) - is established in the opening few chapters.

These five chapters (and the preface) offer a wide range of issues for analysis, translation and commentary, which are representative of the novel as a whole and occur frequently in literary translation.

that 'unnatural translation' is 'marked by interference, primarily from the SL text' (1988: 24-9)



Chapter 2

Analysis

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. Target readership

Before beginning translation a crucial consideration for the translator is to decide what sort of function the translation is to fulfil in the target culture, and to what target audience the novel will be addressed.

These decisions will, in turn, be influenced, perhaps even determined, by the translator's own personal appreciation of the source text, its merit and significance. My own view of *Die Brücke* is as follows. This novel is a strong and powerful anti-war novel. It graphically examines the pointlessness of war, the effect of war on young people and, in particular, the psychological, not to mention physical, trauma which they suffer when they are drafted and forced to fight. It is a deeply tragic story which I would recommend to anyone with an interest in the subject.

Unfortunately, however, *Die Brücke* is almost unheard of. It seems to have been completely forgotten in Germany. As far as the English-speaking world is concerned, while Rosen's translation seems to have enjoyed some success, it is unlikely that 'The Bridge' was ever particularly famous, to judge from the difficulties I had in tracing the original English translation. Edmund Ordon (1965) has examined the question of the sparse number of 'translations of literature' (i.e. translations of literary works into English from any source language) in the case of the United States. His studies, based on the 'Index Translationum', published by UNESCO, produced statistics to the effect that:

In 1961, 404 literary translations were published in the U.S. from a total of 29 different languages;

In 1962, 406 literary translations were published from 35 languages.

The sum total for all publications of literary translations in the U S during this two-year period was 810, from 41 languages

Bearing in mind these very low figures, it is not hard to see why most German novels would be highly unlikely, purely from a statistical point of view, to ever reach an American readership (although *Die Brücke* was in fact an exception to this) This is particularly unfortunate, given the fact that an American readership would potentially be far larger than that of Britain and Ireland combined Ordon evidently feels that American publishers are primarily to blame for the lack of interest in cultures and literatures outside their own, whatever the reasons, however, it is rare for German books, or indeed any other foreign works, to make a significant impact on the English-speaking world On the basis of the above figures, Ordon concludes

“If we consider that approximately 30,000 books were published in the United States during this same period, we can see clearly that American publishers did not display an unusual amount of interest in translations from other literatures And if we analyze the figures further, we see that the situation is even sadder than the above figures indicate ” (Ordon, 1965 100)

In discussing the fate of translations of Dutch literature, Vanderauwa is similarly bleak

“Dutch translated fiction hardly ever gains access to the top circles of the reviewing establishment [] they hold the literary power, and channel and direct the literary opinions of their cultured audience ” (Vanderauwa, 1985 201)

Furthermore, “the books are rarely if ever applauded as new or refreshing contributions to the target literature ” (ibid)

The question of the status accorded to translations and translators has also been dealt with in some detail by Venuti (1995 1-17), who offers figures relating to the overall book outputs of British and American publishing and the relatively tiny proportion of this output which is made up of translations, and also outlines the considerably higher

degree to which translations figure as a 'significant percentage of total book production' in the Western European publishing industry - specifically, in France, Italy and Germany. According to Venuti's figures, 25.4% of books brought out by Italian publishers in 1989 were translations. Offering evidence for British and American publishers' lack of interest in translations, he writes

"[] British and American book production increased fourfold since the 1950s, but the number of translations remained roughly between 2 and 4 percent of the total - notwithstanding a marked surge during the early 1960s, when the number of translations ranged between 4 and 7 percent of the total. In 1990, British publishers brought out 63,980 books, of which 1625 were translations (2.4 percent), while American publishers brought out 46,743 books, including 1380 translations (2.96 percent)." (Venuti, 1995: 12)

It is perhaps this 'marked surge' in the early 1960s which accounts for the relative success of *The Bridge*. Nonetheless, as Venuti points out, publication alone does not mean that a translation will be successful, since very few translations become bestsellers and very few will ever be reprinted. In condemning the British and American publishing industries, Venuti's tone is as scathing as that of Ordon (above), when he writes that

"British and American publishing [] has reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership, while producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other" (ibid: 15)

My view of the novel as a serious and worthwhile piece of literature will strongly influence the kind of readership I will have in mind while translating it. My translation will be primarily geared towards an educated, adult readership. It may also be read by older children, particularly boys, but the translation will not be intended to

fulfil the function of a mere adventure story, indeed, far from it. However, although I will mainly have adults in mind, the fact that the main characters are teenagers means that publication of the translation would inevitably meet with a certain amount of interest from that age group.

2.1.2 Translation strategy

The question of text type, and *Die Brücke's* expressive and vocative functions, was discussed in Chapter One. The novel's vocative dimension is a strong underlying persuasive element within the text, and the reader is invited to sympathise with the author's anti-war perspective. Assuming that the novel's anti-war function is to be preserved in translation, the translator will also have to engage the reader, just as the author of the source text has done, and persuade them in a similar way.

On a far more pragmatic level, one of the purposes of writing – or, in this case, translating – a novel is for the work to be read. Where an author (or a translator on the author's behalf) seeks to use their work as a means of influencing or persuading, it is fair to assume that it is desirable for the work to be read by as many people as possible. The readership for a translation of this novel is potentially very broad, if this readership is to be successfully reached, the translator will have to cater to the needs of English native speakers with, in the great majority of cases, a very limited understanding of the text's historical dimension and of the German culture in which it is embedded. The source text is but one of a range of factors, albeit an important one, which contribute to the ultimate product in the target language, and the translator must keep their own target readership very firmly in mind. This in turn has clear and substantial implications for the manner in which the translator will approach their task – in other words, for the translation strategy which will be employed.

It is for the reasons outlined above that I have opted to take a 'domestication' approach in my translation. This means that the translation is tailored to conform to the norms of this text type in the target culture and to meet the expectations of the target readership. This will be seen most markedly in the approach taken to culture-

specific terms and other historical and cultural references, and will be characterised by a tendency to occasionally make explicit that which is implicit in the source text. These are decisions which are taken with the readership in mind, and are intended to offer the reader easier 'access' to a foreign culture, place and time.

2.1.3 Purpose of text analysis

"Most writers on translation theory now agree that before embarking upon any translation the translator should analyse the text comprehensively, since this appears to be the only way of ensuring that the source text (ST) has been wholly and correctly understood" (Nord, 1991: 1)

The purpose of this section on text analysis is to attempt to highlight the most important areas of difficulty which will arise in the translation of the text, with a view to offering a preliminary discussion of the causes of such difficulty and the issues involved, prior to a further discussion in Chapter Four, during which the solutions which were found will be examined and explained. The text analysis will be divided into the following sections:

- Preface,
- 'Character study' technique,
- Military/War terminology,
- Military allusions through use of simile,
- Shared assumptions,
- Paragraph boundaries,
- Types of sentence, sentence boundaries,
- Dialogue,
- Nicknames,
- Metaphor,
- Cultural references,
- Comprehension/Interpretation difficulties,
- Swear words

- Names

It is important to note that the text analysis cannot attempt to provide a comprehensive list of every instance of difficulty or point of interest under the above headings, nor indeed do the sections offer more than a broad outline of the main issues involved in the translation of this novel. Rather the aim is to give a general overview of the obstacles confronting a translator attempting to tackle an English-language translation of *Die Brücke*.

2.1.4 Overview of narrative

Before delving into the text analysis proper, it is a useful exercise to provide the reader with a summary of the narrative. The following sections provide a chapter-by-chapter discussion of the course of the action of the novel's first 35 pages.

2.1.4.1 Preface

The preface to the novel provides a pretext for the story to be written. From the opening paragraphs it is clear that this particular bridge, in a certain unnamed German town, has a deep significance, for reasons as yet unknown, for the narrator. So much so, in fact, that he has been drawn back to the bridge after a ten-year period during which he has evidently lived elsewhere.

The narrator speaks to us from his vantage point, standing on the bridge and gazing down into the water. His evocative description of the bridge, in paragraph three, shows his pride in its strength. Indeed, the opening paragraphs testify to what is evidently a strong emotional bond which the narrator has to this bridge. This makes the reader curious and catches their attention, as it is not yet clear why this bond exists.

However, gradually the link between the bridge and the narrator begins to transpire. We follow his gaze down into the clear water, to a rifle which lies on the riverbed. The fifth paragraph goes back ten years to explain how the rifle had belonged to a sixteen-year-old soldier who dropped the weapon as he was killed. This provides the crucial link between past and 'present' (i.e. between 1945 and 1955), and also gives an indication of what the reader might expect to be the subject matter of the novel. The final sentence of this paragraph, "Ich wußte, daß ich ihn und die anderen nicht vergessen würde", testifies to the narrator's personal involvement in the events he describes, while also providing an explanation as to why he has written this novel - namely, as a dedication to the memory of friends he has clearly lost.

He then goes on to describe the small town's magnificent, scenic surroundings: "Die Stadt liegt inmitten einer herrlichen Landschaft. Sie ist von weiten Wäldern, Hügelketten und sattgrünen Wiesen umgeben."

The tone of the preface is pensive, with a balance between positive and negative emotions: on the one hand, the narrator rejoices in the magnificence of the bridge and the landscape, on the other, he feels great sadness at the loss of his friends.

In the sixth paragraph there is a clear shift back in time, providing a smooth transition from the preface to chapter one of the novel: "Es begann damals vor zehn Jahren in der Kaserne einer kleinen deutschen Stadt." Thus the reader has been given a brief introduction to the background to the story, before the narration proper begins.

2.1.4.2. Chapter One

In the opening scene the 'Verein' have just returned from an exercise and Karl Horber, the first character we are introduced to, is showering. The remainder of the Verein are lounging around and Horber is the butt of a constant stream of good-natured jokes. Corporal Schaubeck, a malicious, domineering character, arrives on the scene and proceeds to bully Horber. One of the Verein then intervenes and comes to Horber's aid by insulting Schaubeck, without actually revealing his own identity. This leads to

a tense stand-off between Schaubeck and the Verein, which is eventually interrupted by the air-raid siren

At this point the narration breaks off and there is an abrupt temporal shift, as well as a change in subject-matter. We are now told of Schaubeck's past - about how he married 'Kitty' within days of meeting her, but how his wild lifestyle soon led the marriage to break up. He is described as being a heavy drinker but also an excellent leader of men.

Here the action is picked up again, and the seven boys race over to the anti-aircraft guns to assist the gun crews as they open fire on the enemy bomber formation overhead. A single American fighter peels off and strafes the barracks. The NCOs' mess hall is hit and Schaubeck, who is enjoying a bottle of wine and a game of cards with corporal Heilmann, is killed. The chapter ends with the stark image of Schaubeck's dead body and astonished, wide-open eyes.

2.1.4.3 Chapter Two

The enemy aircraft have passed and the chapter opens with the 'Verem' having returned to their sleeping quarters. They have been joined by Lieutenant Frohlich, who informs them of Schaubeck's death. Frohlich encourages the seven boys to flee, telling them that he has made arrangements for this. He curses the war under his breath, and leaves.

At this point, the narration breaks off and we are told that, two hours before the air-raid, Frohlich had learned that his son's unit was completely annihilated on the Russian front. Frohlich is described as being very well loved by the seven boys, he and Heilmann are the only two in the whole barracks to have made a real effort to look after them.

We are told that the boys were the last in the small town to be drafted, and this introduces a flashback and thus a second clear break in the macro-structure of the text.

The boys had been drafted in mid-April, were issued uniforms and rifles, and were greeted upon their arrival in barracks by Schaubeck. At this point, the origin of the nickname der 'Verein' is explained.

Frohlich and Heilmann, we are told, were the only other two soldiers to have dealings with the boys, and the nature of the contact of each with the boys is compared - Frohlich having spent time with them in lengthy conversation, Heilmann, on the other hand, limiting himself to making occasional gloomy comments, in passing, about the worsening military situation. A second comparison follows, namely, between the boys' relationship with Heilmann and Frohlich respectively. Heilmann is well-liked by the 'Verein', but their feelings for Frohlich are considerably stronger.

Here there is a third break in the text structure, made all the more distinct by the introduction of the heading *Leutnant Frohlich und Gaius Julius Caesar*, which is used as a title to the flashback which follows. This technique is in fact identical to that used for Schaubeck in Chapter One. As for Schaubeck, this flashback essentially constitutes a short biography, with Frohlich's background being briefly explored.

We are first told that Frohlich's actual profession is not that of an army officer, rather he is a secondary school teacher. His interest in war and military strategy is limited to that of Julius Caesar. He has no interest in World War Two, he has lost his school, his students and even his son, who was drafted into the army despite his young age.

Then the seven boys arrived in the barracks. This introduces a further flashback, which describes the day Frohlich happened to come across Schaubeck as he made the helpless Albert Mutz do dozens of knee-bends, while also holding his rifle. This infuriated Frohlich, who took sympathy with Mutz and imagined him to be his own son. He immediately came to Mutz's aid.

Finally, we are told that his marriage gradually broke up, and that he has little left in life other than the seven boys in the barracks, who he resolves to take care of.

2.1.4.4. Chapter Three

The chapter opens at midnight, when the alarm sounds. The boys are still wide awake, as they have been debating whether or not to desert. Almost immediately the narration shifts to some time earlier, to a point following their brief meeting with Lieutenant Fröhlich.

The boys are in a quandary as to what to do. There is strong disagreement as to what the best course of action is. What follows is essentially a lengthy discussion during which each of the seven boys expresses his opinion in turn. Scholten is the last to speak. When he does, the boys are more or less equally divided. This means that Scholten's view will be decisive. Scholten then begins to speak at length on the pros and cons involved with their two options. What conclusively clinches the decision for Scholten is the consideration that, if they were to flee, this would make them cowards. Scholten concludes his argumentation by saying that they have not been given equipment and training for nothing, and that it is their duty not to let their superiors down. He finishes by telling the others that they can do what they like, but he is staying put.

Horber is outraged that Scholten should suggest he is a coward, and soon a fight develops, with all seven boys tussling on the floor. Suddenly the alarm sounds, bringing the brawl to an abrupt stop. We have thus arrived at the point at which the chapter began.

The boys quickly grab all their equipment, race outside onto the main square of the barracks, and join Fröhlich's platoon. Three high-ranking officers arrive, and the boys wait at attention with the five hundred other soldiers for about half an hour, while the company and platoon commanders are briefed. Finally, the various commanders return, and the boys' platoon is addressed by Lieutenant Fröhlich.

The troops are told that the Americans are still thirty kilometres from the town, which is to be defended. They will occupy strategic positions. Fröhlich explains that their situation is precarious - a relatively large area is to be defended with relatively few

troops The troops then go to collect their rations, ammunition and additional weapons

Half an hour later, the troops leave the barracks by truck The 'Verein' are soon told to dismount, when the trucks stop on a bridge in the town They are put under the charge of Corporal Heilmann, and Lieutenant Frohlich instructs them to hold the bridge However, it is soon clear that he has only done so for the benefit of the remaining troops in the lorries, since he immediately counters this order by whispering to Heilmann that they are to leave the moment the Americans arrive Heilmann is delighted to hear this

At this point the narrative flow is interrupted by the introduction of an extended flashback As in chapters one and two, a sub-heading is used "*Unteroffizier Heilmann und der Krieg*" The repeated use of this device has established a pattern to the chapter structure and narrative techniques This means that the reader now knows to expect the narrative to focus on one particular character, offering a short biography and possibly one or two anecdotes

The very first word of this extended flashback tells us that Heilmann, at some point in his past, was an officer cadet This naturally provokes curiosity on the part of the reader, as we know that Heilmann has not progressed beyond the rank of corporal He was some ten years older than the other cadets in his class Everything seemed to be running smoothly for him until just four days before his officer's course ended

This introduces a brief anecdote, which will explain what went wrong to prevent him from being commissioned During a lesson in political instruction, he was asked whether he considered it possible for a German officer to make a good officer, without being a dedicated supporter of the (Nazi) regime The answer to this question seemed so glaringly obvious to him that for once he spoke without thinking He blurted out that of course this was perfectly possible As a result of this political 'indiscretion', he was returned to the Eastern front, still a corporal, and lost out on his promotion

A second anecdote follows. This anecdote involves an incident which occurred on the Russian front in early May 1944, and is designed to highlight the injustice of the previous anecdote by showing how Heilmann was capable of acts of great courage and almost superhuman endurance.

Heilmann was involved in an attack on a Russian position on the second of May. The Russians mounted a dogged defence and succeeded in fending off the attack. Following this attack, Heilmann was among the missing. However, later that night a wounded German soldier turned up at another unit some five kilometres away. The following day Heilmann's company learned that Heilmann was no longer missing and that, although badly wounded, he had somehow managed to crawl about five kilometres back to his own lines.

This second anecdote marks the end of the extended flashback, and there is a resumption of the main action of the novel. Corporal Heilmann is now standing on the bridge with the seven boys, the trucks carrying the remaining troops and Lieutenant Frohlich have left them and continued west to meet the oncoming American forces. The chapter ends with the thought pressing on Heilmann's mind that he is responsible for the boys.

2 1 4 5 Chapter Four

This chapter begins as the previous chapter ended - with Heilmann's thoughts. This 'inner dialogue' is particularly characteristic of this chapter. Indeed, the chapter contains relatively little direct speech. Heilmann is the central character here and it is he who propels the narrative.

Initially, little really happens in this chapter. It is now late at night, there are not many civilians about, and a few army convoys cross the bridge, heading westwards to meet the American forces. The seven boys lean against the railings, while Heilmann paces up and down, frustrated at his inability to keep the boys busy.

In the middle of the night a major army withdrawal gets into full swing. Convoys consisting of a wide variety of vehicles flood across the bridge, as do columns of exhausted, battle-weary soldiers. The description of these soldiers is detailed and graphic. It starts to rain, and the boys huddle under their waterproof tarpaulins. They watch the troops pass by, and begin to realise the full implications of their position. Each of them is afraid.

Heilmann distributes cigarettes and they begin to smoke. Their fingers are numb with the cold. As night wears on, the convoy thins out and then, ominously, stops altogether. The seven boys are now alone on the bridge with their corporal, who still doesn't know how to occupy them.

An army jeep arrives and Heilmann is unpleasantly surprised to find himself face to face with a general. The general orders Heilmann to hold the bridge at all costs and also informs him that reinforcements are on the way, and then leaves. Heilmann is furious at the general's visit and knows not to expect much from his promise of 'reinforcements'. Sure enough, the additional troops which soon arrive consist of ten old men who have just been drafted.

The thought suddenly occurs to Heilmann that if they are to defend the bridge, they will need a machine gun. This provides him with the inspiration he has been waiting for - now he knows what to do. He sends three of the boys up to the barracks to fetch a machine gun and ammunition.

Following a short discussion with his comrades, one of the old men speaks up and declares that their order is an impossible one to fulfil - he is going home. He then lays down his rifle and walks briskly away. The remaining nine old men quickly follow suit. Heilmann merely stands and watches. He is at a loss as to what to do. He feels he should prevent them from deserting, but he doesn't move an inch. He is surprised to find that the boys' reaction to his handling of the situation is one of admiration - precisely *because* he allowed the old men to leave. He has become a hero in their eyes, they swear to themselves that he can depend on them.

Mutz, Horber and Borchart return from the barracks by truck, and unload two machine guns and several boxes of ammunition. They describe the situation in the town and in the barracks. Heilmann notes that they did not come across any military police on their travels. He begins to teach them how to use the machine gun.

Morning now dawns and Heilmann has finished his lesson. He suddenly remembers Lieutenant Frohch's order. This marks a crucial point in Heilmann's thinking process. He now knows what he must do.

He addresses the boys, telling them that it is pointless for them to defend the bridge, and that he promised Lieutenant Frohch that they would not see action. He then tells them that he will go for a quick walk to make sure that the coast is clear. They are to stay put until he returns. He digs out a civilian jacket from his rucksack and puts it on over his uniform, before going on his way.

Almost immediately upon crossing the junction by the bridge, however, Heilmann is confronted by two grim-faced military policemen. Seeing Heilmann's civilian jacket, the soldiers know that he is attempting to desert, and begin to march him off. Heilmann must take immediate action if he is to escape and warn the boys. He successfully attacks one of the soldiers, but fails to disable the second soldier. The only option he has left is to run for his life. However, Heilmann is killed by the military policeman's second shot.

The soldier who has killed him searches Heilmann's pockets, and finds numerous items including a picture of a blond girl in a bathing costume. He takes Heilmann's wallet and looks at the photograph, remarking to himself that the girl is attractive, before turning to look after his comrade.

The chapter ends back on the bridge, where the seven sixteen-year-olds await the return of their corporal.

2 1 4 6 Chapter Five

Chapter five opens to the sound of the same two shots which were fired by the military policeman in the closing scenes of the previous chapter. The sound of the two shots prompts Mutz to suggest that someone may have committed suicide. Scholten dismisses this, but nonetheless, all the boys feel somewhat uncomfortable. They continue to sit around on the bridge awaiting Heilmann's return.

Day begins to dawn, and the rain has eased off. Once more the boys argue about what might have happened to Heilmann. They soon stop arguing, since there is no point, and their spirits are lifted by the new day. Horber amuses the others with his antics, as he attempts to open a tin of sausage with his bayonet, but their now jovial mood is interrupted by the sudden arrival of the general, who has again come to pay them a visit. He interrupts Scholten's nervous attempt at making a report and asks for their corporal. Scholten says nothing, but Mutz blurts out that he has 'gone', inadvertently betraying Heilmann. He quickly tries to make good his mistake by lying that Heilmann has gone to fetch ammunition.

When the general learns from Mutz that their corporal has in fact been gone some two hours, he decides to appoint a replacement. He turns around in the car and orders corporal Schlopke to get out and take over, thus introducing a new character to the novel. It is evident that the general is taking some pleasure in this order, and that Schlopke, behind his facade of attentiveness and assiduousness, is very displeased.

The general orders Schlopke to hold the bridge, and assures him in front of the boys that his new troops are seven 'splendid chaps'. The boys are delighted with this praise and filled with enthusiasm, now that they have another NCO in charge of them. The general wishes the boys luck and tells them he is counting on them, before leaving again. Schlopke is clearly furious at his new appointment and curses the general behind his back.

Meanwhile the general drives to a nearby farm, enters a room which is obviously serving as an improvised headquarters, and begins to study a large map on the wall.

At this point the 'character study' device is employed once again. A heading introduces a section - *Ein General und sein Befehl* - which is entirely devoted to the general. However, the section offers only the briefest mention of the general's past and is primarily devoted to his thoughts, narrated as an internal monologue, which are concerned with the tactical situation at hand.

In the first paragraph we learn that the general (at no point is he named) cannot stand 'trübe Tassen'. Evidently he considers Schlopke to be such a person as he has taken great satisfaction in leaving him at the bridge. Briefly he thinks of the seven boys and has 'ein ungutes Gefühl', but then the metaphorical 'windscreen-wiper' gets to work in his brain. This metaphor is used to describe the mental process by which he erases any unwelcome moral concerns which enter his thoughts.

He is satisfied that the seven boys will be able to fend off the initial American advance, and realises that they are likely to die in doing so. However, their defence of the bridge should buy him at least two hours' time. The paragraph which follows provides a 'tactical background' to the action of the novel in its entirety - the reader learns that the bridge is of strategic significance because it must be held for a few hours if a pocket of some seven thousand German troops is to escape from their encircled area and avoid complete annihilation.

A lengthy description of the general's tactical appraisal of the situation, which is entirely based on the pressing need to buy himself as much time as possible, is then provided. He resolves that it would be wrong to destroy the bridge straight away. Instead, the Americans must advance in the belief that the bridge is unprotected. They will then come under fire the moment their first tank reaches the bridge. The response of the Americans will then be to fall back, attack with fighter-bombers, and then advance again. This could even take as much as three hours. The best moment to blow up the bridge is after the first attack, as soon as the second begins. Then the Americans will need to bring up their sappers and this will take even more time.

The general's hands are clammy. He paces up and down the room, running over the likely course of events again in his mind. Once more he thinks of the seven boys, and once more his brain's 'windscreen wiper' gets to work.

2.2. Text analysis

2.2.1 Preface

The preface of *Die Brücke* should be considered separately from the novel proper, for various reasons. It is different from the chapters which follow in numerous respects: it does not constitute part of the story, but rather has the function of providing the background to the story and the pretext for the story to be written. It serves to draw the reader into the narrative which follows. By providing only very limited, factual information on the fate of a German soldier, who is anonymous ("Die Waffe fiel einem deutschen Soldaten am 2. Mai 1945, abends um 17.20 Uhr, aus der Hand"), the preface raises many obvious questions in the mind of the reader (such as *Who was this soldier? Why did he have to die? What was he trying to say when he died? Who were 'die anderen'?* *What was the relationship of the narrator to these people?*) which the novel itself will slowly answer. In short, the preface invites the reader into the story. Most significant, however, is the first-person narration, which is evident right from the opening sentence: "Der Zufall hatte mich wieder in die kleine Stadt geführt, und es waren zehn Jahre vergangen." It is the type of narration which sets the preface apart from the following chapters most markedly, only in the preface, and again at the very end of the novel, in what might be described as a 'postscript', does the narrator occupy so prominent a position. During the course of the novel, the narrator is a vague, anonymous figure hovering in the background, in the preface, however, he is a human figure. What Stanzel writes about the 'Ich-Roman' can be applied to the first-person narration of the preface.

“Im Ich-Roman tritt der Erzähler als Figur der dargestellten Welt auf. Er erzählt, was er erlebt oder beobachtet oder von anderen Figuren des Romans in Erfahrung gebracht hat” (Stanzel, 1974: 25)

The author's decision as to what type of narration to use has clear implications as to how the reader reacts to the text. First-person narration can give the reader a sense of immediacy to the action, since the narrator is directly involved in what is described. By extension, the reader also feels involved. One could even go so far as to say that the 'ich' of the preface almost has a sense of 'wir' (narrator and reader). As Stanzel goes on to point out, it can also serve to make a story more credible, or at least aid the 'suspension of disbelief' (such as in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, for example)

“In der Frühzeit des Romans wurde die Ich-Erzählung vor allem deshalb sehr häufig verwendet, weil durch die in ihr gesetzte Identität des Erzählers mit einer Romanfigur der Anspruch dieses Romans, eine wahre Geschichte zu sein, bekräftigt schien” (ibid: 29)

This is a very useful point in examining the use of first-person narration in the opening and closing paragraphs of *Die Brücke*. The credibility, or 'believability', of the novel is indeed greatly enhanced by the presence of a narrator whose life has obviously been affected by the seemingly factual events which are described.

2.2.1.1 Shared assumptions

A writer with a particular target audience in mind will always make certain assumptions of that audience. In the case of *Die Brücke*, it is likely that Gregor primarily intended German people of the day to read his novel. In other words, he was addressing people with broadly similar life experiences to himself. By far the most profound of these experiences would of course have been the Second World War and the loss of life, unprecedented destruction, social upheaval and savage barbarity which took place during that war.

Gregor and his readership were products of the same culture and time, so most of the assumptions made by him during the course of writing *Die Brücke* would have been subconscious. The fact that the life experiences of a contemporary audience in an English-speaking world, a world which by and large has no first-hand experience of full-scale war, are radically different to those of Gregor's readership, means that there is a considerable challenge posed to the translator who must attempt to unobtrusively, i.e. within the text itself, provide additional background information where necessary. The translator must stretch beyond the mere word and, by examining cultural differences, attempt to cater for the needs of the new target audience by giving access to a source culture which would otherwise remain inaccessible. Dmgwaney has written that

“[] in seeking to transport words (and sentences and texts) from one language to another, the translator cannot merely search for equivalent words in the ‘target’ language to render the meaning of the ‘source’. Rather, the translator must attend to the contexts (‘a world, a culture’) from which these words arise and which they, necessarily, evoke and express. Thus, it seems entirely appropriate that translation theory and practice has, in recent years, turned to both ‘source’ and ‘target’ cultures as something to be studied before the translation of a work can proceed” (Dmgwaney, Maier, 1995: 3)

The reasons for the importance of taking into account assumptions made in the source text are clear - what can be assumed of the ST audience cannot necessarily be assumed of the TT audience.

“The translator has to take account of the fact that a piece of information that might be ‘trivial’ to the ST recipient because of his source-cultural background knowledge (and therefore is not mentioned in the source text) may be unknown to the TT recipient because of his target-cultural background knowledge (and therefore has to be mentioned in the target text) - or vice versa” (Nord, 1991: 97)

Effectively what this means is that the translator will expand or reduce the text in translation as is appropriate. Even the preface assumes a certain amount of knowledge

on the part of the reader. The third paragraph assumes that the reader will be familiar with the phenomenon of *Schmelzwasser*, or meltwater, and its effect on rivers. The river is described as going into flood in the Spring, its waters having been swollen by huge volumes of melted mountain snow. Such is the force of the flood that it has torn down trees, which are carried along by the torrent and crash against the bridge's solid stone pillars. The translator will have to bear in mind that these are assumptions which cannot necessarily be made of an English-speaking readership.

Similarly, assumptions are also made of the reader with regard to German history. Clearly, a German readership would be much more familiar with the historical background to the novel than an English-speaking readership, all the more so, it must be remembered, since the original target readership would have read the novel some fifteen years after the end of the war. Consequently, many readers would have actually experienced similar events to those described. The net result of this much greater cultural and historical knowledge on the part of the original target readership is that the translator is faced with a considerable task to translate a novel which was written primarily for people with first-hand experience of the war, for a new readership which, living over four decades later than the original readership (2000 as opposed to 1958), in very different countries, will for the most part have only the vaguest idea of what Germany was like in 1945. Indeed, the two dates mentioned in the preface (May 1st and 2nd, 1945) are unlikely to mean much to an English-speaking readership of today, the original readership would have immediately been able to fit these dates into a clear historical timeframe (this timeframe being namely at the very end of the war, which had lasted over five years, a time when much of Germany lay in ruins and all hope of Germany avoiding defeat was long lost).

However, it is fair to say that, in the English-speaking world, the Second World War remains a major landmark in the minds of those with even only the most rudimentary knowledge of recent history. Although not entirely a 'contemporary' work, readers of a translation of *Die Brücke* will to some extent benefit from the advantages of the modern world described by Batts, when he writes

“Bei der Übertragung eines zeitgenössischen literarischen Werkes in eine fremde Sprache hat der heutige Übersetzer einen Vorteil, den frühere Übersetzer nicht hatten, da durch den Fremdenverkehr und die Medien der heutige Leser einer Übersetzung in die Lage versetzt worden ist, sich von der fremden Kultur, aus der das Original stammt, ein Bild zu machen. Jede, auch die entfernteste Kultur der Welt ist neuerdings gewissermaßen überall präsent” (Batts, 1993: 647)

So, contemporary English-speaking readers of the translation of this novel will in some ways be reasonably familiar with Germany and its culture. Or, at least, they will *think* they are. For, as Batts goes on to point out, this ‘advantage’ can in fact be very much a two-edged sword.

“Darin liegt allerdings die große Gefahr, daß diese Leser, aus welchen Gründen auch immer, ein falsches Bild von dieser Kultur haben. Unter anderem lassen sich überkommene und aus verschiedenen Gründen immer weiter tradierte Klischeevorstellungen und Stereotypen schlecht vermeiden. Aus seiner Perspektive meint der Leser, volles Verständnis für einen übersetzten Text aus einer fremden zeitgenössischen Kultur zu haben, es kann aber sehr gut eine irrige Meinung sein” (ibid: 653-4)

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the translator must be sensitive to the needs of the new target readership, and careful to avoid making unrealistic assumptions of that readership. Where assumptions are identified in the source text, additional information may need to be unobtrusively introduced in the translation.

2.2.1.2 Military terminology

There are two specialised military terms in the preface: *Sturmgewehr* and *Magazin*. These terms are unlikely to pose any major difficulties for the translator. However, the source text seems to assume that the reader will be able to make a clear distinction between the general term *Gewehr* (rifle), and the more specific and specialised term

Sturmgewehr (assault rifle) Whether an English-speaking readership could make this distinction is uncertain

2 2 1 3 Other terminology

The cultural issues with relation to the term *Schmelzwasser* have already been discussed. The difficulty with the English *meltwater* is that this is a specialised term which is not commonly used. It is likely that this term will require expansion.

Geröll and *Kiesgrund* are also semi-specialised terms used to describe the riverbed. As with the term *Schmelzwasser*, the nearest equivalents in English, for example the word *detritus*, may be somewhat too specialized for the context.

2 2 1 4 Conversational tone

The tone of the text is conversational, without being informal. “Es ist eine schöne Brücke, und die kleine Stadt kann stolz darauf sein”. The language is simple and clear. The rhetorical question “War es ein Zufall?”, which begins the second paragraph, greatly contributes to this conversational tone by involving the reader and provoking thought. The impersonal construction ‘man’ in paragraph four also serves to implicate the reader somewhat in the events which are being described, by encouraging them to imagine themselves standing beside the narrator on the bridge, looking down into the water.

2 2 1 5 Tense

Gregor frequently changes tense during the preface. This can be clearly seen by examining the opening words of the first three paragraphs. “Der Zufall hatte mich geführt” (pluperfect), “War es ein Zufall?” (past), “Es ist eine schöne Brücke” (present). These tense changes can be very abrupt. The first and last lines of

paragraph six are written in the past tense, but the remainder is written in the present tense.

2.2.1.6. Sentence length

A final area which is likely to pose difficulty for the translator is that of sentence length. A number of the sentences are particularly short: “Braungebrannte Körper in schnittigen Booten”; “Es war ein Sturmgewehr. Herstellungsjahr 1944. Das Magazin war leer”; “Ungefähr eine Sekunde lang”. This device, which, as will be seen, is frequently used by Gregor, is unlikely to always achieve the same stylistic effect in English. For this reason, thought must be given to sentence length. Where source text ‘sentences’ lack verbs, verbs may need to be introduced in translation. Some very short sentences may need to be integrated into previous sentences. Norms of writing in English are likely to influence the translator’s decision-making process in this regard.

2.2.2. ‘Character study’ technique

Mention should be made of what can probably best be described as Gregor’s ‘character study’ technique, a feature of chapters one to three and of chapter five (and used repeatedly throughout the novel as a whole). These ‘character studies’ are introduced by a heading (*Unteroffizier Schaubeck und der Alkohol*, *Leutnant Fröhlich und Gaius Julius Cäsar*, *Unteroffizier Heilmann und der Krieg*, and *Ein General und sein Befehl* in chapters one to three and five respectively). What Gregor does on these occasions is to focus on one particular character, and this invariably involves an interruption of the progression of the central plot. Gregor’s use of this device can take a number of forms.

In chapter one, it is essentially Schaubeck’s past which is examined - his brief marriage and excessive drinking - but mention is also made of his professionalism as a soldier and the success of his training techniques. This first character study of the

novel is given just before the character who is being examined is killed. This sets an important precedent for later chapters, in which lengthy character studies will be immediately followed by a resumption of the central plot, with the respective characters being killed. Chapter seven is the next such occasion: there is an eight-page study of Siegi Bernhard, the first of the seven boys to be killed, between a point immediately following an enemy aircraft attack (when his comrades first realise that he seems to be 'missing'), and the boys' gradual realisation that he has, in fact, been killed. This repeated feature of the technique, particularly where the novel's central characters are concerned, means that the reader learns to expect a fatality to accompany a character study. However, this is not always the case. In chapter six, corporal Schlopke, who is stopped by two military policemen, succeeds in convincing them that he is on legitimate business (though this is untrue) and escapes; chapter eight sees a character study of 'Studienrat Stern', who will never appear in the novel's central plot (and who is not killed), while a study of Ernst Scholten in chapter nine does not precede his demise but rather the moment when he first opens fire on the American troops. The 'character study' technique is thus used to examine important characters at crucial points - including death - in the plot. It should also be pointed out that the character studies become progressively longer and more in-depth as the novel progresses - twenty pages for Walter Forst, for example, and thirty for Albert Mutz (the only one of the seven boys to survive), when he feels forced to kill a German officer to save Scholten.

The character study in chapter two examines Lieutenant Fröhlich's past, his interests, his relationship with his only son, and his protective feelings towards the seven boys. In chapter three, Heilmann is examined; here we learn exclusively about his past. This character study mainly takes the form of two anecdotal flashbacks. The character study in chapter five focuses on the anonymous 'General'. Here, it is interesting to note that only the briefest mention is made of his past, and the general's thoughts and actions are discussed. This particular character study thus constitutes a progression of the plot, though not really of the central plot, as the action does not unfold at the bridge. This brief overview should demonstrate the fact that Gregor uses this technique extensively - and in many different ways.

2 2 3 Military/War terminology

It is not surprising, considering the subject-matter of *Die Brücke*, that many terms of a military or war-related nature are used during the course of the novel. These terms can pose difficulties for the translator in at least two respects. Firstly, use of some terms may constitute assumptions on the part of the author, who assumes that the reader will be familiar with certain military hardware and weapons, for example. Secondly, some terms will inevitably be very culture-specific, as they hail not only from a particular army, but also from a particular time in history. Some of the more problematic terms will be looked at later.

However, overall it must be said that the great majority of the military terms used in *Die Brücke* will not in fact pose difficulties. A selection of those terms for which a corresponding term exists in English is given below.

Angriff	-	attack
Aufklärer	-	reconnaissance aircraft ¹
Bajonett	-	bayonet
Bergstellungen	-	mountain positions
Bomberverband	-	bomber formation
Alarm	-	the alarm
Zug	-	platoon
Einheit	-	unit
Exerzierplatz	-	square, parade ground
feldgrau	-	field grey
Flak-Batterien	-	anti-aircraft guns/batteries
Fliegeralarm ¹	-	air-raid ¹
Geschoß	-	bullet
Geschütze	-	artillery pieces
Graben	-	trenches
Gurte (Munition)	-	(ammunition) belts

¹ Can also refer to reconnaissance *troops*, as opposed to aircraft, depending on context.

Handgranaten	-	hand grenades
im Abziehen begriffen	-	(the troops) are retreating, withdrawing
Jabos (abbr of 'Jagdbomber')	-	fighters, fighter-bombers
Kaserne	-	barracks
Kasernenwaschraum	-	barracks washroom
kehrt machen	-	to turn about, about turn
Kessel	-	pocket, encircled area
Kommando	-	order
Koppelzeug	-	webbing
Kriegsschule	-	military college
Landser	-	privates
Lazarett	-	(field) hospital
Leutnant	-	lieutenant
Machinenpistole	-	submachine gun
Maschinengewehr/MG	-	machine gun (no abbreviated form exists in English)
Meuterei	-	mutiny
Munition	-	ammunition
Offizier	-	officer
Panzer	-	tank
Patronentaschen	-	ammunition pouches
Pionieren	-	sappers, engineers
Posten	-	guard, sentry
Rahmen	-	clips (of ammunition)
Rekruten	-	recruits
Rotte	-	troop
Rucksacke	-	rucksacks
Ruckzug	-	withdrawal, retreat
scharfe Munition	-	live ammunition
Schutzengraben	-	trenches
Schützenloch	-	foxhole
<i>Sherman</i>	-	sherman (tank) ~

Spahtrupp	-	reconnaissance troops/patrol
Stahlhelmkante	-	(steel) helmet rim
Stellung	-	position
stramme Haltung annehmen	-	to come to attention
Sturmgewehr	-	assault rifle
Ubung	-	exercise
Unteroffizierskasino	-	NCOs' mess hall
Unterstützung	-	reinforcements
Vorstoß, vorstoßen	-	advance, to advance
Waffenrocke/Rocke	-	uniforms
Walle	-	embankments, ramparts

2 2 3 1 Problematic military terms

With some terms, the difficulties involved are likely to be relatively minor. A term such as 'Nachturlaub', for instance, will require expansion in English, since there is no equivalent noun available. Thus the line in question - "Schonste Zeit Nachturlaub" (p 7, L 21) - might be translated as "Loved being off duty in the evenings"

The term 'Flak-Beschuß' is a similar case in point. The line in which this term is used is "Die einzige amerikanische *Mustang*, die nach erfolgtem Flak-Beschuß aus dem hoch oben am nachtlischen Aprilhimmel dahinziehenden Bomberverband ausscherte und einen kurzen Trip über die Kaserne flog, tat ihnen nichts" (p 8-9). Although the noun 'anti-aircraft fire' does exist, the 'nach erfolgtem Flak-Beschuß' construction is likely to require a noun-verb transposition in English, such as "The flak guns opened up on the bomber formation as it passed overhead, high above in the April evening sky"

2 2 3 1 1 Military rank

The whole question of rank is likely to be a difficult issue during the course of translating this novel, due to the differences between the rank system as it existed in Germany during the Third Reich, and contemporary rank systems of armies in the English-speaking world. However, it must be conceded that there are also differences between rank systems which fall within the latter category. For instance, the rank of ‘lance-corporal’, which can be held in the British Army, does not exist in Ireland.

One example of a difficult term is *Unteroffizier*. It is a rather vague description of rank, as it merely means ‘non-commissioned officer’, and thus covers the ranks of both corporal and sergeant. In English, the term NCO cannot be used to describe someone’s rank in the same way that *Unteroffizier* can evidently be used in German, thus ‘NCO Schaubeck’ or ‘NCO Heilmann’ would not be acceptable translations. The translator must choose either ‘corporal’ or ‘sergeant’.

It is likely to prove extremely difficult to find equivalent ranks in English for the terms *Fahnenjunker-Unteroffizier* (p 18, L 33) and *Fahnrich* (p 19, L 19). These terms are used in the specific context of progression to officer rank. The particular system involved in officer training is culture-specific, which is likely to necessitate the translator using a more general term such as ‘officer cadet’ as a translation for the former term. It may not even be necessary to translate the latter term, which is used in the line “Als zum Lehrgangsende dreihundert frischgebackene Fahnriche auf Heimaturlaub fuhren, rollte Heilmann in Richtung Osten” (p 19, L 18). The problem could be avoided by simply translating ‘frischgebackene Fahnriche’ as ‘freshly promoted soldiers’.

2 2 3 1 2 Weaponry

Brief mention needs to be made of a number of weapons which are referred to in the novel.

The *Karabiner 98 k* is often referred to as the *Mauser 98 k* in English. The latter is preferable to the former, as the word *Mauser* is more likely to be familiar to an English-speaking readership and will be more easily associated with German weaponry. Nonetheless, the term should still be expanded upon - ‘Mauser 98 k rifle’ - to ensure that the reader understands what is being referred to.

The term *Panzerfaust* refers to a specific make of anti-tank weapon used by German infantry which will nonetheless require modulation to a more general term.

The term *Null-Acht* refers to a pistol, specifically the Parabellum Pistole 08. While the precise make of pistol is not of significance to the storyline, in fact this pistol would be quite familiar to an English-speaking readership, but by a different name: the Parabellum Pistole 08 was “known far and wide as the Luger” (Pitt 1989:55). The *Luger* is indeed a very famous pistol. In fact, it is quite possibly the most familiar small-arms weapon of the Second World War, in the English-speaking world. For this reason the most appropriate translation strategy will probably be to substitute the figure 08 by the well-known *Luger*, since the former is effectively meaningless in English while the latter is a word readily associated with German Second World War weaponry.

2.2.3.1.3. Culture-specific military terms

Volkssturm is culture-specific in that it is a term which refers to a particular organisation, in a particular country and at a particular time in history. It is equally a military term, in that it refers to a military organisation. The *Volkssturm* was a German home defence force which was formed late in 1944. It was composed of all males between 16 and 60 who had until then been considered too young, too old, or otherwise unfit, for military service. This German word is unlikely to be familiar to an English-speaking readership, even if they are well-educated. The *Volkssturm* only existed for a relatively short period, and the word has gained far less prominence in the English-speaking world than other words such as *Luftwaffe*, *Wehrmacht*, *Waffen SS* and *Gestapo*. An expansion may be necessary.

Feldmütze is somewhat culture-specific. The term ‘field cap’ is sometimes used as a translation. This is certainly preferable to using a word like ‘beret’, which is a piece of headgear quite different to the *Feldmütze* in appearance. In cases such as this, it is important to attempt to retain some degree of ‘foreignness’. If ‘readability’ were to be the sole consideration, ‘beret’ might be considered an acceptable equivalent. However, as Dingwaney and Maier have written, translation is:

“[...] a cross-cultural activity in which the goal of immediacy or readability is tempered by a simultaneous willingness - even determination - to work in difference. Practising within this definition, a translator does not strive to make possible a rush of identification with an ‘other’ unencumbered by foreignness. Rather, the goal is a more complex verbal ‘transculturation’ in which two languages are held within a single expression.” (Dingwaney, Maier, 1995:304)

Feldgendarmerie would seem to be a relatively straightforward term to translate, the most likely translation being ‘Military Police’. However, this is by no means an entirely satisfactory equivalent. The specific roles of military police can vary - not only from one country to another, but also depending on whether a particular country is at peace or at war. The incident described here in *Die Brücke* is in fact quite typical of the *Feldgendarmerie*, since: “In combat zones, a major task of *Feldgendarmerie* was to ensure that any stragglers quickly returned to the front line” (Badsey, 1993:234). A term such as this can be described as ‘doubly’ culture-specific, since it is peculiar not only to a particular culture, but also to that culture at a particular time.

Metallschild is similarly culture-specific, and is closely linked to the above term, as it refers to an identifying metal plate, known as the ‘Ringkragen’, worn by the *Feldgendarmerie*.

Soldbuch is another culture-specific term. However, only the briefest mention is made of the *Soldbuch* (“Der Feldgendarm fand in der Briefftasche des Unteroffiziers neben den Ausweispapieren, dem Soldbuch und achtundfünfzig Reichsmark in Scheinen ein silbernes Madonnenmedaillon und die Fotografie eines blonden Mädchens im Badeanzug” p.30, L.7), so that the issue of the translation of this term is not a major

one The *Soldbuch* was a military passbook - 'military passbook' may indeed be the most straightforward translation

2 2 4 Military allusions through use of simile

Occasionally, use is made of simile alluding to the military theme of the novel Below are two examples taken from chapter one

2 2 4 1 'wie eine Ladung Dynamit'

The first example is from page six (L 18) "Das und viele andere Kleinigkeiten, die sich im Lauf der vierzehn Tage in Ernst Scholten zusammengeballt hatten, standen jetzt im Dushraum drohend *wie eine Ladung Dynamit* hinter jedem Satz, den Ernst Scholten aus sicherer Deckung seinem Unteroffizier entgegenschleuderte" Here, Scholten's emotions are described as having reached a stage where they are explosive Indeed, there are also other, more subtle allusions in the sentence the word *drohend* suggests aggression and violence, while *Deckung* can also be a military term (the English equivalent being *cover*)

2 2 4 2 'die Locher marschierten'

The second example of this kind of allusion is "Die Locher *marschierten* schnurgerade auf Unteroffizier Heilmann zu, kamen immer naher, und plotzlich riß sich Heilmann vom Tisch los" (p 9, L 16) Here, the choice of the verb *marschieren*, used to describe the pattern formed by the bullet-holes as they cut across the ceiling, is clearly significant, as it is in keeping with the military theme of the novel However, it may not be desirable to choose the verb 'to march' as a translation in English While it works in German, in English the notion of marching is that of a relatively slow and ponderous movement This might not be an appropriate verb to describe the movement of bullets, which clearly travel very fast indeed On the other hand, it

seems that Corporal Heilmann's senses, at this dramatic moment, are perceiving reality in slow motion. Using the verb 'to march' would convey this notion of slow motion.

These allusions greatly add to the military flavour of the entire novel. However, it is likely that it will not always be possible to find suitable equivalents in English which serve the same function of allusion. Where possible, the translator should attempt to compensate for this elsewhere in the translation.

2.2.5. Shared assumptions

The purpose of the following sections is to outline just some of the many assumptions made during the course of the novel.

2.2.5.1. Historical timeframe

Die Brücke is located within a very specific historical timeframe, and an understanding of the full implications of this timeframe is assumed by Gregor of his readership. The main action of the novel takes place on May 2nd 1945. The novel is thus set in the very final days of the war in Europe, a time when Germany had been defeated, Hitler was already dead, and the "formalities of surrender" were underway². This in turn has major implications for how the various characters in the novel might be expected to behave. With defeat already a reality and the rubber-stamping of surrender documents a matter of a very few days away, it is to be expected that

² "The War in Europe came to an end officially at midnight on May 8th, 1945, but in reality that was merely the final formal recognition of a finish which had taken place piecemeal during the previous week. On May 2nd all fighting had ceased on the southern front in Italy, where the surrender document had actually been signed three days earlier still. On May 4th a similar surrender was signed, at Montgomery's headquarters on Luneberg Heath, by representatives of the German forces in north-west Europe. On May 7th a further surrender document covering all the German forces was signed at Eisenhower's headquarters in Reims - a larger ceremonial finish carried out in the presence of Russian as well as American, British, and French representatives. These formalities of surrender were a quick sequel to the death of Hitler." (Liddell Hart, 1973:710-11)

soldiers and conscripts would be far more prepared than usual to desert, with all the risks which that entailed. Similarly characteristic of such a situation is a general breakdown not only in morale and the general physical condition of surviving soldiers (“Dazwischen Männer, total erschöpfte, wankende Gestalten, in dreckverschmierten Uniformen, mit hohlwangigen Gesichtern, unrasiert, bleich, mit gebeugtem Nacken, als säße dort ein Gespenst und schwingte unermüdlich die Geißel” p.22, L.16), but also in discipline and the formal trappings of army life. This is true of any conflict. When the Argentinians were defeated in the Falklands war, their officers were permitted to continue carrying pistols - as a defence against their own men:

“A young Argentinian officer, still equipped with his side-arm for self-protection (against his own troops, I must add) drew the prisoners to attention. Their drill was reluctant and carefree; losing the war had shaken their morale and discipline.” (Bramley, 1991:193)

Among the primary assumptions made by Gregor in the opening stages of the novel are the following: in April of 1945 the Second World War was drawing to a close, and Germany, at war with America³ (among other countries), mobilised ever-younger men - indeed, boys - in a desperate and futile last-ditch effort to defend the ‘Vaterland’. Boys of sixteen years of age and even younger were sent to the front to fight, and many died. The war caused widespread large-scale destruction and horrific loss of life.

2.2.5.2. Officers and orders

Certain assumptions are made as to the behaviour expected of officers in general, and German officers during World War Two in particular. It is assumed that the reader will know that exemplary standards of conduct are expected of officers. For example, an officer would normally never curse or use vulgar language in front of lower ranks. Also, in times of war, an officer would be expected not to openly make any kind of

³ It is the American army which is attacking this area - the Russian and British armies are of no real significance to the story.

demoralising comment as to the likelihood or imminence of defeat. Additionally, it would be almost unheard of for an officer to condone, let alone actively encourage, desertion - regardless of the circumstances. Even during times of mutiny, the large-scale breakdown in discipline would usually be characterised by troops attacking their officers, rather than by these officers aiding and abetting the mass desertion of their own men. Discussing the massive French Army mutinies of April and May 1917, during World War One, Babington writes:

“Entire regiments marched on Paris to demand a negotiated peace settlement with Germany; there were instances of units refusing to serve on the line, of officers being threatened or assaulted, and acts of sabotage being committed on stores and equipment at various bases.” (Babington, 1997:97)

Clearly, these officers were trying, in vain, to uphold discipline and military law and order; they are certainly not implicated in the breakdown of these.

German officers during World War Two had a particularly difficult job to do. Orders which came from Hitler, and which were given to the higher-ranking officers, were expected to be followed with unquestioning obedience. Very rarely were these orders not followed to the letter, and this strict regime of blind obedience applied to all ranks in the German *Wehrmacht*.

Hitler’s dictatorial power, and ability to force senior officers into compliance with his wishes, despite their better judgement, are well documented. For instance,

“[...] at 15:30 hours in the afternoon of 3 November (1942), the worried commander of Panzerarmee (Rommel) was thrown into complete despair. He received telegrams from his superiors at OKW and in Rome. In reply to his report that he intended withdrawing to new positions, there came peremptory orders from both Hitler and Mussolini to hold his ground. Rommel was in a quandary. To obey such senseless orders would result, as surely as night follows day, in the total destruction of his army. But to disobey was unthinkable.” (Lucas, 1982:249)

Where Hitler's senior officers questioned his orders and strategy, Hitler solved this annoyance by the simple expedient of relieving them of their command:

"[...] the responsibility for the decisions on the eastern front became increasingly Hitler's own, as the generals who questioned his strategic or tactical decisions were removed or forced to resign." (Joll, 1976:390)

His misuse of his power, and dogged determination to force his orders upon his generals, regardless of their protestations, entreaties and attempts at reason, was to directly result in, or at least contribute to, numerous major disasters for Germany at crucial points during the war.

Just one anecdote which illustrates what Hitler expected from his officers - namely, unconditional compliance - was Hitler's reaction to General Walther von Brauchitsch's opposition to his plans for the invasion of France. On November 23rd, 1939, Hitler told his high commanders that:

"[...] he [...] expected them to follow his ideas unconditionally. Brauchitsch's attempt to point out the differences and greater risks in the new venture merely drew down on his head a harder rebuke. That evening Hitler saw Brauchitsch privately and gave him a further 'dressing down'. Brauchitsch thereupon tendered his resignation, but Hitler brushed it aside, and told him to obey orders." (Liddell Hart, 1973:40)

As has already been mentioned, this unquestioning obedience and compliance with orders, which was strictly enforced, applied to all ranks in the German *Wehrmacht*. However, crucially, in the extremely unlikely event of officers issuing orders of which Hitler would not have approved, or even in direct defiance of Hitler, these orders would probably *not* have been obeyed by the ordinary troops. Indeed, it was for this very reason that the first plot to overthrow Hitler had to be abandoned:

"The idea was to dispatch a picked force from the front to march on Berlin. But General Friedrich Fromm, the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces, declined to cooperate - and his help was essential. Fromm argued that if the troops were ordered

to turn against Hitler they would not obey - because most of the ordinary soldiers put their trust in Hitler. Fromm's judgement about the troops' reaction was probably correct. It is corroborated by most of the officers who were in touch with troops and did not know what was being discussed in higher headquarters" (Liddell Hart, 1973 39)

The relevance of this discussion to chapter two of *Die Brücke* is considerable. Firstly, it constitutes information which the reader requires, in order to fully appreciate the significance of Lieutenant Frohlich's words and actions. The fact that Frohlich is encouraging his troops to desert, and has even made arrangements for this with a sentry, shows that this is no ordinary officer. He is sympathetic to his seven young boys, and has their welfare and best interests at heart - and not his own. He is risking much by helping them to desert. His actions show him in a favourable light, he is allowing his moral conscience to influence him. This is of course in stark contrast to the 'General' (he is not named, nor will he be named, not even during the lengthy discussion of his thoughts on pages 34/35), who first appears in chapter four. The general's mind is described as having a 'windscreen-wiper', which serves to blank out any occasional pang of conscience. "Er denkt an die sieben Buben, hat für Sekunden ein ungutes Gefühl, aber dann funktioniert der »Scheibenwischer« im Gehirn des Generals" (p 34, L 13). And then, "Er denkt nochmals an die sieben. Im Gehirn des Generals arbeitet wieder der Scheibenwischer" (p 35, L 25)

Also of significance is the fact that Frohlich curses in front of his troops, and that he is cursing the war as he does so. "Und dann hatte Frohlich etwas gesagt, was noch kein Mensch bis dahin in dieser Form aus seinem Munde gehört hatte. »Scheißkrieg, verdammter!«" (p 10, L 9). Both his language and his clear hatred of the war are important, for the reasons described above - they are not significant of themselves, but rather because young recruits are present. Usually officers would only make such comments to each other, if at all⁴

⁴ It is interesting here to note that, when Field-Marshal von Rundstedt suggested on the telephone to Hitler's HQ that the war should be ended (he made the comment soon after the allied invasion of Normandy, in June 1944), he was promptly sacked by Hitler. (See Liddell Hart, 1973 576)

Frohlich's actions are however of further significance. Not only do they reflect on him, but they are also a very clear sign that the military situation for Germany at this point is particularly dire.⁵ Frohlich says as much: "Alles geht kaputt" (p 10, L 2). Utter defeat must be imminent, for Frohlich to be prepared to encourage desertion.

It is this background of assumed knowledge which enables the reader of the source text to fully understand the import of the concluding line:

"Den Leutnant Frohlich aber liebten sie, und an dem Abend, als er ihnen den Tod Schaubecks berichtet hatte, fühlten sie instinktives Mitleid mit Franz Frohlich, der in seiner Leutnantsuniform *so gar nicht dem entsprach, was sich ein Sechzehnjähriger im Frühjahr 1945 noch unter einem deutschen Offizier vorstellt*" (p 11, L 25, my emphasis)

Clearly, this line constitutes a major assumption on the part of Gregor: What would a sixteen-year-old German boy's impression of a German officer have been in Spring 1945? The original target audience of the novel - Germans in the late 1950s - would have been in an infinitely better position to answer this question, and thus to understand the sentence, than an English-speaking audience living some forty years later. Also, the word 'noch' is important. It suggests that, because they were so young, the impression which a German sixteen-year-old would have had of a German officer would not have been very different at the end of the war than it would have been in 1940. It can be inferred from the sentence that the attitudes of older soldiers to their officers would indeed have changed during the course of the war. Indeed, this very distinction will be evidenced in chapter four, when the general arrives on the bridge. The innocent young boys' reaction is very different to that of Corporal Heilmann. Borchart asks: »War das ein richtiger General, Herr Unteroffizier?« Heilmann's reaction to the general's arrival is angry: "»Das war ein richtiger General, mein Junge«, sagte Heilmann wütend, und dann fluchte er, ellenlang, dreckig und ordinar" (p 24, L 16). While the 'Verein' are all in awe of their unexpected visitor - it

⁵ The opening two chapters are set in late April, 1945. By this time, Germany had effectively been defeated. Hitler committed suicide on April 30, while General Jodl signed the surrender of all German forces in Reims on May 7. It is against this factual historical background that the events of May 2, portrayed in *Die Brücke*,

is their first time to see a general in the flesh - Heilmann is angry that they are expected to hold the bridge, and knows what to expect when the general promises them 'reinforcements': "Ich möchte bloß wissen, dachte Heilmann, wie die Unterstützung aussieht. Das möchte ich wissen!" (p.24, L.20)

Finally, the mention above of the fact that the ordinary ranks of the German army would have been unlikely to comply with orders which conflicted with the better interests of their 'commander-in-chief', i.e. Hitler, has major implications for both this chapter and, particularly, for chapter three (in which the boys discuss Fröhlich's advice and put forward arguments for and against deserting). By encouraging the boys to desert, Lieutenant Fröhlich is asking them to do precisely that which many of the youngest soldiers would have been very reluctant to do. It is interesting that, in Badsey's discussion of a separate assassination attempt ⁶, the same point is raised regarding the problem facing conspiracy plots against Hitler from within his senior staff:

"The German armed forces, although many of its senior officers disliked both Hitler and his Nazis, were prepared to follow the orders of their commander-in-chief. For many soldiers, particularly the young who had grown up under the Nazi state, the Führer was 'almost like a god', as one of them put it, 'we had total faith in him'." (Badsey, 1993:210)

Clearly, the 'Verein' fit precisely into this category. The psychological influence of the Nazi state upon its people, particularly the very young and impressionable, was considerable; in their response to Fröhlich's encouragement to flee, the seven young boys - although they are fictional characters - will behave much as those their own age would actually have behaved under similar circumstances.

must be viewed.

⁶ Namely, the bomb plot against Hitler of July 20, 1944, when Colonel Count Klaus Schenk von Stauffenberg placed a briefcase containing a bomb under a map table next to Hitler.

2 2 5 3 Political ‘instruction’ and the ‘Regime’

On page 19, where Heilmann’s officer training is discussed, it is assumed the reader will know that officer training for German soldiers during the Nazi regime would have included political ‘instruction’, and that, to be successful, cadets needed to be seen to conform to the political ethos of the day. Additionally, the Nazi regime is referred to simply by the word ‘Regime’, in the following sentence on page 19: “Der NSFO hatte ihm bei der politischen Schulung die Frage gestellt, ob er es für möglich halte, daß ein deutscher Offizier ein guter Offizier sein könne, ohne ein überzeugter Anhänger des Regimes zu sein” (L 10). An English-speaking reader with a limited knowledge of the historical background to *Die Brücke* may not be aware of the full implications of this word in this context.

2 2 5 4 Literary references

On page 17 Gregor assumes that the reader will be to some extent familiar with ‘die Leichenrede des Marc Anton’ (L 35) - Mark Anthony’s funeral oration. Gregor did not see it necessary to mention the fact that this speech is to be found in Shakespeare’s play *Julius Caesar*. It is interesting that this cultural reference in fact refers to a piece of English literature, which is evidently sufficiently well-known in Germany for a teacher to expect a pupil to know an excerpt from it off by heart (however, it is to be assumed that the young German pupils would have studied a German translation of this play, and not the original).

The fact that a piece of English literary heritage is being referred to does not necessarily mean that the same assumption can be made of an English-speaking audience. Certainly the speech in question is very well-known, but there are no other references to *Julius Caesar* when the reference to Mark Anthony is made, and the new readership may not automatically make the connection.

The choice of ‘Winnetou’ as a nickname for Scholten on page six is a further obvious literary reference, and as such, constitutes an assumption on the part of Gregor. Here,

the translator's target readership is most likely to be unfamiliar with the writings of German author Karl May, this literary reference cannot therefore be used in the English-language target text

2 2 5 5 Weaponry

Assumptions are also made as to the reader's familiarity with Second World War firearms, assumptions which cannot be made of a contemporary audience. During the scene on pages 17-18, in which the boys are issued with weapons and ammunition, four separate terms are used to refer to different weapons: *Sturmgewehr*, *Schnellfeuergewehr*, *KK (Klein-Kaliber)* and *Karabiner*. Gregor assumes that the reader will to some extent understand the differences between these firearms. In 1958, when his novel was originally published in Germany, many of his male readers of perhaps thirty years of age and over would have seen service in the war and used these weapons themselves, while even as civilians in a time of war, people would have become used to the sight of guns. The distinction between the *Karabiner* and the *Sturmgewehr* is to some extent made clear in the text, but it may need to be made more clear for a contemporary English-speaking audience. The English-language equivalent for 'Klein-Kaliber', as the term is used in this context, is 'sub-calibre' or 'small calibre', the former term is unlikely to be familiar to an English-speaking readership.

2 2 5 6 Points of the compass

It is always fascinating to note the considerable differences between the connotations which different points of the compass have in different cultures. For instance, the word 'north' in an Irish context is entirely different to 'north' in an English context, while 'Nord' in a German context is different again. Presumably, for a Norwegian or Swede, 'north' brings the Arctic Circle to mind, but it is likely that any given culture will read more into 'points of the compass' than mere geographic location. In the Irish case, reference to north and south is a reference to the partition of the country,

each part being separately governed by different political administrations (an obvious comparison can be made with Germany, and the meaning of ‘Ost’ and ‘West’, for some four decades); the fact that the most northerly point on the island is in the ‘south’ is indicative of the importance of a word’s usage, which is of far greater significance than what a word ostensibly means at face value.

Points of the compass are of course words which take on a whole new meaning at a time of war, which is what interests us here. Two world wars have ensured that the word ‘West’, for example, has become deeply embedded in German history and is readily associated with war in the mind of the German people. Indeed, the point can be best summed up by reference to that most famous of war novels, *Im Westen nichts Neues*. The war is clearly implicit in the title, for any German person; not so for an English-speaking readership. Little wonder that this title was translated as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and not *All Quiet in the West*.

One instance in *Die Brücke* where similar expansion will be required is the word ‘Osten’ on page 19 (“Als zum Lehrgangsende dreihundert frischgebackene Fähnriche auf Heimaturlaub fuhren, rollte Heilmann in Richtung Osten”, L.18), a word which, in this context, is immediately identifiable as referring to the Russian front - to a German person. However, to those unfamiliar with the Second World War this association may be less quickly made.

2.2.5.7. Shared assumptions: Conclusion

To sum up, a novel such as this, although essentially a fictional story with fictional characters, is nonetheless set against a firm factual, cultural and historical backdrop. This is particularly the case where *Die Brücke* is concerned, given the actual experiences which its author had, when he was the same age as his characters, during the same period in history. This ‘cultural/factual backdrop’ constitutes, at the very least, assumed information; given the time that the novel was written, it is likely that Gregor assumed that the majority of his readers would have also had first-hand

experience of the war itself. The implications of this for a contemporary audience of different nationality are considerable, this discussion has outlined just some of them

2.2.6 Paragraph boundaries

There has been a shift of emphasis in translation theory in recent years. The movement has been towards the target text as a subject for study, the notion of the 'primacy' of the source text has been challenged, some theorists going so far as to suggest that the translation effectively becomes an original. Discussing this idea, Bassnett has written that "This view is entirely credible if we think of the terms in which most readers approach a translated text. When we read Thomas Mann or Homer, if we have no German or ancient Greek, what we are reading is the original through translation, i.e. that translation is our original" (1998: 25).

Such a perspective clearly gives primacy to the target text and reduces the significance of the source text. Schaffner has described this as a 'prospective view' of translation, which "[] is related to the top-down process. It starts on the pragmatic level by deciding on the intended function of the translation and asking for specific text-typological conventions, and for addressees' background knowledge and their communicative needs. It puts the TT in the centre and makes it clear that the ST is but one of the factors influencing the make-up of the TT" (Schaffner, 1998: 86).

It is this kind of thinking which justifies, indeed necessitates, changes being made not only to sentence boundaries but also, on a macro-textual level, to paragraph structure, these changes being made for TL stylistic reasons or on the basis of the perceived expectations of the new target audience. Different cultures and languages have different conventions where writing is concerned, and these differences must be taken into account by the translator. It would appear that the convention which is used in *Die Brücke* is to make a new paragraph each time there is a new speaker, for instance

→ "»Eine Pfundstellung«, meinte Unteroffizier Schlopke, und die sieben glaubten es. Nur Scholten äußerte Bedenken.

→ »Das ist doch keine Stellung!«

Aber Schlopke machte ihn mit zwei Satzten mühelos zur Schnecke

→ »Erzahl mal 'nem alten Soldaten nicht, was 'ne Stellung ist, Kleiner!« Und
»Mach dich bloß nicht naß, Kindchen!«» (p 36, L 20-8)

This is not common in English, and the convention is unlikely to be retained in translation. However, 'convention' is only part of the picture, as the question of where to introduce paragraph breaks is largely a question of style, which is often subjective and does not lend itself to the formulation of rules. In English we would expect a paragraph to usually constitute a self-contained 'block' of meaning or discourse, located in the context of a longer text which outlines a progression of thought. The point at which a paragraph break is introduced will frequently be the same for both languages, but situations will inevitably arise where the translator feels that it is preferable to move that point slightly, or perhaps even to join or split paragraphs. An example of this can be found on page 14 (L 20-7). The paragraph in question reads as follows:

“Borchart hatte das so gesagt, daß keiner, der ihn nicht näher kannte, an seinen Worten gezweifelt hatte. Aber der Verein kannte ihn. Jurgen Borchart wurde genau dann gehen, wenn die anderen auch gingen. Er äußerte stets sehr bestimmte Meinungen, ohne unbedingt die Konsequenzen zu ziehen. * Sechs hatten nun ihre Ansicht gesagt, jetzt wollten sie alle die siebte hören.”

The asterisk indicates the point at which a new paragraph will be introduced in translation. It can be seen that the paragraph break will be moved forward by one sentence. In this particular case the reason for doing so is quite clear: the text up to that point (*) is entirely concerned with Jurgen Borchart, and as such constitutes a 'self-contained unit' in the narrative. This, and the content of the paragraph which follows, suggests that it is preferable to move the last line of the first paragraph to the beginning of the second paragraph.

2.2.7 Types of sentence, sentence boundaries

Occasionally Gregor uses rather short sentences to achieve dramatic effect. Such short lines are not always stylistically desirable in English, and sometimes lend themselves easily to the formation of single, longer sentences. One example from chapter five is

“Drunten im Tal liegen Truppen, an die siebentausend Mann. Sie sind im Abziehen begriffen, in die Bergstellungen im Osten.” (p 34, L 24)

These sentences could easily be written as a single sentence in English.

Often changes will need to be made not only to sentence boundaries, but also to the syntax of the sentences themselves. These changes will be due to differences between source and target norms, particularly norms of style where certain grammatical and sentence structures *could* be retained, but where such retention of source structures would not ‘read’ well and would be stylistically discordant. Specifically, Gregor’s frequent use of short sentences without verbs is a stylistic device not typically used in English. Short, verbless sentences are used throughout the novel, below are some examples taken from the preface and chapters one to five.

“Am 1. Mai 1945.” (p 2, L 17)

“Schönste Zeit. Nachturlaub.” (p 7, L 21)

“Der Alarm erfolgte gegen 24 Uhr. So wie man das geübt hatte. Mit schrillum Pfeifentrillern.” (p 13, L 12)

“Der Zug, zweiundvierzig Mann stark, bezog Panzerfauste. Zwei Stück pro Mann. Dann Sturmgewehre.” (p 17, L 28)

“Ein unangenehmes Gefühl, da mutterseelenallein auf der Brücke zu hocken und zu warten.” (p 30, L 29)

“Der General, kurz, knapp, sachlich: “Wie lange ist er weg?” Mutz, bleich im Gesicht: “Seit zwei Stunden, Herr General!”” (p.32, L.20)

The subject of verbless sentences in German has been dealt with in great detail by Behr and Quintin in *Verblose Sätze im Deutschen*. They describe the *verbloser Satz* as follows:

“Unter einem *verblosen Satz* verstehen wir [...] zunächst eine [...] Satzstruktur, die *keine finite Verbform* aufweist.” (Behr, Quintin, 1996:13)

In practice such verbless sentences can take many different forms in German. Behr and Quintin’s examination of the wide range of such sentence types serves to illustrate the fact that the *verbloser Satz* is by no means uncommon; indeed, to judge from the plethora of examples given and sources quoted, it would seem that such sentences are frequently used and to be found in any number of contexts and text types. Furthermore, the *verbloser Satz* can fulfil many different functions:

“Das in jeder Hinsicht vielfältige Einsatzpotential von verblosen Sätzen, und zwar in Texten der verschiedensten Art [...] bestätigt auf recht anschauliche Weise das, was vom Anfang an eine unserer Hauptannahmen war: VLS [verblose Sätze], diese von der Grammatik kaum beachteten syntaktischen Gebilde, sind alles andere als belanglose Zufallserscheinungen. Sie stellen vielmehr ein zwar nicht notwendiges, aber sehr wichtiges, höchst leistungsfähiges Mittel der Textgestaltung dar, das in seinen verschiedenen Formen imstande ist, sehr unterschiedliche diskursive Aufgaben zu übernehmen.” (ibid:231)

In considering this analysis of the verbless sentence in German, it becomes clear that the situation in English is very different indeed. While the verbless sentence certainly exists, it is by no means such a common phenomenon as in German. This is a crucial factor to be borne in mind by the translator, since in dealing with the examples quoted above from *Die Brücke*, target text norms will be decisive factors in determining the approach taken to the question of syntax - and, indeed, sentence boundaries. As Schöffner writes,

“Decision-making in translation is largely subject to normative constraints resulting from text-type conventions or norms within the target culture [] translators have to be aware of the fact that cultures not only express ideas differently, but they also shape concepts and texts differently” (Schaffner, 1995: 6)

It may however prove possible to retain the occasional short, verbless sentence in English. A case in point, from the first page of the preface, is the line “Braungebrannte Körper in schnittigen Booten” (L 21). Here, a direct translation where the German sentence boundaries and syntax are retained is probably feasible. Such a translation might read as follows:

“On fine summer days it is a pleasure to watch the canoeists come down the river. Tanned brown bodies in smart boats.”

However, this is likely to be the exception rather than the rule.

Now and then a German sentence will simply be so long as to require two or more sentences in English. Yet again, however, this is a question of norms - it is perfectly *possible*, that is to say grammatically correct, to maintain the sentence boundaries of even quite long German sentences. Such a translation would nonetheless assume equal ease with long sentences on the part of an English-speaking readership and would have a stylistically quite different effect. One sentence in point, which also constitutes a paragraph in the source text, is

“Im gleichen Augenblick wußte er, daß er den Heilmann verpiffen hatte (Pfu! Teufel, der Verein würde ihm das nicht verzeihen!), * und hing geistesgegenwärtig an seinen Satz an. “Der Herr Unteroffizier wollte noch Munition besorgen!”” (p. 32, L. 11)

The asterisk * indicates the point where a new sentence boundary is likely to be introduced in translation.

2.2.8. Dialogue

Die Brücke contains a considerable amount of dialogue. This direct speech is frequently characterized by both colloquial language and slang. These will be discussed separately in the following sections, but the examples below should serve to illustrate the kind of language with which the translator is faced. 'Dialogue' is defined in Webster's Third New International Dictionary as "the conversational element of literary or dramatic composition." However, dialogue is also taken here to include verbalised thoughts, which could be described as 'conversation with the self'. Examples of dialogue are:

"Der Heilmann läßt dich nicht im Stich, du Waschlappen!" (p.31, L.4)

"Keiner geht weg, bis ich wiederkomme, und dann gehn wir mal richtig elegant stiften." (p.28, L.30)

"Hast wohl noch Halsschmerzen auf deine alten Tage?...Sollst krepieren, du Aas!" (p.33, L.21)

The following are some examples of characters' verbalised thoughts:

"Verflucht, wenn bloß der Heilmann zurückkommt." (p.30, L.27)

"Mensch, jetzt hast du einen leibhaftigen General angelogen, wenn das bloß gutgeht!" (p.32, L.18)

"...du kannst mich mal, dachte sich Schlopke." (p.33, L.4)

It is clear from the above examples that dialogue in *Die Brücke* is characterized by informal and non-standard language usage. However, certain characteristics can also be noted in the manner in which particular characters speak and the type of language that they use. Corporal Schaubeck is a case in point. It is clear that the type of language which Schaubeck uses is meant to reflect poorly on him, and to portray him

as a decidedly unpleasant character. He has a clipped, sarcastic manner of speaking. Schaubeck's sentences are short and to the point, and his tone is domineering and frequently aggressive. This type of language is used to establish and maintain his authority and thus his control over the situation. A similarly abrasive tone would need to be used in English also. One such example will be examined below under 2.2.8.1. 'Slang'.

2.2.8.1. Slang

Many of the words and expressions used by characters in the novel can be described as 'slang'. This is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as:

“vocabulary, idiom, etc., that is not appropriate to the standard form of a language or to formal contexts, may be restricted as to social status or distribution, and is characteristically more metaphorical and transitory than standard language”.

The final part of the definition is of considerable importance where this translation is concerned, since the transitory nature of slang raises questions as to what approach should be taken: although language in general is always in a state of flux and gradual change anyway (this is defined by Hatim and Mason as 'temporal dialect'⁷), this is never more so than with the 'non-standard' language used by teenagers. When faced with a novel which was written many years ago the translator must decide whether to attempt to retain this datedness and reflect the idioms of the day, or instead to use equivalent, but contemporary, idiom. If the translator chooses the former, this may affect the style of language adopted for the novel as a whole.

⁷ “Temporal dialects reflect language change through time. Each generation has its own linguistic fashions, and, whereas change is generally imperceptible, one has only to read a pre-war advertising text to measure the extent of this diversity [...] Translators of texts from earlier times encounter considerable problems to do with the use of either archaic language or the modern idiom in their target text. In literary translation, there is the added consideration of aesthetic effect.”
(Hatim, Mason, 1990:41-2)

2 2 8 1 1 Schaubeck 'los, los, schlaf nicht ein, du muder Sack, rei dich zusammen'

This is one example (p 12, L 29) of the kind of language which is typical of Schaubeck and indicative of the way in which he treats his troops 'Schlaf nicht ein' can be modulated to 'stay awake' 'Sack' is quite an offensive word and could justifiably be translated by 'bastard' The expression 'rei dich zusammen' also exists in English ('pull yourself together')

2 2 8 1 2 abhauen

When used in the imperative, this verb can be quite offensive, roughly equating with telling somebody to "get lost" in English Here, however (Frohlich "Mir war's am liebsten, ihr wurdet abhauen" p 10, L 2), it is merely an informal word, and could even be described as something of a euphemism, in that the boys are in fact being encouraged to desert Potential equivalents might be to 'beat it' or to 'scarper' 'Abhauen' will also be used by the boys themselves, as they discuss whether or not they should flee (in chapter three)

2 2 8 1 3 Nieselprieme

It is the function and effect of this word which are of prime consideration Schaubeck is using a derogatory word to describe the seven boys This word implies that they appear to him to be a pathetic, dejected, unsoldierly and even unmanly group of boys Specifically, Schaubeck's intention by the use of this word can be easily ascertained by the fact that he has used it in opposition to the word *Menschen* "[] der Krieg dauert noch lange genug, damit man aus euch Menschen machen kann, ihr Nieselprieme!" (p 10/11) Obviously he does not consider them to be worthy of being called men

2.2.8.2. Colloquial language

Colloquial [language] is defined in Webster's dictionary as:

“used in or characteristic of conversation, esp. familiar and informal conversation.”

Colloquial language is thus related to slang in that both are familiar and informal usages of language, and are characteristic of spoken language, but colloquial language is a wider concept and can less readily be described as ‘non-standard’. Nor do the same restrictions apply to colloquial language with regard to social status or distribution as do to slang, which tends to be confined to particular groups of people (one of the functions of slang can be to exclude the ‘uninitiated’ – this is not the case with colloquial language).

The nature of colloquial language is such that its translation can be somewhat ‘freer’ than for other language types. What Hochel writes about literary translation in general is particularly true of the translation of colloquial language:

“It can be said that the primary task of literary translations is not to replace this or that language means of the source language by adequate means in the target one, but to find the means that answers to the usage of the means of the source language in the original, bearing in mind its surroundings, i.e. the artistic (literary) text.” (Hochel, 1991:41-2)

In other words, it is the function of the language, as opposed to the language itself, which is of prime concern. An example of colloquial language is discussed below.

2.2.8.2.1. Mensch, was kommt denn da für ein müder Verein?

This colloquial line (p.10, L.34) is particularly important, as it must credibly tie in with the choice of the nickname ‘the Bunch’ as an equivalent for ‘Verein’⁸. It is this

line which is intended to function as an explanation as to how the seven boys' nickname came about. For this reason, it must contain the word 'bunch', and must do so in an unobtrusive way. The line must sound like an off-the-cuff remark, and should also achieve the same kind of tone of the German - this is one of Schaubeck's disdainful remarks.

It may be necessary to modify the adjective *müde* somewhat, which is being used colloquially, to help to facilitate the word 'bunch'. Rather than call the bunch 'tired' or 'weary', it may be preferable to call them a 'sorry bunch', as these words collocate particularly well in English and achieve a similar colloquial effect. This adjective would also convey Schaubeck's disdain for the boys.

2.2.8.2.2 war's, kann's, darf's, etc.

The shortening of words is characteristic of colloquial language. It will not be difficult to do this in the translation, as both German and English frequently abbreviate words, the missing letters being represented by an apostrophe in the written form. "Mir war's am liebsten" (p 10, L 2) can thus become "I'd prefer if", "ich kann's euch nicht befehlen" (p 10, L 3) - "I can't order you to", "ich darf's nicht" (p 10, L 4) - "I'm not allowed".

2.2.8.3 The character's reaction to language used

Very occasionally, the reaction of a character to certain uses of language will be an additional factor to be taken into account. One example is Mutz's reaction to Scholten in chapter five. "Scholten konnte manchmal richtig grob werden, fand Mutz (Man wird doch schließlich noch etwas sagen dürfen!)" (p 31, L 6)

⁸ Nicknames will be discussed separately in the following section (2.2.9)

Here, Mutz is clearly somewhat taken aback by Scholten. The translation of the line which causes this offence (“Der Heilmann laßt dich nicht im Stich, du Waschlappen!” p 31, L 4) must therefore also be sufficiently offensive in English - for a contemporary readership - to cause Mutz’s reaction

2 2 9 Nicknames

There are a total of six nicknames in the opening five chapters. These are as follows: *Zack* (Karl Horber), *Das Vieh* (Unteroffizier Schaubeck), *Der Schweiger* (Klaus Hager), *Der Spatberufene* (Unteroffizier Heilmann), *Der Verein* (the seven boys), *Winnetou* (Ernst Scholten). The last two will be discussed here, while the remainder will be dealt with in the Translation Commentary.

2 2 9 1 Der ‘Verein’

The seven boys are referred to repeatedly by their collective nickname, der ‘Verein’. The repeated use of this nickname makes the translator’s choice of equivalent of particular importance. There are numerous considerations which will affect this choice. ‘Verein’ is clearly a collective term, the meaning of which is somewhat general, depending on the context, *organisation*, *society*, *association* and *club* could all be potential translations. However, clearly none of these would be suitable in this context. This is because a nickname is by definition informal, and all four equivalents offered above are terms referring to some kind of formal association of people. The seven boys are merely a group of friends who stick close together, and their nickname refers to them collectively in an informal and even somewhat humorous way.

Clearly the first requirement of an equivalent in English will be to fulfil this primary function: an informal collective term for a small group of people. Two words which come to mind are *crowd* and *bunch*. However, the difficulty with ‘crowd’ is that it suggests a considerable number of people, while it also lacks the closeness of the German ‘Verein’. A crowd may be a group of people who do not know each other,

indeed, this is usually the case. The idea of the group as being close-knit would thus be lost. Also, the word 'crowd' can have slightly negative connotations, as in the saying, "two's company, three's a crowd". Of the two, 'bunch' is certainly more appropriate, for several reasons. Firstly, it suggests a relatively small number of people. This is in keeping with the actual number of people being referred to (seven). This word also conveys the same sort of closeness as the German. The reader is much more likely to infer from the word 'bunch' that the boys know each other well. Additionally, the word is suitably informal and much more likely to achieve the slightly humorous effect of the German.

There is one last important consideration. As with other nicknames in *Die Brücke*, an explanation is offered as to how the individual (or, in this case, group) concerned came to be given a particular name. In chapter two there is a brief anecdote telling of how Schaubeck had greeted the boys on their first day in barracks with the words "Mensch, was kommt denn da für ein muder Verein?" (p 10, L 34). We learn that this throwaway remark stuck to the boys, and that this is how their nickname came to be. "Seitdem hießen die sieben in der Kaserne der 'Verein'. Sie selbst hatten so lange mit dem 'muden Verein' geprahlt, bis dieser Name an ihnen hangenblieb und sogar hin und wieder im Dienstverkehr auftauchte" (p 11, L 3). Clearly, whatever choice the translator makes, the boys' nickname will have to tie in, or be made to tie in, with this little explanatory anecdote.

Yet another potential translation would be the word 'gang'. The advantage of this word is that it is credible as a nickname. However, this word also has very negative connotations⁹ which are entirely out of keeping with the characters, who are being described as young and essentially quite innocent and harmless. As a result, 'gang' is inappropriate as an equivalent.

⁹ The Collins English Dictionary defines 'gang' as "a group of people who associate together or act as an organized body, esp. for criminal or illegal purposes" (my emphasis)

2 2 9 2 Winnetou

The reader is introduced to Scholten's nickname on page six. Unlike in the case of the 'Verein', where the reader has to wait until the next chapter for an explanation of the nickname, in this case, the explanation follows immediately. "Scholten hatte diesen Spitznamen schon seit langem. Sein pechschwarzes Haar, das hagere, gelbliche Gesicht mit der jah vorspringenden Nase und dem spitzen Kinn hatten etwas Kampferisches an sich. Es gab Leute, denen war Scholten vom ersten Augenblick an widerlich" (p 7, L 1)

This is clearly a cultural reference. 'Winnetou' was a fictional character created by the German writer Karl May¹⁰. He was an Indian whose adventures inspired the young boys in *Die Brücke* to play cowboys and Indians together. The name 'Winnetou' will clearly mean little to an English-speaking target audience, so the translator will have to find some sort of equivalent. However, this will be particularly difficult in this case. The above quotation is a very detailed description of the facial features both of Scholten and of Winnetou. A comparison is drawn between the two, it is clear that Scholten closely resembles the fictional Indian. However, the main reason for the comparison, and thus for Scholten being given this nickname, is not so much the features per se, as the fact that they "hatten etwas Kampferisches an sich". This should be the priority for the translator: choosing an equivalent figure (whether real or fictional is not terribly important) who is suitably warrior-like, aggressive-looking and even ugly. Ideally, unless the translator is to actually change Scholten's appearance, this person should have similar features to those described above. Not only this, but the person chosen should also - again, ideally - be an Indian, as the link between the reference to Winnetou, and the repeated references, during lengthy flashbacks which describe the boys' childhood together, to the boys playing together as Indians, is of significance. References to this Indian theme of the novel can even be found in the final pages, in chapter seventeen, when Scholten is shot. It takes a few

¹⁰ May will be referred to by name later on in the novel, during a description of Scholten's home life. Auf dem Bucherbord in seinem Zimmer fanden sich Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Rilke, und ein Band Nietzsche stand zwischen dem zweiten und dritten Teil von Karl Mays *Winnetou*" (p 111)

minutes for him to die, and, as his body is sapped of its strength, he becomes drowsy, and imagines himself to be an Indian again (Indian references have been underlined)

“Er horte einen Schrei, und bissige Freude stieg in ihm hoch Er war kein Soldat mehr, er war wieder beim Indianerspielen Er war Winnetou, der große Hauptling Von da druben hatte ihn einer an der linken Schulter erwischt, er wurde das Bleichgesicht toten [] Wo sind die Feiglinge, dachte Ernst Scholten, sie sollen kommen, damit ich sie skalpieren kann, alle Dann horte er den Motor eines Lastwagens, aber er wußte nicht mehr, was das bedeutete Und er dachte Wie kommt ein Lastwagen mitten in die Prarie? []” (p 273)

And, when Mutz suddenly realises that his friend is dying

“»Ernst!« Er schüttelte ihn Da hob Ernst Scholten das Gesicht und blicke Albert Mutz an Es war das Gesicht eines Toten, nur noch die Augen leuchteten, in einem seltsamen, starren Glanz, weit in die Ferne gerichtet Scholten blickte Mutz an, blickte durch ihn hindurch »Ich danke meinem weißen Bruder, er hat mir das Leben gerettet«, flüsterte er ” (p 274)

There is one final factor to be taken into account by the translator The figure who is chosen must be suitably well-known, likely to be familiar, at least in name, to an educated English-speaking readership Clearly these myriad and detailed requirements will present a tall order for the translator

2 2 10 Metaphor

The metaphor of the ‘Scheibenwischer’, or ‘windscreen-wiper’, which is used twice in the section *Ein General und sein Befehl* (p 34-35), is likely to pose considerable problems The function of this metaphor has been described in section 2 1 3 6 Interpretation of the metaphor could however reveal a further potential layer of meaning It is clear that the ‘Scheibenwischer’ metaphor describes a mental process by which the general chooses to disregard the moral implications of his actions and

any emotional, human response to the likelihood - as the general himself concedes - that the seven boys will be killed as a direct result of his order. However, a windscreen-wiper is also something which clears one's vision. The implication *may* be - and this is open to interpretation - that the general regards emotional responses to be an unwelcome nuisance as they have the effect of blurring and impeding his logical thought process, specifically, his ability to deal with tactical problems and to produce tactical solutions to these problems. Use of an alternative metaphor might entail a loss of this interpretation.

2.2.11 Cultural references

There is a whole array of cultural references in *Die Brücke* - the following is just a selection of some of the more interesting ones. A number, such as 'Winnetou', 'Volkssturm' and 'Soldbuch' have already been discussed under separate headings.

2.2.11.1 "Kennste den Frau Wirtin hatte ?"

The context (given in the quotation below) would suggest that this must be a literary reference of some sort - or possibly even *two* references or allusions - but there is very little for the translator to go on. Further confusion is added by the possibility that "kennste den " is in fact the beginning of the reference, as opposed to "Frau Wirtin" (if indeed there is only one reference and not two).

"Und wenn er genug getrunken hatte, zeigte er, daß er auch Einblick in die höhere Literatur gewonnen hatte. »Kennste den Frau Wirtin hatte ? Hahahaha, hahaha!«" (p 8, L 9)

With the reference being so short, it is very difficult to determine what the rest of Schaubeck's quotation might be, and from which work it is taken. A possibility is

that it may be from Goethe's poem *Mignon*¹¹, but it is really not possible to say with any degree of certainty

One native German speaker I consulted, to whom 'Frau Wirtin hatte ' was not familiar, suggested that this may not, in fact, be a reference at all. Instead, it may be the beginning of a joke, and perhaps a rather lewd one at that. He pointed out that, in German, it is not uncommon to begin a joke with "Kennst du den ", much the same as, in English, we might say "Did you hear the one about ?" Several factors support the possibility that this is in fact the start of a joke. Firstly, the word 'Witz' is masculine ("Kennst du *den* ") Secondly, Schaubeck ends with hearty laughter. Lastly, he is very drunk and has just pointed out that he used to be married to 'die Rote hinter der Bar'

However, whether this is a literary reference or a joke, one thing is clear. Schaubeck has certainly *not* gained an 'Einblick in die höhere Literatur', and the statement that he has is obviously ironic. The two main priorities of the translator will be to preserve this irony, and, if the translator opts for an English literary reference, to choose a reference which is appropriate to the situation. 'Frau Wirtin' clearly relates to the fact that Schaubeck is getting very drunk in a pub, and he probably says it as he has just been talking about his former wife, who is serving behind the bar. So, not only will the translation have to be ironic, but it should also refer to drinking in some way.

¹¹ "Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen bluhn,
Im dunklen Laub die Gold-Orangen gluhn,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht,
Kennst du es wohl? Dahin! Dahin
Mocht ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn []

Kennst du das Haus? []

Kennst du den Berg und seinen Wolkensteg []"

2 2 11 2 Orlandobar

“Und wenn er mit einem Kumpel in die Orlandobar kam und von seinem Tisch aus hin und wieder einen Blick zur Kitty hinter der Messingtheke sandte []” (p 7-8)

This is a cultural reference, but in a somewhat unusual sense, in that it refers to a place - America - which is geographically far removed from Germany, but which strongly influenced German culture during the 1920s in particular. This was felt in architecture, literature and music, but the new influence of America - *Amerikanismus* - was much more than this, as it became a way of thinking and doing, and had a considerable impact on life in general. In *The New Sobriety - Art and Politics in the Weimar Period*, Willett has examined this fascination with America in 1920s Germany, and writes

“In Germany the new vogue could link up with the already existing myth of a skyscraper-cum-cowboy civilization across the Atlantic [] to determine the whole climate of the period. That Americanism which earlier [] had stood for advanced technology, now became a way of looking, acting and doing things” (Willett, 1978: 98)

A bar named the ‘Orlandobar’ would thus have been characteristic of the spirit of the day, but would also have sounded foreign and perhaps even a little exotic. In short, it can be said that the place of ‘things American’ in German culture would have been very different then than in Britain or Ireland today, so that the word ‘Orlandobar’ will have a very different effect in the target text.

An added dimension is added by the fact that America is the principal country with which this part of Germany is at war. It is somewhat ironic that Schaubeck used to frequent a pub named after an American city (the interior design of which might even have been on an American theme), and that it is this same country that he will train soldiers to fight against. Indeed, Schaubeck is killed by an American fighter plane.

As a result of these factors, the rendering of an apparently simple proper noun into English can pose difficulties for the translator

2.2.11.3 Jugendarrest, Waldfrevel

These two cultural references appear on page five, during a brief description of Ernst Scholten “Einmal Jugendarrest wegen Waldfrevels” (L 7) ‘Jugendarrest’ is unlikely to pose major difficulties. While legal systems will vary between cultures, and indeed from one period in history to another, all are likely to have some means of dealing with child offenders who are too young to be prosecuted in the normal way or sent to prison. What is important regarding the term ‘Jugendarrest’ in this context is not the specific nature of the offence or punishment, but the fact that Ernst Scholten got into trouble with the law. An equivalent such as ‘juvenile detention’ is likely to be perfectly adequate.

More difficult is the question of ‘Waldfrevel’. The dictionary¹² entry under this word is ‘offence against the forest laws’. This is adequate as an explanation of the German, however, it would be difficult for an English native speaker to know exactly what to understand by ‘forest laws’.

There is of course one way of tackling the term, which is to disregard the term itself and instead try to find references to Scholten’s illegal activities elsewhere in the novel. A solution to this translation problem will present itself if the translator can identify what ‘Waldfrevel’ is most likely to refer to. In fact, this did not prove difficult. In a ‘character study’ of Ernst Scholten (p 109-118), we learn that Scholten came from a ‘Großstadt’ in western Germany, but was sent away by his parents due to the increasing danger from Allied bombing raids (the city is not named but most likely belongs to the *Ruhrgebiet*). He soon came to enjoy his new rural lifestyle.

¹² Collins German-English / English-German Dictionary, 1988

“Ernst war morgens mit den Stallmägden bei den Kühen, lernte spielend die landwirtschaftlichen Verrichtungen. Fuhr mit dem Rad zur Schule und streifte nachmittags stundenlang allein durch die weiten Wälder der Umgebung. In einem Schrank hingen zwei Kleinkalibergewehre. Manchmal nahm er eines auf seine Streifzüge mit, und manchmal brachte er einen Hasen, eine Wildente und einmal auch einen Rehbock mit nach Hause. Scholten wußte genau, daß das verboten war, was er tat. Aber er fühlte sich nicht von Skrupeln geplagt, wenn er auf den Anstand ging. Er wußte: Ich darf nicht erwischt werden, sonst fliege ich von der Penne und es gibt einen furchtbaren Wirbel! [...] Mit Leidenschaft ging er zum Fischen.” (p.111-112)

There is another reference to fishing - one day, Scholten and Horber went fishing for trout together, and the latter was caught by the ‘Pächter des Fischwassers’ (p.157). Scholten succeeded in escaping on that occasion, but this is the kind of activity for which he was probably eventually caught; ‘poaching in the forest’ could thus be a satisfactory translation for the term ‘Waldfrevel’.

2.2.11.4. Firmuhr

This term appears twice on page 26: “Der alte Mann zog eine Uhr aus der Uniformtasche. Eine altmodische Taschenuhr mit Sprungdeckel, vielleicht die Firmuhr. Als ob ihm die Firmuhr irgendeinen Rat gegeben hätte, stellte sich der Alte schließlich in Positur und rief: »Ich geh’ nach Hause!«” (L.18)

‘Firmuhr’ will require explanation, since an equivalent term does not exist in English, nor indeed does the custom. Consultation with a native speaker was required to confirm the meaning of the word as a confirmation gift - ‘Firmung’ - and not a gift given upon retirement from a company (if the ‘Firm-’ element of the word were to refer to the word ‘Firma’, the term would be *Firmenuhr* and not *Firmuhr*). An additional problem is posed by the possibility that an English-speaking readership could find it very unlikely that a man of some sixty years of age would still have, and use, a gift given to him when he celebrated his confirmation some forty-five to fifty years before. For purposes of cohesion, it may be necessary to insert some temporal

reference, such as “many years before”, or “from his youth”, to help establish in the reader’s mind the fact that this man had indeed owned this watch for many years.

2.2.11.5. Reichsmark

“Der Feldgendarm fand in der Brieftasche des Unteroffiziers neben den Ausweispapieren, dem Soldbuch und achtundfünfzig Reichsmark in Scheinen ein silbernes Madonnenmedaillon und die Fotografie eines blonden Mädchens im Badeanzug.” (p.30, L.7)

This culture-specific term was the name given to the currency of Germany between 1924 and 1948. By and large, the tendency in English with currencies is to retain the source language term (Lire, Peseta, Franc, Deutschmark etc.). There is an entry under the word ‘Reichsmark’ in the Collins English Dictionary; it is fair, therefore, to retain this term in translation. Even if the reader is unfamiliar with the term, the word ‘Mark’ is easily identifiable as referring to German currency. Furthermore, the fact that the source text specifies that the Reichsmarks were in notes means that it should be doubly clear to an English-speaking reader that money is being referred to.

2.2.11.6. Blutwurst, Zwieback

Gastronomic terminology is notoriously difficult to translate. This is scarcely surprising; terms referring to particular types of food are frequently culture-specific. Where a particular dish or foodstuff exists exclusively within a particular culture, possible translation strategies range from retention of the source language term to ‘acculturation’ of the term by using the nearest equivalent in the target culture.

The particular source language can be a factor in this decision. For instance, French culinary terms are frequently used in English, so they would lend themselves more easily to the ‘retention’ approach.

German cuisine is however not so familiar - 'Blutwurst' and 'Zwieback' are unlikely to mean much to an English-speaking readership, if used on their own without any additional information. Furthermore, the alternative, 'equivalence', approach, if it merely yields 'sausage' and 'biscuit' respectively, is far from ideal. These two culture-specific terms are likely to prove problematic. A possibility may be to coin the term 'blood sausage' for the purposes of translation.

2.2.12. Comprehension/Interpretation difficulties

"A good translator never translates words, idioms, sentences or even the text but the message of the work which must include the beauty and the style of the original."
(Papp, Sohár, 1996:148-9)

This rather simplistic assertion is all very well, but it begs a number of rather obvious questions. Firstly, the source text is not necessarily a thing of 'beauty', which is a rather grand word to attribute to literature as a whole. Second, the stylistic effect of the original is determined by how it functions in the source culture - what the norms of writing are for particular text-types in particular literatures at particular times - so to say that a translation must somehow 'include the style of the original' is a contradiction in terms, since a translation is written in an entirely different language, which is an integral part of a different culture, where the readership - and that readership's expectations - are obviously different. As Hochel writes:

"[...] the language of any work, its grammar, lexis and syntax, stand in a special relationship with conventions of a given national literature [...] and these conventions themselves relate to the national language as a whole." (Hochel, 1991:41)

Furthermore, decades or even centuries can separate the source and target texts; an attempt to somehow reproduce an 'equivalent' style would then defeat the purpose, since the translation would read as being antiquated. While this could, admittedly, be a legitimate possibility in the TT, the stylistic effect of such a translation would then be quite different to that which the ST would have had on the original readership.

However, what is of interest here is the phrase ‘the message of the work’. To say that a translation must translate the message of the work is to assume that the message is self-evident. Certainly, in the case of *Die Brücke*, establishing the meaning of the text is for the most part a straightforward process. Nonetheless, there are occasions where, even following consultation with a native speaker, the ‘meaning’ of a sentence proves elusive and the translator must accept that, whether or not it is the intention of the author, a sentence, or even a larger part of a text, is open to interpretation. This should not be a problem, since interpretation is an integral part of the translation process anyway. As Barnstone has written:

“[...] the act of formal translation involves an interpretive reading of the source text. Indeed, translation is a hermeneutical process [...] performed in order to come up with the most complete understanding of the source text for the purpose of determining the target text [...] In a word, to translate is to read and to interpret.” (1993:21)

This is reassuring, but the phrase ‘the most complete understanding of the source text’ raises further questions, namely: whose understanding? Presumably the answer to this must be: the translator’s. But how does the translator determine the point at which their understanding is ‘most complete’? Clearly one cannot spend an indefinite amount of time agonising over potential interpretations.

There are three problematic lines in chapter five. The first occurs on page 33: “Und der hielt »aufbauende Reden«.” (L.26) In this instance, the difficulty is caused by punctuation. Why is ‘aufbauende Reden’ in inverted commas (or, strictly speaking, *Anführungszeichen*)? The answer to this question is unclear. This may be a phrase that Schlopke frequently uses, in which case the text is simply quoting his own use of the two words. It may be meant to introduce a note of irony in some way, and may even be meant to suggest that Schlopke’s ‘Reden’ were anything but ‘aufbauend’. The translation problem here lies in the difficulty in determining whether there is ironic intention behind the punctuation.

The second two problematic lines are both on page 34. The first is the somewhat cryptic: “Es steht nicht nur ein Gegner im Land.” (L.26) This rather puzzling line is

open to at least two interpretations. The allusion to a 'second enemy' could simply be a reference to the Russians. It should be remembered that, from 6th June 1944 onwards, i.e. the Allied invasion of Normandy, Germany fought a war on two fronts (or three, if one includes Italy as a 'Southern Front'). While it is against the American forces that these seven thousand soldiers have been fighting, perhaps the general fears that they can only 'retreat' so far before meeting the Eastern Front - they can escape this particular encirclement, but they are still essentially trapped between two fronts.

The other, and perhaps a little more likely, interpretation of this line, is that the word 'Gegner' refers to time itself, which is being personified. Time is the general's 'second enemy'. This is plausible, since the general's entire tactics are aimed at buying as much time as possible for his beleaguered troops. The whole purpose of defending the bridge is to buy time. Time is thus a crucial factor in everything that the general does, and time is not in his favour - as such it is an enemy. In this case, the translation problem again lies in deciding how the line should be interpreted.

The third line which causes a problem is "Dann konnten die siebentausend aus dem Kessel heraus sein, konnten unterwegs sein in die andere Richtung" (L 28). The problem lies with 'die andere Richtung' - 'the opposite direction'. Opposite to what? It seems most plausible that the troops would move eastwards ('in die Bergstellungen im Osten'). 'Andere' is a deictic word, in other words its meaning is determined by the context in which it is used¹³. Since the reader cannot be sure what the word refers to, the meaning is unclear. Most likely the word refers to the direction in which the Americans are advancing. Nonetheless, if the Americans are moving east, and the Germans are retreating, then are the Germans not strictly speaking moving in the *same* direction as the Americans?

¹³ *Deixis* is defined by Hatim and Mason as "Formal features of language (demonstratives, personal pronouns, tense, etc.) which relate the concepts and entities evoked to the time and place of utterance" (Hatim, Mason, 1990: 240).

2.2.13 Swear words

The frequency with which swear words are used in *Die Brücke* necessitates a consistent and carefully considered approach to such words and expressions being adopted by the translator. Chapter one can be taken as a case in point. Several derogatory and offensive words are used in this chapter, including ‘Jammerlappen’, ‘Schlumper’, ‘Drecksack’, and Schaubeck’s threat “Ich schleife euch, bis euch das Arschwasser kocht!” (p 4, L 34). These may prove problematic, particularly the verb ‘schleifen’, which has numerous interpretations. This verb can mean to drag or haul, to raze or destroy, or to grind, while it is also army slang, meaning to ‘give somebody hell’ or to ‘drill someone hard’. Clearly, in the context of the novel, it is most likely that ‘schleifen’ is used here as army slang.

In translating for a contemporary audience, the translator must be careful when rendering such derogatory expressions as ‘Waschlappen’ and ‘trube Tasse’ and mild expletives like ‘pfui Teufel!’. Translations of these expressions could sound dated or otherwise inappropriate unless consideration is given to the fact that swear words and other expletives change over time. A translation of ‘pfui Teufel!’ such as ‘goodness gracious!’, for instance, would be less appropriate than ‘bloody hell!’

2.2.13.1 Scheißkrieg, verdammter!

Lieutenant Frohlich is cursing the war (p 10, L 11), in words which, coming from him, are clearly somewhat shocking to the ‘Verein’. Numerous expletives could be used in English. In translating expletives, the translator is more likely to lean towards dynamic, as opposed to formal, equivalence. In other words

“[] the relationship between reception and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (Nida, 1964: 159)

While the obvious question arising from this is the difficulty in establishing precisely what was the relationship between the original receptors and the message, this question has to some degree been answered within the text itself. The 'Verein' are somewhat taken aback that their officer should use this language. However, it is hard to say in this case who we should consider to be the original receptor - the fictional characters or Gregor's original readership?

The translation should thus achieve a dual function: Fröhlich must curse the war, and must do so using words which achieve, in so far as is possible, an 'equivalent effect'. In attempting to produce this equivalent effect, the translator must prioritise one or other of the sets of receptors mentioned above. The effect of Fröhlich's words on the fictional characters of the novel is clearly of much greater significance than their effect on the original readership. However, in adopting a strategy for dealing with expletives, the target audience of the translation must also be part of the translator's considerations. Could a contemporary, English-speaking readership be expected to understand why the 'Verein' were taken aback by Fröhlich saying, for example, "Damn! What a shitty war!?" On a purely linguistic level, this translation might be said to achieve something approaching an 'equivalent effect'. However, this translation is in fact not at all equivalent, as it does not take into account the crucial temporal factor which is a recurring consideration in the translation of this novel. In short, certain words, which were originally considered highly objectionable and even blasphemous, can become more acceptable over time; 'damn' is among the mildest of 'offensive' words, as they are used today, while 'shitty', although certainly a vulgar word, can hardly be considered among the most offensive words in common usage in the English language today.

However, there is yet a further factor to be borne in mind. In addition to the temporal factor, it must also be said that the usage of offensive language varies widely from one culture to another, and particularly from one national literature to another. In his essay entitled 'The Cross-Temporal and Cross-Spatial Factors and the Translation of Literary Language', Hochel discusses conventions in national literatures with regard to offensive language:

“It is well-known that the prudishness of literary language in Europe increases from the West to the East. Contacts with post-war English and American fiction and drama could make Slovak (or Hungarian, or Russian) readers feel that English and American literary characters [] speak too expressively, vulgarly, even obscenely, in spite of the fact that they - according to English and American readers - speak ‘normally’” (Hochel, in van Leuven-Zwart, Naaijken, 1991: 44)

To illustrate this, Hochel cites an extract from a poem by Roger McGough which contains the word ‘fuck’

“To replace the word “fuck” by its Slovak semantic and stylistic equivalent is simply impossible because of Slovak literary language conventions” (ibid.)

If this argument holds true - which I feel it does - then the converse is equally valid for a translation going in the reverse direction. Contemporary spoken English is frequently characterised by the liberal use of vulgar words and expressions. This in turn has been reflected in literary works (cf. the ‘Barrytown’ trilogy by Roddy Doyle). If a translator from English to Slovak is justified in ‘modifying’ the word ‘fuck’ to take into account the literary language and norms of the target culture, then there is equal justification in translating ‘Scheißkrieg’ as ‘fucking war’.

To sum up, a combination of several factors - the temporal factor, differences in ‘literary language’ conventions, and differences in the cultural norms relating to the use of vulgar language - justifies, indeed necessitates, modification of any curses used in *Die Brücke* to take these factors into account. The language must become ‘stronger’, in order to achieve the same function and effect (assuming a translation using early twenty-first century vernacular).

2.2.14 Names

“Proper names constitute an element both inside and outside language at the same time, forming an essential layer of the thread of narrative and yet in most cases

resisting translation. Their functions are various: the main ones are identification and connotation, on a semantic, associative and/or phonetic level. These will obviously react differently to translation: identification may be more difficult in an unfamiliar tongue but is basically as valid in the second language as in the first, whereas the connotational element will almost certainly be lost or may be distorted” (Willis, 1997: 74)

Die Brücke has seven central characters and a considerable number of secondary characters, including Schaubeck, Heilmann, Frohlich and Schlopke in chapters one to five. Feldweibel Wehnelt also appears briefly, and mention is made of Frohlich’s son Florian and Schaubeck’s former wife Kitty (discussed below) during their respective ‘character studies’. The translator must adopt a consistent approach where these names are concerned. The most common approach to the ‘translation’ of proper names is in fact not to translate them at all, but rather to simply copy them from source language to target language.

However, the difficulty which could arise with this approach is that the new readership might easily confuse names which they are not familiar with. This is certainly a potential problem facing the translator of *Die Brücke*: the names Schaubeck, Scholten and Schlopke may not be so easily distinguished by an English-speaking readership, and it is obviously crucial that any reader of a novel should be clear who is doing and saying what. Thankfully, however, this difficulty is somewhat alleviated by differences in rank: Scholten is an ordinary private, while Schaubeck and Schlopke are both NCOs. By ensuring that the latter two names are frequently accompanied by their rank, the risk of confusion can be greatly reduced. Furthermore, Schaubeck and Schlopke cannot be confused with each other, since the former is dead when the latter arrives on the scene.

2.2.14.1 Kitty/Kathi

An interesting translation problem occurs on page seven, in a paragraph which tells of how Schaubeck came to marry: “Aber Mensch Kitty, Kitty ist ja ’n süßer Name, aber

du kannst doch nicht Kitty heißen, sagen wir Kathi, klar?" (L 25) Kitty is his wife's actual name, but he prefers to call her by an equivalent German name 'Kitty' is not German, and therefore not acceptable (or at least not to Schaubeck) I have learned from a native speaker that this attitude to foreign-sounding words was quite typical of the day, indeed, that German schoolchildren were taught never to use a foreign word where a German word would do. It would seem that this attitude is being manifested here, and that it has been applied to names in addition to general words

The particular difficulty posed by these names is clear: what is the translator to do when faced with a situation where a distinction between two names is made in the original because, from the source language perspective, the target language of the translator is a foreign language? Clearly, the situation of the target text reader will be the reverse, in this case, English will be the native language of those reading the translation. To this new readership, it might seem strange to change the name Kitty - which, although perhaps uncommon, is certainly an English-language name - into a foreign version. On the other hand, it may be perfectly acceptable, if the reader allows for the fact that the novel has been translated from the German. Even so, it could well remain unclear to an English-speaking readership why a German person might find the name Kitty in any way objectionable or unacceptable. There may be a need to elaborate in the translation.

2.2.15 Conclusion

In summary it can be said that *Die Brücke* poses a wide range of translation difficulties. The main issues with which the translator is faced are military terminology, shared assumptions, problems of syntax and sentence and paragraph boundaries, colloquial language and slang, nicknames, cultural references, swear words and, finally, the difficult 'Scheibenwischer' metaphor. All of these issues are likely to prove problematic for the translator.



Chapter 3

Translation

Der Zufall hatte mich wieder in die kleine Stadt
geführt, und es waren zehn Jahre vergangen

War es ein Zufall? Als ich abends auf der Brücke
stand und in den Fluß hmabblickte, wußte ich, daß
5 nicht der Zufall, sondern einzig und allem mein
Wunsch, wieder auf dieser Brücke zu stehen, mich
hierher zurückgebracht hatte Jetzt stand ich also auf
dem breiten Gehsteig am Geländer, schaute ins Was-
ser hinab und wandte hin und wieder auch den Blick
10 zu den Ufern links und rechts.

Es ist eine schöne Brücke, und die kleine Stadt
kann stolz darauf sein Mit ihren wuchtigen Steinqua-
dern halt die Brücke jedem Hochwasser stand Es ist
ein Erlebnis, auf ihr zu stehen, wenn der Fluß im Früh-
15 jahr das Schmelzwasser aus den Bergen bringt Wenn
hin und wieder ein auf den lehmgelben Fluten heran-
treibender Baumstamm gegen die Pfeiler donnert und
brodelnder Gischt, ohnmächtig gegen die Kraft der
Brücke, ihre Standfesten umspruht Es ist ein Vergnu-
20 gen, an schonen Sommertagen die Paddler den Fluß
herabkommen zu sehen Braungebrannte Körper in
schnittigen Booten

Als ich an diesem Maienabend auf der Brücke
stand, führte der Fluß kein Hochwasser und es kamen
25 auch keine Paddler. Von der Brückenhohe aus schien
das Wasser seicht zu sein, man konnte bis auf den
Grund sehen Etwa in der Mitte des Flußbetts lag ein
großer Felsblock. Er blieb damals im Jahr 1935 übrig,
als man die Brücke baute Gleich unterhalb des Fels-
30 blocks gab es eine Stelle im Grund des Flußbetts, die
sich in Jahrzehnten kaum verändert hatte Hier verhin-
derte der gewaltige Stein mit seinem breiten Rücken
jede Ablagerung von Geroll, und man sah das Gewehr

The Bridge

Ten years had passed, and chance had brought me back to the small town

*Was it just chance? That evening, as I stood on the bridge and looked down
5 into the river, I know it wasn't chance which had brought me here once more, but
rather my desire to stand on this bridge again - nothing more and nothing less And
so I stood on the broad footpath, gazing down over the railings into the water, and
looked up now and again at the banks on either side*

*It is a fine bridge, and the small town can be proud of it With its massive
10 square stone pillars the bridge can withstand any flood It is an experience to stand
on her in spring, when the mountain snow melts and the river swells When every so
often a tree-trunk, carried along by the murky, clay-coloured waters, thunders against
the pillars, sending seething spray, powerless against the strength of the bridge,
splashing into the air On fine summer days it is a pleasure to watch the canoeists
15 come down the river Tanned brown bodies in smart boats*

*That May evening, as I stood upon the bridge, the river was not in flood, nor
were there any canoeists Looking down from the bridge the water seemed shallow I
could see right down to the bottom Roughly in the centre of the riverbed lay a large
stone block It had been left over when the bridge was built, back in 1935 Just
20 behind the block there was a spot in the riverbed which had hardly changed at all
over the decades Here the broad, massive stone prevented any collection of detritus
and I could still see the rifle which lay in the gravel It was an assault rifle Year of
manufacture 1944 The magazine was empty*

*The weapon fell from the hand of a German soldier on May 2nd, 1945, at 5 20
25 in the evening, skidded under the railings, hung by its magazine on the edge of the*

115 noch heute, das dort auf dem Kiesgrund lag Es war ein Sturmgewehr Herstellungsjahr 1944 Das Magazin war leer

↳ Die Waffe fiel einem deutschen Soldaten am 2 Mai 5 1945, abends um 17 20 Uhr, aus der Hand, rutschte zwischen Brückenkante und Geländer durch, blieb mit dem Magazin an der Kante hängen und pendelte hin und her Ungefähr eine Sekunde lang Dann sackte der Soldat in sich zusammen und stieß im Fallen das 10 Gewehr endgültig in die Tiefe Der Soldat hatte genau einen Monat früher seinen sechzehnten Geburtstag gefeiert, und als er in sich zusammensackte, bewegten sich seine Lippen, als wollten sie die Worte eines Gebets formen Ich wußte, daß ich ihn und die ande- 15 ren nicht vergessen wurde

Es begann damals vor zehn Jahren in der Kaserne einer kleinen deutschen Stadt Am 1 Mai 1945. Genau durch die Mitte der Stadt verläuft der Fluß in einigen sanften Krümmungen und teilt sie so in zwei 20 Halften Aber von Ufer zu Ufer reicht die massive Brücke Die Stadt liegt inmitten einer herrlichen Landschaft Sie ist von weiten Wäldern, Hügelketten und sattgrünen Wiesen umgeben Einmal kamen zwei Wanderbrüder auf einem der Hügel vor der Stadt 25 zusammen

203 ↳ »Ich mocht' hier begraben sein!« seufzte der eine »Ich nicht«, sagte der andere und weitete die Lungen in einem tiefen Atemzug, »ich mochte hier leben!« Und sie meinten beide das gleiche

1

30 Karl Horber hatte sich gerade unter die Dusche im Waschraum gestellt und ließ das eiskalte Wasser

2

bridge, and swung to and fro For about a second Then the soldier collapsed and,
as he fell, he finally knocked the rifle down into the water The soldier had celebrated
his sixteenth birthday exactly one month earlier As he collapsed, his lips moved, as
though wanting to form the words of a prayer I knew I would not forget him and the
5 others

It all started ten years ago, on May 1st 1945, in the army barracks of a small
German town The river meanders gently right through the centre of the town,
dividing it in half But the two parts are united by the massive bridge The town lies
in the midst of magnificent countryside It is surrounded by large forests, rolling hills
10 and rich green fields Two travellers once met on one of the hills outside the town

"I'd like to be buried here", sighed one of them "I wouldn't", said the other,
taking in a deep lungful of air "I'd like to live here!" And they both meant the same
thing

15

20

über seine mageren Schultern rinnen Er tat es vorsichtig, so daß der kalte Strahl weder voll auf seine Brust noch voll auf seinen Rücken traf

Entlang der Wand des Kasernenwaschraums und
5 unter der halboffenen Tür lummelte der »Verein« herum und verfolgte mit spottischem Interesse, wie sich Karl Horber den Schmutz herunterspulte, der bei der Übung im Granerfeld an ihm hangengeblieben war Der »Verein« hatte seine Freude mit Karl
10 Horber Man nannte ihn kurz »Zack«, seitdem Horber einen Tag lang als Schanzaufsicht eingeteilt gewesen war und jedes Kommando mit den Begleitworten »aber zack, zack« versehen hatte Horber gehörte selbst zum »Verein« und war wohlgehten
15 Mit seinen abstehenden Ohren, dem sommersprossigen Gesicht und dem brandroten Schopf war der Sechzehnjährige an Spott gewohnt

Auch jetzt, unter der Dusche, zeigte er sich hart im Nehmen, denn der »Verein« sparte nicht mehr lehrreichen Hinweisen: »Mach den Bauch nicht naß, Zack, sonst rostet der auch!«

»Leg die Ohren an, damit der Hals auch was abkriegt!«

»Schade, daß dich dein kleines Mädchen nicht
25 sieht, das konnte sich nämlich nicht satt sehen!«

Jedesmal schallendes Gelächter im »Verein«, und prompt suchte der nächste eine noch treffendere Bemerkung an den Mann zu bringen Und Karl Horber lachte mit. Nicht weil das die beste Gegenwehr
30 war, sondern weil Horber so voll Frohlichkeit steckte, daß er über Witze und Blodeleien einfach lachen mußte Auch wenn es Witze über ihn selbst
3 waren

Horber lachte, und alles an seinem mageren Körper, die schlaksigen lange Beine, der Bauch, der krumme Rücken und die spitzen Schulterblätter,

Karl Horber had just stepped under the washroom shower. He let the ice-cold water run over his thin shoulders. He did so carefully, so that the cold stream was distributed equally over his chest and back.

'The Bunch' lounged around, standing by the wall of the barracks washroom and the half-open door. They watched with amused interest as Karl Horber washed off the dirt from the exercise in the gram field. 'The Bunch' had their fun with Karl Horber. Horber had been nicknamed 'Snappy', ever since the day he had been put in charge of the trenches and had followed every order with the words "and make it snappy!" Horber also belonged to the bunch and was well liked. With his jughandle ears, freckled face and fiery red shock of hair, the sixteen-year-old was well used to being made fun of.

Even now, in the shower, he showed himself well able to take the jokes hurled against him, as the Bunch had no shortage of helpful comments. "Hey, Snappy! Keep the water off your head! Your hair is rusty enough as it is!"

"You'll never get your neck clean with your ears sticking out like that!"

"Bet your girl would love to see you now!"

Each remark was followed by roaring laughter, and straight away someone else would try to think up an even better one. And Karl Horber laughed too. Not because laughter was the best form of defence, but because Horber was such a good-natured person that he couldn't do anything but laugh at jokes and silly carry-on. Even when it was directed against him.

alles schien mitzulachen. Dann stand plötzlich Schaubeck im Turrahmen. Unteroffizier Schaubeck, genannt »das Vieh«.

Kein Mensch wußte, wer den Spitznamen erfunden hatte. Aber es hatte auch noch keiner danach gefragt. Es hieß, daß Schaubeck den widerspenstigsten Rekruten »fertigmachen« konnte, und keiner zweifelte daran. Er sah ganz harmlos aus, solange er nicht sprach. Aber in seiner Stimme lag Unheil. Schon wenn er jovial, betont munter und immer ein bißchen spottisch sein militarisches Wissen an den Mann brachte. Noch deutlicher, wenn er brüllte, und erst recht, wenn er flüsterte. Jetzt flüsterte Schaubeck.

»Horber«, flüsterte er, »Sie Jammerlappen! Können Sie sich nicht einmal ordentlich waschen? Muß wohl erst die Frau Mama rufen, daß sie dem Herrn Horber den Hintern wascht?«

Dann lauter: »Unter die Dusche, maaarsch!«

Horber stand bewegungslos unter der Dusche, Schaubeck dreht auf, riß den Hahn herum, so weit es ging, und schenkte dem sommersprossigen Haufchen Elend unter dem niederpasselnden Wasser nichts. Gar nichts. Und in diesem Augenblick ertönte es aus der Ecke, in die sich der Verein verzogen hatte (maßig stramme Haltung), leise, aber nicht zu überhören. »Dreh zu, du Drecksack!«

Pause.

Schaubeck brüllte: »Wer war das?«

Schweigen.

Lauter: »Wer war das?«

Schweigen.

Und dann Schaubeck, ganz leise: »Ich will wissen, wer das war, versteht ihr? Oder ich schleife euch, bis euch das Arschwasser kocht!«

Lahmende Stille beim Verein. Plötzlich die gleiche

And so he laughed, and every part of his scrawny body - the long, gangling legs, the stomach, the stooping back and pointed shoulderblades - seemed to be laughing, too

And then, suddenly, Schaubeck stood in the doorway Corporal Schaubeck,
5 commonly known as 'the Bull' No-one knew who had thought up the nickname Nor did anyone ask It was said that Schaubeck could 'crack' the most stubborn recruit, and no-one doubted it He seemed quite harmless, until you heard him speak His voice sounded menacing You could already hear it in training, when he would teach his men his military know-how in his jovial manner, with forced cheerfulness and
10 always somewhat derisively It was even clearer when he shouted, but clearest of all, when he whispered Now Schaubeck was whispering

"Horber", he whispered, "you little sissy! Can you not even wash yourself properly? Am I going to have to call your mother and ask her to wash Master Horber's backside?"

15 Then he spoke louder "Under the shower, maaarch!"

Horber stood motionless under the shower, and Schaubeck grabbed the tap and wrenched it around until it would go no further The water shot down in a powerful jet, and Schaubeck showed the freckled pile of misery in the shower not the slightest sympathy At that moment, a voice came from the corner of the washroom where the
20 Bunch had retreated, and where they now stood half-heartedly to attention A voice which was quiet but distinct "Turn off the tap, you bastard!"

Silence

Then Schaubeck yelled "Who was that?"

Silence

25 Louder "Who was it?"

Stimme wie vorher »Das kannst du gar nicht, du Drecksack!«

Eine ruhige, satte, beinahe gelangweilte Stimme
Jeder im Verein wußte, das war Ernst Scholten, der
5 Snob unter den sieben leidenschaftlicher Musiker,
schwärmte für Bach und kann Mädchen nicht leiden
Einmal Jugendarrest wegen Waldfrevels

Der Verein war stolz auf Scholten, aber gleichzeitig
furchteteten den Sechzehnjährigen alle ein biß-
10 chen, der – geistig weit über sein Alter hinaus –
Dinge tat, an die ein Sohn braver Leute normalerweise
nicht einmal denken sollte

Auch jetzt wußte der Verein nicht, was Scholten
eigentlich wollte Gut, Schaubeck schikanierte Hor-
15 ber, aber den wurde ja schließlich das Wasser nicht
umbringen. Warum also gerade jetzt gegen Schau-
beck anstampfen? Der Verein begriff im Augenblick
nicht, daß bei Ernst Scholten der kritische Zeitpunkt
20 gekommen war, daß es ihm einfach reichte Die
Schikanen der letzten vierzehn Tage hatte keiner der
sieben so schmerzlich empfunden wie er Es hatte
begonnen, als er Schaubeck zum erstenmal gegen-
überstand

»Name?«

25 »Scholten«, kleine Pause, dann zögernd »Ernst –
Ernst Scholten!«

Schaubeck wunderte sich »Komischer Name,
Scholten, nie gehört Man, wie kann man bloß Schol-
5 ten heißen?«

30 Schaubeck machte gern solche Witze und wartete
dann, bis die Rotte lachte Aber die sechs, die in die-
sem Augenblick um Schaubeck und Scholten herum-
standen, lachten nicht, weil sie noch nicht gelernt
hatten, wann man bei Schaubeck zu lachen hatte
35 und wann nicht

Schaubeck fuhr fort »Schon mal was von Zivili-

Silence

Then Schaubeck said, this time very quietly "I want to know who it was, get it? Or I'll drill you all so hard you won't know your arse from your elbow!"

Paralyzed silence from the Bunch Suddenly, the same voice as before "As if
5 you could, you bastard!"

It was a calm, smug, almost bored voice Everyone in the Bunch knew it was Ernst Scholten, the snob of the seven A passionate musician who's mad about Bach and can't stand girls He once sat a period of juvenile detention for poaching in the forest

10 The Bunch were proud of Scholten, but at the same time they were all somewhat fearful of the sixteen-year-old Mentally he was way beyond his age, and he did things that a son of decent people should normally not even dream of

Even now the Bunch didn't know what Scholten actually hoped to achieve Fair enough, Schaubeck was bullying Horber, but the water wasn't exactly going to
15 kill him either So why choose now to start having a go at Schaubeck? What the Bunch didn't understand was that Ernst Scholten had reached the point where he just couldn't take it any more None of the seven had taken the treatment of the past fortnight more to heart than him It had started the first time he had stood face to face with Schaubeck

20 "Name?"

"Scholten " He hesitated a moment, then "Ernst - Ernst Scholten " And Schaubeck said "Scholten That's an odd name! Never heard it before How on earth can you call yourself Scholten?"

sation gehört, Scholten?»

»Jawohl, Herr Unteroffizier!«

»Das heißt nicht jawohl, sie Schlumper, das heißt jawoll, und zur Zivilisation gehört der Haarschnitt!

5 Er ist eine Errungenschaft der Zivilisation, verstanden?»

»Jawohl, Herr Unteroffizier!«

»Los Mann, gehn Sie, lassen Sie den Urwald roden. Möglichst Kahlschlag Wegtreten!«

10 Zugegeben, Ernst Scholten hatte eine Frisur, die von einem militärischen Haarschnitt ziemlich weit entfernt war. Aber bisher hatte kein Mensch Ernst Scholten gesagt, wann er zum Haarschneiden gehen mußte. Und als er eine Stunde, nachdem er das
15 Kasernentor passiert hatte, beim Friseur im Kasernenkeller saß, empfand er jeden Schnitt der Schere, jedes Rucken der Schneidemaschine als Schmach. Das und viele andere Kleinigkeiten, die sich im Lauf der vierzehn Tage in Ernst Scholten zusammenge-
20 ballt hatten, standen jetzt im Dushraum drohend wie eine Ladung Dynamit hinter jedem Satz, den Ernst Scholten aus sicherer Deckung seinem Unter-
6 offizier entgeschleuderte.

Eine seltsame, spannungsgeladene Atmosphäre

25 Zitternd, splitterackt unter der immer noch laufenden Bräuse, die Hände an die Oberschenkel gepreßt und gar nicht mehr frohlich, Karl Horber. Mit dem Rücken zu ihm gewandt, das Gesicht auf die sechs in der Ecke gerichtet, kalte Wut im Herzen und
30 klauernd, Unteroffizier Schaubeck. In der Ecke der Verein: Walter Forst, Siegfried Bernhard, Albert Mutz, Jürgen Borchart, Klaus Hager und Ernst Scholten.

Die fünf um Scholten kamen immer noch nicht recht mit. Aber sie begannen zu spüren, daß hinter

35 dieser Auseinandersetzung mehr steckte als einer der bekannten Streiche von »Winnetou«

Schaubeck was fond of making these little jokes. He would then wait for the troop to laugh. But the six lads who stood around Schaubeck and Scholten that day didn't laugh. With Schaubeck, they hadn't yet learned when they were to laugh.

5 Schaubeck continued, "Ever heard of something called *Civilisation*, Scholten?"

"Sure, Corp'ral!"

"Not 'sure, Corp'ral!' That's YES, CORPORAL! Get it, you little slob?! Now, if you want to look civilised, then get your hair cut! The haircut is a product of civilisation, do you understand?"

10 "YES CORPORAL!"

"Clear off now and get that mop cut! Chop, chop! Nice and short! Dismissed!"

Granted, Ernst Scholten's haircut didn't exactly conform to army standards. But this was the first time anyone had ever told Scholten when to get his hair cut. And when he had sat in the barber's chair in the basement, within an hour of setting
15 foot in the barracks, he had felt humiliation with every snip of the scissors, every pinch of the electric razor. This, and many other little things, had built up in Ernst Scholten over the past fortnight. And now, in the washroom, with every sentence that Ernst Scholten fired at his NCO from the safe cover of his companions, these feelings
20 were like a pressure-cooker waiting to explode.

It was a strange, tension-filled atmosphere. Karl Horber, now not at all his usual happy self, was stark naked and trembling, his hands clutching his thighs, under the still-running shower. Corporal Schaubeck, with his back to Horber, had turned to the six boys in the corner. His eyes shot from face to face, and a cold rage burned

Scholten hatte diesen Spitznamen schon seit langem Sein pechschwarzes Haar, das hagere, gelbliche Gesicht mit der jah vorspringenden Nase und dem spitzen Kinn hatten etwas Kampferisches an sich Es gab Leute, denen war Scholten vom ersten Augenblick an widerlich Schaubeck gehörte zu ihnen Wie wurde diese Auseinandersetzung enden? Wie überhaupt konnte sie nur enden?

Gerade als Schaubeck Mann für Mann fixierte, ihnen in die Augen starrte, als mußte sich der Sprecher so finden lassen, ertonte die Sirene

Fliegeralarm!

Schaubeck flüsterte »Wir sprechen uns noch«, und zog ab

15 *Unteroffizier Schaubeck und der Alkohol*

Jahrgang 1903 Vorname Alois, Alois Schaubeck also Berufssoldat Spezialist im Umgang mit Menschen und Material, Weibern und Alkohol Legt keinen Wert auf Qualität, weder bei den Weibern noch beim Alkohol Hauptsache viel und möglichst noch mehr Schonste Zeit Nachturlaub

Wie war das doch damals mit Schaubeck? Wie war das doch? Ach ja, Schaubeck hatte geheiratet Ganz schnell Vier oder fünf Tage hatte er Kitty gekannt. Aber Mensch Kitty, Kitty ist ja 'n süßer Name, aber du kannst doch nicht Kitty heißen, sagen wir Kathi, klar?

Kriegstraumung

Das dauerte vier Wochen Dann kam Schaubeck nicht mehr nach Hause Oder nur noch selten Kitty ging wieder ihrer Arbeit nach und Schaubeck dem Alkohol und den Weibern Und wenn er mit einem Kumpel in die Orlandobar kam und von seinem

inside him In the corner stood the Bunch Walter Forst, Siegi Bernhard, Albert
Mutz, Jurgen Borchart, Klaus Hager and Ernst Scholten

The five grouped around Scholten still weren't quite sure what was going on
But they had started to feel that there was more to this exchange of hostilities than
5 'Gerommo's' usual little pranks

Scholten had had this nickname for years His jet-black hair, gaunt, sallow
face with the sharply protruding nose and pointed chin made him seem somewhat
aggressive Some people found Scholten repulsive from the moment they first set
eyes on him Schaubeck was one of them How would this confrontation be
10 resolved? What was going to happen next?

Just as Schaubeck began to look intently into the eyes of each of them, as if
this would betray the speaker, the sirens started up

Air-raid!

"I'm not finished with you yet", whispered Schaubeck before moving off

15

Corporal Schaubeck and the Drink

He had been born in 1903 First name Alois Alois Schaubeck A
professional soldier A specialist in dealing with men and equipment, women and
20 alcohol Doesn't attach any importance to quality, either where his women or his
alcohol are concerned Just lots of both And more, if possible Loves being off duty
in the evenings

What was the story with Schaubeck back then? What was it? Ah yes,
Schaubeck had got married Very suddenly He had only known Kitty for four or five

Tisch aus hin und wieder einen Blick zur Kitty hinter der Messingtheke sandte, konnte es nach der zweiten, dritten Flasche Wein passieren, daß Schaubeck sagte »Siehst du die Rote hinter der Bar? Das ist
5 Kitty, mußt du wissen War mal meine Frau, 'ne feine Sache, mußt du wissen Tolle Feste gefeiert, hahahaha!« Und dann konnte Schaubeck lachen Kollernd und polternd. Und dann konnte er trinken Und wenn er genug getrunken hatte, zeigte er, daß er
10 auch Einblick in die höhere Literatur gewonnen hatte »Kennste den Frau Wirtin hatte ?
Hahahaha, hahaha!«

Aber das ist nicht alles über Alois Schaubeck Die Darstellung wäre unvollständig, wurde man nicht
15 erwähnen, daß er seinen Haufen in mustergültiger Ordnung hatte Daß ihn seine Vorgesetzten nicht schätzten, aber die Erfolge seiner Ausbildung anerkannten Daß kein Mensch sich so schnell exakt in den Dreck schmeißen konnte wie einer, der durch
20 Schaubecks Schule gegangen war

Schaubeck verbrachte den Krieg in der Heimat Manchmal prahlte er mit einer Verwundung, aber hin und wieder hatte er das Pech, daß einer zuhorte, der es besser wußte Dann hieß es »Halt bloß die
25 Luft an, Schaubeck, sonst wirst du gleich noch mal verwundet!« Schaubecks Verwundung stammte von einem Verkehrsunfall Aber das wußte Ernst Scholten nicht

Die sieben rasten aus dem Duschraum zu den
30 Flak-Batterien, Karl Horber bloß mit seinem Trainingsanzug und dem Stahlhelm bekleidet Sie schlepten Munition

Die einzige amerikanische *Mustang*, die nach erfolgtem Flak-Beschuß aus dem hoch oben am
35 nachthchen Aprilhimmel dahinziehenden Bomberverband ausscherte und einen kurzen Trip über die

days *Come on now Kitty, I mean, Kitty's a sweet name, but it's not very German, is it? Let's call you Kathi, O K ?*

War wedding

It lasted four weeks Then Schaubeck stopped coming home Or, at any rate,
5 was rarely there Kitty went back to her work, Schaubeck back to his drink and his
women And sometimes, when he went to the Orlando Bar with one of the lads, he'd
occasionally look over from his table to Kitty as she worked behind the brass counter,
and after the second or third bottle of wine Schaubeck might say "Do you see the
red-head there behind the bar? That's Kitty, you know Used to be my wife A fine
10 thing, I'm telling you We had some good times together, hahaha!" Then Schaubeck
could laugh, a deep, loud, rumbling laugh And then he could really drink And when
he had drunk his fill, he would display his deep insight into literature "Drink to me
only with thine eyes, and I'll hahaha, I'll not look for wme, hahaha!"

But that is not all there is to say about Alois Schaubeck A description of him
15 would not be complete if mention wasn't also made of the fact that he kept his troops
in exemplary order That his superiors didn't think highly of him, but did recognise
the success of his training methods That no soldier could hit the dirt quicker than
those who had been trained by Schaubeck

Schaubeck had spent the war in his home town Sometimes he would brag
20 about his war wound, but occasionally he had the misfortune to be overheard by
someone who knew better Then he would be told "Shut up about that, Schaubeck,
or I'll give you a real war wound to talk about!" Schaubeck had received his injury in
a traffic accident But Ernst Scholten didn't know that

Kaserne flog, tat ihnen nichts Sie erwischte im Tief-
flug bloß das Unteroffizierskasino.

↳ 40
5 Dort saßen zwei Unteroffiziere beim Siebzehn-
undvier und einer Flasche organisiertem Rotwein
↳ Unteroffizier Heilmann hatte sich von Schaubeck
die Geschichte mit dem Duscraum und Karl Hor-
ber erzählen lassen Er wollte Schaubeck gerade
erwidern, daß er die Sache gar nicht lustig fände und
daß er es hasse, wenn man die jungen Kerle für
10 nichts und wieder nichts schikanieren Da blieb sein
Blick an der Kasinodecke hängen

↳ 9
↳ Unteroffizier Heilmann erstarrte
Es ging alles blitzschnell, und doch entging ihm
nichts von dem, was passierte Ein Loch nach dem
15 anderen erschien an der Decke des langen Raumes
Die Locher marschierten schnurgerade auf Unterof-
fizier Heilmann zu, kamen immer näher, und plotz-
lich riß sich Heilmann vom Tisch los

Ließ sich nach rechts fallen

20 Deckenverputz prasselte herunter, ein Krachen,
und dann war es vorüber Als Heilmann wieder auf-
stand, hing Schaubeck in seltsam verkrummter Hal-
tung quer über der Tischplatte, besudelt mit roten
Spritzern Rotwein und Blut

25 In den weitaufgerissenen Augen Schaubecks lag
Staunen Die Hände waren zu Fausten geballt

↳ 20

2

Der Verein fand sich später vollzählig auf der Bude
ein Leutnant Frohlich war gekommen, Horber hatte
Meldung gemacht, und dann war Frohlich bis zum
30 ersten Spind herantreten und hatte folgenderma-
ßen zu ihnen gesprochen

9

The seven boys raced out of the washroom and over to the anti-aircraft guns
Karl Horber was wearing nothing but his gym singlet, shorts and steel helmet They
hailed around the ammunition

5 The flak guns opened up on the bomber formation as it passed overhead, high
above in the April evening sky The single American *Mustang* fighter-bomber which
peeled off from the formation, and flew a quick strafing run over the barracks, didn't
get them As it flew past at low altitude it only hit the NCOs' mess hall

10 At that moment, two NCOs were sitting inside, playing a game of pontoon as
they enjoyed a bottle of red wine which they had 'acquired' Corporal Heilmann had
just listened to Schaubeck's story of the events with Karl Horber in the washroom He
was just about to retort that he didn't find the matter in the slightest bit funny, and that
he hated it when people bullied the young lads again and again for no good reason
whatsoever, when suddenly his eyes fixed on the mess hall ceiling

Corporal Heilmann froze

15 It all happened extremely fast, and yet he missed nothing Holes started
appearing, one after the other, in the ceiling of the long room The holes marched
towards Corporal Heilmann in a dead straight line, came nearer and nearer, and then
Heilmann tore himself away from the table, diving off to the right

20 Plaster rained down from the ceiling, there was a deafening noise, and then it
was all over When Heilmann stood up again, Schaubeck lay in a strange,
spreadeagled shape across the table He was covered in dark red stains Blood and
red wine

Astonishment lay in Schaubeck's wide-open, unseeing eyes His hands were
clenched into fists

»Kinder Schaubeck ist tot Der Ami ist noch drei-
ßig Kilometer weg Alles geht kaputt Mir war's am
liebsten, ihr würdet abhauen Schnellstens Ich
kann's euch nicht befehlen, ich darf's nicht Aber der
5 Posten an der Westmauer weiß Bescheid Der laßt
euch durch «

So hatte Frohlich gesprochen Dann hatte er jeden
der sieben angesehen, so lange, daß es den Jungen
fast peinlich wurde Und dann hatte Frohlich etwas
10 gesagt, was noch kein Mensch bis dahin in dieser
Form aus seinem Munde gehört hatte »Scheißkrieg,
verdammter!«

Es war nur ein Murmeln, wie es manchmal aus
Kehlen kommt, die muhsam das Schluchzen zurück-
15 halten Aber jeder im Raum hatte es gehört

Frohlich machte kehrt, wie auf dem Exerzierplatz
Und verließ die Stube

Zwei Stunden vor dem Alarm hatte er die Nach-
richt erhalten, daß die Russen jene deutsche Einheit
20 vollig aufgegeben hatten, bei der sein Sohn seit drei
Monaten eingesetzt war

Leutnant Frohlich galt die ganze Liebe der sieben
Buben Er war neben dem Unteroffizier Heilmann
der einzige in der Kaserne, der sich ausgiebig mit
25 den Sechzehnjährigen beschäftigte und dabei keinen
Schliff kannte In der riesengroßen Kaserne kam
sich der Verein verloren vor Die sieben Jungen
waren das letzte Aufgebot aus der kleinen Stadt

Man hatte sie Mitte April aus dem Klassenzimmer
30 weg zum Volkssturm geholt, mit feldgrauen Unifor-
men ausgerüstet und jedem einen funkelnagelneuen
Karabiner 98 k in die Hand gedruckt Schaubeck
hatte sie damals begrüßt

»Mensch, was kommt denn da für ein muder Ver-
35 ein?«

Und dann, jovial »Na, der Krieg dauert noch

Later on, after the Bunch had all returned to their billet, Lieutenant Fröhlich arrived. Horber brought the others to attention and reported to him, and then Fröhlich stepped forward to the first locker, and began to speak to them.

"Kids, Schaubeck is dead. The Americans are only thirty kilometres away. Things are going from bad to worse. I'd prefer if you'd all bugger off. As fast as possible. I can't order you to - I'm not allowed. But I've had a word with the guard on the west gate. He'll let you through."

When he finished speaking, he looked at each of the seven boys in turn. He looked at them so long, they almost started to feel uncomfortable. And then he said something which no-one had heard from him before. Or at least not in these words. "Shit! I hate this fucking war!"

He had just muttered it, like people sometimes sound when their throat is trying hard to hold back a sob. But everyone in the room had heard him.

Fröhlich turned about, just like on the parade ground, and left the billet.

Two hours before the air-raid alarm had sounded, he had received the news that the Russians had totally wiped out the German unit which his son had been posted to three months earlier.

The seven lads were very fond of Lieutenant Fröhlich. Apart from Corporal Heilmann, he was the only one in the barracks who devoted his attention to the sixteen-year-olds and who did his utmost for them. The Bunch felt lost in the enormous barracks. The seven boys were the last recruits the small town had to offer.

They had been taken from school in mid-April and sent to join the *Volkssturm* in a last-ditch conscription. They had been issued with field-grey uniforms, and each

lange genug, damit man aus euch Menschen machen kann, ihr Nieselrieme!«

Seitdem hießen die sieben in der Kaserne der »Verein« Sie selbst hatten so lange mit dem »muden
5 Verein« geprahlt, bis dieser Name an ihnen hangen- blieb und sogar hin und wieder im Dienstverkehr auftauchte

Schaubeck hatte dann seine Versuche begonnen, dem Verein die militärischen Grundbegriffe einzu-
10 pauken, und ansonsten kummerten sich in dem kata- strophalen Durcheinander, das in diesen letzten Kriegstagen in der Kaserne herrschte, nur noch Leut- nant Frohlich und Unteroffizier Heilmann um die Buben Frohlich fuhrte lange Gespräche mit ihnen,
15 fragte sie nach ihrem Zuhause, Heilmann beschränk- te sich auf geheimnisvolle und düstere, aber stets wohlgemeinte Prophezeiungen im Vorbeigehen

»Mensch, haut ab!« Oder »Ich sage euch, das Ding geht schief, macht die Schotten dicht, geht bei
20 Muttern!«

Sie mochten den Heilmann gern, obwohl er selten lachte, keinen Witz erzählte und, wenn er zu den Buben sprach, über sie hinwegschaute, als sehe er in der Ferne drohendes Unheil heraufkommen

25 Den Leutnant Frohlich aber liebten sie, und an dem Abend, als er ihnen den Tod Schaubecks berichtet hatte, fühlten sie instinktives Mitleid mit Franz Frohlich, der in seiner Leutnantsuniform so gar nicht dem entsprach, was sich ein Sechzehnjähri-
30 ger im Frühjahr 1945 noch unter einem deutschen Offizier vorstellt

Leutnant Frohlich und Gaus Julius Casar

Leutnant Franz Frohlich ist von Beruf nicht Leut-

was handed a shining brand new Mauser 98k rifle. Schaubeck had greeted them when they arrived.

"God, what sort of sorry bunch is this?" Then he added, in a jovial voice, "Well, there's enough of this war left for us to make men of you, you miserable lot!"

5 Since then, the seven boys had been known in the barracks as the 'Bunch'. They themselves had spent so long bragging about being a 'sorry bunch' that the name stuck, and even occasionally turned up in official communications.

10 Then Schaubeck had begun his attempts to hammer basic military principles into the Bunch. In the atrocious confusion which reigned in the barracks in these final days of the war, Lieutenant Frohhch and Corporal Heilmann were the only others who looked after the lads. Lieutenant Frohhch spent time with them in lengthy conversation, asking them about their home life, while Heilmann restricted himself to making mysterious and gloomy prophesies as he passed by. However, his comments were always well-meant. "For God's sake, scarper!" Or, "I'm telling you, things are
15 looking grim! Close up shop, get home to your mothers!"

 They were fond of Heilmann, although he seldom laughed, never told jokes and, when he spoke to them, would look past them, as though he could see impending disaster looming in the distance.

20 They loved Lieutenant Frohhch, however. That evening, when he told them of Schaubeck's death, they felt instinctive sympathy for Franz Frohlich. Standing there in his lieutenant's uniform, he seemed such a far cry from what a sixteen-year-old in the spring of 1945 still imagined a German officer to be.

nant Er ist Studienrat Strategie und Krieg machten ihm Spaß, solange es sich um die Strategie und die Kriege Gaius Julius Casars handelte Die Strategie des Zweiten Weltkriegs bereitet ihm keinen
5 Spaß Überhaupt nichts mehr macht ihm Spaß, jetzt, nachdem er seine Schule, seine Buben verlassen mußte Und seinen Sohn haben sie auch geholt Er konnte das nicht verstehen Der Flori war doch noch so klein, er spielte doch noch mit der
10 Eisenbahn – und mit Soldaten Ja, auch mit Soldaten

Und er spielte mit. Der Studienrat spielte mit, baute Schutzengraben und Walle und Burgen, und er erklärte seinem Sohn Flori die Strategie

15 Und mitten drin mußte Florian Frohlich fort, zum Militar

In einer Uniform mit viel zu langen Ärmeln und einer Feldmütze, unter der das magere Gesicht des Jungen noch schwächer erschien, so sah Franz
20 Frohlich seinen Sohn zum letztenmal

Dann kamen diese sieben Buben in die Kaserne, und Frohlich kam einmal dazu, wie Unteroffizier Schaubeck daran arbeitete, aus dem »muden Verein« Menschen zu machen

25 Und er sah, wie Schaubeck den stämmigen Albert Mutz Kniebeugen pumpen ließ, mit dem Karabiner in der Hand

Schaubeck zahlte »Dreunddreißig – vierunddreißig – funfunddreißig – los, los, schlaf nicht ein, du
30 muder Sack, reiße dich zusammen – sechsunddreißig – siebenunddreißig «

Und Leutnant Frohlich sah plötzlich anstelle des rotbackigen, blonden Albert Mutz seinen eigenen Sohn Sah ihn pumpen und keuchen Knie beugt,
35 streckt, Knie beugt, streckt

Und dann ließ der Leutnant den Unteroffizier

Lieutenant Frohlich and Julius Caesar

Lieutenant Frohlich was not a lieutenant by profession. He was a schoolteacher. War and military strategy were a source of great enjoyment to him -
5 the wars and strategies of Julius Caesar, that is. The strategy of the Second World War didn't offer him any enjoyment. He didn't enjoy anything any more, since having to leave his school and his boys. And they had taken his son as well. He couldn't understand that. Flori was still so small, he had still played with his model railway - and with toy soldiers. Yes, with soldiers too.

10 And Frohlich had played with his son. The teacher played along, built trenches, embankments and fortresses, and taught his son Flori about strategy.

Then all at once, Florian Frohlich had to go off to the Army. The last time Franz Frohlich saw his son he was wearing a uniform with sleeves which were far too long, and a field cap which made the boy's thin face look even more frail.

15 Then these seven lads had arrived in the barracks, and one day Frohlich happened to come along as Corporal Schaubeck was working on turning the 'sorry bunch' into men. He saw Schaubeck making the stocky Albert Mutz do knee-bends, while holding his rifle in his hand.

20 Schaubeck was counting aloud: "Thirty-three thirty-four thirty-five come on, stay awake, you slack bastard! Pull yourself together! Thirty-six thirty-seven."

And suddenly, in place of the blond, red-faced Albert Mutz, Lieutenant Frohlich saw his own son. Saw him panting and sweating. His legs straightening, bending, straightening, bending.

Schaubeck mit zur Seite treten und machte ihn fertig,
nach Strich und Faden

Was hatte der Leutnant Frohlich jetzt noch? Er
hat zu Hause eine Frau, von der er sich im Lauf der
5 Jahre entfremdet hat Er hat einen Schrank voller
Bucher über Strategie, Casar und anderes Er hat die
Leutnantsuniform Er hat keine Schule mehr Keine
Schuler Nicht einmal mehr einen Sohn

Bloß noch die sieben Buben in der Kaserne
10 Er denkt Ich muß mich um sie kümmern Aufge-
paßt, Frohlich! Das ist deine Aufgabe!

3

Der Alarm erfolgte gegen 24 Uhr So wie man das
geubt hatte Mit schrillum Pfeifentrillern

Manchen rissen die Pfeifen aus dem Schlaf, aber
15 in der Stube des Vereins traf der jahe Alarm sieben
hellwache Buben

Die Sechzehnjährigen hatten nach der Ansprache
von Leutnant Frohlich keinen Schlaf finden können,
sie diskutierten noch Sollten sie turmen? Sollten sie
20 den Wink befolgen und sich über die Westmauer
davonmachen? Selten herrschte unter den sieben
eine solche Uneinigkeit wie an diesem Abend

Karl Horber war für Turmen (Scholten »Na,
dann mach aber, zack, zack!« Alles wieherte vor
25 Lachen) Klaus Hager, Spitzname »der Schweiger«,
hielt eine Rede Es war die erste seit Tagen Manch-
mal brachte er stundenlang den Mund nicht auf
»Kinder, wenn wir gehen, dann sind wir desertiert,
und Deserteure werden erschossen! Bleiben wir da,
30 werden wir vielleicht auch erschossen Sicherer ist,
wir bleiben da Gehen können wir immer noch!«

13

And then the Lieutenant took the Corporal off to one side and tore strips off him, good and proper

What else did Lieutenant Frohlich have? He has a wife at home, but they have grown apart over the years. He has bookshelves full of books about military strategy, Caesar and other things. He has his lieutenant's uniform. He has no school any more. No pupils. He has not even a son.

All he has left are the seven boys in the barracks.

He thought to himself: "I have to look after them. Watch out, Frohlich! That's your job!"

10

15

20

Schaubeck mit zur Seite treten und machte ihn fertig,
nach Strich und Faden

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30 werden wir vielleicht auch erschossen Sicherer ist,
wir bleiben da Gehen können wir immer noch!«

It was about midnight when the alarm sounded. Just like during the practice drills. Some of the soldiers in the barracks were torn from their sleep by the shrill whistles, but in the Bunch's room the seven lads were still wide awake when the raw, jangling alarm rang.

After Lieutenant Frohlich had spoken to them, the sixteen-year-olds had been unable to get any sleep. They were still debating what to do. Should they do a runner? Should they take Frohlich's advice and make off through the west gate? Seldom had there been such disagreement among the boys than on that evening.

Karl Horber was in favour of making tracks. Scholten responded: "Well go on then, and make it snappy!" The Bunch roared laughing. Klaus Hager began to speak. It was the first time in days that he had said anything substantial. The others had nicknamed him 'Dumbstruck'. Sometimes he wouldn't say anything for hours on end. "Lads, if we go, that makes us deserters, and deserters get shot! If we stay, we might get shot too. But it's safer to stay put. We can still go later on."

That was typical Hager. When he spoke like that, he had thought about it. This didn't necessarily mean that he was by any means right - but all the same, he had thought about it. Albert Mutz complained about the lousy grub. He wanted to go home to his little house on the outskirts of the town. He hoped he might be able to hide the others there as well. Ernst Scholten lay in his bunk bed - on the top bunk, of course. He claimed he preferred the purer air up there. So far he hadn't expressed his own view on the matter. He seemed content to just get a few laughs by making one of his cynical comments now and then.

Das war typisch für Hager. Wenn er so etwas sagte, dann hatte er das überlegt. Es mußte deshalb noch lange nicht stimmen, aber immerhin, er hatte überlegt. Albert Mutz schimpfte auf den Scheißfraß

5 Er wollte heim, in das kleine Haus am Stadtrand. Dort konnte er, so hoffte er wenigstens, auch die anderen verstecken. Ernst Scholten lag auf dem zweistöckigen Bett, oben natürlich (wegen der Höhenluft, sagte Scholten). Er äußerte bisher keine

10 Meinung. Schoß bloß hin und wieder eine seiner zynischen Bemerkungen ab und schien mit dem Lacherfolg zufrieden.

Walter Forst war fürs Dableiben. »Mensch, glaubt mir's doch, das wird noch hollisch interessant!« Scholten. »Klar, Mensch, gleich spielen wir Indianer!« Siegi Bernhard. »Mir ist es wurscht, ich bleibe da, wo ihr bleibt!« Jürgen Borchart. »Ich will doch hier nicht verrecken! Ich gehe stiften, und zwar sofort!«

20 Borchart hatte das so gesagt, daß keiner, der ihn nicht näher kannte, an seinen Worten gezweifelt hatte. Aber der Verein kannte ihn. Jürgen Borchart würde genau dann gehen, wenn die anderen auch gingen. Er äußerte stets sehr bestimmte Meinungen,

25 ohne unbedingt die Konsequenzen zu ziehen. Sechs hatten nun ihre Ansicht gesagt, jetzt wollten sie alle die siebte hören.

Karl Horber richtete sich in seinem Bett auf, fuchtelte theatralisch mit den Händen in der Luft herum

30 und deklamierte. »Freunde, Stallgefährten, wir wollen den Worten unseres weisen Hauptlings lauschen, Winnetou soll entscheiden!«

Und damit hatte er Scholten den Einsatz gegeben. Der sprach, ohne sich vom Bett zu erheben, gegen

35 die weißgetünchte Stubendecke, als wäre er allein im Zimmer.

Walter Forst was in favour of staying put "Guys, believe me, things are going to get bloody interesting around here!" "Yeah, right, we'll be playing cowboys and Indians soon", interjected Scholten "I'm not bothered either way I'll do whatever you all do", said Siegi Bernhard "I don't want to die here! I'm out of here, and pronto!" proclaimed Jurgen Borchart

Borchart had said this in such a way that no-one who didn't know him better would have doubted his words for one moment But the Bunch knew him Jurgen Borchart would not go anywhere without the others He was always expressing very definite opinions, but he didn't always necessarily follow up on them

Six of them had given their view, now they all wanted to hear the seventh Karl Horber sat up in his bed, waved his hands about theatrically in the air, and declared "Comrades! Fellow horsemen! Let us listen to the words of our wise chieftan! Geronimo shall decide!"

Scholten had been given his cue He spoke without rising from his bed, and lay facing the whitewashed ceiling of the billet as though he were alone in the room

"If Frohlich reckons we should go, then he's given it thought Strictly speaking, you might say it was almost an order from a superior Strictly speaking And the man has experience But we have no experience Or very little

So the question is, do we bugger off because Frohlich has experience, or do we stay because we have none? When I listen to your opinions, I can only laugh But there's certainly something in what Forst said Things are going to get bloody interesting Things are definitely going to get bloody interesting

The only problem is, things might get *too* interesting I'm thinking of Schaubeck Things got interesting for him as well On the other hand, so long as we keep our heads screwed on, we can wait till things get interesting, and if things get too

»Wenn der Frohlich meint, daß wir gehen sollen, dann meint er es gut Wenn man das ganz genau nimmt, war es fast ein Befehl von einem Vorgesetzten Wenn man es ganz genau nimmt Und der Mann
5 hat Erfahrung Aber wir haben keine Erfahrung Oder bloß wenig

Die Frage ist also, hauen wir ab, weil der Frohlich Erfahrung hat, oder bleiben wir da, weil wir keine haben? Wenn ich mir euere Meinungen besehe,
10 dann kann ich bloß kichern Aber an dem, was der Forst gesagt hat, ist was dran Es wird hollisch interessant Es wird bestimmt hollisch interessant

Fragt sich bloß, ob's nicht zu interessant wird Ich denke an den Schaubeck Fur den war's auch inter-
15 essant Andererseits, wenn wir auf Draht sind, konnen wir warten, bis es interessant ist, und wenn's zu interessant wird, dann konnen wir immer noch abhauen Vor allem – wenn wir jetzt turmen, sind wir dann nicht, strenggenommen, Feiglinge?«

20 Als fiel es ihm jetzt erst ein, daß er ein Feigling sei, wenn er turme, fuhr er aus seinem Bett hoch, blickte triumphierend in die Runde und schrie

»Menschenskinder, Feiglinge sind wir, wenn wir abhauen Jammerliche Feiglinge! Die wollen doch
25 was von uns, wenn sie uns hier ausbilden Die geben uns doch die Uniformen und die Karabiner nicht zum Turmen! Kinder, die wollen doch was wissen von uns!«

Und dann gnadig »Ihr konnt ja machen, was ihr
30 wollt, ich bleibe da Winnetou halt die Stellung, das ist er seinen roten Brudern schuldig! Hugh, ich habe gesprochen!«

Horber hatte ihn kaum ausreden lassen und hing jetzt an der zweistockigen Bettstatt wie ein Affe Sein
35 brandroter Schopf, das magere Gesicht und die abstehenden Ohren ragten gerade über die Bett-

interesting, we can always scarpers then. But the main thing is, if we desert now, then doesn't that, strictly speaking, make us cowards?"

As though it had only just struck him that he would be a coward if he deserted, he sat bolt upright in his bed, looked triumphantly at the others and shouted

5 "For God's sake, guys, if we do a runner, then we're cowards! Miserable cowards! They haven't trained us here for nothing! They haven't given us uniforms and rifles for us to desert! Guys, they want to see what we've got!"

Then, in a gracious tone, he said "Well, you can all do what you like, but I'm staying put. Gerommo will hold the fort. He owes it to his Red Indian brothers! Lo, I
10 have spoken!"

Horber was now swinging from the bars of the bunk bed like a monkey. His thin face, prominent ears and fiery shock of red hair loomed up over the edge of the top bunk. He had hardly allowed Scholten to finish speaking when he shouted "Say that once more, that I'm a coward, say that once more, and I'll throw you out the
15 window!" Scholten laughed in his face and, as Mutz and Borchart tickled Horber's feet, Scholten bumped him straight on the nose with the heel of his foot, so that Horber had to let go of the bed and landed on the floor.

Straight away a full-scale brawl started on the floor. Scholten swung his legs over the edge of the bed and joined the others, dropping straight into the knot of
20 fighting boys. There were shouts of rage and laughter, there was a racket of crashing tables and chairs - and all of this shortly before midnight. It was just at that moment that the alarm sounded.

Instantly the scrapping stopped. They listened. The alarm bell continued ringing, so they hadn't imagined it. They all raced to their lockers, tore out their full
25 marching order equipment, and got their kit on in a feverish rush. Rucksacks, already

packed, were thrown onto backs, webbing, complete with ammunition pouches, bayonet and spade, was slung over shoulders, helmets were put on, gas masks hung around necks, and then the seven dashed out into the corridor. They snapped their rifles from the rifle rack as they ran past, the metal tips of their army boots clattering loudly across the flagstone floor. Then on down the steps and out across the main square of the barracks. There the sixteen-year-olds joined the second platoon Frohlich's platoon

The companies were lined up in a square formation. A grey utility jeep approached through the round arch of the west wing. Three people got out

"Some top brass or other", whispered Scholten. Then the company and platoon commanders were summoned for a briefing. This took about half an hour. During this time the five hundred soldiers stood in formation and waited

Finally the platoon commanders returned. Orders sounded across the square, and one formation after the other started moving. Lieutenant Frohlich, Sergeant Wehnelt and Corporal Heilmann moved over to the gym with the second platoon, the seven boys trotting along behind. There the platoon formed a semicircle around the lieutenant

"The Americans are only thirty kilometres outside the town", said Frohlich, and then, as if it were a real effort of will for him, "The town will be defended. To do this, we will occupy strategic positions which must be held!"

Somehow he had lost his train of thought, and his eyes wandered over to the seven boys on the left of the group, as though they might offer him help

"We have to cover a relatively large area with relatively few men. We will now draw weapons, live ammunition, anti-tank rockets and iron rations!" Frohlich turned about abruptly and made off towards the gym

rer zur Besprechung beordert Die Besprechung dauerte etwa eine halbe Stunde. Währenddessen standen die funfhundert Soldaten in Appellformation angetreten und warteten

5 Schließlich kehrten die Zugfuhrer zurück Kommandos hallten über den Platz, und eine Formation nach der anderen setzte sich in Bewegung Leutnant Frohlich, Feldwebel Wehnelt und Unteroffizier Heilmann ruckten mit dem zweiten Zug zur Turnhalle,
10 die sieben trotteten hinterher Dort bildete der Zug einen Halbkreis um den Leutnant

»Die Amerikaner stehen noch dreißig Kilometer vor der Stadt Die Stadt wird verteidigt« Frohlich sagte diesen letzten Satz, als kostete es ihn eine riesige Überwindung.
15

»Wir beziehen Stellungen, die zur Verteidigung der Stadt gehalten werden müssen!«

Irgendwie hatte er jetzt den Faden verloren, und sein Blick irrte zu den sieben am linken Flügel hinüber, als konnte von dort Hilfe kommen
20

»Wir haben mit verhältnismaßig wenigen Mannern einen verhältnismaßig großen Raum zu decken Wir fassen jetzt scharfe Munition, Waffen und Panzerfauste – und eiserne Rationen!« Abrupt drehte
25 Frohlich sich um und stapfte auf die Turnhalle los Feldwebel Wehnelt brüllte »Ohne Tritt – maaarsch!«

Der Zug, zweiundvierzig Mann stark, bezog Panzerfauste Zwei Stück pro Mann Dann Sturmge-
30 wehre Als Unteroffizier Heilmann zu den sieben am Ende der Reihe gelangte, fragte er »Wer von euch kann mit so einem Ding umgehen?«

Scholten sagte »Ich «

Er sagte das so gleichgültig, als hatte ihn Studienrat Frohlich gefragt »Kannst du die Leichenrede des Marc Anton?« Keiner vom Verein wunderte

sich

Man hatte sich daran gewohnt, daß Scholten alles konnte. Warum sollte er nicht auch mit einem Sturmgewehr umgehen können.

5 Horber bekam ein russisches Schnellfeuergewehr (Scholten »Dabei macht der Kerl schon in die Hose, wenn er mit dem KK schießt!«) Der Rest behielt die Karabiner. Und die Panzerfauste. Zum Schluß kam noch ein Kasten mit Munition auf den
10 Tisch. Jeder steckte an Rahmen ein, was in den Taschen Platz hatte.

Eine halbe Stunde später kletterten die zweiundvierzig Mann auf zwei Lkw, und wieder drei Minuten später ließ Leutnant Fröhlich die Lastautos auf
15 der Brücke der kleinen Stadt halten. Unteroffizier Heilmann stieg ab und brüllte »Na, wo bleibt denn dieser mude Verein?«

Verdrossen sprangen die sieben von der Rampe des Wagens auf die Straße. Leutnant Fröhlich »Die
20 Brücke ist ein strategisch wichtiger Punkt! Ihr haltet die Brücke besetzt. Unteroffizier Heilmann hat das Kommando!« Dann leise zu Heilmann »Sowie der Zauber hier losgeht, haut ihr ab! Verstanden? Sie sind mir dafür verantwortlich, klar?«

25 Und da geschah das, auf das der Verein in den vergangenen vierzehn Tagen vergebens gewartet hatte. Über das Gesicht des Unteroffiziers breitete sich ein frohes Lachen aus. Nahm von jeder Falte, von jedem Winkel in diesem grobflächigen Gesicht
30 Besitz, und Heilmann sagte »Jawoll, Herr Leutnant, ich habe vollig verstanden!«

Unteroffizier Heilmann und der Krieg

Fähnjenker-Unteroffizier Heilmann hatte auf der

Sergeant Wehnelt yelled "Forward March!"

The forty-two men in the platoon were given two anti-tank rockets each, and then they were issued assault rifles. When Corporal Heilmann reached the seven boys at the end of the line, he asked "Does any of you know how to use one of these things?"

Scholten said "I do." He said it with complete indifference, just as if Frohlich had asked him if he could recite Marc Anthony's funeral oration in *Julius Caesar*. None of the Bunch was surprised. They had got used to Scholten's ability to do anything. Why shouldn't he also know how to handle an assault rifle?

Horber was given a Russian automatic weapon. Scholten had remarked "Sure the guy nearly wets himself when he fires the little training rifle!" The rest held on to their standard-issue rifles and the anti-tank weapons. Finally a box of ammunition was put on the table in front of them. They all crammed as many clips as possible into their pouches.

A half an hour later the forty-two men climbed into two trucks, and three minutes after that Lieutenant Frohlich ordered them to stop on the small town's bridge. Corporal Heilmann dismounted and shouted "Now, where's this sorry bunch of ours?"

The seven boys reluctantly jumped off the back of the truck and onto the street. Lieutenant Frohlich told them "The bridge is of strategic importance! You will hold the bridge! Corporal Heilmann is in command." Then he quietly whispered to Heilmann "The moment things hot up, get out of here! O K? I'm holding you responsible for that, Heilmann. Understood?"

And then something happened which the Bunch had waited in vain for during the past two weeks. A warm smile spread across the corporal's face. It spread to

Kriegsschule binnen dreier Tage seinen Spitznamen weg Man nannte ihn den »Spatberufenen« Er war damals ungefähr zehn Jahre alter als die Fahnenjunker, die mit ihm die Schulbank druckten Seine bedachtige Art zu sprechen, die Ruhe, die von ihm ausstrahlte, ließen ihn noch älter erscheinen Er erhielt bei den Ausbildungsoffizieren weder Lob noch Tadel Nur vier Tage vor Abschluß des Lehrgangs passierte etwas

10 Der NSFO hatte ihm bei der politischen Schulung die Frage gestellt, ob er es für möglich halte, daß ein deutscher Offizier ein guter Offizier sein könne, ohne ein überzeugter Anhänger des Regimes zu sein Und diese Frage schien dem Fahnenjunker Heilmann so kinderleicht zu beantworten, daß er ausnahmsweise ohne zu überlegen ein »Selbstverständlich, Herr Oberleutnant!« in den Raum schmetterte

15 Als zum Lehrgangsende dreihundert frischgebakene Fahnrüchle auf Heimaturlaub führen, rollte Heilmann in Richtung Osten. Zur seiner Einheit zurück Nach wie vor Unteroffizier

20 Und dabei war ihm jetzt noch nicht klar, weshalb Denn Unteroffizier Heilmann brauchte immer viel Zeit, bis er sich alles richtig zurechtgelegt und überdacht hatte. »Dabei prädestiniert ihn allein schon sein Name zum Führer«, sagte der Kompaniechef und grinste, als bei ihm der Stoß schlechter Beurteilungen und dann, mit zwei Tagen Verspätung, Heilmann selbst anrudelten »Mensch Heilmann«, sagte 25 der Chef, »Sie ham's geschafft, Sie sind prima!« Und Heilmann horte sich das mit unbewegtem Gesicht an Nur seine Augen lachten

30 Am 2. Mai 1944 Angriff gegen russische Hinterhangstellung Die Russen halten die Stellung verbissen. Der Angriff wird abgewehrt Unter den Vermißten befindet sich Adolf Heilmann Kein Mensch

every corner, every wrinkle of his rough, lined face, and Heilmann replied "Yes, sir! I fully understand, sir!"

Corporal Heilmann and the War

5

Officer Cadet Heilmann had hardly been three days at military college when he was given his nickname. They called him the 'mature student', because of his late vocation. He had been about ten years older than the other officer cadets who shared the classroom with him. His measured manner of speaking and the aura of calmness which surrounded him made him seem even older. The officers who were training him neither praised nor criticised him. But something happened just four days before the course ended.

During a class in political instruction, the National Socialist training officer had asked him whether he considered it possible for a German officer to be a good officer without being a dedicated supporter of the Nazi regime. And to officer cadet Heilmann this question seemed so childishly simple that for once, he spoke without thinking. "But of course, sir!", he blurted out in reply.

When the course finished and three hundred freshly promoted soldiers went home on leave, Heilmann was on a train. He was heading eastwards, back to his unit on the Russian front. Still a corporal.

He still didn't quite understand why. Corporal Heilmann always needed lots of time to think about things and work them out for himself. "All the same, with a name like 'Adolf Heil-mann', you'd swear he was destined to become the Fuhrer himself", joked his company commander, who sneered, when the stack of poor reports landed on his desk. When Heilmann himself turned up, two days late, his commander said

25

weiß, was ihm passierte Keiner hat etwas gesehen
Er ist einfach nicht mehr da

Aber in der Nacht erlebt der Posten einer etwa
fünf Kilometer entfernten Nachbareinheit einen Hei-
5 denschreck In die Totenstille, die ringsum herrscht,
drängt sich plötzlich ein Klappern und Schleifen,
kommt immer näher auf ihn zu, und da verliert der
Posten die Nerven. Er denkt nicht an seine Maschi-
nenpistole, nicht an die Handgranaten, er denkt an
10 gar nichts mehr Hat nur Angst vor diesem Furchtba-
ren, was da geradewegs auf ihn loskriecht und
brüllt »Alarm!« Dann noch mal »Alarm, der
Iwan!«

Der Posten steht da, entsetzt über die eigene
15 Stimme, stemmt den Rücken gegen die brockelnde
Erdwand seines Schützenlochs und starrt in die
Nacht hinaus Und dann ist es ganz nah vor ihm,
gerade wie die Kameraden links und rechts, keu-
chend vom raschen Lauf, in die Locher und Gräben
20 plumpsen Ganz, ganz nah Und dann spricht es
»Mensch sei bloß ruhig, oder ich knall' dir eins in
die Fresse!«

Und dann schleppt sich eine große, massige, graue
Gestalt die letzten paar Meter zur deutschen Stel-
25 lung, rutscht kopfüber in den Graben und bleibt lie-
gen

Am nächsten Tag erfährt Heilmanns Kompanie,
daß Unteroffizier Adolf Heilmann nicht mehr ver-
mißt wird Mit einer schier übermenschlichen Zähig-
30 keit hat sich der Schwerverwundete zu den eigenen
Limen zurückgeschleppt Er hat die paar tausend
Meter auf dem Bauch kriechend zurückgelegt

Und jetzt stand Unteroffizier Heilmann mit sieben
sechzehnjährigen Buben auf der Brücke Der Last-
35 wagen mit Leutnant Frohlich und dem restlichen

"Hey, Heilmann, you made it! Well done!" Heilmann listened with a stony face
Only his eyes laughed

On May 2nd 1944 an attack was mounted against a Russian position behind
the front line. The Russians defended the position doggedly, and fended off the
5 attack. Adolf Heilmann was among the missing. Nobody knew what had happened to
him. No-one had seen anything. He just wasn't there any more.

But that night, the sentry of a neighbouring unit some five kilometres away got
the fright of his life. The deathly silence which surrounded him was suddenly
disturbed by a clattering, dragging sound. The sound came closer and closer, and the
10 sentry lost his nerve. He didn't think of his submachine gun, or of his hand grenades.
He didn't think of anything at all. He just felt fear, as this monstrous thing crept
straight towards him. "Stand to!" he shouted, then again, "Stand to! The Russians!"

The sentry, horrified by the sound of his own voice, stood pressing his back
against the crumbling earthen wall of his foxhole and stared out into the night. And
15 then it was very close to him, just as his comrades dropped into the holes and trenches
to his left and right, panting from their fast running. Very, very close. And then it
spoke. "Will you shut the hell up before I put my fist through your face!"

A large, heavy, grey figure hauled itself the last few feet to the German
position, slid head-first over the top and lay still at the bottom of the trench.

20 The following day Heilmann's company learned that Corporal Adolf Heilmann
was no longer missing. Badly wounded, he had dragged himself back to his own lines
with almost superhuman determination. He had covered the several thousand metres
by crawling along on his front.

Zug war weitergefahren, in Richtung Westen, den Amerikanern entgegen Und Heilmann spürte bedrückend, daß er für die sieben verantwortlich war

4

- 5 Irgend etwas muß ich jetzt tun, dachte Heilmann, ich muß die sieben beschäftigen, sonst werden sie nervös Aber es fiel ihm nichts ein, gar nichts Und so sagte er zu Ernst Scholten, weil der ihm am nächsten stand »Jetzt wollen wir erst einmal abwarten und
- 10 Tee trinken!« Und Scholten, der sonst immer reserviert und erwachsen wirkende Scholten, zog eine richtige Lausbubenschnute und fragte ohne jeden Respekt »Mensch, warum setzen die uns denn hier ab? Jetzt sind wir wieder nicht dabei, wenn's interes-
- 15 sant wird!«
Heilmann sagte, müde. »Es wird noch interessant genug werden, warten wir's mal ab «
Und es wurde interessant Jetzt, spät nachts, gingen bloß noch wenige Zivilisten über die Brücke Ein
- 20 paar Kolonnen führen in Richtung Westen, den Amerikanern entgegen Dann rührte sich nichts mehr Die sieben lehnten am Geländer, Heilmann ging spazieren, auf und ab
Zu dumm, dachte er, daß mir nichts einfallt!
- 25 Unten, zwischen den Ufern, platscherte das Wasser über Kies und Geröll Der Fluß arbeitete Unablässig Er schleppte Sand und Steine mit sich Wenn es lange regnete, wuchs er zu einem gewaltigen Strom, in trockenen Sommern aber schwand er zu
- 30 einem kleinen Rinnsal Man konnte ihn dann leicht durchwaten Die sieben hatten einmal einen Aufsatz

And now Corporal Heilmann stood with seven sixteen-year-old lads on the bridge. The trucks carrying Lieutenant Fröhlich and the rest of the platoon had driven on, westwards, to meet the Americans. And pressing on Heilmann's mind was the thought that he was responsible for the seven boys.

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10 Tee trinken!« Und Scholten, der sonst immer reserviert und erwachsen wirkende Scholten, zog eine richtige Lausbubenschnute und fragte ohne jeden Respekt. »Mensch, warum setzen die uns denn hier ab? Jetzt sind wir wieder nicht dabei, wenn's interessant wird!«

15 Heilmann sagte mude: »Es wird noch interessant genug werden, warten wir's mal ab.«

Und es wurde interessant. Jetzt, spät nachts, gingen bloß noch wenige Zivilisten über die Brücke. Ein
20 paar Kolonnen fuhren in Richtung Westen, den Amerikanern entgegen. Dann rührte sich nichts mehr. Die sieben lehnten am Geländer, Heilmann ging spazieren, auf und ab.

Zu dumm, dachte er, daß mir nichts einfällt!

25 Unten, zwischen den Ufern, platscherte das Wasser über Kies und Geröll. Der Fluß arbeitete. Unablässig. Er schleppte Sand und Steine mit sich. Wenn es lange regnete, wuchs er zu einem gewaltigen Strom, in trockenen Sommern aber schwand er zu
30 einem kleinen Rinnsal. Man konnte ihn dann leicht durchwaten. Die sieben hatten einmal einen Aufsatz

"I'm going to have to do something now", Heilmann thought. "I've got to give the boys something to do, otherwise they'll get restless." But he could think of
5 nothing, nothing at all. He turned to Ernst Scholten, who was standing closest to him, and said: "Let's just sit down for the moment and see what happens." Usually Scholten seemed reserved and mature, but now he pulled a face and asked Heilmann, without the slightest respect: "Why the hell are they leaving us here? Just when things are starting to get interesting, we get left out again!"

10 Heilmann said wearily: "Things will get interesting enough yet, let's just wait and see."

And things did get interesting.

It was now late at night, and only a few civilians still crossed the bridge. A few convoys passed them, heading westwards towards the Americans. Then there was
15 silence. The seven boys leaned against the railings. Heilmann paced up and down.

"Bloody hell, if only I could think of something to keep them occupied", he thought to himself.

Below, between the banks of the river, the water babbled over shale and shingle. The river was doing its work. Never stopping. Its waters carried along sand
20 and stone. When there was heavy rainfall, the water grew into a powerful flood; in dry summers the flow shrank to a shallow trickle. On such days, you could easily wade across. Once the seven boys had been given an essay to write. The title had been: "The river - a symbol of our town!" Karl Horber had been given a straight 'A'. He had described the river beautifully, with its rich, green waters and the drooping
25 willow trees along its banks.

geschrieben Der Fluß, ein Sinnbild unserer Stadt!
Karl Horber hatte eine glatte Eins gebaut Er hatte
den Fluß malerisch geschildert, mit seinen grünen
Wassern, mit den sich neigenden Weiden an seinen
5 Ufern

Scholten bekam eine Funf »Thema verfehlt«,
stand auf seinem Aufsatz Er hatte den Fluß spre-
chen lassen, wie einen Menschen, und zog aus der
Benotung die Erfahrung, daß das nicht nach jeder-
manns Geschmack war

Mitten in der Nacht, die Gruppe Heilmann hockte
eng zusammengedrängt am ostlichen Bruckenende,
setzte der Ruckzug aus dem Westen voll ein Unun-
terbrochen fluteten jetzt die Kolonnen über die
15 Brücke Kraftwagen, Pferdegespanne, Geschütze,
hin und wieder ein Panzer Dazwischen Männer,
abgehetzte, total erschöpfte, wankende Gestalten, in
dreckverschmierten Uniformen, mit hohlwangigen
Gesichtern, unrasiert, bleich, mit gebeugtem Nak-
20 ken, als saße dort ein Gespenst und schwingte uner-
müdlich die Geißel. Manchmal rief einer aus der
Kolonne den am Boden kauern den Jungen zu
»Was wollt denn ihr noch? Haut doch ab!« Dann
wandten die Buben verlegen die Gesichter und starr-
25 ten in den Fluß hinunter, und Unteroffizier Heil-
mann schalt sich einen Trottel, weil ihm immer noch
nichts eingefallen war

Es begann leise zu regnen Die acht auf der
Brücke schnallten die Zeltplanen von den Rucksak-
30 ken und hüllten sich frostelnd in den groben Stoff
Sie ließen die Kolonnen an sich vorbeiziehen, und
bei jedem Marschtritt spürten sie deutlicher, daß sie
dem vielleicht größten Abenteuer ihres Lebens ent-
gegengingen Und die sieben Jungen hatten Angst
35 Keiner hatte es in diesem Augenblick zugegeben,
kein einziger Aber es war so

Scholten got an 'E' "Not to the point", his teacher had written Scholten had personified the river, which had spoken just like a person He had deduced from his mark that this wasn't to everyone's taste

5 In the middle of the night, as Heilmann's group of boys crouched on the eastern end of the bridge, huddling close together, the retreat got into full swing The convoys now flooded non-stop across the bridge - motorised vehicles, horse-drawn vehicles, artillery pieces, the occasional tank, all were heading eastwards Between the convoys came men - weary, utterly exhausted figures, short of breath, barely able to walk straight, their uniforms caked with dirt, their faces thin and drawn, skin pale
10 and unshaven, heads bowed as though some demon sat astride their shoulders, whipping them relentlessly, forcing them on Now and then one of them would turn to the boys as they crouched on the ground, shouting to them "What are you doing here? For Christ's sake, get out of here!" Then the boys would turn away, embarrassed at this attention, and look down into the water And Corporal Heilmann
15 cursed himself, because he still hadn't managed to think of anything

A light ram started to fall The eight of them on the bridge unfastened their waterproof tarpaulins from their rucksacks and huddled under the coarse material, shivering with the cold They watched the troops pass by, and with each step the soldiers took the boys felt more and more that the adventure which awaited them
20 might well be the greatest of their lives And the seven boys were afraid Not a single one of them would have admitted it at that moment, not one of them But they were afraid

They began to smoke Heilmann had a packet of cigarettes and he shared them generously around They shoved them into their mouths, struck matches with numb

Sie rauchten Heilmann hatte Zigaretten und verteilte sie großzügig an die Sechzehnjährigen Sie steckten sich die Dinger zwischen die Lippen, brannten mit klammen Fingern Streichholzer an und
5 sogen den Rauch in tiefen, hastigen Zügen ein Nur Albert Mutz hustete Er mußte immer husten, wenn er rauchte, die anderen hatten sich längst daran gewohnt

Im Lauf der Nacht wurde der Strang der Kolonne
10 dünner und riß zwischendurch auch einmal ab Dann kamen wieder Fahrzeuge mit regenschweren Planen, unter denen abgekämpfte Landser lagen So ging es fort Fahrzeuge – Pause Fahrzeuge – Pause

Und dann horte die Kolonne plötzlich ganz auf
15 Das war beangstigend, bedrohlich Immer waren Fahrzeuge vorbeigefahren, Fuhrwerke, Autos mit Menschen Jetzt waren die sieben mit ihrem Unteroffizier auf der Brücke allein Und Heilmann überlegte und grubelte

20 Er war nahezu dankbar, als plötzlich ein Kubelwagen die Bruckenauffahrt von der Altstadt herunterkam und mit quietschenden Bremsen bei dem kleinen Hauflein hielt Heilmann ging auf den Wagen zu, bereit, ein gemutliches Gespräch mit
25 irgendeinem Cheffahrer anzufangen, und erstarrte Was da im Fond des Wagens saß, sich jetzt erhob und mit elegantem Satz aufs Pflaster sprang, war ein leibhaftiger General

»Unteroffizier Heilmann mit sieben Mann auf
30 Brückenwache«, meldete er Etwas Vernünftigeres fiel ihm beim besten Willen nicht ein

Aber der General legte offenbar nur noch geringen Wert auf Formen Er übersah die sieben heranstolpernden Buben mit ihren umgehangten Zeltplanen
35 geflissentlich und sprach leise, eindringlich auf Heilmann ein

fingers and drew the smoke in deeply, hastily Only Albert Mutz coughed He always coughed when he smoked, the others had long grown accustomed to it

As night wore on the convoy thinned out, breaking off altogether at one point Then came more vehicles, their tarpaulin covers weighed down with rainwater
5 Underneath sat battle-weary privates And so it continued Troops, then silence Then more troops, then more silence

And suddenly, the convoy tailed off altogether This was frightening, ominous Up to now a constant stream of vehicles had been passing by - motorised vehicles, horse-drawn carts People Now the seven boys were alone on the bridge
10 with their corporal And Heilmann was still thinking and brooding

He almost felt relieved when an army jeep suddenly appeared from the direction of the town, came down the road towards the bridge, and with a squeal of brakes stopped by the little group Heilmann made towards the car, expecting to have a pleasant chat with some low-ranking army driver or other He froze The man who
15 was seated in the rear, and who now got up and dropped to the road with an elegant spring in his step, was none other than a full-ranking general

"Corporal Heilmann with seven men on bridge-guard, sir!" he reported Try as he might, he couldn't think of anything more sensible to say But it was clear that the general was no longer terribly concerned with formalities He looked carefully at the
20 seven young lads as they scrambled forward, their waterproof ponchos draped over their shoulders, and then he turned to Heilmann and spoke quietly and urgently The boys could only hear their corporal

"Yes, sir!"

"No, sir!"

25 "Absolutely, sir!"

Die Jungen horten bloß ihren Unteroffizier

»Jawoll, Herr General!«

»Nein, Herr General!«

»Zu Befehl, Herr General!«

5 Und dann sprach der General lauter, so daß ihn auch die sieben verstanden »Ich erwarte, daß die Brücke unter allen Umständen gehalten wird Verstanden? Unter allen Umständen! Sie bekommen noch Unterstützung!«

10 Und dann war der General wieder weg, genauso schnell, wie er gekommen war

Unteroffizier Heilmann dachte einen Augenblick lang, er hatte das alles getrauert, aber Jürgen Borchart riß ihn in die rauhe Wirklichkeit zurück »War

15 das ein richtiger General, Herr Unteroffizier?«

»Das war ein richtiger General, mein Junge«, sagte Heilmann wütend, und dann fluchte er, ellenlang, dreckig und ordinar

Aber die Flüche schufen ihm keine Erleichterung

20 Ich mochte bloß wissen, dachte Heilmann, wie die Unterstützung aussieht Das mochte ich wissen!

Und er brauchte gar nicht lange zu warten Ein Lastwagen tauchte auf, kam genau wie vorher der Wagen des Generals die Bruckenauffahrt herunter

25 und spuckte acht, neun, zehn Gestalten in grauen Uniformen aus Heilmann ging auf die Soldaten zu, sah sich die Leute aus der Nahe an und sagte bloß »Oh, du heiliger Strohsack!«

Sonst gar nichts

30 Die Unterstützung bestand aus zehn alten Mannern Alle um die Sechzig und darüber Offenbar während der letzten Stunden zusammengetrommelt, aus den Häusern, von den Kuchentischen weggeholt. Sie trugen die Waffenrocke noch nicht lange Aber

35 was machte das schon aus Die Rocke waren bewahrt, ein bißchen zerschlissen, etwas geflickt

Then the general raised his voice, so that now the seven boys could hear him too "I expect the bridge to be held at all costs! Understood? At all costs! Reinforcements are on their way!" Then the general was gone, just as quickly as he had arrived

5 For a moment Corporal Heilmann thought he must have been dreaming But Jurgen Borchart brought him back to reality "Was that a real general, Corporal?" "Yes, that was a real general, son!", Heilmann replied, and then, furious, he let out a long, vulgar string of curses But it didn't make him feel any better "I can't wait to see what sort of fucking reinforcements we're getting!" Heilmann thought, "I can't
10 wait to see this!"

He didn't have to wait long A truck appeared and came down the road towards the bridge, just as the general's car had a few minutes before It stopped a short distance away and threw out eight, nine, ten figures in grey uniforms Heilmann walked towards the soldiers so that he could see them from up close "Oh, for fuck's
15 sake!" That was all he said

The reinforcements consisted of ten old men, all around sixty or more They had obviously just been rounded up during the past few hours, taken from their homes, their dinner-tables They hadn't worn their battle dress for long But no matter - the uniforms were tried and tested, albeit a little tattered, with a few patches here and
20 there The men who had previously stood in them were long since dead Their bodies lay somewhere in France or Russia They had been shot to pieces and stripped of their uniforms as they were laid on the operating table The uniforms were repairable

The ten old men had been given the same order as the sixteen-year-olds None of them - neither the old men nor the young boys - had said anything in response to the
25 order They had received the order in the same way that a student accepted his end-of-

Die Männer, die ehemals in ihnen gesteckt hatten, waren längst tot. Sie lagen irgendwo in Frankreich oder Rußland. Man hatte ihnen die Rocke ausgezogen, als man sie zerschossen auf die Operations-
5 tische legte. Die Rocke konnten wieder geflickt werden.

Die zehn alten Männer hatten den gleichen Befehl bekommen wie die Sechzehnjährigen. Sie hatten nichts zu dem Befehl gesagt. Die Jungen nicht und
10 die Alten nicht. Sie hatten ihn in Empfang genommen, so wie man zum Jahresschluß das Zeugnis in die Hand nahm.

Und Unteroffizier Heilmann dachte nach und wußte, daß er irgend etwas tun sollte, aber er wußte
15 nicht, was.

Die achtzehn hatten Gewehre, Panzerfauste, Munition und eiserne Rationen. Die eiserne Ration bestand aus einer Buchse, Blutwurst, einer Buchse Rindfleisch und Zwieback. Man hatte die Buchsen
20 gefaßt, wie man Panzerfauste faßte. Eine in die linke Hand, eine in die rechte Hand.

Vielleicht, so überlegte Heilmann, ist es nicht gut, wenn sich Sechzehnjährige und Sechzigjährige auf einer Brücke treffen, um einen Befehl auszuführen.
25 Die Ansichten über Befehle im besonderen und über den Krieg ganz allgemein gehen zu weit auseinander. Und keiner weiß, wie man eine Brücke verteidigt.

Und ich selbst, so sagte sich Heilmann, weiß es
30 eigentlich auch nicht. Ich weiß nur, daß man eine Brücke auf keinen Fall verteidigt, indem man auf dieser Brücke herumsteht. Man mußte eine Stellung beziehen, von der aus man die Brücke beherrscht. Aber wo? Und wie? Und man braucht ein Maschi-
35 nengewehr.

Jawohl, das war die Erleuchtung. Jetzt konnte

year report at school - having to live with what they were given, powerless to change anything

And Corporal Heilmann was still brooding. He knew he should do something, but he didn't know what

5 The eighteen men on the bridge had rifles, anti-tank weapons, ammunition and iron rations. Their rations consisted of a tin of *Blutwurst* sausage, a tin of beef and hard biscuits. They had grabbed their tins in just the same way as they had their anti-tank weapons - one in the left hand, one in the right

"Perhaps it's not such a good thing", thought Heilmann, "if sixteen-year-olds
10 and sixty-year-olds get together on a bridge to carry out an order. Their attitudes to orders in particular, and the war in general, are far too different. And none of them knows how a bridge is defended. And I don't actually know either", Heilmann thought, "all I know is that standing around on a bridge is no way to defend it. We should take up a position from which the bridge can be covered. But where? And
15 how? And we need a machine gun."

Yes, that was the inspiration he had been waiting for! Now they could do something! Of course - a machine gun!

"Borchart, Mutz, Horber, run up to the barracks and tell them to send us down a machine gun. A light machine gun and a few belts of ammunition. Lots of ammo,
20 O K?" The three boys acknowledged the order and went on their way, clearly happy to at least escape the waiting around on the bridge for an hour or so

The old men stood whispering together in a group, as though one word spoken too loudly might somehow bring disaster upon them. Then suddenly one of them spoke more loudly. It was a man with thin, silvery-grey hair and a weak voice. "It's
25 over, you hear me, it's over!"

man etwas tun Freilich – das Maschinengewehr!

»Borchart, Mutz, Horber, spurtet mal rauf zur Kaserne und sagt, die sollen uns ein MG zur Brücke schicken Ein leichtes MG und ein paar Gurte Munition Viel Munition, versteht ihr?«

Die drei erklärten, daß sie ihren Unteroffizier verstanden hatten, und zogen los Sichtlich froh, dieser Warterei auf der Brücke wenigstens für eine Stunde entgangen zu sein

Die Alten standen in einer Gruppe zusammen und unterhielten sich im Flüsterton. Als konnte schon ein lautes Wort irgendeine Gefahr heraufbeschworen Dann plötzlich sprach einer lauter Ein Mann mit schütterem, silbergrauem Haar und einer dunnen

Stimme »Es ist Schluß, hort ihr, es ist Schluß!«

Er sagte das in die Nacht hinein, aber dann blickte er schrag zu Unteroffizier Heilmann hinüber

Heilmann antwortete nichts Der alte Mann zog eine Uhr aus der Uniformtasche Eine altmodische Taschenuhr mit Sprungdeckel, vielleicht die Firmuhr Als ob ihm die Firmuhr irgendeinen Rat gegeben hatte, stellte sich der Alte schließlich in Positur und rief »Ich geh' nach Hause!«

Niemand antwortete, obgleich der alte Mann eine gute Weile verstreichen ließ

Dann sagte er noch »Der Befehl, die Brücke zu halten, ist undurchführbar!« Und nach einer kleinen Pause nochmals »Ich gehe!«

Er sagte das fast ohne jede Betonung, ganz leise Dann lehnte er seinen Karabiner sorgfältig an die steinerne Brüstung und ging mit schnellen, kurzen Schritten weg

Damit war der Anfang gemacht Einer nach dem anderen stellten die Alten ihre Waffen an die Mauer und gingen Am Ende lehnten zehn Karabiner an der Bruchsteinumfassung der Brücke, und auf dem

He had turned to say this into the night, without addressing anyone directly, but then he looked across at Corporal Heilmann

Heilmann said nothing. The old man pulled a watch from the pocket of his uniform. It was an old-fashioned pocket watch with a spring lid. Perhaps a confirmation watch from his youth. As though the watch had just advised him what to do, the old man finally summoned up his courage, straightened up and said, loudly, "I'm going home!"

No-one said anything in reply, even though the old man paused for a long time. He then continued, quietly and evenly. "The order to hold the bridge cannot possibly be carried out!" He paused again briefly and then said "I'm going!" Then he carefully leaned his rifle against the wall and left with short, brisk steps. The other men followed suit. One by one the old men stood their weapons against the wall and left. Finally, ten rifles were leaning against the rough stone of the bridge, and a pile of anti-tank weapons lay on the ground. All they had taken with them was their iron rations.

Corporal Heilmann watched as the ten men marched off. He didn't move a muscle. He stood with his legs spread far apart, his hands behind his back, and watched. He didn't know what to do. He just stood there, thinking "You have to do something, Heilmann, you can't just let them go! That's mutiny!" The thoughts raced around in his brain, but Heilmann did nothing.

As the last of the ten men disappeared, Heilmann turned to face the boys and was surprised to see the admiration and enthusiasm in their eyes. It was as though they were just waiting for an order to pass his lips so that they could carry it out. For them, Heilmann had become a hero - precisely because he had allowed the old men to go. He could count on them, they swore to themselves.

Boden lag ein Haufen Panzerfauste Bloß ihre eisernen Rationen hatten sie mitgenommen

Unteroffizier Heilmann sah dem Abmarsch der zehn Männer zu, ohne mit der Wimper zu zucken
5 Breitbeinig, mit hinter dem Rücken verschränkten Armen, stand er da und beobachtete Er war ratlos Du mußt etwas tun, Heilmann, du kannst sie nicht einfach gehen lassen, das ist Meuterei! Die Gedanken jagten sich in seinem Schadel, aber Heilmann
10 rührte keinen Finger

Als der letzte der zehn gegangen war, drehte sich Heilmann zu den Buben um und war überrascht, mit wieviel Eifer und Verehrung sie ihn anstarrten Als warteten sie geradezu auf einen Befehl aus seinem
15 Mund, um ihn auszuführen Heilmann war in ihren Augen ein Held geworden Gerade, weil er die Alten hatte gehen lassen Auf sie sollte er sich verlassen können, schworen sich die Buben Dann kamen Mutz, Borchart und Horber zurück, auf einem Last-
20 wagen Sie luden zwei Maschinengewehre ab, mehrere Kisten Munition Dann rumpelte der Lkw wieder los

»Erst wollten die uns überhaupt nichts geben«, prahlte Horber, »dann sind wir zum General gegangen!«
25 gen!«

»Fein habt ihr das gemacht«, bestätigte Heilmann ohne Begeisterung und ließ sich von den drei Buben erzählen, wie es in der Altstadt und in der Kaserne aussehe Keine Feldgendarmerie unterwegs, regi-
30 strierte sein Gehirn, keine Gefahr, wenn man plötzlich turmen mußte! Dann stellte er mitten auf dem Bruckengehsteig die beiden Maschinengewehre zusammen und begann zu erklären So wie er das MG an die tausendmal vor irgendwelchen Rekruten
35 erklärt hatte Mittendrein hielt er an Jetzt hatte er doch den Sechzehnjährigen um ein Haar erzählt, wie

Then Mutz, Borchart and Horber returned by truck. They unloaded two machine guns and several boxes of ammunition. The truck rumbled off again. "First they didn't want to give us anything at all, then we went to see the General about it!", Horber boasted. "Well done, guys", Heilmann replied without enthusiasm. He listened as the three boys described the situation in town and in the barracks. "No military police about", his brain registered, "no danger, if we have to clear off suddenly." Then he stood the two machine guns together on the middle of the pavement and began to instruct the boys. Just as he had taught the machine gun to recruits a thousand times before.

Suddenly, he stopped in the middle of his lesson. He had just been on the verge of telling the sixteen-year-olds how a machine gun is cleaned. "As if these two weapons are ever going to have to be cleaned again", Heilmann thought.

He reached the end of his machine gun lesson as morning dawned in the east. As far as the theory was concerned, he had nothing further to add, while the practice - well, there was no need to put the lads through that.

Heilmann suddenly thought of Lieutenant Frohlich. Where could he be now? And then Heilmann remembered what Frohlich had said to him. "The moment things hot up, get out of here! O.K. ? I'm holding you responsible for that, Heilmann!"

As he remembered these words, Corporal Heilmann's deliberations were resolved. Now he knew what he had to do. And why postpone something which has to be done?

"Guys, listen up a moment", he said. "All of this is completely pointless. Your parents are waiting for you at home, and you want to stay here and play soldiers. I promised Lieutenant Frohlich that it wouldn't come to that. You all have to help me keep my promise!"

man ein Maschinengewehr reinigt. Als ob diese beiden Gewehre jemals noch gereinigt werden mußten.

Im Osten dämmerte der Morgen herauf, da war Heilmann mit seinem MG-Unterricht am Ende angelangt. Theoretisch hatte er dem Gesagten nichts mehr hinzuzufügen, und die Praxis – die wurde er den Burschen schon ersparen. Heilmann mußte plötzlich an Leutnant Frohlich denken. Wo der wohl steckt? Und dann fiel ihm wieder jener Auftrag ein, den ihm Frohlich erteilt hatte. »Sowie der Zauber hier losgeht, haut ihr ab! Verstanden? Sie sind mir dafür verantwortlich, Heilmann!«

Bei diesem Gedanken fanden die Überlegungen des Unteroffiziers Heilmann ihr Ende. Er wußte jetzt, was zu tun war. Und warum das aufschieben, was geschehen muß?

»Kinder«, sagte er, »hort mal zu! Das Ganze hier hat überhaupt keinen Sinn. Zu Hause warten eure Eltern, und ihr wollt hier Krieg spielen. Ich habe Leutnant Frohlich versprochen, daß es nicht soweit kommt. Ihr müßt mithelfen, daß ich mein Versprechen halten kann!«

Eine so lange und sorgfältig ausgedachte Rede hatte Heilmann selten gehalten, er war richtig stolz darauf. Und um die Jungen gar nicht erst zum Denken und Antworten kommen zu lassen, fuhr er fort. »Ich mach' mich jetzt auf die Socken und walze durch die Stadt. Schau, ob die Luft wirklich rein ist. In zehn Minuten bin ich zurück, und dann geht's ab nach Kassel! Verstanden? Keiner geht weg, bis ich wiederkomme, und dann gehn wir mal richtig elegant stiften. Das kann auch recht interessant werden!«

Die Tatsache, daß Unteroffizier Heilmann nun aus seinem Rucksack eine Ziviljacke hervorkramte und sie über den Waffenrock anzog, bewies, daß er

trotz langsamen Denkens nicht völlig unvorbereitet
den Zeitläuften gegenüberstand Aber trotzdem
unterlief ihm ein Rechenfehler

Er hatte nämlich die Kreuzung bei der Brücke
5 kaum überschritten, hatte nur wenige Meter der
Straße zur oberen Stadt zurückgelegt, da polterten
beschlagene Stiefel gerade aus der Hofeinfahrt her-
aus, an der er vorüber wollte Zwei unbewegte
Gesichter unter scharfen Stahlhelmkanten starrten
10 ihn an Zwei Metallschilder blinkten ihm entgegen
Feldgendarmarie, dachte Heilmann Und Jetzt ist
alles aus!

Er zeigte seine Papiere, mußte sie zeigen

»Warum Ziviljacke«, fragte der eine der beiden
15 mit eiserner Miene. »Wohl vorzeitig aus dem Staub
gemacht, was?« witzelte der andere

Heilmann ging zwischen den beiden her und über-
legte fieberhaft. Dabei dachte er gar nicht so sehr
daran, wie er seinen eigenen Hals noch retten
20 konnte, sein ganzes Denken war bei den Kindern auf
der Brücke Er zermartete sich das Hirn Mensch,
wie kann ich denen bloß Bescheid sagen, was kann
ich bloß machen? Ich muß etwas tun. Ich muß
etwas tun!

25 Seine Faust traf den einen der beiden Gendarmen
voll auf der Nasenwurzel. Dann zog er das Knie
hoch und trat ihm mit aller Wucht in den Leib Aber
den zweiten erwischte er nicht richtig, und da blieb
dem Unteroffizier Heilmann bloß noch eins übrig
30 laufen, laufen, um sein Leben laufen

Das erste Geschöß aus der Null-Acht des Gendar-
men surrte knapp neben Heilmann gegen die Haus-
wand, flirrte ein paar mal auf Stein und klatschte
dann in den Verputz Heilmann schlug ein paar
35 Haken

Wie ein Hase werde ich aussehn, wie ein Hase!

Heilmann had seldom spoken at such length or given such thought to what he said. He was quite chuffed with himself. Then, not wanting to give the boys the time to think and reply to him, he continued. "I'm going to head off now and go for a little walkabout in town, just to make sure that the coast really is clear. I'll be back in ten
5 minutes, and then it's time to split! Understood? None of you goes anywhere until I come back, and then we'll perform a nice little disappearing act. That could get pretty interesting as well!"

The fact that Corporal Heilmann now dug out a civilian jacket from his rucksack, and put it on over his uniform, proved that he wasn't entirely unprepared for
10 events - despite taking a long time to think things over. Nonetheless, he made a miscalculation.

He had hardly crossed the junction by the bridge and had only walked a few yards up the road in the direction of town, when he heard the clatter of steel-tipped boots. They came straight out in front of him, just as he was passing a private
15 entrance. Two stony faces appeared, their eyes staring at him from under sharp helmet rims. Heilmann saw two shiny metal badges gleaming before him.

"Military Police!", he thought. "Well, the game's up now!"

He showed his identification papers, he had no choice. "Why the civvies?", asked one of them, his face grim and unmoved. "Making tracks a bit early, are we?"
20 joked the other.

Heilmann was marched along between them, his mind racing. He wasn't even so concerned with trying to save his own skin - all his thoughts were with the children on the bridge. The thoughts flashed frantically through his mind. "How am I going to let them know? What on earth can I do? I have to do something! I have to do
25 something!"

Dann verspürte er einen dumpfen Schlag gegen den Rücken, wollte weiterlaufen, aber da waren plötzlich keine Füße mehr. Heilmann schlug in seiner ganzen Länge aufs Pflaster. Zweimal versuchte er noch mit
5 letzter Kraft, sich auf die Ellbogen hochzustützen, dann war der Unteroffizier Adolf Heilmann tot.

Der Feldgendarm fand in der Briefftasche des Unteroffiziers neben den Ausweispapieren, dem Soldbuch und achtundfünfzig Reichsmark in Schei-
10 nen ein silbernes Madonnenmedaillon und die Fotografie eines blonden Mädchens im Badeanzug. Die Briefftasche mit Papieren und Medaillon steckte er in die Tasche seines langen Mantels. Das Bild betrachtete er im Lichtschein seines Feuerzeugs.

15 »Kesse Puppe«, sagte der Mann. Dann kümmerte er sich um seinen Kameraden, der mit vor dem Leib verschränkten Armen stöhnend an der Wand kauerte.

Auf der Brücke warteten sieben sechzehnjährige
20 Buben auf ihren Unteroffizier.

5

»Es schießt!« sagte Horber, und alle horchten. Doch es blieb bei dem zweimaligen dumpfen Drohnen.

»Vielleicht hat sich einer umgebracht«, flüsterte der stämmige Mutz und fühlte, wie ihm ein leiser
25 Schauer über den Rücken lief. Aber Scholten bezeichnete das als Quatsch. Innerlich war ihm freilich nicht wohler zumute als den anderen. Verflucht, wenn bloß der Heilmann zurückkommt.

Ein unangenehmes Gefühl, da mutterseelenallein
30 auf der Brücke zu hocken und zu warten. Allmählich wurde es Tag. Über die Hügel im Osten drangte die

His fist connected full on the nose of one of the two military policemen. Then he raised his leg and kned him in the stomach with all his strength. But his fist didn't connect properly with the second soldier, and there was only one thing left for Heilmann to do: run. Run. Run for his life.

5 The first bullet from the military policeman's Luger hummed close past Heilmann and struck the wall of a house, chipping off pieces of stone before burying itself in the plasterwork. Heilmann swerved right, then left, then right again.

"He won't see me for dust!", he thought.

10 Then he felt a dull blow to his back. He tried to keep running, but suddenly his legs were gone from beneath him. Heilmann fell flat to the ground. With the last of his energy, he tried twice to raise himself up on his elbows. Then Corporal Adolf Heilmann was dead.

15 When the military policeman went through Heilmann's pockets, he found a wallet with his identity papers, military passbook, and fifty-eight Reichsmarks in notes. He also found a silver medallion of the Madonna and a photograph of a blond girl in a bathing costume. He put the wallet, medallion and identity papers into the pocket of his long coat. Then he held up his lighter and looked at the photograph. "Nice bit of stuff", he said to himself, before turning to look after his comrade, who was doubled up against the wall, groaning, his arms pressed against his stomach.

20 On the bridge, seven sixteen-year-old boys waited for their corporal to return.

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"Gunfire!" said Horber. They all listened. But there were just two dull cracks, and then silence.

5 "Maybe someone's shot himself", whispered Mutz, and he felt a slight shiver run down his stocky back. But Scholten dismissed that as nonsense. Inwardly, of course, he felt just as uneasy as the others. If only Heilmann would bloody well come back.

10 It was an unpleasant feeling to sit around all alone on the bridge, waiting. Day began to dawn. Light was gradually seeping over the hills in the east. The ram had eased off a little.

"Damn, what if Heilmann buggers off without us?" muttered Mutz. "Heilmann won't bugger off without you, you stupid wimp!" replied Scholten.

15 Scholten could get really rude sometimes, thought Mutz. (Was he supposed to ask for permission to speak now?) But Heilmann had buggered off without them after all. His 'ten minutes' had now become exactly two hours, and the seven boys on the bridge started arguing again about whether Heilmann had done a runner or if he had been held up somewhere.

20 Eventually they stopped quarrelling. There wasn't any point anyway, since none of them knew anything. It wasn't even all that important. The sun was shining brightly now, and things looked much more harmless in daylight than they had during darkness. Horber lifted their spirits.

25 "Guys, we've completely forgotten about breakfast!" They all laughed. They watched with interest as Horber had a go at a tin of sausage with his bayonet. Twice the knife slipped and then the tip stabbed into his finger.

Helligkeit Der Regen hatte etwas nachgelassen –

4 »Mensch, wenn uns der Heilmann im Stich
läßt ?« murmelte Mutz

5 »Der Heilmann läßt dich nicht im Stich, du
Waschlappen!«

Scholten konnte manchmal richtig grob werden,
fand Mutz (Man wird doch schließlich noch etwas
sagen dürfen!) Aber Heilmann ließ sie doch im
Stich Aus den zehn Minuten waren inzwischen
10 genau zwei Stunden geworden, und die sieben auf
der Brücke stritten sich wieder darüber, ob Heil-
mann stiftengegangen sei oder ob er irgendwo aufge-
halten worden war

Schließlich horten sie auf zu streiten Es hatte ja
15 auch keinen Sinn, weil keiner etwas wußte Es war ja
auch gar nicht so sehr wichtig Inzwischen war es
namlich richtig hell geworden, und bei Tageslicht
besehen, sahen die Dinge viel harmloser aus als bei
Dunkelheit

20 Horber brachte Stimmung in den Haufen

9 »Mensch, wir haben ja das Frühstück ganz verges-
sen!« Alles lächelte Interessiert sahen die anderen zu,
wie Horber mit seinem Bajonett der Wurstbuchse zu
Leibe rückte Zweimal rutschte er ab und einmal

25 stach er sich in den Finger

16 »Kinder, ich verblute, schafft mich ins Lazarett!«

Die sieben wieherten vor Lachen, sie waren ausge-
lassen wie auf einem Schulausflug Da ertonte Moto-
rengeräusch Scholten horchte »Seid mal einen

30 Moment ruhig!«

Jetzt horchten alle, die Schulausflugsstimmung
war wie weggewischt

Der Motorenalarm kam nicht aus dem Westen, er
kam aus der Altstadt Und wie in der Nacht, raste
35 ein Kubelwagen die Bruckenauffahrt herunter, hielt
mit quietschenden Bremsen Der General Diesmal

"Help, I'm bleeding to death! Get me to a field hospital!"

The seven boys roared with laughter. They were as lively as on a school trip. Then they heard the sound of an engine. Scholten pricked up his ears. "Keep it down a mmute, will you!" They all listened now, the boisterous school trip mood vanishing

5 The sound didn't come from the west, it came from the town. And just as had happened the previous night, an army jeep raced along the road up to the bridge, and screeched to a stop. The general. This time he sat in the front, beside the driver. Two more soldiers sat in the rear.

The seven boys sprang up and came to attention, just as they had learned. Scholten stuttered out a report. His face was beetroot red.

The general interrupted him with a wave of his hand. "Where is your corporal?" Scholten said nothing, but Mutz, somewhat overeager in the presence of the general, said "He's gone, sir!"

15 Even as he said it, he realised that he had grassed on Heilmann. (Shit! The Bunch wouldn't forgive him that mistake in a hurry!) Quick as a flash, he added "The corporal's just gone to get ammunition." The lie passed smoothly, insolently, across his lips, but then it struck him - Albert, you've just lied to a full-ranking general! Let's hope you can get out of this one!

The general asked "When did he go?" His voice was terse, curt, to the point. Mutz replied "Two hours ago, sir!" His face was pale. The general began to think. He seemed to Albert Mutz to look almost like the picture of Napoleon in his history book. All that was missing was a lock of hair hanging over his forehead. The general was still thinking, and then suddenly a grin darted across his face and disappeared just as quickly. He turned around in the car. "Schlopke!"

25 "Yes, sir?"

vorn, neben dem Fahrer, zwei weitere Soldaten im Fond

5 Die sieben spritzten vom Boden, nahmen stramme Haltung an, so gut sie es gelernt hatten. Scholten stotterte eine Meldung herunter. Er hatte einen hochroten Kopf bekommen.

Der General unterbrach ihn mit einer Handbewegung: »Wo ist der Unteroffizier?«

Scholten schwieg, aber Mutz, im Ubereifer, sagte: 10 »Der ist weggegangen, Herr General!«

Im gleichen Augenblick wußte er, daß er den Heilmann verpiffen hatte (Pfiu Teufel, der Verein wurde ihm das nicht verzeihen!), und hing geistesgegenwärtig an seinen Satz an: »Der Herr Unteroffizier wollte

15 noch Munition besorgen!«

Ganz glatt, ganz unverfroren, ging dem blonden Mutz die Lüge über die Lippen, aber dann durchfuhr es ihn: Mensch, jetzt hast du einen leibhaftigen General angelogen, wenn das bloß gutgeht!

20 Der General, kurz, knapp, sachlich: »Wie lange ist er weg?«

Mutz, bleich im Gesicht: »Seit zwei Stunden, Herr General!« Der General überlegte und sah dabei fast aus wie Napoleon auf dem Bild im 25 Geschichtsbuch, wie es Albert Mutz vorkam. Nur die Stirnlocke fehlte. Der General überlegte weiter, und plötzlich huschte ein Grinsen über sein Gesicht, tauchte auf und war wieder weg, blitzschnell.

Er drehte sich im Wagen um: »Schlopke!«

30 »Jawoll, Herr General?«

Der Mann links im Fond nahm im Sitzen stramme Haltung an. Sein ganzes Gesicht schien Aufmerksamkeit.

»Schlopke, steigen Sie aus. Sie übernehmen den 35 Laden hier!« Wieder das Grinsen auf dem Gesicht des Generals: »Wollen mal abschließend auch noch

ein bißchen in Krieg machen, nicht wahr, Schlopke!«

2 »Jawoll, Herr General!« sagte Schlopke dienstfertig, und du kannst mich mal, dachte sich Schlopke

5 Er sprang aus dem Wagen, kam federnd auf der geteerten Fahrbahn auf, wie ein trainierter Turner
»Sie halten die Brücke, Schlopke, verstanden?«

Der General sprach leise, dann lauter »Sie haben hier sieben prachtvolle Kerle Ein paar tausend mehr
10 von der Sorte und wir konnten den Krieg noch gewinnen, Schlopke!«

Die Sechzehnjährigen bekamen jetzt rote Köpfe, vor Stolz und Aufregung Sie wurden die Brücke halten! Und jetzt hatten sie auch wieder einen Unter-
15 offizier Er hieß zwar nicht Heilmann, sondern Schlopke, aber er war aus dem Wagen des Generals gestiegen

»Macht's gut, Jungens, ich verlasse mich auf euch«, sagte der General und fuhr ab

20 Schlopke, leise hinter dem abfahrenden Kubelwagen her »Hast wohl noch Halsschmerzen auf deine alten Tage?«

Und dann, voller Wut »Sollst krepieren, du Aas!«

25 Die sieben scharten sich vertrauensvoll um Unteroffizier Schlopke Und der hielt »aufbauende Reden«

Der General fuhr inzwischen zu einem Bauernhof, vier Kilometer östlich der Stadt gelegen, trat in die
30 niedere Stube und begab sich zu der großen Karte an der Wand' Mit gespreizten Beinen stand er eine Zeitlang sinnend davor Dann nahm er einen schmierigen roten Stift und machte einen dicken Ring um eine Stelle auf der Karte

The man on the left in the back came to attention while still seated. His whole face was the picture of attentiveness.

"Schlopke, get out. You're going to take over things here." Again the grin appeared on the general's face. "I'm sure you'd love the chance to see some real action before the war is over, isn't that right, Schlopke!"

"Yes, quite right, sir!" replied Schlopke eagerly, and thought to himself 'Go to hell!' He leapt from the jeep and landed on the tarred road with the agility of a trained gymnast. "You're to hold the bridge, Schlopke, understood?" The general lowered his voice, and then raised it again. "You've got yourself seven splendid lads here. A few thousand more men like them and we could still win this war, Schlopke!"

The sixteen-year-olds flushed with pride and excitement. They were going to hold the bridge! And now they had a corporal again. Granted, his name was Schlopke and not Heilmann, but he had arrived in the general's car.

"All the best, boys. I'm counting on you", said the general, before driving away. As the army jeep drove off, Schlopke said quietly "Getting a bit scared now in your old age, are you? Afraid to fight?" And then, angrily, "I hope you die, you bastard!"

The seven boys gathered trustingly around Corporal Schlopke. And he began to give the boys a few words to "boost their morale".

Meanwhile the general drove to a farm a couple of miles east of the town. He walked into the low-ceilinged room and went over to the large map on the wall. He stood for some time in front of it, his legs apart, pondering. Then he took a grimy red pen and drew a thick circle around a point on the map.

Ein General und sein Befehl

Er wurde General, weil er mehr konnte als die Kameraden vom Kriegsschullehrgang. Er war für Sauberkeit und konnte »trübe Tassen« nicht leiden.

5 Man muß sich zwar manchmal mit solchen Burschen umgeben, weil sie nützlich sind, dachte er, aber es bietet sich auch wieder die Gelegenheit, ihnen in den Hintern zu treten.

Der General freut sich, wenn er an Schlopke
10 denkt.

Ansonsten hat er die Brücke vergessen. Eine Angelegenheit, die gut versorgt und deshalb nicht mehr wichtig ist. Er denkt an die sieben Buben, hat für Sekunden ein ungutes Gefühl, aber dann funktioniert der »Scheibenwischer« im Gehirn des Generals. Sieben Mann. Schon, gut. Junge Kerle, fast noch Buben. Wahrscheinlich geht es ihnen dreckig auf der Brücke. Aber sie haben Ehrgeiz, haben Stolz, und – sie haben noch nicht die richtige Angst. Gott
15 sei Dank. Sie werden den ersten Vorstoß amerikanischer Spahtrupps abwehren können, und das bedeutet – der General blickt auf die Uhr und rechnet – das bedeutet mindestens zwei Stunden Zeitgewinn.

Drunten im Tal liegen Truppen, an die siebentausend
25 Mann. Sie sind im Abziehen begriffen, in die Bergstellungen im Osten. Es steht nicht nur ein Gegner im Land. Ein paar Stunden können reichen. Dann konnten die siebentausend aus dem Kessel heraus sein, konnten unterwegs sein in die andere
30 Richtung. Aber wenn der Amerikaner über die Brücke vorstößt, wenn er durchkommt, dann ist der ganze Kessel beim Teufel.

Der General überlegt weiter. Die Brücke sprengen? Gleich? Nein, das ist falsch. Wenn man sie
35 sprengt, weiß das der Ami, bevor er angreift. Er hat

The General and His Orders

He had become a general because he was more capable than the others in his class at the military academy. He liked cleanliness and couldn't stand people who were "complete drips". Admittedly, the general thought to himself, you need to have people like that around you sometimes because they're useful, but then the opportunity arises once in a while to give them a good kick up the arse. The general thought of Schlopke and smiled to himself.

Other than that, he had forgotten about the bridge - it was a matter which had been taken care of and was therefore no longer important. He thought about the seven lads and felt ill-at-ease for a few seconds, but then his emotional 'bulldozer' got to work, shovelling these thoughts to the back of his mind. Seven men. Great stuff. Young chaps, little more than children. They probably wouldn't last long on the bridge. But they were eager, they were proud - and they had yet to know real fear. Thank God. They would be able to hold off the first advance of the American reconnaissance patrol, and that gave him - the general looked at the clock and worked it out - that gave him at least two hours. There were about seven thousand troops down in the valley, retreating towards the mountain positions in the east. Their second enemy was time. A few hours should be enough. Then the seven thousand men could get out of the pocket and start moving away from the front. But if the Americans advanced over the bridge, if they broke through, then the whole pocket was in for it.

The general continued deliberating. Should he blow up the bridge? Straight away? No, that would be wrong. If the bridge was blown then the Americans would know before they attacked. They had scout planes for that. Then they wouldn't even

seine Aufklärer. Dann probiert er's gar nicht bei der Brücke, sondern kommt gleich mit Pionieren und allem Tod und Teufel. Nein, der Ami muß herankommen und meinen, er könne stillvergnügt über die
5 Brücke marschieren. Und wenn der erste Sherman auf der Brücke steht, muß es Zunder geben.

37 Dann werden sie sich zurückziehen, werden Jabos bringen, dann wird es zehn Minuten ganz ruhig sein, und dann werden sie wieder kommen. Das Ganze
10 konnte – der General sieht wieder auf die Uhr – vielleicht sogar drei Stunden dauern.

15 Ja – und nach dem ersten Angriff mußte man die Brücke sprengen. Gerade dann, wenn der zweite beginnt. Dann brauchen sie erst Pioniere und das dauert noch mal seine Zeit.

18 Der General vor seiner Landkarte hat feuchte Hände bekommen. Er marschiert im Zimmer auf und ab.

19 Der erste Angriff!
20 Halten!

4 Dann Jabos, dann zweiter Angriff.
Im gleichen Augenblick fliegt die Brücke in die Luft – macht insgesamt drei Stunden.

25 Der General reibt die Hände aneinander, um das ekelhafte Gefühl der Feuchtigkeit loszuwerden. Er denkt nochmals an die sieben.

Im Gehirn des Generals arbeitet wieder der Scheibenwischer.

Sieben Buben waren begeistert. Unteroffizier
30 Schlopke schien genau das, was sie gebraucht hatten. Mit ihm wurden sie die Brücke halten. Was hieß

try to push across the bridge. They would just come with their sappers and everything else they could throw in. No, the Americans must advance in the belief that they could march across the bridge without a care in the world. And when the first *Sherman* tank was on the bridge - that was the moment to let them have it.

5 Then they would fall back, they would send in the fighter-bombers, then it would be totally quiet for ten minutes, and then they would advance again. The whole thing might take - the general had another look at the clock - it might even take as much as three hours.

10 Yes - the bridge would have to be blown up after the first attack. Just as the second attack began. Then they would need to bring up the sappers, and that would take even more time.

The general stood before his map. His hands were clammy. He began to pace up and down the room.

The first attack!

15 Hold the bridge!

The fighters come, then the second attack.

Just at that moment the bridge goes up. That made three hours in total.

The general rubbed his hands together, trying to get rid of the horrible clammy feeling. He thought about the seven boys again.

20 In the general's mind, the emotional 'bulldozer' got back to work.

- »mit ihm«? Sie wurden die Brücke in jedem Fall halten! Ein General hatte es gesagt – Er hatte gesagt »Macht's gut, Jungens!«
- Ja, man setzte Vertrauen in sie Vertrauen! Schlopkes aufbauende Reden hatten ihren Zweck erfüllt Die sieben hingen begeistert an jedem Wort, das über seine Lippen kam, fühlten sich unter Männern, wenn Schlopke jeder seiner Binsenweisheiten ein schlupfriges Pendant gegenüberstellt
- 10 »Mit dem MG machen wir auf die vordere Brukenrampe, dort, wo der Mauervorsprung reingeht!«
 »Aber dort ist kein Platz!«
 »Schon, schon, das macht der Liebe auch kein Kind, dann spurten wir mal nach rechts!«
- 15 »So, dort geht's!«
 Sie stellten das Maschinengewehr am ostlichen Brückenende hinter den Mauervorsprung, der von rechts auf die Brücke hereinlief und einen gewissen Abschluß bildete
- 20 »Eine Pfundsstellung«, meinte Unteroffizier Schlopke, und die sieben glaubten es Nur Scholten äußerte Bedenken
 »Das ist doch keine Stellung!«
 Aber Schlopke machte ihn mit zwei Sätzen muhelos zur Schnecke
- 25 »Erzahl mal 'nem alten Soldaten nicht, was 'ne Stellung ist, Kleiner!« Und »Mach dich bloß nicht naß, Kindchen!«
- Plotzlich, Horber beschäftigte sich wieder einmal mit seiner Blutwurstbuchse, hatte Schlopke eine Idee
- 30 »Kinder, ich geh' kurz weg und organisiere Sandsacke!«
 Schon war er weg Mit ruhigen, gelassenen Schritten verließ er die Brücke, überquerte die Auffahrt und verschwand in der Straße zur oberen Stadt. Kein

Wort, wann er wiederkommen wurde, was sie inzwischen tun sollten Nichts, gar nichts

Horberk sagte, immer noch mit dem Bajonett über der Blutwurstbuchse »Sandsacke sind gut Da werden sich die Amis anschauen!« Aber er stieß auf keine Begeisterung

»Wetten, daß der nicht zurückkommt?« Das war Scholten »Klar kommt der zurück!« Horber war emport, er hatte die Buchse jetzt auf, aber erst mußte er diesem widerlichen Scholten Bescheid stoßen »Wenn der nicht zurückkommt, fresse ich einen Besen – mitsamt der Putzfrau!«

Darauf Scholten »Daß du dich bloß nicht verschluckst, du Vollidiot!«



Chapter 4

Commentary

4 1 Introduction

During my translation commentary I will attempt to explain, and hopefully to justify, the various decisions which I made in the course of translation. I will be largely dealing with those points which were raised in Chapter Two (Analysis). As in the text analysis, the purpose is to give a broad and comprehensive overview of some of the most interesting issues and difficulties, to attempt to do more than summarise the salient points would be an impossible task. As in Chapter Two, the preface will be discussed separately to the remainder of the text.

4 2 Translation commentary

4 2 1 Preface

4 2 1 1 Word/Clause order

Translation between two languages will inevitably result in changes being made to sentence structure and to the organisation of information. This is due to the major syntactical differences between languages - linguistic expression must, on the whole, conform to the rules which impose constraints on the manner in which ideas are expressed. As Levý writes:

‘Der Charakter und die Gestalt des Gedankens im Originalwerk, deren Folge und Anlage, sind zu einem großen Teil von den syntaktischen Möglichkeiten und von dem Vorrat an Benennungen abhängig, die der Originalsprache zur Verfügung stehen.’
(1969: 58)

It is therefore not surprising that changes to word and clause order, overall sentence structure and sentence boundaries, and indeed, on the macrotextual level, to paragraphing, were sometimes necessary during translation.

An example of such change to both clause order and to emphasis can be found in the first sentence. I opted to begin my translation with the temporal reference: “Ten years had passed...” (T91, L.3). While this conforms to convention, it also means that ‘der Zufall’ is moved from its prominent position at the beginning of the German sentence to a position in the English sentence where it loses this prominence and thus its significance: “...and chance had brought me back to the small town.”

While this appears to involve a shift of emphasis, it must also be said that the decision to open the sentence, and thus the novel, with the words “Ten years had passed”, has a significant advantage. This is because these words are extremely effective in immediately grabbing the readers’ attention, as well as in arousing their curiosity. Their first question, upon opening this novel, will thus be: “Since when? What happened ten years before?” Arguably, it is these crucial questions which should be at the forefront of the readers’ mind, as their search for the answers will encourage them to read not only the preface, but also the novel in its entirety. Indeed, while the preface will go some small way towards answering the above questions, it will raise far more questions than it answers.

A further (but less significant) point is that, in English, it is somewhat preferable to bring the word ‘chance’, in the first sentence, closer to the second sentence/paragraph, where the word is repeated in the question “was it just chance?”

The third sentence posed particular difficulties due to its length and the number of clauses it contains. This is often a problem in German-English translation; German texts frequently contain long and grammatically complex sentences the translation of which can require two or three sentences in English. A rather extreme example of such a case is the following:

“Da es beim Übersetzen selbstverständlich auf die Sprache ankommt, *aus* der, mehr aber noch auf diejenige, *in* die übersetzt wird, wünsche ich mir als erstes ein mit etwa 1900 Seiten Dünndruck immerhin noch handliches, einigermaßen erschwingliches und somit jedermann zugängliches *Wörterbuch Deutsch - Deutsch*, ein Wörterbuch der gegenwärtig gesprochenen und geschriebenen Sprache, das sich in seinem

Wortbestand nicht auf frühere, bis ins vorige Jahrhundert zurückgehende Auflagen, sondern vor allem auf die Werke gegenwärtig schreibender Autoren stützt.” (Hansen, 1965:83)

In fact, this particular sentence is so complex that it would probably even prove challenging, if one were to translate it, to restrict oneself to three sentences in English, without making them excessively unwieldy. In her thesis *A Study in the Translation of a Culture-Specific Text* McGrath examines this problem and says:

“Generally speaking, German sentences tend to be longer than English sentences. Comprehension is further hindered by lengthy attributive expressions which are often rendered in English by relative clauses, which results in a division of the sentence and thereby eases comprehension.” (1996:96)

However, it did not prove necessary in the third sentence of the preface to divide the sentence. Instead, the sentence boundaries were maintained, but particular attention needed to be paid to punctuation. “Einzig und allein” (S1, L.5) was translated as “nothing more and nothing less” (T91, L.6), and was moved to the end of the sentence.

Occasionally, the choice of clause order may be a matter of personal preference. I opted to change the clause order of the German in the sentence: “It had been left over when the bridge was built, back in 1935” (T91, L.19). Upon reflection, it was not strictly necessary, and this sentence could equally have read: “It had been left over back in 1935, when the bridge was built”.

As was mentioned above, translation, particularly between German and English, can result in changes being made to sentence boundaries. The case system of German allows for greater freedom of word and clause order (Hawkins, 1986, in Mc Grath, 1996:103), which sometimes results in German sentences being longer and more complex than English ones. The following sentence is one example of where I decided to use two sentences in English: “Der Soldat hatte genau einen Monat früher seinen sechzehnten Geburtstag gefeiert, und als er in sich zusammensackte, bewegten

sich seine Lippen...” (S2, L.10) - “The soldier had celebrated his sixteenth birthday exactly one month earlier. As he collapsed, his lips moved...” (T92, L.3).

However, there were certain occasions when the reverse was in fact necessary. Gregor’s style is such that he sometimes opts to use very short sentences, with no verb. This stylistic device is less common in English, and I often deemed it preferable to integrate such a ‘sentence’ into the previous sentence. One such example is: “Am 1. Mai 1945” (S2, L.17). In English, “on May 1st 1945” (T92, L.6) is much more likely to be part of a sentence than to constitute a sentence, since it is merely a temporal reference and lacks a verb.

4.2.1.2. Deixis

The question of deixis concerns the differences between the ways in which languages conceptualise spatial relationships. Deixis comes under the broad heading of psycholinguistics, which examines the relationship between language and thought. Research conducted in this area has produced evidence that:

“[...] there seem to be clear differences in the ways in which one’s thoughts are mobilized, moment-by-moment, for purposes of speaking in one language or another” (Slobin and Bocaz, 1988, in Richardson, 1998).

It is these considerations which proved important in translating the line: “Jetzt stand ich also auf dem breiten Gehsteig am Geländer, schaute ins Wasser hinab und wandte hin und wieder auch den Blick zu den Ufern links und rechts” (S1, L.7). There is no ambiguity in this sentence as to how the narrator fits in physically with his surroundings. He is clearly standing on a footpath, by the railings (perhaps also leaning on them), with his back to the traffic, facing away from the bridge and looking into the water which runs below. Occasionally, he raises his head, and turns it left and right to look at the riverbanks on either side. All of these pieces of information can be easily understood and are concisely expressed. From the text which follows it is clear that he must indeed be looking almost vertically down into the water, in order to see

the rifle which dropped off the edge of the bridge ten years before. It is for this reason that I chose to expand slightly on the German - the phrase 'gazing down over the railings' succinctly conveys most of the above information.

4.2.1.3. Transposition

A transposition is a translation device whereby the semantic value of a sentence is retained, but one or more parts of speech may change ¹. For example, a noun may become a verb, an adjective may become a noun, a verb, or an adverb, and a verb may become a noun. These are just a few examples of the many transpositions which can take place.

An excellent example of a situation where transposition is required is the line: "Es ist ein Erlebnis, auf ihr zu stehen, wenn der Fluß im Frühjahr das Schmelzwasser aus den Bergen bringt." (S1, L.13) This proved difficult to translate, primarily due to the use of the term 'Schmelzwasser'. This is a term which requires explanation in translation due to the absence of an appropriate equivalent in English. As Levý argues:

"Zusammenfassend kann gesagt werden, daß der Wortschatz der verschiedenen Sprachen eine unterschiedliche Anzahl von Begriffen zur Bezeichnung der einzelnen Gebiete der Wirklichkeit aufweist, daß also vom Standpunkt der Sprecher zweier Sprachen die Wirklichkeit nicht gleichermaßen fein gegliedert ist." (1969:57)

It should be pointed out that the word 'meltwater' does in fact exist. However, it is by no means appropriate, as it is a somewhat specialised term not in common usage. It is for this reason that an alternative was required. I decided on the following: "...when the mountain snow melts..." (T91, L.11). This is a noun - adjective transposition (*mountain snow*). It also entailed using a modulation, as the German *Schmelzwasser* focuses on the result of the melting process - water - where the translation instead focuses on that which is melting, namely snow. While the German term covers the

¹ A transposition is described by Newmark as "A change of grammar in the translation from SL to TL" (1988:285)

melting of both snow and ice, the use of just the word snow in English does not really entail any loss, as common sense would dictate that the two are both water in a frozen and solid state, and inevitably melt simultaneously

However, there is yet a further factor to be taken into account by the translator. This is the fact that important information can be inferred from the German for cultural reasons, information less likely to be inferred from an English version of the same sentence. In a country such as Ireland, we are far less familiar with the phenomenon being described above than a German readership. In Ireland it seldom snows, any snow which does fall here is rarely very deep. It also invariably rapidly melts, as our winters tend to be relatively mild. This situation is in stark contrast with a country such as Germany. Bearing in mind that, although the precise geographical location of the anonymous German town is never given, there are numerous linguistic and other references which would suggest that the novel is set somewhere in the south of Germany, probably Bavaria - indeed the sentence in question is most likely a vague geographical reference - it is clear that the difference between the experience of winter of the readership of the source text, and of the target text, will be very great indeed. The mountains being referred to are quite possibly, in fact probably, the Alps. This is a major mountain chain which has glaciers and, in certain areas, year-round snow. A vast quantity of snow and ice builds up on these mountains over the winter, when spring comes this snow melts, and the resulting water has a major effect on local rivers and streams, which can swell to many times their usual volume.

The above paragraph contains a considerable amount of information, all of which is implicit in the source text. This implicit information constitutes an assumption on the part of the author as to what cultural, background knowledge can be assumed of his readership. This assumption of the target audience cannot be made by the translator, however, and an explanation is necessary. This is why I opted to add 'and the river swells' in my translation, helping the reader to realise that this line is a logical progression from the previous line, which refers to 'Hochwasser', i.e. the river being in flood.

A further example of transposition is to be found: “Dann sackte der Soldat in sich zusammen und stieß *im Fallen* das Gewehr endgültig in die Tiefe” (my emphasis) (S2, L.8). This construction is simply not possible in English; a noun-verb transposition was necessary (“...as he fell...”) (T92, L.2).

4.2.1.4. Adjectives

On one occasion I felt it was necessary to add an adjective which was not present in the German. The line in question is: “...ein auf den *lehmgelben* Fluten...” (my emphasis) (S1, L.16). My primary motivation for elaborating on the German, by using an additional adjective, was in order to ensure that the new target audience would make the link between a river being in flood, and the colour of the river being unusually dark and brown. I opted to add the word ‘murky’ in my translation: “...carried along by the murky, clay-coloured waters...” (T91, L.12). I feel that this word succinctly conveys the notion that the water is a) an unusual colour (particularly when compared to the words of the following paragraph: “Von der Brückenhöhe aus schien das Wasser seicht zu sein, man konnte bis auf den Grund sehen” S1, L.25) and b) that the water is dirty. It could be argued that ‘clay-coloured’ is sufficient. However, an additional adjective was needed to ensure the target audience understood this line as the author intended; the word ‘murky’ was eminently suitable for this task.

4.2.1.5. Impersonal constructions

The German pronoun ‘man’ can be particularly difficult to translate. The nearest English equivalent is the pronoun ‘one’, but this is rarely satisfactory as this device is somewhat antiquated and certainly very formal. A common alternative to ‘one’ is ‘you’. However, this may also often be unsuitable, as it is quite colloquial and is usually used in informal or semi-informal situations. Furthermore, in some cases it may be a little ambiguous and may necessitate the reader re-reading the line. ‘You’, at first glance, may appear to refer to the reader.

When translating impersonal constructions it is important for the translator to attempt to determine if the original intention of the author was to involve the reader in some way. There are two uses of 'man' in paragraph four. They are unusual in that, upon close examination of the text, it becomes clear that the narrator is including himself in the generalised 'man'. For this reason it is perfectly acceptable, indeed preferable, to simply translate 'man' as 'I' in these two instances: "I could see right down to the bottom" (T91, L.17); "I could still see the rifle which lay in the gravel" (T91, L.22). In this way, the use of impersonal constructions in English, both types of which were in this case undesirable, could be avoided.

4.2.1.6. Conjunctions

In some cases close attention needed to be paid to certain conjunctions. The word 'und' (S2, L.14) proved problematic: "Ich wußte, daß ich ihn und die anderen nicht vergessen würde". Usually, 'und' would probably be translated by 'or', where there is negation involved. However, I hesitated to do this as I felt that there was a risk that the sense of the dead soldier belonging to the 'anderen' might be lost. In other words, 'I knew I would not forget him or the others' leaves the relationship of the others to this particular soldier slightly more open to interpretation than the same sentence with 'and' as the conjunction. "...him and the others" (T92, L.4) makes it clear that he belonged to the others in some way. This is why I chose to retain the word 'and', despite the fact that it seems slightly incorrect from a grammatical point of view.

4.2.1.7. Tense

The second-last paragraph of the preface posed particular difficulties with regard to tense. This is due to the fact that the first sentence is written in the past tense, while the third abruptly changes to the present tense (S2, L.16-18). In English, this makes for a sudden and rather uneasy transition; the tense change exacerbates the seeming lack of cohesion between the first two sentences and the remainder of the paragraph.

Nonetheless, assuming the structure of the paragraph is to be retained, it is difficult to see how this situation can be avoided. The first line must, as in German, be in the past tense. Similarly, the third and subsequent lines must be in the present tense. This is because they describe features of the town which have not changed, to say that the river *meandered* right through the centre of the town, or that the two parts *were* united by the massive bridge, would be in some way to suggest that this is no longer the case. However, there is no suggestion of this in the German, and it is clear that the narrator is describing the town as it is now and has always been.

However, it is important in this context to point out that careful attention needed to be paid to the choice of past tense for the opening line. The opening words of this line - "Es begann damals vor zehn Jahren" (S2, L 16) - consist of a temporal reference which is perhaps slightly more complex than is immediately apparent. This is because it is in fact a 'double reference' into the past. The narrator is not just remembering events of the past, he is remembering the evening he returned to the bridge, the evening on which he in turn remembered the events of ten years before. Usually this would be conveyed in English by use of the pluperfect: "It had all started ten years before." Indeed, this was my first translation. However, unfortunately this tense would only cause confusion when read in the light of the previous paragraph. Specifically, it would be taken by most readers as an anaphoric reference to the date 1945, the readers would read "It had all started ten years before", assume that *before* meant *before 1945*, and thus incorrectly conclude that 'it had all started' in 1935.

Clearly this is not what is meant by the German, nor would it make any sense in the context of the novel. Consequently, the pluperfect had to be rejected, and the temporal reference was instead greatly simplified: "It all started ten years ago" (T92, L 6). On reflection, however, this can hardly be considered a significant loss, as it is clear from the very first paragraph ("Der Zufall hatte mich wieder in die kleine Stadt geführt, und es waren zehn Jahre vergangen" S1, L 1) that the entire preface is set in the past.

It is more important to note that this is a clear example of a situation where choice of tense is crucial, as insufficient thought given to such decisions could result in major

confusion for the reader. Had I not corrected this simple mistake, the reader could quite conceivably have read much of the novel in entirely the wrong historical context.

4.2.1.8 Words

The word 'Hugelketten' (S2, L 22) proved problematic. In English we can talk of *mountain* ranges or chains, but it would be far less common for us to talk of groups of hills in the same way. Originally I intended to simply translate this word as *hills*. However, when I tried to think of a suitable adjective to compensate for the loss of the notion of *Ketten*, I decided on the word 'rolling'. My translation thus reads as follows: "It is surrounded by large forests, rolling hills and rich green fields" (T92, L 9).

This adjective is successful, and appropriate, in two respects. Firstly, it offers an appropriate collocation and conveys the concept of the town being surrounded by not just a few hills, but many hills. *Hugelketten* is strongly suggestive of panoramic views, as is 'rolling hills'. Secondly, it is in keeping with the style of language used in this very descriptive paragraph. Alliteration is used ("weiten Waldern [] Wiesen") which lends the paragraph an almost poetic feel. This alliteration is of course largely lost in translation (though not entirely: "forests [] fields"), which also helps to justify the introduction of a rather poetic adjective as a means of compensation.

This provides a practical example of the application of ideas expressed by Dingwaney and Maier, when they say that

"[] translation involves far more than looking for the closest lexical equivalent. Rather, it involves the creation of a complex tension. That is, translation, ideally, makes familiar, and thereby accessible, what is confronted as alien, maintaining the familiar in the face of otherness without either sacrificing or appropriating difference. This means that the translator must have a foot in each of two worlds and be able to mediate self-consciously between them." (1995: 304)

4 2 1 9 Pronouns

On one occasion (T91, L 11) I made the unusual choice to translate a pronoun ('ihr') which refers to the inanimate 'Brücke' with 'her'. The reason I chose to personify the bridge in this way is simple. It is clear that a strong emotional bond exists between the narrator and this bridge. In order to reinforce this bond, and to lend the bridge a personality - indeed, a character - of its own, I felt it preferable in this brief instance to use 'her' as the pronoun, rather than 'it'. Bearing in mind the title of the novel, and the fact that almost all of the action centres on this concrete structure, it is fair to say that the bridge is indeed a character in its own right. It must be stressed, however, that this decision was taken in this particular instance only, and in no way constitutes a policy for the remainder of the novel.

4 2 2 Military terminology and metaphors

4 2 2 1 Military terminology

“Der »Verein« hatte seine Freude mit Karl Horber. Man nannte ihn kurz »Zack«, seitdem Horber einen Tag lang als Schanzaufsicht eingeteilt gewesen war und jedes Kommando mit den Begleitworten »aber zack, zack« versehen hatte.” (S3, L 9)

In the case of the term *Schanzaufsicht* the apparent ambiguity of the German was to some degree maintained. Of the two potential interpretations, the idea of Horber being in charge of the actual construction of the trenches seems the less likely, and it is more likely that he was simply given command of the 'Verein' during a training exercise. However, the translation has deliberately been left a little vague. “ever since the day he had been put in charge of the trenches” (T93, L 9)

The rank of corporal was chosen for Schaubeck and Heilmann, as it seems by far the most likely. *Unteroffizier* can be an abbreviation for *Stabsunteroffizier*, meaning 'corporal'. Also, a corporal is much more likely than a sergeant to have the kind of

contact with the troops that Schaubeck is described as having. Schaubeck is directly in charge of training the recruits, a job normally assigned to corporals. Lastly, at no stage do we see either Schaubeck or Heilmann giving orders to anyone other than the seven recruits. If they were sergeants, they would be unlikely to jump the 'chain of command' in this way, and their orders would not be given direct to such a low rank of soldier, but rather their orders would be relayed by corporals.

The term *Kriegsschullehrgang* (S34, L 3) proved somewhat problematic. It is a compound word composed of the two words 'Kriegsschule' and 'Lehrgang', which are both in turn also compound words. The word 'Kriegsschule' is inevitably to some degree culture-specific. It was translated with a roughly equivalent term which is also somewhat vague. "He had become a general because he was more capable than the others in his class at the military academy" (T124, L 3)

In this way, the term has in a sense been 'domesticated', the 'foreignness' of the foreign term has been lost. However, as Venuti has written, this is an integral part of the translation process and cannot be avoided.

"[] a translation always communicates a foreign text that is partial and altered, supplemented with features peculiar to the translating language. In fact, the goal of communication can be achieved only when the foreign text is no longer inscrutably foreign, but made comprehensible in a distinctively domestic form. Translation is thus an inevitable domestication, wherein the foreign text is inscribed with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies" (Venuti, 1995: 9)

The word *Sherman* (S35, L 5) constituted an assumption in the source text – it was assumed that the reader would be familiar with the term and would know that the Sherman was a type of American tank. Since this assumption could not be made of a contemporary readership, the word 'tank' was added. "And when the first *Sherman* tank was on the bridge - that was the moment to let them have it" (T125, L 3)

4 2 2 2 Military metaphors

4 2 2 2 1 'wie eine Ladung Dynamit'

“Das und viele andere Kleinigkeiten, die sich im Verlauf der vierzehn Tage in Ernst Scholten zusammengeballt hatten, standen jetzt im Duschraum drohend hinter jedem Satz, den Ernst Scholten aus sicherer Deckung seinem Unteroffizier entgeschleuderte” (S6, L 18)

It did not always prove possible to satisfactorily convey every instance of metaphor
This is one such example The translation of this was as follows

“This, and many other little things, had built up in Ernst Scholten over the past fortnight And now, in the washroom, with every sentence that Ernst Scholten fired at his NCO from the safe cover of his companions, these feelings were like a pressure-cooker waiting to explode” (T96, L 17)

This metaphor is also successful in describing the way in which Scholten's emotions have been building up over a period of time, to the point at which they are in imminent danger of 'exploding' I was able to partly compensate for the loss of the military reference which this entailed, by translating the verb 'schleudern' with 'to fire' Thus, although one military allusion was lost, another was gained, in that Scholten is described as 'shooting' comments at Schaubeck Further compensation was achieved by introducing the verb 'explode' “ like a pressure-cooker waiting to *explode*” These compensatory devices serve to greatly make up for the loss incurred by dropping the word 'dynamite'

4 2 2 2 ‘die Locher marschierten’

“Ein Loch nach dem anderen erschien an der Decke des langen Raumes. Die Locher marschierten schnurgerade auf Unteroffizier Heilmann zu, kamen immer näher, und plötzlich riß sich Heilmann vom Tisch los” (S9, L 14)

Eventually I decided to preserve the verb ‘marschieren’ “The holes *marched* towards Corporal Heilmann in a dead straight line” (T99, L 16). While it does indeed seem a strange word to describe the movement of bullets, it was successful in conveying the idea that Heilmann is not witnessing events in real time, but rather his mind has slowed his senses. He is perceiving these dramatic few moments in slow motion, taking in every detail in an almost leisurely way. Several moments pass before he tears himself away from the table.

4 2 3 Paragraph and sentence boundaries

4 2 3 1 Paragraph boundaries

My translation strategy, which was presented in 2.1.2 and followed on from my discussion of text type in 1.2.5, proposed a ‘domestication’ approach in which the translation would be intended to conform to the norms of this text type in the target culture. It will be seen below that this was also reflected in the approach to paragraph boundaries.

Juliane House (1997) uses the term ‘cultural filter’ to refer to changes which are made in translation based on “cross-cultural differences in communicative preferences, norms and values” (House, 1997: 98). She identifies five dimensions of cross-cultural difference between English and German and refers to a range of different studies which provide ‘converging evidence’ for these. In so doing, she suggests that

“[...] language use is linked to culture and mentality, and [...] linguistic differences in the realization of discourse phenomena may be taken to reflect “deeper” differences, at a conceptual-cognitive and emotive level, in cultural preference and expectation patterns. This type of “deep difference” can have serious consequences for the process of translation in that they are likely to influence a translator’s decisions about changes in the original text. The translator may consciously or unconsciously apply a *cultural filter* in covert translation to account for cross-cultural differences in the expectation norms holding in the two cultures concerned.” (House, 1997:94-5)

It is clearly implicit here that the translator, as – one would assume – a native speaker of the target language, is sufficiently familiar with the norms of particular text types and genres in their own culture to be in a position to make an informed judgment as to which cross-cultural differences will apply for a particular translation.

In the case of my translation of *Die Brücke*, far fewer paragraph breaks were used in English than there are in the source text. This is because of the tendency in the source text to use very short paragraphs, some of which only consist of a single sentence. For instance, the line “Horber brachte Stimmung in den Haufen” (S31, L.20), which is a paragraph, was simply added onto the previous paragraph. This is perfectly acceptable in English - indeed, *more* acceptable, since norms of English-language writing dictate that a paragraph should normally consist of a self-contained unit of text which deals with a particular, discrete topic. As such, a new paragraph indicates a ‘topic-shift’:

“Between two contiguous pieces of discourse which are intuitively considered to have two different ‘topics’, there should be a point at which the shift from one topic to the next is marked.” (Brown, Yule, 1982:94-5)

This ‘structural basis for dividing up stretches of discourse’ is likely to vary considerably from one language to another. Indeed, the motivation for paragraph breaks may not even necessarily be anything to do with the text per se at all:

“[] orthographic paragraphs may be motivated purely by mechanical aspects of the writing process, such as ‘eye appeal’ or printing conventions, with little or no regard for the meanings being exchanged through texts” (Hatim, 1997: 59)

The translator thus does not have to strictly reproduce the same paragraph boundaries as are used in the source text, though this will of course depend on the text type/genre framework in which the source and target texts are based. The frequency with which paragraph breaks were used in *Die Brücke* would be highly unusual in a comparable English-language text, i.e. a war novel, as a general rule, and the approach to paragraph breaks in the translation was therefore to ‘normalize’ the paragraph structure bearing in mind these text type norms and target readership expectations.

Another example of a line which apparently justified a paragraph break in the source text is “Jetzt horchten alle, die Schulausflugstimmung war wie weggewischt” (S31, L 31). Again, this sentence was integrated into the previous paragraph in the target text: “Then they heard the sound of an engine. Scholten pricked up his ears. “Keep it down a minute, will you!” They all listened now, the boisterous school trip mood vanishing” (T122, L 3).

The following is a further example from page 47 (L 7)

“Der General unterbrach ihn mit einer Handbewegung. »Wo ist der Unteroffizier?«

Scholten schwieg, aber Mutz, im Übereifer, sagte: »Der ist weggegangen, Herr General!«”

These two lines were translated as a single paragraph (T122, L 11). It seems that the ‘printing conventions’ mentioned above may well have something to do with the tendency to make a new paragraph on each occasion that the action switches to another character.

The point of this section can best be illustrated by a comparison of the number of paragraph breaks in the source and target texts, taking chapter five as an example.

The source text contains a total of no less than 47 paragraph breaks², while the target text contains just 34. This represents a considerable decrease (in the order of 25%) in the number of paragraph breaks.

4.2.3.2. Sentence boundaries

As was stated in section 4.2.1.1., German grammar facilitates the creation of sentences which, on the whole, tend to be longer and more complex than those in English. The implication of this for the translator is that translation from German into English may frequently necessitate careful attention being paid to sentence boundaries, with the translator having to change these boundaries, or introduce new ones, as necessary.

The German sentence does not always have to be overly long, to warrant two sentences being used in English. One instance where two sentences were preferable was in the translation of the reasonably long sentence: “Entlang der Wand des Kasernenwaschraums und unter der halboffenen Tür lümmelte der ‘Verein’ herum und verfolgte mit spöttischem Interesse, wie sich Karl Horber den Schmutz herunterspülte, der bei der Übung im Granerfeld an ihm hängengeblieben war” (S3, L.4). The translation of this sentence is on T93, L.6.

The decision in a case such as this to use two sentences in the translation is not primarily motivated by considerations of syntax in the target language. After all, it would be perfectly possible to translate the above sentence using one sentence in English. ‘Possible’, in the sense that the one-sentence translation would be grammatically correct, but the new target audience would be unused to dealing with such long sentences.

In chapter three, changes to sentence boundaries were made from the very first paragraph. The third sentence of paragraph one - “Mit schrillum Pfeifentrillern” - does not contain a verb. This is a stylistic device which Gregor uses frequently but

² This figure was arrived at by counting each instance where there was an indentation from the margin

which is not appropriate in English, the stylistic and syntactical conventions of which necessitate the presence of a verb in almost any sentence. For this reason, the sentence was removed, and the loss of its semantic content was immediately compensated for in the following line. This was done by the addition of three adjectives, 'shrill', 'raw' and 'jangling' (T104, L 4-6). This device proved to be a very effective means of adapting the style to suit the changed conventions of the target language and the changed expectations of a new target readership. Overall the approach taken to sentence boundaries was one of homogenisation, with short sentences being integrated into paragraphs (as was seen in 4.2.3.1 above) and longer sentences being broken up.

Differences in the use and function of the comma between German and English meant that it was necessary to translate the following sentence as two sentences: "Die Sechzehnjährigen hatten nach der Ansprache von Leutnant Frohlich keinen Schlaf finden können, sie diskutierten noch" (S13, L 17).

Here, the comma has served to separate what are essentially two sentences. The comma cannot be used in this way in English and two sentences were required: "After Lieutenant Frohlich had spoken to them, the sixteen-year-olds had been unable to get any sleep. They were still debating what to do" (T104, L 7). The verb 'diskutieren' required expansion in English, because the verb 'to debate' begs an object in this context.

Another usage of the comma, again peculiar to German, can be seen in the line "Klaus Hager, Spitzname »der Schweiger«, hielt eine Rede" (S13, L 25). These commas could conceivably be retained if *Spitzname* were translated as 'nicknamed' (i.e. "who was nicknamed/known as"). However, for reasons of clarity it is preferable to postpone mention of the nickname until the reader has first been given some information which they will require to understand it. While the German nickname *der Schweiger* is self-explanatory, the English translation which was decided upon - 'Dumbstruck' - is somewhat cryptic and necessitates background knowledge as to Hager's behaviour. This background information is provided in two sentences: "Es war die erste [Rede] seit Tagen" and "Manchmal brachte er

stundenlang den Mund nicht auf” (both S13, L 26) By expanding the German (“ Spitzname »der Schweiger« ”) so that it forms a separate sentence, and then inserting it between the two sentences which explain and justify this choice of nickname for Hager, the translation is rendered in a clear style which facilitates target audience comprehension of the text “Klaus Hager began to speak It was the first time in days that he had said anything substantial The others had nicknamed him ‘Dumbstruck’ Sometimes he wouldn’t say anything for hours on end ” (T104, L 12)

4 2 4 Dialogue

In section 2 2 8 it was pointed out that the dialogue in *Die Brücke* is characterized by colloquial language and slang, which were defined and discussed In the sections below, some further examples will be looked at and explanations will be offered as to the approach taken in each particular case

4 2 4 1 Slang

4 2 4 1 1 *Der Heilmann laßt dich nicht im Stich, du Waschlappen!*

This is Scholten’s response to Mutz’s suggestion that Heilmann may have left them to fend for themselves (S31, L 4) His dismissal of Mutz is quite forceful and blunt, such that Mutz is somewhat offended and taken aback Mutz does not say this, rather his thoughts are voiced as an internal monologue (“Scholten konnte manchmal richtig grob werden, fand Mutz” L 6) The nature of Mutz’s response is such that an appropriately forceful translation was required It is for this reason that the derogatory adjective ‘stupid’ was inserted (“ you stupid wimp!” T121, L 13)

The rather blunt nature of the language was further conveyed by the translation of *jdn im Stich lassen* as ‘to bugger off without sb’ This was chosen in favour of other potential translations such as to leave someone ‘in the lurch’, or ‘high and dry’ In

this way, strong slang was favoured over more 'neutral' idioms. The word 'bugger' is, in some contexts, quite vulgar and obscene. This is less so the case when used in this expression, but the word nonetheless functions very effectively as an emphatic and forceful way of conveying the idea that someone has looked after their own interests first and left suddenly, without caring for the greater good. The importance of the approach taken to tackling the idiom *jdn im Stich lassen* was all the greater because of the repetition of the phrase in the opening paragraphs. It is used three times in the space of five lines (“[] wenn uns der Heilmann im Stich laßt?” [] “Der Heilmann laßt dich nicht im Stich” [] “Aber Heilmann ließ sie doch im Stich” S31, L 2-8). As such, this repetition functions as a brief, cohesive theme running through this part of the text. This device was maintained in translation.

““Damn, what if Heilmann buggered off without us?”” muttered Mutz. “Heilmann won’t bugger off without you, you stupid wimp!”” replied Scholten.

Scholten could get really rude sometimes, thought Mutz. (Was he supposed to ask for permission to speak now?) But Heilmann had buggered off without them after all.” (T121, L 12-16)

4 2 4 1 2 *Hast wohl noch Halsschmerzen auf deine alten Tage? [] Sollst krepieren, du Aas!*

The first of these sentences (S33, L 21) proved quite difficult to understand, due to the nature of the slang used. It is for this reason that this was one of the numerous points in the text which required consultation with a native speaker. It transpired that the meaning here is essentially *Hast du jetzt Angst bekommen (weil du jetzt alt bist)?* Additionally, Schlopke’s words are spiteful, disrespectful and pejorative. He bitterly resents the fact that he is being left to fight while the general returns to the relative safety of his headquarters outside, and well to the east of, the town. The general is leaving the fighting of the war to others.

The translation of this line - “Getting a bit scared now in your old age, are you?” (T123, L 15) - would have been insufficient on its own, as the implication of the

translation is not as clear as the source text. It is for this reason that addition was used - “Afraid to fight?”

The second line (“Sollst krepieren, du Aas!”) was straightforward to translate. The message here is abundantly clear. Schlopke strongly dislikes the general, so much so that he would derive satisfaction from the general’s death. Both this contempt, and the expression of hope that the general will be killed, were expressed in the translation “I hope you die, you bastard!” (L 19)

4 2 4 1 3 *du kannst mich mal*

This very offensive remark (S33, L 4), which Schlopke makes in his mind but does not actually say, was translated by the expression ‘go to hell’ (T123, L 6). It was important to make clear the distinction between what Schlopke says (“Jawoll, Herr General!”) and what he thinks. This was partly achieved by using different punctuation for his thoughts: single inverted commas were used as distinct from the double inverted commas for Schlopke’s apparently obedient and zealous reply (“Yes, quite right, sir!” T123, L 6)

4 2 4 2 Colloquial language

4 2 4 2 1 *stiftengehen*

A wide range of possible colloquial translations exists for this verb, including to ‘hop it’, ‘leg it’, ‘scarper’ and ‘skedaddle’. On two occasions (T104, L 8, T106, L 5) the colloquial expression ‘to do a runner’ was used. More colloquial language has been used where the opportunity arose in order to compensate for instances where it proved difficult to find colloquial language translations for source language words and expressions. For example, the line “Sie übernehmen den Laden hier!” (S32, L 34) presented just such a difficulty. Although the word ‘shop’ is used in English in

numerous colloquial expressions, such as ‘all over the shop’, ‘to set up shop’, ‘shut/close up shop’ and ‘talk shop’, it would be somewhat unusual to use it in this context (“You’re going to take over the shop here!”) It is for this reason that the translation “You’re going to take over things here” (T123, L 3) was opted for. The fact that, in this instance, the informal tone of the source text was to some degree lost, does not really matter, as the compensatory devices described above make up for such ‘loss’. The overall register of the source text dialogue is retained.

A further example of an instance where a colloquial use of language could not be retained was the line “Horber brachte Stimmung in den Haufen” (S31, L 20). Here, ‘Haufen’ is being used in a somewhat colloquial way, the translation “Horber lifted their spirits” (T121, L 22) involves a change of register from the informal to the neutral.

4 2 4 2 2 *Wollen mal abschließend auch noch ein bißchen in Krieg machen, nicht wahr, Schlopke!*

The tone of these words, spoken by the general to corporal Schlopke (S32-3), is strongly sarcastic and contemptuous. It is abundantly clear that he despises the corporal and that he is deriving the greatest pleasure from the opportunity to give him a thoroughly unpleasant order, a ‘kick up the arse’, as he later describes it. It is obvious that he knows full well that the *last* thing that Schlopke wants at this stage in the conflict is to be posted to the front line to await the oncoming Americans. If Schlopke does as he is ordered, he is quite likely to be killed or at least injured.

This sarcastic tone, which barely contains the general’s satisfaction and *Schadenfreude*, was the priority in the translation of this sentence. The word ‘abschließend’ was slightly problematic, as it is not entirely clear what this is ‘in conclusion’ to. It seems most likely that it is an open acknowledgement by the general that the war is almost over (in which case it is one of two such acknowledgements by the general. “Ein paar tausend mehr von der Sorte und wir konnten den Krieg noch gewinnen, Schlopke!” S33, L 9)

The word 'abschließend' was dealt with by the translation 'before the war is over' ("I'm sure you'd love the chance to see some real action before the war is over, isn't that right, Schlopke!" T123, L.4). Clearly the general's implication, when he suggests that Schlopke might like to take part in the war for a change, is that Schlopke's involvement in the war so far has not been on the front line and has not involved any danger. To a professional soldier in a time of war, this must be a grave insult. This implication has been retained by the translation of 'in Krieg machen' as to 'see some real action'. The reader of the target text can easily infer that the general does not consider Schlopke to be a soldier who has yet truly taken part in the war - and perhaps even that he does not consider Schlopke to be a real soldier at all.

4.2.5. Nicknames

New nicknames are frequently introduced during the opening chapters of *Die Brücke*. As will be seen, these posed varying degrees of difficulty (*Der 'Verein'* and *Winnetou* have been discussed in chapter two, in sections 2.2.9.1. and 2.2.9.2. respectively).

4.2.5.1. *Der Schweiger*

Defined in the Collins English Dictionary as "a familiar, pet or derisory name", the nickname can in fact have more than one function. Certainly a nickname is a familiar, informal means of referring to or addressing somebody, without using their actual name. Used among friends, use of the nickname can imply fondness - "pet" - while nicknames can also be used in a very malicious and spiteful way. In either case, the nickname often focuses on some particular aspect of a person's appearance or manner. Furthermore, the fact that the actual usage of a nickname is the same as that of an ordinary name means that the nickname must be concise, usually consisting of just one word. This conciseness in turn also often helps to lend the nickname a humorous effect. It is fair to say that, in the English-speaking world at least, nicknames are very frequently humorous. The fact that what is ostensibly the same phenomenon may in

fact function a little differently from one culture to another is a further factor to be borne in mind by the translator, and may justify the introduction of a feature, such as humour, not present in the source text

The word itself is thus of secondary importance to the function(s) it serves. In the case of the nickname *der Schweiger* (S13, L 25), and indeed *der Spatberufene*, this is perhaps just as well, since these words do not offer succinct translations in English. As has been mentioned above, a nickname must where possible be concise. The translation offered in the Collins German Dictionary for the word 'Schweiger', for example, is "man of few words". Clearly these four words could not possibly function as a nickname in English.

Numerous possibilities presented themselves in the translation of 'der Schweiger'. The primary concerns were, firstly, to convey the fact that Klaus Hager's nickname was based on his habitual silence and reluctance to speak at length, and secondly, to do so using a word which in English could credibly be employed as a nickname. It was for this latter reason that a somewhat humorous wordplay was used. However, it might be useful to first mention one or two potential translations which were rejected.

One possibility was 'Dumbdumb'. This is a play on the word 'dumdum', a name given to "a soft-nosed or hollow-nosed small-arms bullet that expands on impact and inflicts extensive laceration" (Collins English Dictionary). This nickname would thus have been in keeping with the military theme of the novel and would have helped to provide compensation for other instances where retention of military allusions or specifically military vocabulary did not prove possible. This translation was however rejected, primarily on the grounds that Hager would have been given his nickname some years before the boys were taken away from school to enlist in the *Volkssturm*. The influence of military matters on their lives would then have been somewhat less.

Obviously the English word 'dumb' has great potential where wordplay is concerned, since in addition to meaning 'mute', it is frequently used informally to mean 'stupid', 'dim-witted'. However, such wordplay might be construed as implying a slight degree of maliciousness towards Hager on the part of the 'Verein'. This is not desirable, as

the source text nickname is quite bland and neutral, and there is no suggestion that the 'Verein' think that Hager is stupid

A different wordplay was used instead, which does however contain the word 'dumb' Since Hager behaves as though he were *struck dumb*, the two words can be reversed and joined to form one word which, in fact, exists *Dumbstruck* (T104, L 14)

4 2 5 2 *Der Spatberufene*

The particular difficulty associated with this word (S19, L 2) is that a concise and succinct translation is even more elusive than for *der Schweiger* Like certain other German words, including for example *schreibfaul* and *Aufbruchsstimmung* (as in the sentence "hier herrscht eine Aufbruchsstimmung"), there is no single equivalent English word, and the means by which the concept must be expressed in English is comparatively 'clumsy'

The primary consideration for the translation of this particular nickname was twofold 1) To devise a credible nickname in English, and 2) to convey the fact that Heilmann was some years older than average Of secondary importance was the notion that Heilmann had found a *late vocation*, the words which most closely approach the German *spatberufen* This would have been of primary importance had it been possible for 'late vocation' to function in some way as a nickname, which is, however, not possible In other words, the core idea of the German nickname, namely that Heilmann had found a vocation late in life which his much younger colleagues had clearly found much sooner, had to be 'relegated' to a secondary status since it simply could not satisfy a primary consideration As will be seen, however, this did not necessitate complete abandonment of the concept, the translation of which was eventually achieved by compensation Finally, of tertiary importance was what can perhaps be described as the 'tone' of the German nickname, which is neither imaginative nor humorous It is hard to imagine that Heilmann would have been addressed directly in this way It is more likely that it was a means by which his colleagues referred to him amongst each other

Consideration of the above priorities resulted in the choice of 'mature student' as a translation (T109, L 7). This choice achieved numerous objectives. Firstly, it successfully conveyed the idea that Heilmann was exceptionally older than average. Although 'mature student' is a title usually reserved for university students, trainee officers are also students who attend classes and sit exams in a similar way to students at a university. For this reason, the TT nickname can pass as being credible, even though it is usually used in a quite different way. Furthermore, the TT nickname has an effect quite similar to that described above, in that it is neither particularly imaginative nor humorous. Finally, it would be likely to be used in a very similar way to the ST nickname, in that Heilmann's colleagues might have referred to him as being 'the mature student' amongst each other, but would be less likely to address him directly as such.

As was mentioned above, the meaning contained in the ST nickname was achieved in the TT by compensation. This proved quite simple: the ST sentence was expanded to include the clause "because of his late vocation" (T109, L 7). In this way, the ST meaning could be retained.

4.2.5.3 Zack

I decided on 'Snappy' (T93, L 9) as Horber's nickname. The primary consideration in this choice was that the nickname should tie in with the explanation given in the source text: "Man nannte ihn kurz 'Zack', seitdem Horber einen Tag lang als Schanzaufsicht emgeteilt gewesen war und jedes Kommando mit den Begleitworten 'aber zack, zack' versehen hatte" (S3, L 10). One of the nearest equivalents to this in English is the phrase 'and make it snappy!'. 'Snappy' is reasonably credible as a nickname, while the reason given as to how Horber came to be given this nickname is also credible.

4 2 5 4 *Das Vieh*

This nickname, which is used for Schaubeck in chapter one (S4, L 3), required a slight modulation in English. 'Vieh' is an informal pejorative word used to describe unpleasant people. In choosing a nickname for Schaubeck, I wanted to retain the idea of some form of livestock, while also choosing an animal which suitably epitomised Schaubeck's character. 'Bull' (T94, L 5) fulfilled these criteria. A bull is an animal which is powerful, aggressive and potentially dangerous. These characteristics equally apply to the malicious Schaubeck.

4 2 6 Metaphor

In the text analysis mention was made of the difficult 'Scheibenwischer' – or 'windscreen-wiper' – metaphor, which is used twice in the section *Ein General und sein Befehl* (which concludes chapter five). Although this metaphor did indeed prove difficult, the problem was eventually dealt with by first identifying the *rhetorical function*, also called *rhetorical purpose*, of the metaphor, which was quite straightforward, and then arriving at a target-language metaphor which could credibly be used to achieve the same rhetorical function, which was somewhat more time-consuming. As Hatim and Mason have written,

“Solutions to problems of translating metaphor should, in the first instance, be related to rhetorical function” (Hatim, Mason, 1990: 233)

The function of the 'Scheibenwischer' metaphor is to show that the general has learned to ignore any 'ungute Gefühle' which surface in his mind as emotional responses to the implications of his actions. Such feelings of discomfort or guilt are unwelcome in the general's mind and he quickly dismisses them. They are 'wiped away'. Nevertheless, although this metaphor is effective in German, my view was that it would not function as well in English and that an alternative metaphor was required.

The metaphor of the ‘bulldozer’ was employed as a translation (T124, L 11) This metaphor was insufficient on its own and required qualification in two respects, firstly by adding the adjective ‘emotional’ (“then his emotional ‘bulldozer’ got to work”), and additionally by elaborating on the metaphor to explain what it is that the ‘bulldozer’ actually *does* when it ‘gets to work’ Both of these added pieces of information were necessary in order for the metaphor to achieve the necessary rhetorical function They are in my view successful in doing so and clearly convey what is going on in the general’s mind

“He thought about the seven lads and felt ill-at-ease for a few seconds, but then his emotional ‘bulldozer’ got to work, shovelling these thoughts to the back of his mind ” (T124, L 10)

By elaborating on the metaphor, its meaning and implications become firmly established in the reader’s mind, such that it will be easily recalled on the second occasion that it is used (in the very final line of this chapter), no explanation was then necessary

“In the general’s mind, the emotional ‘bulldozer’ got back to work ” (T125, L 20)

“Im Gehirn des Generals arbeitet wieder der Scheibenwischer ” (S35, L 27)

It should be pointed out that the modulation involved in the translation of both instances of this metaphor (Gehirn → mind) was a conscious one Of course ‘mind’ is far less ‘harsh’ a word than ‘brain’, but this harshness is more than compensated for by the use of the ‘bulldozer’ metaphor, which has much more forceful connotations than the comparatively puny ‘windscreen-wiper’

4 2 7 Comprehension/Interpretation difficulties

Mention was made in the text analysis of certain parts of the source text which posed comprehension difficulties. These were discussed with native speakers in an attempt to clarify these sentences and resolve apparent ambiguities. In fact, for the three sentences in question, these discussions merely had the effect of clarifying the fact that some confusion did indeed exist.

4 2 7 1 *Und der hielt »aufbauende Reden«*

Although it is not entirely clear why the author chose to punctuate this sentence as he did, the difficulties posed by the line (S33, L 26) were to some degree resolved. This was done by re-reading chapter six, which contains information which can be brought to bear on an interpretation of the line. This information is contained in the following two paragraphs.

“Ja, man setzte Vertrauen in sie. Vertrauen! Schlopkes aufbauende Reden hatten ihren Zweck erfüllt.

Die sieben hingen begeistert an jedem Wort, das über seine Lippen kam, fühlten sich unter Männern, wenn Schlopke jeder seiner Binsenweisheiten ein schlupfriges Pendant gegenüberstellt” (S36, L 4)

It will be remembered from the text analysis that one possible reason for the use of *Anführungszeichen* was to denote irony, and that the meaning of ‘aufbauende Reden’ was not to be taken literally. However, it is clear from the lines quoted above that Schlopke’s ‘Reden’ were indeed ‘aufbauend’. This rules out the possibility that the sentence in chapter five is ironic as such. However, it is possible that the punctuation is intended to indicate that Schlopke does not believe in what he says. He succeeds in making the boys very eager and enthusiastic, but he does not believe his own words. For this reason, the punctuation was retained. “And he began to give the boys a few words to “boost their morale”” (T123, L 18)

4 2 7 2 *Es steht nicht nur ein Gegner im Land*

The interpretation suggested in the text analysis, where ‘Gegner’ is a personification of time, and time is the general’s second ‘enemy’, does seem to be the most plausible explanation of this sentence (S34, L 26). Time is the general’s primary concern, and it is the motivating factor behind his actions. He needs to buy as much time as possible for his seven thousand troops.

A translation of this line such as “There isn’t just one opponent in the country” would have made little sense, and would merely have caused confusion. Instead, the best strategy was to establish the most likely meaning of the source text and convey that meaning in the translation. “Their second enemy was time” (T124, L 18).

An alternative possibility could have been to remain equally vague – and somewhat cryptic – and to have translated the line as “There was more than one enemy to consider”. However, this line would be likely to be misinterpreted as referring to the Russians.

Since the whole of the paragraph is concerned with the encircled troops, it is probable that the line is intended to refer to the troops also. It is for this reason that the anaphoric reference ‘their’ was used, the possessive adjective standing in place of the ‘seven thousand troops’. Besides, it seems that the general himself has little to fear from either enemy anyway, since he is careful to keep well behind the front.

4 2 7 3 *Dann konnten die siebentausend aus dem Kessel heraus sein, konnten unterwegs sein in die andere Richtung*

Again, in this case (S34, L 28) the apparent ambiguity of the source text has been removed by a translation which opts for the most likely meaning.

“Then the seven thousand men could get out of the pocket and start moving away from the front” (T124, L 19).

The reason for this decision was the fact that to have translated “in die andere Richtung” as “in the opposite direction” might have caused some confusion for the target readership: opposite to what? There is no other reference in the text to assist in the interpretation of this line. This explicitation is in line with the domestication approach I took in my translation, which was outlined in section 2.1.2. “Translation strategy”.

Although ‘encircled area’ and ‘pocket’ were suggested in the text analysis as the two possible translations for ‘Kessel’, it is interesting to point out here that an instance was found in an English-language text where the literal translation of this term - ‘cauldron’ - was used in a similar context (the entrapment of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad):

“Berlin was already proclaiming the capture of Stalingrad, and to Hitler’s eyes no loss of life could compensate for his own loss of face if it were not quickly confirmed; Paulus must have as many men as could be shipped to him and he must feed them into the cauldron without scruple.” (Pitt, 1989:136)

Of course, it is impossible to say whether this use of the word is anything more than coincidence. In this context, the word is more likely being used not only to describe the fact that the German troops were surrounded, but also to imply that they were being decimated.

4.2.8. Swear words

As was proposed in the text analysis chapter, considerations regarding the changing use of swear words over the last fifty years meant that it was necessary to revise them somewhat for a modern audience. For instance, the word ‘Drecksack’, used on pages ten (L.27) and eleven (L.2), was translated as ‘bastard’ (T94, L.21; T95, L.5). This may be a more vulgar word than the German, but it needed to be in order to achieve the same effect. It must be made clear that Scholten is being very insulting towards

Schaubeck, not only because of the insult itself, but also because of the fact that these insults deliberately show gross disrespect for Schaubeck's rank

A similar example can be found in the translation of the line *Oh, du heiliger Strohsack!* (S24, L 28) This was translated as "Oh, for fuck's sake!" (T115, L 14) While a translation such as "goodness gracious me!" might be said to be 'equivalent', it is hardly appropriate for a readership of today and would certainly seem more than faintly ludicrous in the context, given that Heilmann was "wütend" a few moments ago and "dann fluchte er, ellenlang, dreckig und ordinar" (S24, L 17) Since Heilmann is furiously angry at being asked to effectively defend the bridge to the last 'man', and is clearly prone to the use of very vulgar and obscene words on occasions when he is upset, it is appropriate to illustrate this by use of a vulgar word, given the opportunity This does not mean that such a decision is taken lightly, nor that vulgar words should be used liberally

4 2 8 1 *Ich mochte bloß wissen [] wie die Unterstutzung aussieht*

This line (S24, L 20) is of interest, since on this occasion the word 'fucking' was introduced despite the fact that there was no such expression used in the German The reason for this decision was primarily the fact that what is clearly conveyed in the German would not be clearly conveyed in English without some elaboration - in this case, the introduction of an adjective

It can be clearly deduced from the source text that Heilmann fully expects the reinforcements to be of a very poor standard indeed At this stage in the war there are no reserves left, at least none worthy of the name, so that the only last resort available to people like the general is to conscript youngsters and old men By using a translation where Heilmann effectively curses his 'reinforcements' in advance, his expectation that his 'fresh troops' will be basically just civilians in uniform can be conveyed "I can't wait to see what sort of fucking reinforcements we're getting!" (T115, L 8)

4 2 9 Humour

The subject of the translation of humour is a notoriously vexed and problematic one, not least due to the fact that the very question as to what constitutes humour can vary widely from culture to culture. Humour is frequently present in the good-natured exchanges which take place between the boys in the novel, particularly in the opening scene in chapter one, when the 'Verein' watch Horber as he showers. They joke about him, and each tries to outdo the other in thinking up humorous comments.

In approaching this difficult issue, the translator must establish priorities based on the function of the humour in the source text. In the case of chapter one and, specifically, the opening scene, the actual semantic content of the humorous comments is clearly of limited significance. More important is the fact that, as is typical of boys of this age, Horber's friends are having some good-humoured fun at his expense. It is not in any way intended as malicious or hurtful.

Since the priority in this case is not the semantic content of the original, the translator can afford a little more liberty than usual in fulfilling the greater priority, namely, the function of the sentences in the source text. It was this consideration which determined the strategy for translating the line "Mach den Bauch nicht naß, Zack, sonst rostet der auch!" (S3, L 20)

The fact that the verb 'rosten' is in fact a reference to Horber's red hair is not immediately apparent. Furthermore, it is possible that this distance between the verb 'to rust' and Horber's hair colour would be accentuated in translation. The net effect of a literal translation of the line could thus be to confuse the reader as to what the line means and why it is funny. It was to avoid this, and to achieve the desired effect, that I decided to change the line somewhat. Nonetheless, the change is not enormous, and the idea of rust is retained. "Keep the water off your head! Your hair is rusty enough as it is!" (T93, L 15)

4 2 10 Modulations

A modulation is generally understood to mean a translation device whereby the semantic value of a sentence is retained, but where this semantic value is conveyed through a shift in emphasis. As will be seen, this was necessary at numerous points throughout the translation.

The first such instance was in the very second line of chapter one: “Er tat es vorsichtig, so daß der kalte Strahl weder voll auf seine Brust noch voll auf seinen Rücken traf” (S3, L 1). The meaning is clearly expressed in the German, but presents difficulties in translation. Horber is under a very cold shower and is trying to minimise the discomfort caused him by the cold water by ensuring that neither his back nor his front takes the full brunt of the freezing stream.

It was necessary to find an alternative means of conveying this information, since a direct translation would have been somewhat ‘clumsy’ (e.g. “He did it carefully, so that the cold stream neither hit him directly on his chest nor on his back”). I opted for the following modulation: “so that the cold stream was distributed equally over his chest and back” (T93, L 4). The semantic content of this is essentially identical to the original.

4 2 10 1 [] mit gebeugtem Nacken, als saße dort ein Gespenst und schwingte unermüdlich die Geißel

This highly evocative description of the battle-weary soldiers (S22, L 19) required some modulation and expansion in English. Firstly, in English we do not bow our necks, but rather our heads. Nor, in any case, would we say that someone sat on our necks, but rather on our shoulders. The mental image conveyed by the German must be conveyed in English with reference to different parts of the body, even though the image is the same (“heads bowed as though some demon sat astride their shoulders.” T113, L 10). The word ‘Gespenst’ also required some modulation, since the word ‘ghost’ in English does not necessarily evoke the same feelings of fear. A

‘ghost’ is not appropriate to the image in any case, since our concept of ghosts in English does not allow the degree of ‘interaction’ with humans as ‘Gespenst’ apparently does. For this reason, ‘Gespenst’ was translated as ‘demon’. Finally, it can be understood from the German (“ und schwinge unermüdlich die Geißel ”), without a need for much interpretation, that the reason the soldiers are being ‘whipped’ is to force them on. They have a tormented, tortured look and are bowing under the spirits they carry with them. This implicit information was made explicit in translation by the words “ forcing them on” (T113, L 11)

4.2.10.2 “Aber der Posten an der Westmauer weiß Bescheid”

This line (S10, L 4) required two modulations. To translate *Mauer* by ‘wall’ could have led to misinterpretation of the sentence. ‘On the west wall’ might be taken a little too literally, the reader assuming that the sentry was actually patrolling a large wall by walking along the top of it (as in a castle, for instance). However, this sentry is most likely controlling the movement of vehicles and personnel through one of several gates (the *Kasernentor* was mentioned in chapter one, on page twelve). For this reason it is best to remain unambiguous, and to employ a modulation - “ on the west gate ” (T100, L 8)

The second modulation which was necessary in this line involved the translation of *weiß Bescheid*. Arguably, however, the translation also constitutes something of an interpretation and elaboration of the original. I opted to translate this as “I’ve had a word with ” (T100, L 8). It seems clear that this is essentially what is meant, the semantic information is thus more or less the same. Also the somewhat surreptitious tone of the source text has been retained.

The anecdotal description of Schaubeck’s bullying of Mutz in the final paragraphs of the same chapter (chapter two) proved particularly problematic, and required two modulations. The first was in the translation of the line *Knie beugt, streckt, Knie beugt, streckt* (S12, L 34). ‘Knee’ was modulated to ‘leg’, though this was not strictly necessary. It was however necessary to make the noun (‘leg’) plural. The second

modulation was in the translation of the verb *pumpen*, which was difficult to translate as there is no equivalent in English which functions in the same way. Here, the word is used to convey the great physical exertion on the part of Mutz. This function was thus fulfilled by an alternative verb which also conveys the notion of exertion, namely sweating. “And suddenly, in place of the blond, red-faced Albert Mutz, Lieutenant Frohlich saw his own son. Saw him panting and sweating. His legs straightening, bending, straightening, bending.” (T102, L 22)

4.2.11 Problematic sentences and words

4.2.11.1 *wegen der Hohenluft, sagte Scholten*

This is the explanation which is offered for Scholten’s preference for sleeping on the top bunk (S14, L 8). The difficulty arises with the word *Hohenluft*, which would usually mean ‘mountain air’ but which is being used here in a humorous way, as though the difference in height between the top and bottom bunk were significant enough to produce a difference in air quality. Obviously this claim of Scholten’s is not meant seriously, we already know that he is fond of making silly remarks. Just such a ‘silly remark’ is thus what is required in the target text. By translating *sagte* as ‘he claimed’, the reader is alerted to the fact that the remark is indeed not to be taken seriously, this is quite clear in the source text but might be less clear in English if the remark were prefaced by ‘he said that’.

The translation of the sentence in its entirety reads “He claimed he preferred the purer air up there” (T104, L 22). This information was not stated so explicitly in the source text. An English-speaking readership might not so readily make the connection between height and air quality, such that a more literal translation would only serve to confuse.

4.2.11.2. Dabei prädestiniert ihn allein schon sein Name zum Führer

This statement (S19, L.25), which seems to be made in a somewhat sarcastic and humorous way, contains two references. The first is to Heilmann's name - "...sein Name..." - which we only know as 'Heilmann' up to this point. However, we are soon to learn that his first name is 'Adolf'. The word 'Name' in this sentence is thus simultaneously an anaphoric and a cataphoric reference, referring as it does to both a surname and a first name, the former which the reader knows and the latter which the reader does not yet know but will soon learn (in the line: "Unter den Vermissten befindet sich Adolf Heilmann" S19, L.35). The second reference is to the 'Führer', here clearly meant in the sense of 'Hitler' as opposed to merely a leader of men.

The link between Heilmann's name and Hitler is twofold. The more obvious of the two is that fact that they share the same first name. However, the surname 'Heilmann' also contains the word *Heil*, a somewhat antiquated form of greeting which gained prominence during the Third Reich, being used not only as a means of greeting Hitler himself, but also as a general greeting, particularly between soldiers: "Heil Hitler!"

It is fair to assume that a contemporary English-speaking readership will know that Hitler's first name was Adolf, and that they will know that he was fond of being referred to as the *Führer*. Additionally, it can be assumed that the readership will be familiar with the German word *Heil*, and the fact that it is a form of greeting which was particularly used during the Third Reich. This assumption can primarily be made because of the popularity and profusion of English-language films which deal with the war in particular or with Hitler's Germany in general. Such films continue to be made despite the fact that the war ended well over half a century ago. Among the more recent examples are *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). More often than not, portrayals of German soldiers in film have been little more than caricatures rather than authentic depictions, but most such films, good and bad, attempt to lend themselves a vestige of perceived 'Germanness', and a flavour of Nazism, by using some of the better-known trappings of Hitler's 'Reich'. The "Heil Hitler!" greeting and the German word 'Führer' count among the most popular of these.

It is for this reason that an English-speaking readership can be expected to know that the word 'Fuhrer' refers to Hitler, and that, as is pointed out in the source text, 'Heilmann' is a rather ironic name for a man who, unlike his three hundred colleagues, has failed officer training. However, in order to ensure that these references were understood by the target readership, it was decided to draw them into the sentence itself and make them more clear. "All the same, with a name like 'Adolf *Heil-mann*', you'd swear he was destined to become the Fuhrer himself" (T109, L 22)

Use of italics and a hyphen was employed to draw the reader's attention to the word 'Heil', which would have otherwise most likely been overlooked.

4.2.11.3 *Und es wurde interessant*

This line is interesting (S21, L 18), since this seems to be a direct comment by the narrator himself, confirming Heilmann's assertion to Scholten that "Es wird noch interessant genug werden" (S21, L 16). As an omniscient narrator, he even knows what is going to happen, and not just everything that happens at the moment.

The fact that the line is serving both to foretell the future and to confirm Heilmann's words was conveyed in the translation by using the emphatic form of the past tense "And things did get interesting" (T112, L 12). This translation makes it clear that this is a reference forward in time from the temporal perspective of events in chapter four, i.e. that things *were to* get interesting.

It is also interesting to note that this line may indeed serve a third function. At this point in the novel the reader may be finding the progress of the plot somewhat slow. Indeed, little is in fact happening - the boys and Heilmann are basically waiting around on the bridge. Up to this point, events have been in keeping with the ironic military maxim 'hurry up and wait!'. There was a brief flurry of frenetic activity following the sounding of the alarm, but this is followed by a lengthy period of waiting about. There is a potential risk that it is not only the characters in the novel

who might get bored and restless, but that the reader may also begin to find the story somewhat boring. The line *Und es wurde interessant* serves thus not only to reassure Scholten, but also the reader, that action can be expected. For the reader, it is a spur to encourage further reading.

4.2.12 Repetition

There are numerous instances where particular words and phrases are repeated several times. Such repetition can be used to achieve a dramatic effect, to act as a thread linking a series of thoughts or to show the progression of an argument.

Page 21 is a case in point. The first notable example is found in the second and third sentences of the first paragraph: “Wenn man das ganz genau nimmt, war es fast ein Befehl von einem Vorgesetzten. Wenn man es ganz genau nimmt.” This repetition was mirrored in translation: “Strictly speaking [] Strictly speaking” (T105, L 16-17). Similarly, the word *Erfahrung* is repeated in lines four and five of the same paragraph: “Und der Mann hat Erfahrung. Aber wir haben keine Erfahrung.” In this instance, *Erfahrung* was translated as *experience* and was also repeated (T105, L 18).

An extreme example of repetition, again on page 21 (L 11-18), is the use of the word *interessant*, which is used here by Scholten no less than six times.

“Es wird hollisch interessant. Es wird bestimmt hollisch interessant. Fragt sich bloß, ob's nicht zu interessant wird. Ich denke an den Schaubeck. Für den war's auch interessant. Andererseits, wenn wir auf Draht sind, können wir warten, bis es interessant ist, und wenn's zu interessant wird, dann können wir immer noch abhauen.”

This word contains a subtle mixture of euphemism and naivety on the part of Scholten, both being reinforced by the repeated use of the word. The reference to Schaubeck's death indicates that he is fully aware of what the full implications of 'interessant' might mean for the 'Verein', but there is nonetheless a prevailing sense

of innocence and naivety in this choice of word, which is reinforced by its repetition and also by Scholten's assertion that escaping death will simply be a matter of running away when things start to get too dangerous

In this particular case, repetition has served to reinforce Scholten's attitude to the imminent battle in the mind of the reader and, by extension, to show the reader that the boys do not see war for what it is – despite having just being given, with Schaubeck's sudden death at the hands of an enemy fighter pilot, a glimpse of the reality which faces them – and continue to see war as some sort of exciting, 'interesting', experience. Repetition can also be used in English to achieve the same effect. For this reason, the repetition was maintained. The dual sense of euphemism and naivety is preserved by the direct translation of *interessant* as 'interesting'

However, there were also numerous instances where repetition was avoided in the translation. This was for stylistic reasons and often involved the use of pronouns, particularly for references to the seven boys. Repeated use of "the seven boys" and "the sixteen-year-olds" was occasionally avoided by simply using "they". In section 2.1.2 "Translation strategy", and elsewhere in this thesis, mention has been made of the importance of meeting the target readership's needs and expectations. In those instances where repetition was avoided I decided that my readership might not appreciate being constantly reminded of how many boys there are in the story or how old they are. There is no need to continually provide readers with information they already have. However, occasional reference to the boys' age is certainly useful, since this is an anti-war novel and a key element in the novel's anti-war message is the fact that these soldiers are boys and not men.

Repetition was also avoided on other occasions. For instance, one example of a different situation where repetition was avoided, again for reasons of style, is in my translation of the following line

"Er zeigte seine Papiere, mußte sie zeigen" (S29, L 13) as

"He showed his identification papers, he had no choice" (T119, L 18)

I could have translated the second part of this sentence as “he had to show them”, but I decided that it was preferable to avoid repeating the same verb and to avoid referring to the identification papers again

4 2 13 Conclusion

This commentary has provided an overview of some of the more interesting areas of difficulty and outlined the various solutions which were reached and translation strategies which were employed. A recurring theme was the importance of identifying the function of particular words and phrases before attempting to overcome the problems which they posed.

The translation process does of course involve many thousands of decisions - if indeed they can be quantified at all - and the reader may well have found other areas of interest which have not been dealt with in the commentary. Unfortunately, it is impossible to write about everything. However, it is hoped that this chapter has offered an interesting insight into the reasoning behind my translation and the many factors which were taken into account throughout.



Scholten atmete muhsam, dann versuchte er zu sprechen »Nicht vergessen«, sagte er »Nicht vergessen «

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis has provided a practical example of literary translation. Not only were many theoretical issues explored, but the added historical dimension of the text – which is a major factor in the translation process – was also dealt with.

Chapter one provided a short introduction to the thesis, offering a brief biography of Manfred Gregor and a look at some issues in literary translation theory. Robert Rosen's translation was considered, and the reasons for the choice of chapters one to five as the focus for this thesis were also explained.

Chapter two offered a lengthy text analysis of the source text. This chapter began with a look at the likely target readership, and also appraised the status of foreign-language translations in the English-speaking world. For information purposes, a summary of the action was then given. During the course of the text analysis proper, the preface was dealt with separately to the five chapters. The analysis offered an in-depth look at such issues as military terminology, culture-specific terms, presuppositions, paragraph and sentence boundaries, colloquial language, slang and swear words, nicknames, metaphor, and instances where comprehension and interpretation of the source text proved difficult.

My translation (chapter three) was followed by the final chapter of the thesis, which offered a commentary on my translation and a look at the reasons behind certain translation decisions. Again, the preface was dealt with in a separate section. The subject-matter of the commentary for the most part deals with the same kinds of issues as were discussed in the analysis, but it was only after having completed the translation process that the full range of difficulties and points of interest became apparent.

On the whole, I must say that I found this practical, hands-on exploration of literary translation to be a challenging, arduous but also very rewarding process. It provided me with a much clearer insight into not only literary translation itself, but also the

academic theory which examines translation and the myriad issues involved. It is to be hoped that the reader has found this exploration as interesting as I have.

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3

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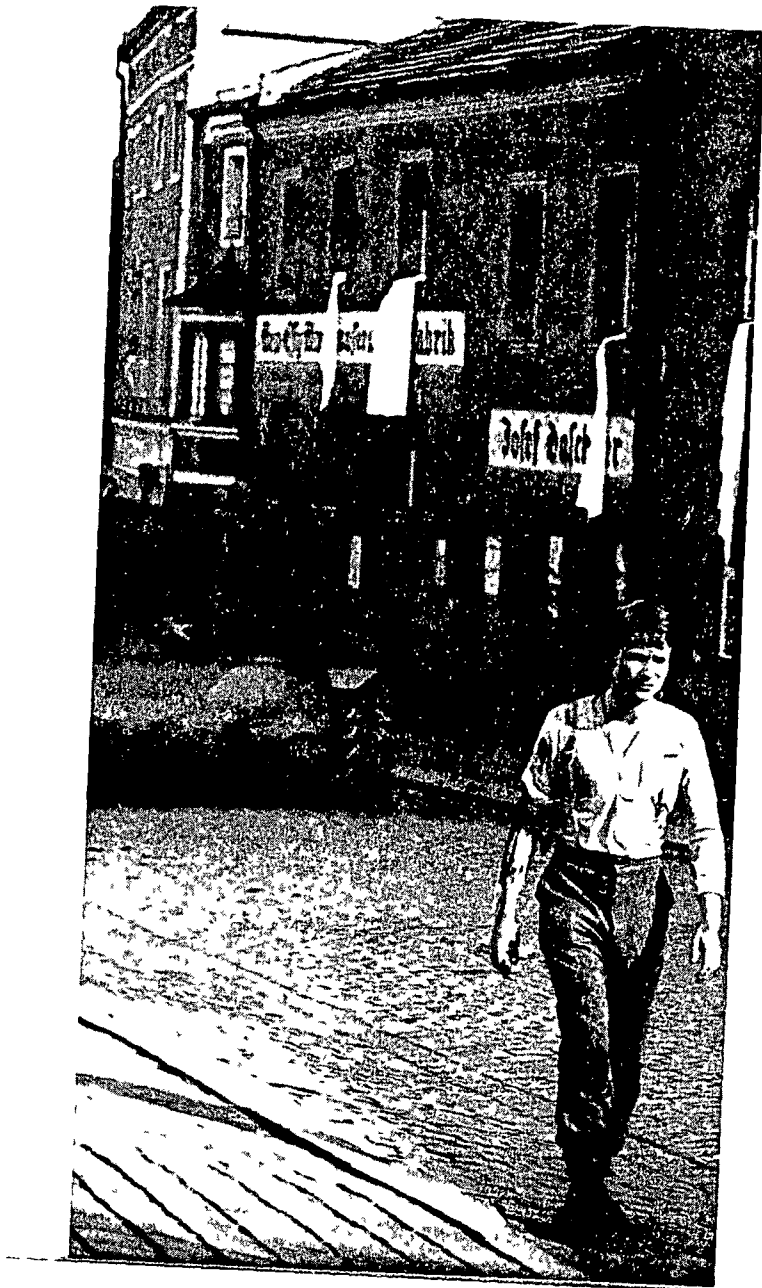
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Photographs taken from *Die Brücke* - Bernhard Wicki's

1959 screen adaptation - reproduced

in the novel's 1985 edition



Appendix

Rosen translation

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It was chance that led me back to the little town—ten years later. But was it chance? As I stood on the bridge that evening and looked down into the river, I knew it was more my desire to return to the bridge that had brought me back. I stood on the wide pavement leaning over the railing, looked down into the water, and from time to time turned to gaze at either bank.

It was a beautiful bridge and the little town could be proud of it. The massive quarry stones stood firm against high tides. It was absorbing to stand on the bridge in the spring when the river brought the melting snow down from the mountains. Sometimes then a tree-trunk, carried along by muddied yellow waters, thundered against the pilings; boiling foam, helpless against the strength of the bridge, surged about its foundations. On beautiful summer days it was a pleasure to watch the rowers come downstream, to see their tanned bodies in the racing boats.

As I stood on the bridge on this May evening, the river brought neither flood waters nor rowers. From the height of the bridge the water seemed shallow. One could see to the bottom. Near the centre of the river bed lay a huge rock, left behind when the bridge was built in 1935. Just beyond the rock was a spot that had changed little in the decades since. There the broad back of the powerful stone prevents the deposit of debris, and the storm-gun lying on the gravelly bottom can still be seen today. It is a 1944 model. The magazine is empty.

The weapon had slipped out of a German soldier's hand on May 2nd, 1945, at 5 20 in the afternoon, had

glided between the railings, caught at the magazine, and swung to and fro. For about a second. Then the soldier collapsed, and, falling, pushed the storm-gun downward. The soldier had had his sixteenth birthday only a month earlier. As he collapsed, his lips moved as though they were forming the words of a prayer. I knew that I would not forget him or the others.

It all began ten years before, in the barracks of this little German town. To be exact, on the first of May, 1945.

The river meandered gently through the centre of the town, dividing it into two halves. The link was the massive bridge. The town lay in the midst of a magnificent landscape: wide woods, chains of hills, and dark-green meadows. Once two wanderers met on one of the hills overlooking the town.

"I'd like to be buried in a place like this!" one of them sighed. "Not I," the other said and took a deep breath. "I'd like to live here!"

They had both meant the same thing.

I

KARL Horber had just stepped under the shower. The water was cold as ice, and he took care not to get it directly on his breast or his back. Gingerly he let it trickle down his narrow shoulders.

Farther along the wall of the barracks washroom, below the half-open door, the Gang idled about. With mock interest they watched Horber as he tried to wash away the dirt that still clung to him from the field-drill. They had fun with Horber. He was called "Chop-chop" because on the day he had been assigned to lead the platoon in a detail Horber had added the words "chop-chop!" to every command. Horber belonged to the Gang himself, and was well liked. With his protruding ears, freckled face, and flame-red hair, this lad of sixteen was used to ridicule.

He proved again, under the shower, that he could take it. For the Gang were not sparing with helpful hints:

"Just don't get your belly wet, Chop-chop, it might rust on you!"

"Put your ears back if you want to get some water on your neck!"

"It's a shame we can't have your girl watch you now, Man, how does she ever get enough looking at you!"

They roared with laughter after each remark, and immediately another member of the Gang tried to come up with an even funnier one. Karl Horber laughed too. Not because this was the best defence. He was so full of good cheer, he simply had to laugh at jokes and funny stuff. Even jokes about himself.

Horber laughed, and his whole body—the lanky legs, the stomach, the convex back with its bony shoulders—seemed to shake with laughter. Then suddenly Schaubeck stood in the doorway. Noncom. Schaubeck, known as “The Beast”.

Nobody knew who had given Schaubeck that name. Nobody ever thought it necessary to ask. Schaubeck had the reputation of being able to straighten out the most obstinate recruit, and no one ever questioned it. As long as he kept his mouth shut he seemed harmless enough. But there was something ominous about his voice, which always had a tinge of sarcasm. His voice sounded ominous even when, with exaggerated cheerfulness, he displayed his military knowledge. Still more when he shouted, and most of all when he whispered.

“Horber,” he whispered, “you goat. Can’t you even wash yourself properly? Do you want me to send for your mother and have her wash your behind?”

Then louder: “Get under that shower, maaarch!”

Horber stood motionless under the shower. Schaubeck turned the water tap on as far as it would go. He was by no means through with Horber when he heard a voice from the far corner to which the Gang had withdrawn—low, but clearly audible: “Turn it off, you bastard!”

Quiet.

“Who was it?” Schaubeck screamed.

Silence.

Louder: “Who was it?”

Silence.

Schaubeck, very softly now: “I want to know which one of you it was, do you understand? Or I’ll break you, so help me, I’ll knock the shit out of you!”

Dead silence in the Gang. Suddenly the same voice as before: “Like hell you will, filthy bastard!”

A calm, deep voice, sounding a trifle bored. The Gang knew it was Ernst Scholten, the snob among them: keen

musician, fanatical about Bach, and shied away from girls. Had once been arrested for vandalism.

The Gang was proud of Scholten, but at the same time also a little afraid of him. He was, at sixteen, mature for his age, and capable of doing things that other boys of his class did not even dare think about.

Now too the Gang was in the dark about Scholten's real motives. Agreed, Schaubeck tormented Horber—but was a little water going to kill him? Why pick a fight with Schaubeck over a thing like that? The Gang did not immediately realize that Scholten had reached the critical point, that he was simply fed up. None of the seven had felt the mistreatment of the past fourteen days as painfully as he had. It had begun the very first time he found himself face to face with Schaubeck.

"What's your name?"

"Scholten." Then, after a moment's hesitation: "Ernst—Ernst Scholten."

Schaubeck seemed surprised: "Scholten? What a name! First time I've ever heard it. Brother, how can anyone be named Scholten?"

Schaubeck loved these little jokes and usually waited for the laughter that followed. But the six who stood around him and Scholten had not yet learned when Schaubeck expected them to laugh, and had remained silent.

Schaubeck continued: "Ever hear anything about civilization, Scholten?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Yes, sir! that's *yessir* you mug, wake up! And the haircut is also part of our civilization. It is one of the achievements of civilization, wouldn't you say so?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Get going man, have 'em clear that jungle. Let them take it all off. Dismiss!"

Ernst Scholten's haircut was indeed a far cry from standard army regulation cut, but he was simply not used to being told when he should go to the barber. And so he

felt every snip of the clippers, as he sat in the barber's stool an hour later, as a personal humiliation. This and a host of other petty annoyances accumulated in the past two weeks, was now like a charge of dynamite behind every sentence Scholten hurled at his Sergeant from a safe cover.

An unusually tense atmosphere: Karl Horber trembling, naked and unhappy under the still running shower, clutching his thighs. With his back to him Schaubeck, cold rage in his heart, his face turned to the six in the corner, lurking. The Gang, Walter Forst, Siegi Bernhard, Albert Mutz, Jürgen Borchart, Klaus Hager, and Scholten, were quietly waiting.

The five around Scholten were somewhat slow to follow. They began to sense, however, that there was more to this than one of Winnetou's usual pranks.

Scholten had come by this Indian nickname a long time ago. His jet-black hair, his lean, yellowish face with the sharply protruding nose and chin had something warlike about it. There were some people who formed an intense dislike for Scholten from the very first moment on. Schaubeck was one of them. What next? the Gang wondered. How was this little scene going to end?

Just as Schaubeck stared them down, one after another, as though he could detect the one who had spoken out this way, the siren sounded.

Air-raid alarm.

Schaubeck whispered: "We'll have more to say about this later," and marched off.

Noncom. Schaubeck and Alcohol

Born in 1903. First name: Alois. Full name: Alois Schaubeck. Professional soldier. Specialist in the handling of men and equipment, women and alcohol. No stress on quality in women or in alcohol. Just let there be lots of both, and if possible even more. His idea of a great time: any night off duty.

There was some story in connection with Schaubeck . . . What was it again? Ah, yes, Schaubeck had married. Real quick. He had known Kitty only four or five days: Look here, gal, Kitty is a sweet enough name, but you don't want to be called that, do you? Let's make it Cathy, agreed?

War marriage.

Lasted all of four weeks. Then Schaubeck stopped coming home. Kitty went back to her work and Schaubeck to his women and to alcohol. Occasionally he showed up at the saloon where Kitty worked, and from time to time he threw glances at her from the table where he sat with one of his cronies. After the second or third bottle of wine, Schaubeck was likely to say: "See that redhead over there, behind the bar? That's Kitty, I want you to know. Used to be my wife one time. Man, if you only knew! Quite a story. Had some wild times together, hahaha!"

Schaubeck laughed, boisterous and loud. And then he drank some more. And when he had had enough to drink, he displayed his knowledge of literature: "Say d'ye know this one . . . there once was a hostess in . . .? hahahaha, hahahaha!"

But there was more to Schaubeck's story. The portrait would be incomplete if we failed to mention that Schaubeck's platoon was in tiptop shape. That his superiors did not respect him, but that they valued the success of his methods. That no one could hit the dirt as quickly as one who had trained under Schaubeck.

Schaubeck spent the war in the homeland. Sometimes he bragged of a wound, but had occasionally the misfortune to be overheard by someone who knew better: "Don't shoot your mouth off, Schaubeck, or you'll get wounded again!" Again! Schaubeck had merely been injured in a traffic accident. But Ernst Scholten did not know that.



The seven boys raced from the shower-room to the anti aircraft batteries, Karl Horber wearing only fatigues and a steel helmet. They hauled ammunition.

The anti-aircraft guns went into action, and the enemy bombers flew off, soaring high in the night sky. Only one American Mustang left his squadron, nose-dived across the barracks, and strafed the N C O lounge as he zoomed past

Two noncoms sat there sharing a bottle of wine which one of them had managed to swipe, and playing cards. Schaubeck had just finished telling Sergeant Heilmann about Karl Horber and the shower-room incident. Heilmann was not at all amused, and was just about to say that he hated to see the boys tortured for no reason at all, when he happened to glance at the ceiling.

Sergeant Heilmann froze.

It all happened with lightning speed, yet none of it escaped his notice. First, the holes on the ceiling. Marching forward in a straight line, they seemed to come directly towards him—and he pushed away from the table.

He threw himself down, to the right.

Plaster came down on top of him, he heard a crash—then it was over. When Heilmann got up again, he saw Schaubeck lean across the table in a peculiarly twisted position, there were red splashes all over him. Red wine and blood.

Schaubeck's wide open eyes were astonished.

His hands were clenched into fists.

2

THE whole Gang was in the room when Lieutenant Frohlich came in later. Horber made the report. After that Frohlich stepped up to the first locker, and he said to them. "Kids. Schaubeck is dead. The Amis are only twenty miles away from here. Everything goes *kaput*. I'd like to see you beat it. Now. You understand that I am not in a position to issue an order to that effect. But I have told the post at the western wall. You can get through there."

This was all Frohlich said. Then he looked so long and hard at each of them that it made them uncomfortable. And then he used language which no one had ever heard him use before. "Damn shit—war!"

It was only a mutter, like that of a man who is desperately trying to keep from weeping. But they had all heard it.

Frohlich made an about-face, as if on parade ground, and left the room.

Two hours before the alarm he had received the news that the Russians had completely wiped out the German unit to which his son had been attached for the last three months.

The seven boys were devoted to Lieutenant Frohlich. Aside from Sergeant Heilmann, he alone concerned himself about their welfare. The Gang felt lost in the huge barracks. They were the last contingent from the little town.

They had been called away from their classroom in the middle of April, in a final mass conscription, had been

fitted with field-grey uniforms and were issued with brand-new carbines Schaubeck had welcomed them

“Christ, look at that weary Gang!”

Then cheerfully “Well, the war won’t be over that soon There will still be time enough to make men out of you no-hopers ”

Ever since, they had been known in the barracks as the Gang They had themselves boasted of the name “weary Gang” for so long that it finally stuck and even appeared sometimes in official orders

Then Schaubeck took over their basic training in his usual fashion Aside from him, only Lieutenant Frohlich and Sergeant Heilmann were still concerned with them in that catastrophic confusion which prevailed in the barracks during those final days of the war Frohlich engaged them in long conversations about their homes and families, while Heilmann confined himself to making gloomy and ominous, albeit well-meant, prophecies in passing

“Clear out, men ” Or “Listen to me, boys, things are going from bad to worse Pack up Go back home to mother!”

They liked Heilmann, even though he seldom laughed or told jokes, and had a way of looking past them when he talked to them as though he saw disaster looming in the distance

But they loved Frohlich, and that evening, when he told them of Schaubeck’s death, felt an instinctive compassion for him Franz Frohlich, even in the uniform of a lieutenant, hardly corresponded to the image of a German officer which a sixteen-year-old still retained in the spring of 1945

Lieutenant Frohlich and Julius Caesar

Lieutenant Frohlich was not a career officer He was a school-teacher He had enjoyed lecturing on Julius Caesar’s wars and the strategy employed in them The

strategy of the Second World War gave him little joy. Nothing, in fact, did since he had left the school and the boys behind. And they had even drafted his son. He could not understand that. Florian was so little; he still played with trains—and with soldiers. Yes, even soldiers.

They still played together. The teacher was building trenches, walls and castles for his son, and explaining the strategy to him.

And in the midst of all that Florian Fröhlich was called away to the Service.

The last time Franz Fröhlich saw his son, the boy wore a uniform of which the sleeves were much too long, and a field cap behind which his lean face appeared even more delicate.

Then the seven boys came into the barracks. Fröhlich once happened to come by just as Schaubeck was engaged in making men out of the weary Gang. Schaubeck made Mutz do deep knee-bends with the carbine in hand.

Schaubeck counted. "Thirty-three, thirty-four, thirty-five—come on you mug, don't fall asleep now, pull yourself together—thirty-six, thirty-seven . . ."

Suddenly Fröhlich saw his own son in place of the blond, ruddy Mutz. Saw him pant and gasp. Bend your knees, stretch, bend your knees, stretch.

Fröhlich ordered Schaubeck to fall out, then dressed him down—really let him have it.

What is Fröhlich left with now? He still has a wife back home from whom he has become estranged over the years. He has a closet full of books, mostly on strategy—Julius Caesar and others. He has his lieutenant's uniform. He no longer has a school. Nor any students. Not even a son.

Only the seven boys in the barracks.

He thinks: It is up to me to look after them. Attention Fröhlich! They are your responsibility!

3

THE alarm came in the middle of the night. The whistles blew shrilly. It was all exactly as they had practised it. The whistles tore most men from their sleep, but the seven boys were still wide awake when the alarm was sounded.

They had not been able to fall asleep after Frohlich's talk, and stayed up arguing late into the night. Should they clear out? Should they take Frohlich's hint and make off across the western wall? They had seldom been so much at odds as on this evening.

Karl Horber was all for skipping out (Scholten "Go on beat it, but chop-chop!" They roared with laughter). Klaus Hager, nicknamed "The Silent One", made a speech. His first in days. Sometimes one could not get him to open his mouth for hours. "Fellows, if we leave now, we are deserters, and deserters are shot. If we stay, we might also get killed. Still, I think it is safer to stay. We can always leave later."

That was typical for Hager. He always thought first before speaking. It did not have to be right, but you knew he had given what he said careful consideration. Albert Mutz grumbled about the abominable food. He wanted to be home again, in the little house on the outskirts of the town. There was even chance he could hide them all there. Ernst Scholten, for the time being, refrained from expressing an opinion. Lying in bed, the upper bunk of course (because of the better air higher up, he explained), he merely fired off his cynical comments, and seemed content with the laughter they provoked.

Walter Forst was for staying. "Take it from me, fellows, this is going to get devilishly interesting!" Scholten "Sure, pal, any minute now we will start playing Cowboys and Indians!" Siegi Bernhard. "I don't care one way or the other, I'll go along with whatever you decide." Jurgen Borchart: "I am not going to get myself killed here I'm skipping out, right now!"

The way he had said it would have left little doubt in anyone's mind that he meant to do just that Unless one happened to know Jurgen, as the Gang did Jurgen wasn't going to leave any sooner than the rest He always expressed firm convictions, and then failed to act on them All but one had now stated their opinions, and they were anxious to hear from him

Karl Horber sat up in bed, theatrically sawed the air with his hands and declaimed "Friends, stable comrades, let us listen to the words of our wise chief Winnetou shall decide!"

This gave Scholten an opening He started to speak without raising himself from his bed, addressing the white-washed ceiling overhead as though he were alone in the room.

"If Frohlich suggests that we leave, he must have good reason for that—he means well Strictly speaking it was almost a command by a superior officer That is if we are going to be technical about it And he knows what he is talking about—he has lots of experience Unlike us, who have no experience. Or only a little

"The question then boils down to this. shall we beat it because Frohlich has experience, or stay on because we don't have any? Most of your arguments are ridiculous and only make me laugh But there is something to what Forst said. It is going to be interesting all right It sure as hell is.

"It still remains to be seen if it's going to get too interesting. I think of Schaubeck We know what happened to him. Then again, if we are on our toes, we can stick

around and wait for some action, and skip out later when the going gets too rough. Anyway—if we left now, we'd be cowards, wouldn't we?"

As if the thought that he would be a coward if he deserted had only just occurred to him, he shot up in bed, looked triumphantly about and shouted.

"Listen, boys, we're cowards if we leave now. Miserable cowards. They must want something from us. They are training us for a reason. They did not give us uniforms and rifles to clear out with. Fellows, they need us now!"

And then condescendingly "You can do as you please, I am staying. Winnetou will hold the fort, he owes that to his red brothers. Ugh, I have spoken."

Horber hardly let him finish. He hung suspended like a monkey from the upper bunk. His flame-red hair and protruding ears extended over the rim of the bed, and he screamed at Scholten "You say that again, say I am a coward just one more time and I'll throw you out of the window!"

Scholten laughed in his face, and while Mutz and Borchart tickled Horber's feet, Scholten tapped him on the nose with his heel so that Horber had to let go of the bed and landed on the floor.

At once a free-for-all started down below. Scholten swung his legs over the side of his bed and let himself fall down on top of the brawling Gang. Frenzied screams, laughter, a banging of tables and chairs—till way past midnight. It was then that the alarm came.

The brawl stopped at once. They listened to the whistles. It was no mistake, they could hear it clearly now. They rushed to their lockers, pulled out full marching equipment, and dressed in feverish haste. The packs were ready. They just threw them over their shoulders. They fastened the swordbelts, bayonets, spades, cartridge-pouches, put steel helmets on their heads, slung the gas-masks around their necks, and raced out into the hall. They snatched the carbines out of the rifle cases as they

passed, and their heavy boots went trapp-trapp-trapp-trapp down the stone steps. Outside, in the centre court of the barracks square, the boys attached themselves to the Second Squad. Lieutenant Frohlich's squad

The companies lined up four deep. A grey jeep approached through the archway of the western wing. Three men got out.

"Some big guns," Scholten whispered. The company and battalion commanders were summoned to a conference. The soldiers, some five hundred men, were kept waiting outside, lined up in roll call formation.

Half an hour later the troop leaders emerged. Then the commands echoed across the square, and one formation after another got under way. Lieutenant Frohlich, Sergeant Heilmann and Corporal Wehnelt advanced with the Second Squad to the gymnasium, the seven boys trailing behind. In front of the gymnasium the squad formed a half-circle around their lieutenant.

"The Americans are only twenty miles outside the town. It has been decided to put up a defence." It was with enormous reluctance that Frohlich got past the last sentence.

"We will now take up positions that are essential to the defence of the town, positions we will have to hold."

He lost the thread of what he was saying, and his glance strayed over towards the seven boys at the left flank as though he expected them to come to his aid.

"We have to cover an extensive area with relatively few men. Now take up heavy arms, bazookas, ammunition—also iron rations!" Abruptly Frohlich turned about and trudged off to the gymnasium.

Corporal Wehnelt bellowed: "Break step—maaarch!"

The squad numbered forty-two men. Each of them took two bazookas. Then they lined up for the storm-guns. When Heilmann reached the Gang at the end of the line, he asked: "Any of you boys know how to handle one of these?"

"I do," Scholten said

Said it as nonchalantly as if he had been asked whether he knew Mark Antony's funeral oration. The Gang was not surprised.

They were getting used to the idea that Scholten knew just about everything. Why shouldn't he know how to fire a storm-gun?

Horber was given a Russian semi-automatic rifle (Scholten "He can't even shoot with an ordinary carbine without dirtying his pants!") The rest of the Gang held on to their carbines. A case of ammunition was placed on the table and each took as many clips as he had room for in his pockets.

The squad of forty-two men climbed aboard two trucks. In three minutes they reached the bridge where Frohlich ordered them to halt. Sergeant Heilmann got off and called "What's keeping our weary Gang?"

Disgruntled, the seven jumped off the platform of the truck to the street. Lieutenant Frohlich: "The bridge is of strategic importance. You are to hold it. Sergeant Heilmann will be in charge." Then he said softly to Heilmann "As soon as the fun starts, you clear out. Is that clear? I am holding you personally responsible for that."

They saw Heilmann's face light up in a smile, for the first time in the fourteen days they had known him. The smile spread across his features, took hold of every wrinkle and line in his craggy face, and he said: "Yes, sir! Perfectly clear."

Noncom Heilmann and the War

Within three days they had a name for Cadet Heilmann at the academy. They called him Johnny-Come-Lately. He was then about ten years older than the rest of the cadets in his class. But his slow way of speaking, the calm he radiated, made him appear even older. He gave his training officers no cause for censure and none for special

praise. Then, with only four days left in the semester, something happened.

The Nazi officer in charge of political indoctrination asked him if it were possible for a German who was not a staunch supporter of the regime to be a good officer. The question seemed so childishly simple that Heilmann for once was able to blurt his answer into the room without hesitating first. "Of course, *Herr Oberleutnant!*"

At the end of the semester, when three hundred newly commissioned officers went home on furlough, Heilmann travelled east. Back to his unit. Still a noncom.

The reason was not clear to him at first. It always took Heilmann considerable time to arrange these things in a logical pattern, to think matters through. "Adolf Heilmann, you'd think the name alone predestined him for leadership," the company commander said, grinning, when he saw the pile of negative reports come to his desk. Heilmann, with some delay, sauntered in a few days after them. "How did you manage it, Heilmann?" the commander said to him. "You did it this time!" Heilmann listened without moving a muscle in his face. Only his eyes laughed.

On May 2nd, 1944, there was an attack against some Russian rear positions, which were being defended doggedly. The attack was repulsed. Adolf Heilmann was among those missing. Nobody knew what had happened to him. Nobody had seen him. Heilmann had gone.

But that same night, the sentry of a neighbouring unit was frightened out of his wits when the stillness around him was suddenly pierced by a rattling, dragging sound. As it crept closer, he lost his nerve. Forgot all about the automatic rifle, the hand-grenades—everything. He couldn't think any longer, was terrified by this monster making straight for him, and sounded the alarm, screaming: "The Ivans!" And then once again "The Ivans!"

Startled by the sound of his own voice, the sentry pressed his back against the crumbling wall of his foxhole.

and stared out into the night To the left and right of him, his comrades stumbled into ditches and holes, gasping breathlessly Quite, quite close now, he heard a voice "Shut up, you idiot, or I'll punch you in the nose "

A big, massive grey hulk dragged itself forward the last few yards to the German position, slid headlong into the ditch and lay there

The following morning the news was relayed to Heilmann's company that Heilmann was no longer missing Heavily wounded, he had dragged himself back to his own lines with well-nigh superhuman tenacity, he had covered a distance of some several thousand yards, crawling on his stomach

□

□

□

And now Heilmann stood on the bridge with seven boys of sixteen The truck with Frohlich and the remaining squad moved on, heading west towards the Americans The knowledge that he was now responsible for the seven boys weighed heavily on Sergeant Heilmann

4

I MUST do something now, Heilmann thought, I must keep them occupied or else they will get nervous. But nothing, absolutely nothing, occurred to him. And he said to Scholten, because he stood nearest him. "Now we will just have to wait and see what happens!" Scholten, usually so reserved and mature, made a wry face and without any show of respect asked "Why the devil did they have to leave us behind here? Now we are going to miss everything again, just when it starts to get interesting!"

Heilmann said wearily "Let us wait and see. It will get interesting enough right here too."

It did by and by. Only few civilians still crossed the bridge at this late hour. Several columns drove by, heading west to meet the Americans. Then nothing stirred. The seven leaned against the railing. Heilmann walked back and forth.

How stupid of me, he thought, not to know what to do with them. Down below, the water rippled over pebbles and stones. The river was at work. Ceaselessly carrying stones and sand along its journey. After a long rain it swelled into a mighty stream, but in dry summers it dwindled to a rill. One could easily wade across it then. The boys had once written a composition: "The River—a Symbol of Our Town." Horber had given a long, graphic description of the river: the green waters, the dipping willow trees along the banks. He expanded on the theme along these lines, and got an "A" easily enough.

Scholten failed to get a passing mark. "Missed the point," ran the comment across his paper. He had made

the mistake of letting the river speak like a man, and was forced to the conclusion that this approach was not the right one.

In the middle of the night, the retreat from the west set in Heilmann's group were squatting close together at the eastern end of the bridge, when a stream of columns flooded across Trucks, horse-drawn vehicles, cannons, a tank every now and then In between, men—wearing, exhausted, staggering figures in mud-smudged uniforms, with hollow-cheeked faces, pale, unshaven, their necks bowed as though a ghost sat there and tirelessly cracked the whip From time to time one of the men called over to the cowering boys "What are you waiting for? Why don't you beat it!" Embarrassed, the boys turned their faces away and stared down into the river And Heilmann cursed himself for a fool, because he still did not know what to do

It began to rain lightly The eight men on the bridge unbuckled the tarpaulins from their packs Shivering, they draped the coarse material around themselves As the columns continued to pass, it seemed to the boys that every marching step they heard carried them closer to the greatest event of their lives They were afraid

Not one of the seven would have owned up to it just then But it was so

They smoked Heilmann had generously distributed cigarettes They stuck them between their lips, struck matches to them with numb fingers, then sucked in the smoke with deep, hasty draughts Only Albert Mutz coughed He always coughed when he smoked. The other boys were used to cigarettes by now

As the night wore on, the line of columns thinned and even broke completely every now and then After a while more vehicles rolled past, and beneath their rain-heavy tarpaulins lay combat-worn foot soldiers And so it went Vehicles—nothing Vehicles—nothing

And then the column ended That was eerie, frighten-

ing. There had been a continuous stream—of carts, of trucks laden with men. Now suddenly, the seven were alone on the bridge with their noncom. Heilmann thought and brooded.

He was almost grateful when he saw a jeep racing down the bridge-ramp. With screeching brakes it came to a halt near the little group. Heilmann walked over to the jeep, looking forward to a chat with some staff driver. He was startled when he saw a full general before him. The General rose from his seat in the rear of the jeep, and with a sprightly movement jumped down to the pavement.

"Sergeant Heilmann with seven men on bridge patrol," Heilmann reported. He could not think of anything more sensible to say.

The General obviously no longer put much emphasis on form. Intentionally he overlooked the boys who stumbled forward with the tarpaulins hanging loosely around their shoulders. In low, insistent tones, he kept on talking in on Heilmann.

The boys could only hear their sergeant.

"Yes, *Herr General!*"

"No, *Herr General!*"

"Very good, *Herr General!*"

The General spoke loud enough then, so that the seven could hear him as well. "I expect the bridge to be held, come what may. Do you understand? Under all circumstances. I'll see to it that you get some reinforcements!"

And as quickly as he had come, the General was off.

For a moment Heilmann thought he had been dreaming it all, but Borchart brought him back to harsh reality. "Was that a real general, Sergeant?"

"Yes, lad. That was a general all right," Heilmann said fiercely, and let loose a blast of filthy, vulgar curses.

But the curses brought him no relief. I just wonder what those reinforcements are going to look like, Heilmann thought. I really wonder.

As it was, he did not have to wait long for them. A truck

came into view Like the jeep earlier, it came down the bridge-ramp The truck discharged eight, nine, ten figures in grey uniforms Heilmann walked up to them, took one close look, and said "Jesus Christ!"

That was all he said

The reinforcement consisted of ten old men All sixty and over Obviously drummed together in the last few hours, torn away from their homes, their kitchen-tables They had not been wearing these uniforms very long Not that it mattered The uniforms had proved themselves They were torn and patched. The men who had formerly worn them were dead Had fallen somewhere in France or in Russia They had been stripped of their coats when they were put on the operating tables, all shot up The coats could be patched again

The ten old men had been given the same order as the seven boys In silence they had received it The old and the young alike They had accepted the command as one accepts a report card at the end of the school year

Noncom Heilmann was still brooding He felt that he ought to do something, but did not know what

The eighteen on the bridge had rifles, bazookas, ammunition, and iron rations The iron ration consisted of a tin of blood sausage, a tin of beef, and Zwieback They had taken the tins as they had taken the bazookas One in the left hand, one in the right.

It doesn't make sense, Heilmann thought, to put men of sixty and boys of sixteen together like this on a bridge, and expect them to carry out an order Their feelings about military orders and the war in general are bound to be poles apart And not one of these people knows how to defend a bridge

To be quite honest, Heilmann said to himself, I don't know either. But I do know one can't hold a bridge by just standing around on it One would have to take up a central position from which the entire bridge can be con-

trolled The question is where? And how? And one would need a machine-gun for that

Here was an inspiration at last Something to be done Of course—a machine-gun

“Borchart, Mutz, Horber, hurry over to the barracks and tell them to send us a machine-gun A light machine-gun and ammunition Lots of ammunition, do you understand?”

The three told their noncom that they had understood, and shoved off Visibly glad to escape this waiting around, at least for an hour

The old men stood together in a group and conversed in whispers As though one loud word could bring about some disaster. Suddenly one of them did speak up A man with sparse, silver-grey hair and a thin voice “This is the end, you hear, the end!”

He had addressed no one in particular He had spoken into the night Then he looked sideways at Heilmann

Heilmann did not reply The old man pulled a watch out of his pocket It was an old-fashioned watch with a cover that snapped open when pressed Possibly a confirmation present. As if this confirmation watch had given him some sort of advice, he snapped to attention and said: “I’m going home!”

Nobody objected, although the old man waited a while

“The order to hold the bridge cannot be carried out,” he said. And again, after a brief pause. “I’m going.”

He spoke with undue emphasis, very softly Then he carefully leaned his carbine against the stone rampart, and walked away with quick, short steps

This was the beginning The old men, one after another, put their weapons down and left At the end there were ten rifles leaning against the stone enclosure of the bridge and a pile of bazookas were lying on the ground The iron rations were all they had taken with them

Sergeant Heilmann watched the departure of the ten men without batting an eyelash Straddle-legged, his arms

folded behind his back, he stood there and watched. He was helpless. You've got to do something, Heilmann. You can't just let them go off. This is mutiny! These thoughts raced through his brain, but Heilmann did not lift a finger.

When the last of the ten had gone, Heilmann turned around to face the boys. He was surprised to note with how much fervour and respect they looked up to him. They looked as though they were only waiting for him to issue an order now, and to carry it out at once. Heilmann had become a hero in their eyes. Precisely because he had let the men go. Let him rely on them. They would not let him down. Mutz, Borchart and Horber returned on a truck. They unloaded two machine-guns and several cases of ammunition. The truck rumbled off again.

"They didn't want to give us anything at first," Horber bragged, "so we went straight to the General."

"Well done," Heilmann acknowledged without much enthusiasm. He asked the boys about the situation in the barracks, and whether they had noticed anything as they came through the older sections of the town. Heilmann made a mental note of the fact that the boys had encountered no M.P.'s along the way. There would be no danger, he concluded, if one had to clear out suddenly. Then he assembled the machine-guns, right in the middle of the street. He explained the parts to them as he went along. In much the same manner he had explained the workings of the machine-gun, before new recruits, at least a thousand times. He stopped abruptly. A little more and he would have told them how to clean a machine-gun. As if these two guns would ever be cleaned again.

Morning dawned in the east. Heilmann had come to the end of his instruction. There was little he could add to the theory of it, and as for the practice—well, he'd spare the boys that. Heilmann suddenly remembered Frohlich. I wonder where he is now? And then he remembered Frohlich's charge. "As soon as the fun starts here, you

clear out. I am holding you personally responsible for that, Heilmann!"

Heilmann's deliberations had come to an end. He knew what to do at last. And why postpone any longer what was inevitable?

"Listen to me, kids," he said, "none of this makes sense. Your parents are waiting for you at home, and here you are wanting to play war. I promised Lieutenant Frohlich not to let it come to that. You must help me to keep my promise!"

Heilmann had seldom made so long and carefully planned a speech. He was visibly proud of it. To keep the boys from thinking of a reply and raising objections, he went on: "I'm going off now for a little stroll around the town. To see if the air is clear. I'll be back in ten minutes, and off we go then. To Kassel. No one is to leave before I get back, is that clear? And then we'll skip out together, in style. That too can be quite an experience!"

Heilmann rummaged about in his pack, and pulled out a civilian jacket which he put on over his uniform, proving that in spite of his slowness Heilmann was not unprepared for a turn of events. But even so, he had miscalculated.

He had crossed the intersection near the bridge and proceeded up the street a few yards only, when a pair of boots came stumping out of a courtyard he was about to pass. Two unmoving faces stared at him from below the sharp rim of steel helmets. A pair of metal badges gleamed up at him.

M P.'s, thought Heilmann. It is all over.

He showed them his papers, as he was asked to.

"Why the civilian jacket?" one of the two asked with a dour expression. "Knocking off a little too soon, aren't we?" the other M P. said.

Heilmann walked between the two and feverishly worked his brain. He wasn't over-concerned with saving his own skin now. He only thought of the boys back on the

bridge. He racked his brain. Christ, how can I make them understand? What can I do? I must do something. I must do something!

His fist landed on the nose of one of the M P s. He brought his knee up and kicked him in the stomach, as hard as he could. But he couldn't get the right grip on the second one, and had only one alternative to run, to run for dear life.

The first bullet from the 45 whistled past him, ricocheted off the wall of the building and smashed into the plaster. Heilmann jumped from side to side.

I must look like a rabbit, like a rabbit. He felt a blow against his back. He wanted to run on, but suddenly his legs gave way under him. Full length, he hit the pavement. Twice he tried, with all the strength still left him, to raise himself up on his elbows. Then Sergeant Heilmann was dead.

The M P found in the Sergeant's wallet his identification papers, a paybook and fifty-eight Marks, a silver medallion of the Madonna, and a snapshot of a girl in a bathing-suit. He slipped the wallet with papers and medallion into the pocket of his long coat. Then he looked at the snapshot by the light of his cigarette lighter.

"Nice skirt," the M P said. Only then did he go to look after his comrade who was cowering against the wall, groaning, his arms clasped around his stomach.

On the bridge, seven boys waited for their Sergeant.

"I HEAR shooting," Horber said. They strained to hear. But after the two muffled sounds, there were no more.

"Perhaps somebody committed suicide," big Mutz whispered and a shudder ran down his spine. "Sheer nonsense," Scholten called that. He actually felt as miserable as the rest. Damn it all, if only Heilmann would come back.

What a ghastly feeling it was to be deserted on the bridge, to sit around and wait. The day came on gradually. Light poured in across the hills in the east. The rain had subsided a little.

"Suppose Heilmann leaves us in the lurch, fellows . . . ?" Mutz muttered.

"He won't leave you in the lurch, big sissy!"

Scholten can get nasty at times, Mutz thought (I can still express an opinion, after all!) And as it was Heilmann did leave them in the lurch. The ten minutes turned into two hours. The seven began to argue again. Had Heilmann deserted, or had he been forcibly detained some place?

They stopped arguing at last. There was no sense to it, since no one could know for certain. Nor was it so terribly important. It had become a lot lighter meanwhile, and looked at in daylight, everything assumed a brighter aspect. Horber brought a little life into the bunch.

"Hey, we forgot our breakfast!" Everyone laughed. They watched Horber attack his tin of sausage with the bayonet. Twice he slipped, and once he pricked his finger.

"Get me to a hospital, fellows, I'm bleeding to death"

They roared with laughter, they were as wild as on a school-hike. The din of a motor arose. Scholten listened. "Be quiet a moment!"

They all stopped to listen, the school-hike mood had vanished.

The sound did not come from the west, but came from the older part of the town. Once again a jeep raced down the bridge-ramp as it had done earlier in the night and stopped with screeching brakes. It was the General. Up front this time, next to the driver. Two more soldiers sat in the rear.

The seven jumped to their feet, and snapped to attention as well as they could. Scholten stammered through the report. His face had turned crimson.

The General interrupted with a gesture of his hand. "Where is your noncom?"

Scholten remained silent, but Mutz, over-eager, said "He's gone, General!"

He realized almost immediately that he was telling on Heilmann (Christ, the Gang would never forgive him that!) and had the presence of mind to add. "He went to see about more ammunition for us!"

Brazenly, unabashed, he had lied. Suddenly it struck Mutz. That's a General you're lying to, no good can come of that.

The General was curt and to the point. "How long is he gone?"

Mutz paled. "Two hours, General!" The General considered this. It seemed to Mutz now that in this attitude the General bore a resemblance to Napoleon as he appeared in a picture in his history book. Only the forelock was missing. The General was still considering when a grin flitted across his face, quite suddenly, and was gone.

He turned around in the jeep. "Schlopke!"
"Yes sir, General?"

The man in the rear left of the jeep snapped to attention in a sitting position, his whole face assuming an air of alertness.

"Get off, Schlopke You're going to take over the show here!" Again the grin on the General's face "We do want to get into this war a little before it is all over, Schlopke, don't we?"

"Yessir, General!" Schlopke replied with zeal, and thinks to himself you know what you can do

He jumped out of the jeep, and landed on the pavement with the resilience of a trained athlete

"You are to hold the bridge, Schlopke, do you understand?"

The General had spoken softly In a louder voice he added: "You've got seven splendid chaps here A few thousand more like them and we might still win the war, Schlopke."

The boys blushed with pride and excitement Of course they'll hold the bridge They even had a noncom again So it wasn't Heilmann So his name was Schlopke But hadn't he come straight from the General's jeep?

"Do your stuff, boys, I'm relying on you," the General said, and drove off.

Schlopke called softly after the departing jeep "Getting sick in the brain, or something, in your old age?"

And then furiously: "Drop dead, you bloody thing!"

The boys trustingly flocked around noncom Schlopke And Schlopke gave them pep-talks

The General drove to a nearby farm meanwhile, some three miles east of town. There he stepped into a low room and placed himself before the huge map on the wall. He stood before it for quite a while, straddle-legged, and studied it. Then he took a red crayon and made a heavy circle around one spot.

A General and His Order

They made him a general because he knew more than

his comrades at the academy. He had a penchant for cleanliness, and no tolerance for "jerks." There are times, to be sure, when one has to put up with these characters, when they are useful. But sooner or later an opportunity presents itself to kick them in the arse.

The General thought of Schlopke and smiled, pleased.

Aside from that, the bridge was quite forgotten: A matter well taken care of, and therefore no longer important. When the seven boys crossed his mind, he had a disagreeable sensation for a matter of seconds, but then the "windshield-wiper" inside the General's brain went into action. Seven men. Well and good. Young chaps, still boys in fact. Most likely they're wretched on the bridge. But they have ambition, they have pride, and—they still have the right kind of fear. Thank God for that. They would ward off the first advance of American patrols, and that meant—the General looked at his watch and figures—that meant at least two hours gained.

There were still troops in the valley below, some seven thousand men. They were retreating to new positions in the eastern mountains. There was more than just one enemy in the land. A few hours might suffice. The seven thousand could be out of the valley, and on their way. If the Americans could push across the bridge however, and break on through—why then the whole valley was gone to the devil.

The General considered further. Blow up the bridge? Now? No, that would be a mistake. If I do that, the Americans will know it before they even begin to attack. Their reconnaissance is busily at work. They won't even attempt a crossing of the bridge. They'll send up their engineers, and soon all hell and damnation will break loose. No, the Ami must be allowed to come up close to the bridge, thinking they can march across at will. Only when the first Sherman is on the bridge, the fireworks must start.

They'll withdraw then, send up a few light bombers.

Then it will be quiet for ten minutes, and they will advance again. The whole operation might—the General looked at his watch again—might take even three hours

Yes—and after the first attack the bridge will have to be blown up. Just as they are about to launch the second attack. Then they'll have to send for engineers, and lose more time.

The General's hands became moist, as he stood there before the map. He paced up and down in the room

First attack!

Resistance!

Bombers, and the second attack

At that very moment the bridge goes up in pieces—three hours all told.



The General rubbed his hands together to get rid of that disagreeable moistness. He thought once more of the seven.

But again the windshield-wiper in the General's brain started working.