

TA51, Response 13 (to C20, Freeman)

GERMAN FRENCH @100% NEEDLESS JASPERS' TRANSLATORS SAY by Glenn C.  
Wood 5 November 2002, posted 19 November 2002

[1] Appreciated Margaret H. Freeman's (MHF) references to those considering the translation question, and the necessary reminder that understanding can range from some degrees of "estimates of feasibility" to words' worthlessness if 100% translatable and the necessity of degrees of openness required on both ends of the communication spectrum.

[2] While reading C20 a reference came to mind that demonstrates not only translation difficulties but also the relative positive resolutions that can exceed the problems. It's found in the 1962 Translators' Preface pp. vii through ix. of Karl Jaspers' General Psychopathology (GP).

[3] The two translators begin by showing the need for the translation by reminding the readers that much of early psychiatry was written in French and German some of which had remained inaccessible to English speaking psychiatrists. In this Preface they shattered, It seems to me, that feeling of delimited humility, that feeling of exclusivity from one side of objectivity -- renamed structures of subjective ongoing experience -- that's perpetuated in occasional lengthy quotes in French and German posted on the KJF. It's almost 100% unnecessary, though defensible by a system of rationalization, pointing to the "internationality of readers," but coming across as meaning: how can an English reader understand what users of French and German ... know. That defensive mechanism is hard to defend in as much as more or less than 99% of the Forum is in English. Those absorbed in that absolutist attitude, it's noted, seem always to stop short of an 'oops' like apology" -- if their errors are clearly obvious -- and take refuge in German and/or French. Being so fluent it doesn't seem like too much to wish they'd risk their interpretation to translation.

[4] The GP translators maturely say, regarding viewpoints, "a unification is not even desirable" balanced by the statement that the freedom to explore can also be threatened by the lack of "common terminology" for "we need to know better what psychiatry has already achieved and discipline ourselves more, to a shared terminology within clearly defined theoretical frameworks."

[5] They list and define several terms that provided some problems in translation. "Objectivity is not mentioned. But perhaps the most important statement for the KJF is in the first sentence: "... concerned with the teaching of psychiatry, we have felt as keenly as others the lack of a fundamental textbook in psychopathology." The fundamental textbook is the book they are translating, i.e. Jaspers' works -- which includes not only his GP, for in its deciphering, the translators also depended on his philosophical works, and also on "going their

own way" to some degree as recommended by colleagues in their "University Department of Philosophy." The meaningfulness of this to me is that within KJ's GP can be found the philosophical attitude and forms of thinking at its beginning and throughout its editions -- and, he has said, looking back he could not only see the role of philosophy but theology as well.

[6] What this R to C20 (my apologies for the exploitation) is leading to is relevant to TA54 regarding constructionism (constructivism) and the arbitrary reduction of objectivity to what science is limited to. Science is limited to objectivity, but objectivity as potential is not limited to science, as seen in Jaspers' comment about possible philosophical meanings, that science is limited to objectivity and philosophy accomplishes itself in objective ideas, which do not mean objects as such, but their transcendence and in this way they bring that, which encompasses to life. (GP 771) There would be no GP without objectivity and within that occurs structures of subjective ongoing experience. Objectivity's importance ought not be denied in a standard for definitions in the area of psychopathology and the history of psychology/psychiatry, and the human sciences when being philosophical about the human being as a whole.

[7] The GP's Translator's Preface's objectivity exceeds the confines of sentiments that though individuals use word-concepts they are created by others and we take them over already structured. The Preface not only shows the inadequacy and absoluteness of "already structured" takeovers such as mentioned in TA51C19, and the limits of individual word-concepts as well not only ten days but simultaneously after one responds to an inner word-concept in a hard-hat area. Hiding oneself from Objectivity behind fig-like subjective structures does not mean the constant scientific factor -- the limitation of the mind -- has passed over without detecting the denial of limit. The constant potential for objectivity to see the limits, and then potentials, of the mind and the mind's subjective states ought not be suppressed.

[8] This being called a KJF, and if communication is going to depend on an understanding of terms, it seems proper to use the textbook and the meanings of terms expressed therein giving due respect to the limits of the mind and the estimates of feasibility in the connections it makes.