

Translating Cultural Memory: French and English D-Day Narratives at the Memorial Museum of Caen

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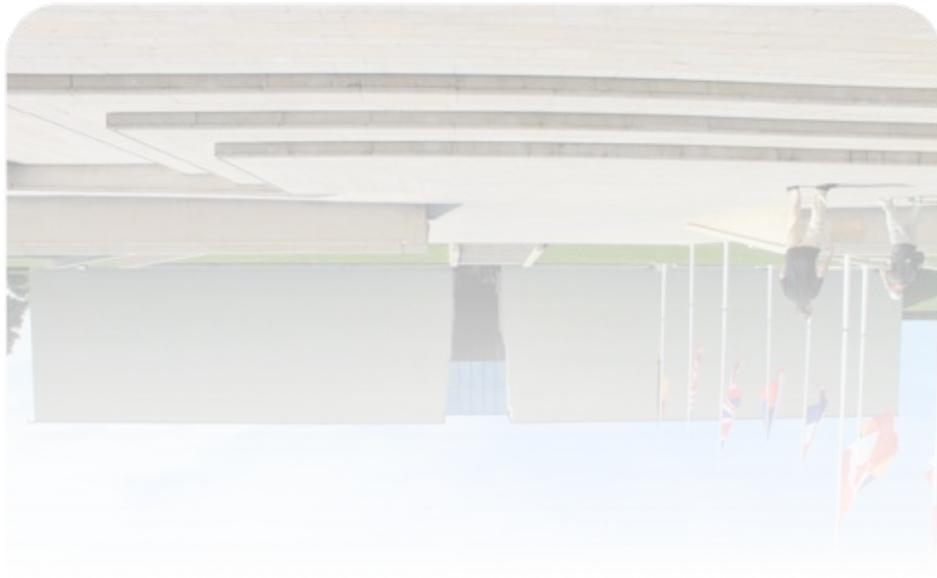
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Translating Cultural Memory: French and English D-Day Narratives at the Memorial Museum of Caen



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Advanced Senior Honors Thesis

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Chestnut Hill, MA

April 5, 2013

In loving memory of Joëlle Bodrot Goetz

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Abstract

During my five-month stay with in Rennes, France in the fall of my junior year, my French host parents took me to Normandy to visit the memorial museum in Caen and the D-Day beaches. Véronique and Gildas considered this trip “obligatoire” for any American in France, a sentiment that has been matched by virtually everyone I have spoken with since, both French and American. My visit was, however, disrupted by an experience of linguistic confusion that could have significantly limited my ability to appropriate the information presented in the museum. The guiding texts found on the walls of the museum, translated from French to English, lacked so acutely the idiomatic feel of native English that they would have obscured my understanding of the text, had I not also been fluent in French and able to read the originals.

What began as a tourist’s frustration is today the subject of a project that has carried me back to France for another two months as well as into both translation and museum theory. I have created here a critical study as well as a retranslation of a selection of these texts, proposed with no other aim than to explore the importance of linguistic accuracy, and the implications of inaccuracy in translation. This work is meant to represent the chronological process by which I explored the original translations and ultimately determined my final retranslations. As such, I have attempted to reflect the results of the different stages of my work in the division of my five chapters.

The first chapter is an introduction to the museum: its history, purported aims, and layout. In discussing the museum, I consider some applications of Vivian Patraka’s museum and performance theories to this site, eventually exploring the connection between the importance of these texts within their physical and cultural space and the importance of their proper translation. To further delve into the subject of translation theory and its implications to my project, I will invoke the work of David Bellos, Walter Benjamin, and others. After having laid this theoretical groundwork for my project in conjunction with a background of the museum, my second chapter will present the original translations of the texts from the portion of the museum devoted to D-Day, supplemented by my annotations. These annotations are prefaced with an explanation of the methodology that I used while sifting through these original translations, which I hope will help to at least primarily explain the categories into which I have chosen to group the errors and problems that I found. The third chapter is a deeper analysis of each of these categories, beginning with the most significant or global and descending all the way down to the purely technical. Each section of this commentary will include examples of pertinent cases of the problem or error and a discussion of the stylistic or cultural issue present.

After having identified all the present errors in my second chapter and analyzing them by category in my third, I will present in my fourth chapter a complete retranslation of these selected texts. My fifth and final chapter will serve to conclude the process, stating any changes or modifications to my theoretical or procedural approach I find appropriate after having completed the project.

I. Introduction

“There’s no formula for reducing the whole mystery to understandable terms. There are only flashes which light up a little corner of the fog and make you think, momentarily at least, that you are beginning to see.” Tom Traener, one of the first war correspondents to file a dispatch from the beachhead of the D-Day invasions in Normandy, wrote the above to elaborate upon his original dispatch from the top of the cliffs at Omaha beach, which read, “it was too much to describe”.¹

It is this scene and this historical moment that the Memorial Museum of Caen in Normandy aims to present to its visitors. It is, too, this difficulty of representation that is faced by any historical museum, especially one with such a violent and tragic history to relay. The task of appropriating such an event into an intelligible visitor experience is a complex one: any narrative of a widely experienced historical event necessarily excludes some perspectives and possibilities. To create a defined and linear narrative out of a war that produced such a multiplicity of experiences is to prescribe the national and international cultural memory it produces.

If the texts of the museum can be considered part of the narrative created by this museum, what happens when this narrative is disrupted by an unacceptable translation? What are the implications of a failure to communicate such a narrative across cultural lines? Why does the translation of a narrative of cultural memory matter, and what would be the result of an inadequate translation? It is this last question that I intend to explore as I lay the theoretical groundwork for my analysis and re-translation of the texts of the D-Day exhibit in the Memorial Museum of Caen.

¹ Tobin, James. “ ‘You Alone Are Left Alive...’ ” *Ernie Pyle's War: America's Eyewitness to World War II*. Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas, 1998. 169-175. Print, 173.

Since its opening on the 44th anniversary of D-Day (*Jour J* in French), the Mémorial de Caen has hosted around 400,000 annual visitors from all over the world.² Located 50 kilometers from the *plages de débarquement* and within a city that experienced firsthand the devastation of the Allied bombings in occupied Normandy, this massive rectangular museum is introduced by a sweeping esplanade dedicated to Dwight D. Eisenhower (see figure on title page). The walk to the museum entrance is lined by the flags of all countries involved in World War II in an impressive display of unity. The symbolism of the German flag flying adjacent to the French is perhaps an accurate metaphor for a larger motive of the museum: its content and messages must be politically satisfactory to French, German, and English-speaking parties and, more importantly, not antagonistic to any. Such limitations will be important to this thesis as it later considers the linguistic and cultural restraints on the museum texts and their translations.

Designated as “Specially Commended” by the European Museum Forum at the Council of Europe in 1988, the museum is self-described as “au cœur de la réflexion sur l’avant et l’après 1945.”³ About half of its yearly visitors are under the age of 20, which necessitates the complex task of complying with an educative program prescribed by the French national school system. The *Équipe Éducative*, a group of museum staff dedicated to the materials and organization for school visits, states as its goal to “faire comprendre les enjeux des événements qui ont marqué le XXe siècle.”⁴

This idea of “faire comprendre” or to help someone to understand recalls the complexities of prescribing national or cultural memory. In her book, *Spectacular Suffering*,

² Andrianjaka, Jaccot. “Caen-Normandie Mémorial: Cité de l’histoire pour la paix.” Ed. Jaccot Andrianjaka. Web. Musée Mémorial de Caen. <<http://www.memorial-caen.fr/portail/index.php>>

³ Dossier Presse: “Toute l’Histoire est au Mémorial de Caen.” Ed. Sophie Bruneau de la Salle. *Caen-Normandie Mémorial*. Press Kit. Print, 2.

⁴ Ibid., 7.

Vivian Patraaka discusses the issues inherent to museums with such educative goals. She argues for a reevaluation of the role of museums that represent particularly violent or unimaginable historical events. Patraaka's work focuses on the Holocaust museum, but she provides useful conceptions of ways in which all museums may narrativize complex historical moments.⁵ In her introduction, Patraaka states that there should be "no 'golden nugget' of knowledge to take away, but only a continual process of critical engagement (between...museum architects and museum-goers)."⁶ In other words, a museum that presents history (or a specific historical event) as linear and narrative and that neatly explains cause and effect for its visitor is only serving to represent "a fixed set of norms or a closed narrative."⁷

Patraaka's conception of a museum's ability to create a fixed narrative for its visitor's experience gives such a museum a great deal of power. To render intelligible and readable such a vast topic as World War II and the D-Day invasions is to prescribe for one's audience a specific framework for imagining these events. Given that this particular museum in Normandy frequently hosts international visitors, particularly those from America, England, and Germany, it is further charged with the task of creating a national and cultural memory that is personally and politically acceptable to each of these peoples. I would like to propose, first, a presentation of the museum at Caen in light of the questions that Patraaka has posed in her analysis of various Holocaust museum: what narrative of D-Day does the museum create, and how does it use physical space to create a path for its visitor that emphasizes this conceptualization? How, also, does the press kit for the museum reinforce this narrative? How do the texts and path of the

⁵ The *Musée Mémorial* does, in fact, include several rooms devoted to the holocaust and genocide during World War II, but for the purposes of the material in question, I will be limiting my application of Patraaka's ideas to the D-Day exhibit and its place within the museum as a whole.

⁶ Patraaka, Vivian M. *Spectacular Suffering: Theatre, Fascism, and the Holocaust*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999. Print, 13.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

museum appear to be or desire to appear within the “legitimizing discourse of its host country?”⁸ Exploration of these questions will ultimately facilitate a discussion of what happens when these narratives are disrupted here in the form of mistranslation.

What is the path of the *Musée Mémorial*? In what ways does it narrativize World War II by employing “differing strategies of attempting to move people through a landscape whose meanings are uniquely determined?”⁹ Does the museum subscribe to “seemingly inevitable emotional hardwirings,” or does it “[provide] an opportunity for contestation and multiplicity of association?” An analysis both of the directed spaces of this museum and of its texts will help to explore these questions.¹⁰

The permanent exhibit at the museum is a (recommended four- to five-hour) journey through the causes, events, and effects of World War II and the Allied landing in Normandy. The 5,600 square meters of permanent exhibition are structured in such a way as to reinforce a narrative quality of history and of the end of World War II: the visit is divided into *Avant 1945* and *Après 1945*, and the D-Day exhibit is placed logically in the middle. Even this division suggests a fundamental shift in the narrative at the 1945 mark, thus asserting that the world before 1945 represents a history that is significantly different after 1945. This strategy of distribution in the museum, too, places D-Day as the focal point for the change that precipitated this new “after 1945” era. As I will show in the following analysis of *Avant 1945*, this is reinforced by the museum’s physical environment in order to frame D-Day as the central turning point in European history from the pre-1945 to the post-1945 period.

⁸ Ibid., 111.

⁹ Ibid., 109.

¹⁰ I concentrate my analysis primarily on the *Avant 1945* section through the D-Day exhibit, at it is this former section that serves to create a foundation upon which the D-Day rooms are presented.

Spatially, the visitor is first directed down a spiral ramp that begins the *Avant 1945* portion of the exhibit (see Figure 1.1). This descent into the turmoil and the tension of Hitler's fascist regime and the occupation of France is set to the sounds of the chants of Nazi troops, their adoring crowds, and the loud drum beat to which these troops marched. A timeline works its way through the spiral, offering important dates leading up to the start of World War II; these notable events are supplemented by photos, videos, and original artifacts.

By choreographing the physical descent of the visitor *down* into the events of World War II, the museum implicates the position of World War II as a low point in the larger historical narrative. The timeline offers an even more explicitly linear presentation of historical events, thus reinforcing the narrative quality of the museum's presentation of World War II.



Figure 1.1: The descending spiral ramp “into” the beginning of World War II.

This spiral structure allows the museum to physically guide the reader toward what it ultimately promotes as the enlightening effects of the Allied invasions in Normandy. As one

descends downward, overhead lighting becomes dim and the sounds of a Nazi chant grows louder. The spiral culminates in a tunnel-like dome where a bridge leads the visitor into the sections of the exhibit that tell the story of the French defeat and consequent occupation. The entrance and exit of this dome, which is filled with deafening sounds of Nazi armies, are shaped like a bunker, evoking a sense of captivity and restriction. Emerging from this narrow and low-ceilinged exit, a visitor enters a series of rooms devoted to France's defeat and the German occupation. These rooms are walled mostly in stone with brief sections of jagged brick that may be meant to suggest the fragmented infrastructure of a devastated town.



Figure 1.2: The bunker-like entrance into a tunnel filled with the sounds of Nazi war chants.

The texts found on the walls of this half of the museum's permanent exhibition are, for the most part, informational (in the historical sense) without providing significant commentary or obviously biased information. Further, although the visitor is certainly given physical indications of how to move about the museum, individual topics like the German occupation, the French

resistance movement, the Battle of Britain, and the Holocaust are presented in large sequences of rooms in which there is no linear suggestion for movement but only a variety of options for reading and observation. This strategy serves to oppose the linear movement of the spiral ramp and bunker, thus providing space for critical engagement even from within a narrativized story of the war.

It should be noted, however, that the occupation of France is called a “black period” in its history, and there are several spaces devoted to extolling the positive influence of the French resistance movement, perhaps in order to contrast those who collaborated with German forces. The exhibit in no way shies away from admitting this cooperation, as a separate circular room is devoted to showing video and playing audio of Maréchal Petain’s declaration of intent to work with the Germans, translated into three languages. There is, however, a line of text above one portion of the resistance exhibit that reads, “40 million collaborators, 40 million resisters?” (See Figure 1.3). Thus, the presentation of France’s experience of World War II is one of equal collaboration with and resistance to the German forces, which deliberately chooses a positive framework for France’s role in World War II. In a broader sense, too, the period leading up to and during World War II is framed as a dark time, both in France and for Europe in general. The entire *Avant 1945* half of the permanent exhibition, with the exception of the spiral ramp that introduces it, is underground, once again reinforcing the idea of a bunker and of darkness and restriction. As I will later discuss, this metaphoric use of light and space is ultimately contrasted by the light and openness of the rooms devoted to D-Day.



Figure 1.3: A portion of the exhibit devoted to the Résistance (both walls and text discussed).

Another tool used to narrativize World War II and to create a “path” through it is a series of maps that present Hitler’s advancing progress in his conquest of Europe. As arrows guide a visitor between various open spaces that explore the different topics of the exhibit, maps provide visual checkpoints that ground him or her within the chronology of the war (see Figure 1.4). Each is titled *États des fronts* or “State of the Fronts” and uses color shading to show the physical progress of both Hitler’s efforts to conquer Europe and the Allies’ efforts to defend against him. This organized visual representation of the events of World War II serves to further reinforce the narrative quality of the exhibit.



Figure 1.4: “State of the Fronts” visual, provided at frequent intervals throughout the Avant 1945 half of the museum.

At the end of the *Avant 1945* section, a visitor begins to apprehend a dramatic shift in the tone of the exhibit. The oppressive dimness and enclosed, twisting spaces of the rooms devoted to the previous topics begin to release, and natural sunlight creeps into the walls of the final part of the walk through the *Avant 1945* period of world history. Suddenly, at the end of yet another low-ceilinged, bunker-like stone room, one sees an opening filled with light and, significantly, with a staircase that takes us to the source of this light (see Figure 1.5). This staircase takes us back to the ground floor of the museum, where natural lighting and open spacing provides a welcome contrast to the previous hours spent in bunkers that explore what is certainly framed as

a dark period of world and European history. This change to a light, open, physically liberated space is immediately followed by the presentation of the chain of rooms that constitute the D-Day exhibit. This exhibit, placed at the end of the pre-1945 exhibit, surrounded by light, and signaling a new post-1945 era, is thus framed by the path of the museum to present the invasion as both catalyst and liberator in the World War II narrative.



Figure 1.5: The spacious opening that signals the end of the *Avant 1945* exhibit and leads the reader up, into the light, toward the *D-Day* and the *Après 1945* exhibits.

The D-Day exhibit itself is both the culmination of the *Avant 1945* narrative and the beginning of the *Après 1945* narrative. As the historical crux of the museum, it stands alone, physically, separated from both halves of the museum (although it can only be accessed from the entrance to the *Avant 1945* portion of the museum). It consists of three contiguous and spacious rooms – one explaining the scope and effects of the entire invasion, including the landing, one that presents the effects of Allied bombings of Normandy, and one detailing the military logistics

of the landing. The rooms are listed in this order because it is this path that the visitor is encouraged to take, entering from first of these three and exiting from the last room out into the main museum lobby. The only separation between these rooms is an artificial wall structure composed to look like the ruins of occupied Norman towns bombed by the Allies during the invasion (see Figure 1.6). In fact, besides the logistical and historical information surrounding the D-Day operation, this exhibit also includes a great deal of information about the suffering of the people of Normandy, as will be seen in later chapters when this exhibit's translated texts are analyzed.



Figure 1.6: The first of the three rooms of the D-Day exhibit (and an example of the artificial reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure of Caen).

Highlighting the suffering of the Norman people serves to invoke the location of the museum, which is not insignificant in an analysis of the cultural effects of such a museum. As previously stated, the museum was constructed only 50 kilometers from the beachheads where

the invasion began, and the building itself stands on the edge of a town that experienced firsthand the destruction of these bombings. The city of Caen is a majority shareholder in the museum, which is the financial property of a *société d'économie mixte* or SEM. An SEM is a sort of combination public and private holding in which 85% of shares must be owned by public persons and at least one owner must be a “private” one.¹¹ In a complex exception, however, the “private person” may also be another SEM, which means that it is effectively possible for any SEM to be completely state-owned. In the case of the museum of Caen, the exact distribution of shares is undisclosed, but the city of Caen is publicized as the majority shareholder, giving it a primary interest in the museum’s revenue¹² and in its political successes.

The significance of Caen’s involvement with the museum is twofold: first, Caen becomes an inextricable part of any visitor experience that is centered on D-Day history. The train station is the only viable starting point for visitors who do not have a private vehicle, making a visit to this internationally commended museum more likely en route to the beaches. Further, the museum as well as private companies offer guided tours of the entire area that include time allotted for the museum as well as the beaches. Thus the museum is actually enfolded into the D-Day narrative and becomes not only a historical presentation of that D-Day narrative but also an extremely relevant preparatory experience for visitors who are about to visit the beaches.

The second significance of the city of Caen’s involvement with the museum is that it implies the involvement and therefore political obligations of state involvement in the museum. As mentioned earlier, a museum that aims to present such a significant historical moment, especially when doing so in a way that narrativizes that history, will have certain obligations regarding other relevant nations and peoples. In the case of the museum in Caen, on top of its

¹¹ “Connaître les Sem/les Spl.” *Fédération des Entreprises Publiques Locales*. <<http://www.lesepl.fr/definition.php>>

¹² The museum revenue in 2011 was 1,216,350 Euros (<http://www.memorial-caen.fr>).

heavy responsibility to educate French schoolchildren on the significance of D-Day (and of World War II in general), the museum is also under an obligation, if an implicit one, to appease British, German, and American interests.¹³ Consideration of this obligation is crucial to the understanding of certain syntactical and stylistic choices in the original French museum texts as well as their English translations, as it will govern the way in which certain sensitive historical moments may be portrayed.¹⁴

All of its geographical and political influences and obligations included, then, the museum has created out of both a complex historical event and a set of politico-cultural considerations, a partially narrativized experience of the D-Day invasion in light of the history surrounding it. I mean the term narrative as the integrated experience of both the implicit spatial and visual narrative throughout the pre-1945 period that I have just described, as well as the textual narrative provided as a guide throughout the museum path. The texts on the walls of the museum, translated from French into English and German, are perhaps the most explicit statement of the story that the museum has chosen to convey. What then, becomes the importance of their accurate translation for English- and German-speaking visitors?

In light of the previous appropriation of museum theory to the *Musée Mémorial de Caen*, I would now like to use theories of translation in order to examine the significance of the translation of such texts for the visitor experience. Ultimately, I will explore how the *mistranslation* of these texts might also play into this significance, disrupting not only cognitive understanding of a free-standing text but also the narrative of the museum.

¹³ These countries do not, of course, make up a comprehensive list of the major participators in World War II. They are, however, the most relevant to the story of the debarkation on June 6th and further constitute the 3 languages into which the texts are translated. I have thus chosen to narrow my analysis of the political obligations of the museum to these other countries.

¹⁴ The texts are translated into both French and German, but this project undertakes only the relation between the French and English versions.

Translation, according to professional translator and Princeton professor David Bellos, seeks to “preserve the force of the original utterance – not only the overall meaning of what has been said but the meaning that the saying of it has, and to do so in a way that is appropriate to the specific context in which the second formulation is to be heard or used.”¹⁵ In the case of the *Musée Mémorial*, the specific context in which the translated texts are to be used is similar, though perhaps not identical, to that of the original French. Although both the French and English texts are placed in the same physical location, they are aimed at different audiences and therefore vary slightly in context. Bellos adds, however, an exception for texts such as those in question: “poetry, signage, and museum and exhibition captions count as special cases – everywhere else, the requirement of sameness stops at information and force.”¹⁶ Bellos seems to hold that these categories demand even further dedication to the various dimensions of the source text. What’s more, whatever cultural baggage the museum texts carry in their native language and for their native French speakers, this cultural baggage will be different for an American, English, or German person visiting the same site and being guided through the same museum narrative. Translating the “effect” of such a textual narrative is perhaps the most complex task of the translator in this case. As Bellos writes,

“Baudelaire in French” has a whole range of different effects on me at different times, and it surely has an even wider range of effects on the community of readers as a whole. Of which one does the “effect” of translation aim to be equivalent?¹⁷

Just as Patraha discusses the multiplicity of performances that are enacted by different visitors that engage with museum material, Bellos emphasizes the multiplicity of effects that one translation may have on different people and groups of people. While he notes the importance of

¹⁵ Bellos, David. *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?; Translation and the Meaning of Everything*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2011. Print, 301.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 320.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 310.

these effects in understanding the context of a source or target text, Bellos also asserts, “‘effects’ ...can’t be extracted from people and measured against one another.”¹⁸ Walter Benjamin seems to concur when he writes, “consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful.”¹⁹

While the effect that a work produces upon its reader or viewer may, hypothetically, be an important factor in translation, the unquantifiable nature of an effect or a group of effects makes this factor difficult, if not impossible, to include. Benjamin makes an interesting distinction, however, between effect upon the reader and effect upon the language: “the task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect upon the language into which he is translating which produces with it the echo of the original...directed at the language as such, at its totality.”²⁰ Benjamin views a translation’s effect upon a language as its place within the totality of a linguistic structure. At the same time, he maintains the untranslatability of connotation, just as he argues that to consider the effects of a translation *upon a reader* cannot be useful. Both Bellos and Benjamin discuss the impossibility of creating a translation that contains a certain pre-fixed reader effect. This concept becomes magnified when the text being translated is one that constitutes part of a museum experience meant to create for its reader an intelligible narrative and a cultural memory of an event. This conflicting set of restrictions further complicates the production of what might be deemed a good translation “match.”

The concept of a match in translation is viewed differently by various theorists. The one that I would like to pursue is that of David Bellos, who gives no more specific definition than that “for a repeated utterance in a different natural language to count as a translation of the

¹⁸ Ibid., 307.

¹⁹ Benjamin, Walter. “The Task of the Translator.” *The Translation Studies Reader*. Tran. Harry Zohn. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. London: Routledge, 2000. Print, 1.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

source, it must give the same information and have the same force.”²¹ While this definition may provide little practical guidance, its resistance to a more specific definition of match maintains the integrity of the huge variation that can occur in the translation process. Bellos admits, as do most theorists of translation²², that there may be multiple correct translations of a given source text. Bellos analogizes the idea of match in translation to match in paintings or faces, positing that both require “[reliance] on multiple dimensions and qualities.”²³ In consequence of the opportunity for variance within this process, “translators of...all kinds possess the outcome of their work in a very personal way. Translation cannot be but, in some measure, an appropriation of the source.”²⁴ Thus, because of the choices of a translator, the possibility for more than one acceptable translation, and the multitude of effects that a text may have upon its reader, “the only certainty is that a match cannot be the same thing as the thing it matches.”²⁵ The translated narrative of a cultural memory, then, such as the one found at the *Musée Mémorial*, would necessarily be appropriated and shifted even in the case of an acceptable translation match.

Unfortunately, the translations from French to English of the texts at this museum do not, I argue, qualify as an acceptable match. I make this argument on many grounds and from an understanding of the wide variety of translations that may be considered a match: “the point where a reformulation ceases to count as a match for the source is open to negotiation within frameworks that vary widely among different traditions and genres.”²⁶ As I will contend on both a theoretical and mechanical level, the translated texts constitute a translation that so profoundly

²¹ Bellos, David. *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?; Translation and the Meaning of Everything*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2011. Print, 320.

²² Including Vinay and Darbelnet, whose manual of comparative stylistics I use as the foundation for my commentary in the third chapter.

²³ Bellos, David. *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?; Translation and the Meaning of Everything*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2011. Print, 322.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 315.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 310.

transgresses acceptable stylistic and cultural appropriations of the source material as well as stylistic products in the target language that it cannot be considered an acceptable translation of the source material. Further, these translated texts are the linguistic lifeline for many non-French speaking visitors and thus may dramatically reshape the narrative of the museum, either by the appropriating nature of acceptable translation or in such a mistranslation as we see in these texts. The latter product exacerbates the displacing effects that may already be present in an acceptable appropriation of such a culturally sensitive narrative. In light of both the museum theory and translation theory discussed above, I would consider an acceptable translation of these texts to have the effect of *displacing* the museum's narrative; the current and unacceptable translation, however, serves to *disrupt* this narrative in an unproductive way. The way in which any translation of these texts might be obliged to treat the original French framing of World War II and D-Day as well as the further effects of a mistranslation will be discussed in more depth during the commentary chapter of this work.

In considering how to unravel an existing translation – that is, to analyze it for its stylistic and expressive choices, one might consider how the process was first completed. The texts of the *Musée Mémorial* were translated by one Jean Migrenne,²⁷ a professor of English at the Université de Caen. The choice of a source-language (or SL) translator is an unusual one in the modern practice of translation into English. More commonly, at least in Anglophone countries, the translator chosen for a given project is either one whose native language is the target language (TL), or two translators, both fluent in both languages but each being native to either the SL or TL. To choose a French national and native French speaker may be more typical of European translation practices, and it may also perhaps fulfill some nationalist interest of the museum to keep either the labor or the appropriation of such a delicate text within cultural

²⁷ “Migrenne Jean.” *Canal U*. <http://canal-u.tv/auteurs/migrenne_jean>

borders. The effect of this choice, however, upon the translation in question is that, to say the least, it lacks the idiomatic feel of something translated, written, or revised by a native English speaker. While this effect may, hypothetically, be desired, in this case the English version is so linguistically jarring (and, in many cases, incorrect in the syntactical and grammatical sense) as to be disrupting to the larger narrative of the museum. As discussed before, the effect of a text or its translation on someone cannot be measured or considered useful when translating it, but I would argue that this translated text's divergence from norms of translation as well as from structural features of the English language creates a jolt to the reader experience that cannot be ignored. I will go no further in an attempt to quantify this mistranslation's effect on different viewers, but I must assert for the sake of my proposed project that the acceptable translation of these texts is crucial to an apprehension of the content of the museum.

II. Methodology and Annotations

The following chapter contains, first, a copy of the methodology that I originally used when annotating the original translations of these museum texts, and second, the original translations in full, annotated either by error or by result. The methodology represents a series of questions that I posed in order to categorize the errors I perceived within the translated material. For the entirety of this project, I work exclusively with the texts from the main guiding plaques in the D-Day exhibit of the museum. These texts, though only a portion of the entire museum, represent the focal point of the D-Day narrative and allow me to focus my analysis.

It should be noted that the translated texts are in British English, which varies from American English in various ways, the most pertinent of which are, for my purposes, word spellings and the writing of dates.

As may be apparent by the categorization below, I attempted to address problems in the translated text first in terms of larger structural and meaning-based considerations before moving to smaller, more technical issues with fewer cultural implications. In the frequent case that several different of these concerns presented themselves within the same sentence or paragraph, I placed the instance first in the “higher” category (closer to the number 1) and then only repeated it in a “lower” category if there existed persisting linguistic or technical issues that were not resolved by addressing the larger, “higher” issue of the sentence.

In the case of the first and second categories, I have noted an error or issue with the original text, but I will not, in my retranslation, significantly change either the order within a paragraph and/or passage or a seemingly intentional or political displacement of agency within a historical narrative. I made this choice primarily to ensure that my own re-translation did not stray too far from the intention of the original French text, despite the clarity that a major

reformulation of the text according to these two categories might provide for an Anglophone reader. This point will be further discussed in my concluding chapter.

2A. Methodology for Identification and Analysis of Errors in Translation

- 1) Does this paragraph or passage present information in a logical order for an Anglophone reader?
 - a. Information order within a passage
 - b. Information order within a paragraph
- 2) Is this sentence intentionally allaying agency or blame for an action or effect?
 - a. Nominalization of action, particularly verbal action
 - b. Insistent passive voice
- 3) Are there words or phrases in the English translation that assume a historical or cultural knowledge to which a typical Anglophone reader may not be privy?
 - a. Quotation marks around historical or cultural names and events
 - b. Events or names known to Francophone but not as commonly to Anglophone viewers
- 4) Are there sentences for which agency is not intentionally being displaced but similar stylistic problems occur as a result from an error in transposition, modulation, literal translation, or calque?
 - a. Clause order – unnatural or incorrect syntax in the English translation
 - b. Sentence length – A long sentence that may seem less natural in English
 - c. Calque – the incorrect direct translation of a specific French expression
 - d. Latinate words – insistence on Latinate words that may be more naturally replaced by shorter, Saxon-derived words
 - e. Abstraction or conceptualization – frequently the use of abstract nouns
 - f. Other instances of nominalization – these may obscure agency but do not avoid it
 - g. Insufficient conciseness – verbosity and redundancy
 - h. “Plain old passive” – stylistically awkward (but not political) tendency toward the passive tense
 - i. Vocabulary error to do with the subject/verb pairing – lack of modulation and consideration of the target language
- 5) Are there more specific errors with this sentence that are not resolved as a product of addressing any of the above issues and that are a product of pure mistranslation, that is, not a misuse of a translational technique but an oversight altogether?
 - a. Incorrect usage: parentheses and dashes
 - b. Omission of key words from the original text
 - c. Vocabulary mistake – incorrect translation of a single word
 - d. Conjunction and punctuation – incorrect grammar in the target language

2B. Annotations of the Original Translations¹

La décision de construire le Mur de l'Atlantique est prise en décembre 1941. Elle résulte de l'évolution de la stratégie hitlérienne face à l'entrée en guerre des Etats-Unis et à l'échec de la *Wehrmacht* devant Moscou.

L'engagement de l'essentiel des forces allemandes sur le front de l'Est dégarnit dangereusement les défenses à l'Ouest, où plane désormais la menace d'un débarquement anglo-américain. Il s'agit donc d'édifier un tel système défensif qu'il permettra à la « forteresse Europe » de résister à un assaut amphibie allié.

La construction du « Mur » débute au printemps 1942. Pas moins de 11 millions de tonnes de béton seront nécessaires pour édifier plus de 15 000 ouvrages le long de 6 000 kms de côtes, de la Norvège à la frontière franco-espagnole. Le mur de l'Atlantique n'est pas un rempart continu. Il se compose d'une juxtaposition d'ouvrages fortifiés de tailles diverses, plus ou moins espacés les uns des autres.

¹ The texts presented in this chapter, as they are direct copies of the informational plaques in the D-Day exhibit of the Mémorial de Caen, are cited in the Bibliography under “Mémorial de Caen” and the plaque title, when applicable.

Taken in December 1941,² the decision to build the Atlantic Wall was a result of the development of Hitler's strategy following the United States' entry into the war and the *Wehrmacht*'s failure at the gates of Moscow.³

The deployment of the bulk of Germany's troops on the Eastern front dangerously undermanned defences in the West, where the threat of an Anglo-American landing now hovered.⁴ It was therefore a matter of⁵ building a defence system that would enable “Fortress Europe”⁶ to withstand an allied amphibious assault.⁷

Construction of the “Wall”⁸ began in the spring of 1942. No less than 11 million

² **Error in modulation/clause order:** As a result of the nominalization of Hitler's decision, this clause has been extracted from the action of the main independent clause of the sentence in a way that is not natural to English syntax.

³ **Displacement of agency:** The syntactical structure of this sentence avoids giving either Hitler or the U.S. agency - instances of nominalization and the passive voice. Agency is instead given to the “threat of a Anglo-American landing,” which, in English, cannot “hover.”

⁴ **Displacement of agency:** Agency is here again maneuvered away from Hitler and Germany and from the Allied forces through both nominalization and the passive voice.

⁵ **Mistranslation/usage:** Incorrect translation of the French “il s'agit donc de,” choosing a different meaning than is implied by the French.

⁶ **Assumption of cultural knowledge/quotation mark:** Here, the translator assumes a reader's knowledge of the term, “Fortress Europe,” but also places it within quotations, directly translating a French affective mark that does not have the same effect in English.

⁷ **Lack of transposition/nominalization:** Although the original French prefers to nominalize the assault and then qualify it with adjectives, this is uncommon in English and conceptually unexpected to an Anglophone reader.

⁸ **Error in equivalence/quotation:** quotations are not usually used to emphasize or to make less

tones of concrete were required to raise over 15,000 buildings along 6000 km of coastline stretching from Norway to the Franco-Spanish border.⁹

The Atlantic Wall was not a continuous rampart.¹⁰ It was made up of a

credible in formal writing in English, as they may be in French.

⁹ **Lack of modulation/passive voice:** This sentence centers around the concrete as its subject and uses the passive voice to describe actions performed upon the concrete, which is an unusual syntax in the English language.

¹⁰ **Lack of modulation/ conceptualization/ latinate words:** Here the translator has privileged a direct translation of “rempart continu” to its Latinate equivalents in English,

juxtaposition of fortified works of various sizes set at varying distances from one another.^{11 12}

where the English might more naturally use concrete Saxon vocabulary to describe this spatial phenomena. In addition, this first sentence is a conceptualization of the information that is to follow, which is typical to French but not to English.

¹¹ **Order within a passage:** presentation of information in an illogical order – first the reasons for the wall, then the reasons for the reasons for the wall, then the construction of the wall, then the physical specificities of the wall.

¹² **Error in literal translation/verbosity:** Mirroring the original French phrasing creates an effect of verbosity in the English; Latinate words, too, contribute to an over-elaborate explanation of a spatial concept.

En janvier 1943, deux mois après le débarquement allié en Afrique du nord, Roosevelt et Churchill se rencontrent à Casablanca et s'accordent sur le principe d'un assaut plus direct contre l'Allemagne à partir des côtes du nord-ouest de la France. La conception du plan, qui reçoit le nom de code d'*Overlord* est confiée à un état-major (le COSSAC) dirigé par le général britannique Frederick Morgan.

En mai 1943, réunis à Washington (conférence *Trident*), les Alliés fixent la date du Débarquement : début mai 1944. Reste à déterminer le lieu. Compte tenu des limites de l'indispensable couverture aérienne, deux régions seulement sont envisageables.

Les Allemands s'attendent – logiquement – à un assaut dans le Pas de Calais, très proche de l'Angleterre. En conséquence, leurs défenses sont ici plus redoutables qu'ailleurs. En revanche, les côtes de la baie de Seine, entre Le Havre et Cherbourg, plus éloignées et apparemment moins menacées, ne sont pas aussi bien protégées.

Privilégiant l'effet de surprise, les Alliés réunis à Québec en août 1943 (conférence *Quadrant*) font le choix des plages de Basse-Normandie. En décembre 1943, le général américain Dwight D. Eisenhower reçoit le commandement en chef de l'opération *Overlord*. Son ordre de mission est clair : prendre pied en France et libérer l'Ouest de l'Europe !

In January 1943, two months after the allied landing¹³ in North Africa, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Casablanca and agreed on the principle of making¹⁴ a more direct attack upon Germany from the northwest coast of France. Design of the plan, which was given the codename “Overlord”, was entrusted to a joint staff (COSSAC) under the command of the British general Frederick Morgan.¹⁵

Meeting in Washington in May 1943 (the Trident conference), the Allies set the date of the landing for early May 1944. It only remained to decide upon where it would take place. Taking into account the limited reach of the air cover essential to the operation, only two regions were real possibilities.

Logically enough, the Germans were expecting an attack in the Strait of Dover, which was very close to England, and their defences there were consequently stronger¹⁶ than elsewhere.¹⁷ ¹⁸ The Seine Bay coastline between Le

¹³ **Lack of transposition/nominalization:**

Action of allied landing is made into a noun rather than described actively with a verb

¹⁴ **Error in literal translation/abstraction:**

equivalent translation of the French “s'accordent sur le principe d'un assaut plus direct” creates an unnecessary abstraction of the decision in English.

¹⁵ **Error in literal translation/ nominalization/**

passive voice/syntax: Without giving agency either to those who “entrusted” or to general Morgan, this sentence becomes awkward by nature of having to revolve around a the noun “design.”

¹⁶ **Lack of modulation/syntax:** By mirroring the French syntax, the English translation misplaces “consequently.”

¹⁷ **Error in literal translation/redundancy:**

Having already stated that defences were stronger in this area, mentioning that they were stronger “than elsewhere” becomes redundant in English.

¹⁸ **Mistranslation/omission:** The English translation omits the French “en revanche” and therefore misses an opportunity to make clear the opposition between these two locations.

Havre and Cherbourg, further away and apparently less under threat, was not so well protected.^{19 20}

Putting their money on the success of mounting a surprise attack,²¹ the Allies met in Quebec in August 1943 (the Quadrant conference) and selected the beaches of Lower Normandy.²² In December 1943, the American general Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of Operation Overlord. His mission was clear enough:²³ land in France and liberate Western Europe!

¹⁹ **Order within a paragraph:** By beginning with a description and qualification of one of the two location options for invasion, this information order makes it unclear that this information corresponds directly to the previous paragraph's introduction of the two regions.

²⁰ **Error in literal translation/verbosity:** By adhering to the French syntax, the English translation is unnecessarily verbose.

²¹ **Error in modulation:** "Privilegiant" is here translated as "putting their money on the success of," which is an awkward and uncommon choice for English.

²² **Order within a paragraph:** the action of choosing to mount a surprise attack chronologically follows the meeting in Quebec and its basic information and should therefore come after it.

²³ **Mistranslation/addition:** "Enough" is unnecessary and is added in the English version.

MARDI 6 JUIN 1944 : LE DÉBARQUEMENT

Contrairement à une idée reçue, le débarquement allié sur les côtes normandes porte le nom de code *Neptune* et non *Overlord* (réservé à la libération de l'Ouest de l'Europe) dont il constitue la première phase.

Les opérations commencent dans la nuit du 5 au 6 avec le largage des parachutistes, tandis que des bombardiers lourds pilonnent les batteries d'artillerie côtières jugées les plus dangereuses.

Pendant ce temps, une armada de 5 000 navires (dont un millier de vaisseaux de guerre) traverse la Manche et prend position au large des plages sans avoir été repérée par les Allemands, abusés par la tempête qui sévit toujours et handicapés par la destruction de leurs radars au cours des semaines précédentes. La surprise est donc totale.

A 5h45, les navires de guerre ouvrent le feu sur les défenses du Mur de l'Atlantique, alors que les barges transportant les premières vagues d'assaut approchent de leurs objectifs.

En secteur américain, l'attaque débute à 6h30, une heure plus tard en secteur britannique en raison du décalage des marées. Les horaires ont été calculés pour permettre un débarquement à mi-marée montante afin d'éviter les obstacles de plage disposés par Rommel dans l'hypothèse – la plus plausible à ses yeux – d'une tentative alliée à marée haute.

TUESDAY 6 JUNE 1944: THE LANDING

Contrary to popular belief,²⁴ the allied landing on the coast of Normandy bore the codename Neptune not Overlord (which was reserved for the liberation of Western Europe as a whole), of which it constituted the initial phase.^{25 26}

Operations started on the night of 5/6 June,²⁷ with airborne troops being parachuted down while heavy bombers pounded the coastal artillery batteries deemed to present the greatest danger.²⁸

Meanwhile, an armada of 5000 ships (including a thousand battleships) crossed the English Channel and took up position off the beaches without being spotted by the Germans, who were battered by the storm that still raged and handicapped by the loss of their radar stations, which had been destroyed over

²⁴ **Error in equivalence:** translating “idée reçue” to “popular belief” creates a different effect in the target language; “popular belief” assumes that the name Overlord was already known to Anglophones as the name of the allied landing, whereas “idée reçue” refers more to an idea that is unchallenged but not necessarily commonly held.

²⁵ **Order within a passage:** first paragraph does not reflect information in following paragraphs (a reader expects to now learn about Overlord).

²⁶ **Error in literal translation/clause order:** while this clause order is perfectly logical in the French, the direct translation of this clause order without consideration for those more common in English creates an illogical order of information for an Anglophone.

²⁷ **Lack of modulation /nominalization:** Keeping operations as a noun creates a nominalized means of saying that the allies began operations and creates a syntactically undesirable sentence.

²⁸ **Error in literal translation/ passive voice:** the use of the passive voice to conceptualize the first attacks of the invasion creates a whole host of other syntactical abnormalities as well as verbosity.

the previous few weeks.²⁹ The surprise was therefore total.³⁰

At 5:45 a.m., the battleships opened fire on the Atlantic Wall defences, while the landing craft [sic] carrying the first assault waves³¹ drew nearer their targets.

In the American sector, the attack began at 6:30 a.m., an hour later than in the British sector, because of a difference in the rhythm of the tides.^{32 33 34}

The timetable had been calculated to enable landing at half high tide³⁵ in order to avoid the obstacles that Rommel had placed along the beaches on the hypothesis – the most likely in his opinion – of an allied landing at high tide.^{36 37}

²⁹ **Error in literal translation/ syntax/ nominalization/passive voice:** each clause after “the Germans” is a modifier to this noun and therefore uses the passive voice.

³⁰ **Lack of modulation/syntax:** this English phrase translates directly each element of “la surprise est donc totale” without regard to idiomatic English syntax.

³¹ **Error in lexical calque:** the direct translation of each lexical element of “vagues d’assaut” results in an impossible adjective-noun juxtaposition in English.

³² **Added paragraph break:** The original French passage is one whole paragraph, while the English is unnecessarily broken into two, creating a break in the logical flow of information.

³³ **Error in literal translation/clause order:** in English, the explanatory clause might more commonly precede the information it explains.

³⁴ **Error in literal translation/verbosity:** the “difference in the rhythm of the tides” makes overly explicit and verbose a concept that might be more succinctly phrased in English.

³⁵ **Passive voice:** by giving the “timetable” agency in this sentence rather than those who “calculated” it, this sentence acquires an awkward syntax.

³⁶ **Displacement of agency/passive voice:** despite describing the action of the invasion, this text does not once give direct agency to either the Germans or the Allies but only mentions them obliquely in sufficient quantity to make it basically clear who was doing what.

³⁷ **Error in literal translation/sentence length:** the literal translation of all elements of this long phrase results in a run-on sentence in English where the French is acceptable. The most apparent abnormality is the interjectory phrase “the most likely in his opinion.”

« VEUILLEZ ÉCOUTER QUELQUES MESSAGES PERSONNELS... »

Pendant l'occupation, la radio est un moyen de communication entre la résistance intérieure française et les forces alliées à Londres qui diffusent des « messages personnels ».

Contrairement à une idée reçue, les fameux vers du poète Verlaine diffusés par la BBC le 1^{er} juin (« Les sanglots longs des violons de l'automne »), puis le 5 juin (« Bercent [sic] mon cœur d'une langueur monotone ») ne sont pas le message général annonçant le Débarquement, mais seulement l'un des messages parmi beaucoup d'autres. Ceux du 1^{er} juin ont pour but de mettre en alerte les diverses organisations de la résistance française. Les quelques 210 messages émis, pendant 16 minutes, le 5 juin vers 21h 15, donnent l'ordre de passer à l'action immédiate.

Les messages spécifiquement destinés à la région « M » des Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (FFI), dont font partie la Normandie et la Bretagne, sont les suivants :

Message d'alerte (1^{er} juin) : « L'heure du combat viendra ».

Message d'action (5 juin) : « Les dés sont sur le tapis » (*Plan vert* : sabotage des voies ferrées) ; « il fait chaud à Suez » (*Plan Guérilla*) ; « La flèche ne percera pas » (*Plan Tortue* : embuscades contr les colonnes de renforts allemands) ; « Ne faites pas de plaisanteries » (*Plan Violet* : sabotage des lignes téléphoniques).

“PLEASE LISTEN TO A FEW PERSONAL MESSAGES...”

During the occupation, the radio was³⁸ a means of communication between the Resistance movement in France and the allied forces in London, through the broadcasting of “personal messages.”³⁹

Contrary to popular belief,⁴⁰ the famous lines from Verlaine’s ‘Autumn Song’ broadcast by the BBC on 1 June (“Les sanglots longs des violons de l’automne” – “The long sobs of autumn’s violins”), and on 5 June (“Bercent [sic] mon Coeur d’une langueur monotone” – “Wound my heart with a monotonous languor”) were not a general message⁴¹ announcing the Normandy Landing, but simply one message among many others. The aim of the messages broadcast on 1 June was to⁴² put the various French Resistance organisations on alert. The 210 or so messages broadcast on 5 June at around 9:15 pm gave the order to go into immediate action.

The following messages were specifically aimed at region “M” of the FFI (French Forces of the Interior), which included Normandy and Brittany:

³⁸ **Lack of modulation/abstraction:** in order to make more explicit the role of the radio for an Anglophone reader, “was used as a” might be a more explicit way to say this.

³⁹ **Error in transposition:** although the translation of “qui diffusent...” to “through the broadcasting” takes into account that a direct translation would be grammatically ambiguous, the current phrasing in English still does not clarify who was using the personal messages.

⁴⁰ **Error in equivalence:** see identical error in the previous text (number 23).

⁴¹ **Mistranslation:** “le message général” is here translated to “a general message.” This is incorrect both because it replaces a definite article with an indefinite one and because general is incorrectly translated literally.

⁴² **Error in modulation/passive voice:** making “the aim” the subject of this sentence creates unnecessary verbosity and passive voice.

Message of alert⁴³ (1 June): “The hour of combat will come”. [sic]
Message of action⁴⁴ (5 June): “The dice are on the carpet” (*Green Plan*: sabotage of railway lines); “It’s hot in Suez” (*Guerrilla Plan*); “The arrow will not pierce” (*Tortoise Plan*: ambushes of German reinforcement columns); “Don’t joke”; (*Violet Plan*: sabotage of telephone lines).

⁴³ **Error in calque:** the French syntax for descriptive adjectives is incorrectly directly translated to “message of alert,” rather than the pre-existing “alert message.”

⁴⁴ **Error in calque:** identical to the above error.

UN DÉBARQUEMENT NON DÉCISIF

Le Débarquement a réussi. Mais il n'est nullement décisif ! Le sort de l'opération *Overlord* dépend désormais de la montée en puissance des deux camps dans les premières semaines de juin. A priori, les Allemands disposent de l'avantage. En une journée ou deux, ils peuvent diriger vers la Normandie une vingtaine de divisions, présentes dans un rayon de 250 kms autour de la tête de pont. Ils disposeraient alors d'un net avantage sur leurs adversaires, pour lesquels l'arrivée des renforts par voie maritime sera forcément plus lente ; ce qui pourrait permettre à Rommel de rejeter les Alliés à la mer.

Pour ces derniers, l'essentiel est donc d'employer tous les moyens pour ralentir l'arrivée des renforts allemands. Outre l'action de la résistance française, les Alliés feront jouer pleinement leur écrasante supériorité aérienne en détruisant les nœuds de communication que forment les villes normandes et en attaquant systématiquement les convois allemands sur les routes (voir l'avion *Typhoon* dans le hall du Mémorial).

Enfin, les Anglo-américains vont bénéficier des effets durables du plan d'intoxication « *Fortitude* », Hitler pensant, jusqu'en juillet, que l'opération en Normandie n'est qu'un leurre destiné à leur faire dégarnir les défenses du Pas-de-Calais où se produira l'assaut principal. Quinze jours après le Débarquement, les Alliés ont nettement pris l'avantage et disposent d'une solide tête de pont.

INDECISIVE LANDING⁴⁵

The Landing⁴⁶ had succeeded –⁴⁷ but it was by no means decisive! The outcome of Operation Overlord now depended on how much power the two camps could muster in the first weeks of June.⁴⁸

A priori,⁴⁹ the Germans had the advantage. They could have a score⁵⁰ of divisions marching on Normandy in a day or two, within a 250-kilometre radius of the bridgehead. They therefore⁵¹ had a major advantage over their enemy,⁵² who would have to bring in reinforcements by boat – a slower process altogether⁵³ – and so give

⁴⁵ **Error in literal translation:** the adjective “decisive” usually qualifies a victory, which makes its qualification of “landing” unusual.

⁴⁶ **Mistranslation/capitalization:** landing is not a term that is normally capitalized in English with reference to the D-Day landing.

⁴⁷ **Mistranslation:** the dash does not here fit grammatically as it does in the French.

⁴⁸ **Error in literal translation/syntax:** the syntax of this phrase becomes belabored in the English translation when taken directly from the French.

⁴⁹ **Error in equivalence:** while the term “a priori” is commonly used in French, it is an uncommon and perhaps much less commonly understood term in English. The translator assumes that both languages borrow with equal weight from the Latin original.

⁵⁰ **Error in equivalence/register:** the translator here chooses a word that may not be as commonly known to English speakers as one in a lower register, like “twenty.”

⁵¹ **Mistranslation:** the translator has here chosen to place “therefore” directly after a pronoun and before a verb, an uncommon syntactical structure in English.

⁵² **Displacement of agency:** by avoiding (whether unintentionally or not) naming the “enemy” party, the translator both reduces clarity for an Anglophone reader and varies in meaning from “adversaires.”

⁵³ **Error in modulation/sentence length:** The translator here adds to the sentence using dashes, creating a sentence that is too long and awkward.

Rommel the opportunity to push back⁵⁴ the Allies into the sea.

For the Allied camp, therefore,⁵⁵ it was essential to use all possible means to slow down the arrival of German reinforcements.⁵⁶ Besides action on the part of the French Resistance,⁵⁷ they were to⁵⁸ make good use of their crushing superiority in the air, destroying the communication hubs constituted by Normandy's towns⁵⁹ and systematically attacking German convoys on the roads (see the Typhoon aircraft in the Memorial's hall).⁶⁰

Finally,⁶¹ the Allies could count on the lasting effects of the "Fortitude" misinformation plan, with Hitler

continuing to believe well into July⁶² that the Normandy operation was nothing more than a ploy designed to lure him into depleting the defences at Pas-de-Calais, where the real attack was to take place.⁶³

Two weeks after the Landing, the Allies had gained the upper hand and established a solid bridgehead.

⁶² **Error in literal translation/sentence length/syntax:** imitation of a French grammatical structure creates an awkward phrase ("with Hitler continuing to believe) and thus results in a long and over-complicated sentence.
⁶³ **Added paragraph break:** one paragraph in the French text split into two in the English.

⁵⁴ **Mistranslation:** the placement of the word "back" would most commonly be after "the Allies."

⁵⁵ **Repetition:** the translator has used "therefore" as a match for three different expressions, which creates an over-frequency of the word in this passage.

⁵⁶ **Error in literal translation/Latinate verbosity:** the translator has chosen directly equivalent Latinate words that are technically correct but whose combination is verbose and lacks an idiomatic feel.

⁵⁷ **Lack of transposition/nominalization:** the focus of this sentence on the noun "action" creates syntactical issues (see below).

⁵⁸ **Error in literal translation/referent:** by maintaining this word order within a clause, two grammatical issues arise: first, the pronoun "they" has no referent in the previous clause. Second, this disconnect between the first clause and the second creates an ambiguity for the agency of the entire sentence (based on the unclear term "they").

⁵⁹ **Lack of modulation/conceptualization:** directly translating the idea of towns representing communication hubs represents this idea in a way that is unnaturally indirect.

⁶⁰ **Added paragraph break:** the paragraph break while listing Allied defense tactics creates confusion.

⁶¹ **Mistranslation/usage:** Enfin does not here signify "finally," which in English implies the end of a clearly presented list (which is not clearly indicated in the passage).

POURQUOI BOMBARDER LES VILLES NORMANDES?

De tous les souvenirs douloureux qui ont marqué l'esprit des Normands confrontés aux combats de l'été 1944, le plus effroyable est incontestablement celui laissé par les terribles bombardements déclenchés par l'aviation alliée. Le sifflement des bombes, les explosions assourdissantes, le sol qui tremble, les murs qui s'écroulent avec fracas, la poussière, les flammes, l'odeur de la poudre, les cris des blessés ensevelis sous les ruines, la perte d'être chers resteront à jamais gravés dans la mémoire des rescapés.

Contrairement à ce l'on croit souvent, ces bombardements ne visent pas directement les troupes allemands. Pour les Alliés, il s'agit en fait de détruire les nœuds de communication que constituent les villes, afin de retarder autant que possible la montée des renforts ennemis vers les plages.

Ce plan de destruction systématique, conçu avant le Débarquement, est mis en œuvre le 6 juin vers 20 heures par l'*US Air force*, relayée au cours de la nuit, par la *Bomber Command* de la RAF. À la demande des aviateurs américains, des tracts avaient été lancés dans la journée pour avertir les habitants du danger. Mais largués de manière trop imprécise, ils se dispersèrent souvent loin des villes et n'eurent pas d'effet. Les bombardements se poursuivent pendant la dizaine de jours suivants, visant d'autres villes, puis des carrefours routiers de moindre importance, voire parfois de simples villages quand ils représentent un enjeu stratégique. Les bombardements aériens ont provoqué la mort de près de 12 000 personnes.

WHY BOMB NORMANDY'S TOWNS ?

Of all the painful memories that left their mark on the inhabitants of Normandy who had to suffer through the fighting that raged during the summer of 1944,⁶⁴ the worst is undoubtedly that left by the terrible air raids launched by the Allies.^{65 66}

The whistling of the bombs as they fell, the deafening explosions, the shuddering ground, the walls that crumbled and came crashing down, the dust, the flames, the stink of powder, the screams of the injured buried beneath the rubble, and the loss of loved ones will forever remain graven⁶⁷ in the memories of those who survived.

Contrary to what many people believe, these air raids did not directly target German troops. For the Allies, it was actually a question of⁶⁸ destroying the communication hubs that the towns represented,⁶⁹ so as to slow down the

⁶⁴ **Error in literal translation/referent:** unusually long prepositional phrase in English that risks the reader losing sight of the original subject in the following clause.

⁶⁵ **Displacement of Agency:** at the end of this sentence, it becomes clear that the passive voice has determined the clause order of this sentence that has caused such a long prepositional phrase. The fact of the Allies' responsibility in the bombings of Normandy is here downplayed as much as possible by the structure of this sentence.

⁶⁶ **Added paragraph break:** The translator unnecessarily adds a paragraph break where there is none in the original text.

⁶⁷ **Mistranslation/vocabulary:** an understanding of English idiomacy would yield the more common expression "engraved in the memories."

⁶⁸ **Mistranslation/usage:** the expression "il s'agit de" is here taken to mean "it was a question of" and does not sufficiently explain the causal relationship between the Allies and "destroying the communication hubs."

⁶⁹ **Lack of modulation/conceptualization:** the idea of the towns representing communication hubs, though easy to work into the grammatical

enemy reinforcements' advance towards the beaches as much as possible.⁷⁰

This plan of systematic destruction, which had been drawn up⁷¹ before the Landing took place, was put into action by the US Air force at around 8 o'clock in the evening of 6 June,⁷² with the RAF Bomber Command taking over from them during the course of the night. At the request of the American pilots, leaflets had been dropped the day before, warning the inhabitants of the impending danger. But⁷³ scattered somewhat haphazardly, they⁷⁴ often landed a good distance from the towns themselves⁷⁵ and had no real effect.⁷⁶

The raids continued over the next ten or so days, targeting other towns, and then

structure of the French text, creates in the English translation an awkward and unnecessarily conceptualized understanding of the use of these towns.

⁷⁰ **Error in literal translation/run-on sentence:** using the identical grammatical structure to the French original creates in the English translation a run-on sentence.

⁷¹ **Mistranslation:** Instead of maintaining the French past participle, the English translation uses the unnecessary form, "which had been drawn up before," which creates in its meaning much more emphasis on the order of events than does the French original.

⁷² **Lack of modulation/passive voice:** by keeping the passive voice from the French version, the English clause order and construction becomes overcomplicated and produces undesirable constructions such as the following "with the RAF Bomber Command taking over..."

⁷³ **Mistranslation/mechanics:** this grammatical structure in English requires a comma ("but, scattered...").

⁷⁴ **Error in literal translation/referent:** English grammar requires that a referent be closer in distance to its pronoun than this direct translation of the French structure.

⁷⁵ **Error in modulation/redundancy:** "themselves" is not necessary to an identical understanding of the meaning of the French.

⁷⁶ **Added paragraph break:** a separation between paragraphs is created in the English version from one longer paragraph in the French.

crossroads of lesser importance, even little villages standing alone when they were seen to be of strategic importance.⁷⁷ The air raids caused the death of almost 12, 000 people.

⁷⁷ **Error in literal translation/referent:** there is no apparent referent for the word "other," which renders the list of effects of the bombs logically confusing.

LES SOUFFRANCES DE LA POPULATION

Au cours de l'été 1944, les Normands se sont trouvés brutalement plongés au cœur de l'un des plus gigantesques affrontements de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Au plus fort des combats, en juillet, deux millions de soldats combattent dans les départements de la Manche et du Calvados dont la population totale ne dépasse pas un million d'habitants.

Certains se retrouvent en sécurité dans la tête de pont tenue par les Alliés ; d'autres n'ont pas cette chance, coincés sur la ligne de feu ou dans les zones encore aux mains des Allemands. Pour eux, il reste à se mettre, tant bien que mal, à l'abri des bombes, des obus et des balles, en creusant des tranchées dans les jardins, en se réfugiant dans des caves, dans des carrières souterraines, dans des galeries de mines... Par milliers, des Caennais on[t] trouvé asile à l'abbaye aux Hommes et dans l'église Saint-Etienne.

Plus de 150 000 hommes, femmes, enfants, et vieillards ont préféré fuir les combats et prendre le chemin de l'exode, au hasard de routes dangereuses qui les mèneront parfois fort loin de leur domicile, jusque dans le centre de la France pour certains.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION

During the summer of 1944, the inhabitants of Normandy found themselves⁷⁸ brutally caught up in the midst of one of the⁷⁹ most gigantic confrontations of the Second World War.

At the height of the fighting, in July,⁸⁰ two million soldiers were in the field in the *départements* of La Manche and Calvados, which had a total combined population of under a million.

Some found safety at the bridgehead held by the Allies; others were not so lucky, stuck in the line of fire or in areas still in German hands.

For these,⁸¹ there was nothing else to do other than find what shelter they could from the bombs, shells, and bullets by digging trenches in their gardens or seeking refuge in cellars, underground quarries, or mine galleries...⁸² Caen's inhabitants sought shelter by the

⁷⁸ **Error in literal translation/ conceptualization/ lack of agency:** the choice to take agency from the Normans ("found themselves") adds to the conceptualization of their suffering, framing it as "in the midst of" the war.

⁷⁹ **Error in literal translation/verbosity:** by literally translating all the modifiers (or prepositional phrases) here, this phrase becomes unnecessarily verbose.

⁸⁰ **Mistranslation/emphasis:** the comma preceding "in July," though present in the French, is grammatically unnecessary in the English and therefore creates an emphasis on the month of July that may not be present in the meaning of the original text.

⁸¹ **Error in literal translation/referent:** the English version requires an elaboration or clarification of the pronoun "some."

⁸² **Error in equivalence:** an ellipsis that ends a sentence in French is commonly translated by a period in English, understanding that English sentences only end in an ellipsis in cases of significant uncertainty or suggestion.

thousand in the Abbaye aux Hommes and Saint-Etienne church.

Over 150,000 men women and children, young and old alike, preferred to flee⁸³ the fighting and take the road to other parts,^{84 85} along danger-ridden routes that often led them far from home, some not stopping until they reached the very centre of France.

⁸³ **Error in literal translation/word choice:**

Despite the French use of “preferait,” in English, “preferred” gives the sense of a less serious and freer choice.

⁸⁴ **Lack of modulation:** In English, “take the road to other parts” is uncommonly vague and does not give any more information than did the previous clause (“flee the fighting”).

⁸⁵ **Mistranslation/mechanics:** unnecessary comma.

LA JOIE DU PEUPLE LIBÉRÉ

La libération de la Normandie a laissé à ceux qui l'ont vécue deux images contrastées. Celle de destructions et de mort provoquées par des combats acharnés. Mais celle aussi de la joie intense d'une liberté retrouvée après quatre longues années d'occupation. Elle éclate avec d'autant moins de retenue là où la population n'a pas eu à souffrir directement de l'horreur de la guerre.

Le 14 juillet 1944, la fête nationale française est célébrée avec une grande ferveur dans les villes et les villages libérés. Partout, les troupes alliées s'unissent aux populations locales pour lui donner l'éclat particulier qui convient.

Drapeaux et banderoles fleurissent aux fenêtres. Les couleurs alliées sont même à l'honneur sur des vêtements confectionnés à la hâte en l'honneur des libérateurs. Quant aux enfants, ils sont particulièrement attirés par ces militaires débonnaires qui ne sont pas avares de chocolat, friandises et autres chewing-gum.

THE JOY OF A LIBERATED PEOPLE⁸⁶

The liberation of Normandy left those who lived through it with two contrasting images.^{87 88}

That of the death and destruction brought about by unrelenting combat, and that of the joy at liberty regained after four long years of occupation⁸⁹ – a joy that burst forth with even greater abandon in areas whose inhabitants had not suffered directly from the horrors of the war.⁹⁰

On 14 July 1944, France's national holiday was celebrated with unprecedented⁹¹ fervour in the liberated towns and villages. Everywhere, allied troops united with the local populace to give the occasion the special magic it deserved[.][sic]⁹²

⁸⁶ **Error in literal translation:** although not grammatically incorrect, this literal translation almost constitutes calque (with the exception of “du” to “of a”) and produces a title that is stylistically awkward.

⁸⁷ **Added paragraph break:** The translator chooses to create a new paragraph at the moment of elaborating upon the two contrasting images. This is not mirrored by the original French text.

⁸⁸ **Lack of transposition/ conceptualization/ nominalization:** The choice to keep the liberation as a noun creates a more conceptual quality to the sentence and thus to the passage.

⁸⁹ **Lack of modulation/ conceptualization/ verbosity:** Retaining so strictly the French structure of two images forces while changing the syntax to fit English creates an uncommonly conceptual understanding of the feelings following French liberation while also making passive the “inhabitants.”

⁹⁰ **Error in literal translation/ verbosity/ redundancy:** by maintaining the structure of this sentence, the English translation retains information that does not change the message of the translated text.

⁹¹ **Mistranslation/vocabulary:** “une grande ferveur” is here unnecessarily translated to “unprecedented fervour,” thus adding a meaning to the translation not implied by the original.

⁹² **Lack of modulation/Latinate words:** by directly translating this from the French and not

Flags and streamers hung from every window⁹³ and the Allies' colours were sported on⁹⁴ clothing hastily sewn together in honour of the liberators.⁹⁵

As for the children, they were irresistibly attracted by their debonair saviours, who were so free with⁹⁶ hand-outs of chocolates, sweets, and chewing-gum.

considering the frequency of these more Latinate words, the translator produces an effect in the English translation of a higher register and formality that is awkward and inappropriate to the text.

⁹³ **Mistranslation/mechanics:** a comma should follow "window," as it separates two independent clauses.

⁹⁴ **Lack of modulation/passive voice:** By maintaining the passive voice in this sentence, the focus becomes the colors and not those sewing or sporting them, the latter of which is more likely in English.

⁹⁵ **Added paragraph break:** the jump from here to the next paragraph seems unnecessary, especially since the French version does not do so.

⁹⁶ **Error in modulation:** The translator has here chosen to maintain the syntax of the French while modulating it to fit more closely with an English expression; while this is not incorrect, a translation that gave more weight to the objects handed out and then qualified them might seem more idiomatic.

100 JOURS DE BATAILLES EN NORMANDIE

La bataille de Normandie devait durer quelques semaines tout au plus. Elle ne s'achèvera que le 12 septembre avec la prise du Havre, soit cent jours après le Débarquement.

Surpris le 6 juin, les Allemands se sont ressaisis et vont offrir une résistance opiniâtre, malgré une infériorité numérique croissante et l'absence quasi-totale de soutien aérien et naval. Mais ils disposent d'une artillerie anti-aérienne (FLAK) efficace, de troupes d'infanterie le plus souvent aguerries et combattives telles que les unités de chasseurs-parachutistes et surtout de onze redoutables divisions blindées (dont 6 appartenant à la SS) équipées de chars l'emportant nettement en qualité sur les blindés alliés.

Face à eux, les Alliés peuvent compter sur l'appui logistique sans faille que leur assure la maîtrise totale de la mer de la Manche. Ils bénéficient ainsi d'une croissance continue de leurs effectifs et d'un ravitaillement en armes, matériel et munitions sans comparaison avec ce que peuvent espérer les Allemands. Ils peuvent enfin tirer avantage d'une artillerie puissants et d'une supériorité aérienne écrasante, encore renforcée par la construction d'une cinquantaine de terrains d'aviation avancés sur le sol normand.

A 100 DAYS OF BATTLE IN NORMANDY⁹⁷

The Battle of Normandy should have⁹⁸ lasted a few weeks at the most. However,⁹⁹ it only came to an end with the taking of Le Havre¹⁰⁰ on 12 September, a full hundred days after the Landing.

Taken by surprise¹⁰¹ on 6 June, the Germans rallied,¹⁰² and went on to offer stubborn resistance, despite their increasingly inferior numbers and an almost total lack of air and sea support.¹⁰³

They did, however, possess¹⁰⁴ very effective anti-aircraft artillery (FLAK) and such aggressive and experienced infantry troops as their¹⁰⁵ airborne units

⁹⁷ **Mistranslation:** The article “a” is unnecessarily added here and has no precedent in the original French.

⁹⁸ **Lack of modulation:** “devoir” here takes on more a sense of “was supposed to” than “should have,” which is vague and suggests fault.

⁹⁹ **Error in modulation/syntax:** The English translation includes a “however” that is not present in the French but serves to make explicit the causality of this paragraph. The placement of “however,” though, is not ideal.

¹⁰⁰ **Lack of modulation/nominalization:** by keeping the French syntax of turning the action of taking le Havre into a noun, the English version becomes awkward.

¹⁰¹ **Error in literal translation/clause order:** A more common English syntactical translation of this sentence would have “the Germans” begin the clause.

¹⁰² **Mistranslation/mechanics:** because “and went...” is a dependent and not an independent clause, the comma here is unnecessary and grammatically incorrect.

¹⁰³ **Added paragraph break:** unnecessary paragraph break (not mirrored in the French).

¹⁰⁴ **Error in modulation/Latinate:** The choice to translate “disposent” to “possess,” while not altogether incorrect, is not as ideal as “have” or a more Saxon word as opposed to the Latinate “possess”

¹⁰⁵ **Error in literal translation:** by closely following the French structure of “telles que...” to produce the English “such...as,” the translator

and, above all, eleven formidable armoured divisions (6 of them belonging to the SS)¹⁰⁶ equipped with tanks of superior quality to¹⁰⁷ those put in the field by the Allies.

In order to tip the balance,¹⁰⁸ the Allies could count on the unwavering logistical support ensured by their total control of the English Channel, which provided them with constant additions to their manpower and supplies of weapons, equipment and munitions beyond anything the Germans could hope for.¹⁰⁹
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They¹¹¹ also had the advantage of¹¹² powerful artillery and crushing superiority in the air, further reinforced by construction of some fifty “Advanced Landing Grounds” on Norman soil.

here produces an over-formal and verbose quality.

¹⁰⁶ **Error in literal translation/syntax:** This direct translation of the French syntax, using the interjection, creates an uncommon and cumbersome effect in the English.

¹⁰⁷ **Error in modulation:** By changing the word class of “l’important nettement en qualité” to “of superior quality to,” the translator here creates a grammatically correct but unnecessarily verbose modulation.

¹⁰⁸ **Error in modulation:** “Face à eux” is here translated to “In order to tip the balance.”

¹⁰⁹ **Lack of modulation/abstraction:** By maintaining almost the exact syntactical structure of the French original and literally translating its various elements, the result in English is a nonsensical and abstract representation of Allied military advantage.

¹¹⁰ **Added paragraph break:** unnecessary paragraph break (not mirrored in the French).

¹¹¹ **Error in literal translation/unknown referent:** while the French version may not need to make explicit that “they” or “ils” refers to the Allies, in the English this is not clear.

¹¹² **Mistranslation/omission:** The direct article from “d’une artillerie” is here lost in the English translation and produces a mechanical error of “the advantage of powerful artillery” instead of “the advantage of a powerful artillery.”

JUILLET 44: LES ALLIÉS PIÉTINES

Fin juin, les Américains ont remporté un succès important en s'emparant de Cherbourg, dont le port, une fois remis en état, servira de base logistique pour la reconquête de la France.

Mais le mois de juillet, qui voit la relance des assauts vers le sud, est beaucoup moins favorable. Dans le bocage du Cotentin, les GI's peinent et souffrent terriblement. C'est « l'enfer des haies ». Les champs, âprement défendus par les Allemands, doivent être conquis l'un après l'autre, au prix de pertes considérables et sans cesse renouvelées. La progression est d'une lenteur décourageante. « Cette foutue guerre peut bien durer dix ans ! », lance un général américain.

De leur côté, Britanniques et Canadiens sont bloqués devant Caen, qu'ils espéraient enlever le 6 juin au soir. Face à eux, il est vrai, le meilleur de l'Armée allemande avec les redoutables divisions blindées de la Wehrmacht et de la Waffen SS. Toutes les offensives de contournement lancées à l'ouest de la capitale bas-normande par Montgomery échouent les unes après les autres.

Ainsi, l'opération *Epsom*, déclenchée le 26 juin avec des moyens pourtant considérables (90 000 hommes et 600 chars) est brutalement stoppée par l'arrivée de deux divisions blindées SS rappelées du front de l'Est. Dès lors, les combats s'enlisent sur la terrible cote 112 où s'enchaînent attaque et contre-attaques aussi meurtrières pour un camp que pour l'autre.

THE ALLIES ARE AT A STANDSTILL¹¹³

Their¹¹⁴ taking of Cherbourg at the end of June had been a major success on the part of the Americans. Once the town's port was rehabilitated, it would serve as a logistics base for the reconquest of France.

But the month of July, which saw fresh attacks being launched in the south, was a good deal less favourable to the allied cause.¹¹⁵ In the "bocage"¹¹⁶ of Cotentin, the GIs strove to gain the upper hand and suffered terribly for it. It was "the hell of the hedgerows." The fields were fiercely defended by the Germans and had to be taken one by one,¹¹⁷ at the cost of considerable and repeated losses. The advance¹¹⁸ was discouragingly slow. "This damn war could well last twenty years!" one American general bemoaned.

¹¹³ **Mistranslation/omission:** the translated English title loses the date from the French original.

¹¹⁴ **Error in modulation/ referent/nominalization:** The translator has significantly shifted the syntax of this sentence; the effects are a pronoun with no referent ("their") as well as the nominalization of the "taking of Cherbourg" (and therefore the passivity of the "Americans.")

¹¹⁵ **Error in literal translation/syntax:** the month of the July is given agency in this sentence, creating an awkward syntax.

¹¹⁶ **Assumption of cultural knowledge:** The translator here assumes a reader's knowledge of the French term "bocage," which is not common to the English language and whose understanding is integral to the sense of the rest of the passage.

¹¹⁷ **Displacement of Agency:** No agency is here given to the Germans; instead, the fields become the main subject of this sentence, forcing an awkward syntax.

¹¹⁸ **Lack of modulation:** This sentence, for an Angolophone reader, may need to be more explicit than the French; "the Allied advance" would help to remind a reader of the topic at hand, as this advance has not yet been referred to as such.

On their side, the British and Canadians were blocked at the gates of Caen, which they had hoped to take on the evening of the 6 June. It is true that they were confronted with the best the German army had to offer,¹¹⁹ with its formidable Wehrmacht and Waffen SS armoured divisions. All of Montgomery's¹²⁰ offensives launched to the west of Lower Normandy's capital,¹²¹ ¹²² in an attempt to bypass the enemy, failed¹²³ one after the other.

Operation Epsom, which kicked off on 26 June with very considerable means at its disposal (90,000 men and 600 tanks),¹²⁴ was brutally halted by the arrival of two SS armoured divisions recalled from the Eastern front.¹²⁵ The fighting continued,¹²⁶ bogged down¹²⁷

around the terrible Hill 112, upon which endless attacks and counterattacks followed one upon the other, wreaking murderous havoc on both sides.¹²⁸ ¹²⁹

¹²⁷ **Error in literal translation/syntax:** "Bogged down" is the first in a series of three qualifiers to this sentence, the combination of which creates a long and unidiomatic feel.

¹²⁸ **Error in modulation:** The translator here chose to change the phrasing of the English sentence when something closer to the French may have actually been more idiomatic in English (and possibly solved the problem of successive modifiers described above).

¹²⁹ **Mistranslation/omission:** "Ainsi" is here not included in the translation, with the result that this paragraph begins without an explicit connection to the previous information and paragraphs.

¹¹⁹ **Lack of modulation:** "it is true" does not capture the sense of justification present in the French original of this phrase. The result is that "it is true" seems unnecessary and does not explain the following explanation of German strength.

¹²⁰ **Assumption of cultural knowledge:** As with the French original, this is the first time Montgomery is mentioned in this passage, so to refer to him without a title assumes a cultural knowledge that an Anglophone reader might not necessarily have.

¹²¹ **Lack of modulation:** While not incorrect, this phrase might more naturally be translated as "the capital of Lower Normandy."

¹²² **Error in literal translation/sentence length:** By keeping roughly the same syntactical structure as the original French, the subject of the sentence is longer than would be expected in English.

¹²³ **Error in literal translation/passive voice:** Agency is here given to Montgomery's offensives, which creates an awkward sentence structure.

¹²⁴ **Error in literal translation/redundancy:** To an Anglophone reader, the numbers given here may already suggest considerable means and therefore render that description redundant.

¹²⁵ **Error in literal translation/sentence length:** This is a very long sentence for English and might be more naturally broken into two.

¹²⁶ **Mistranslation/omission:** the French "dès lors" here has no equivalent in the translation.

UNE RAPIDE LIBÉRATION DE LA FRANCE

La bataille en Normandie aura duré beaucoup plus longtemps que prévu, en raison d'une résistance allemande poussée à l'extrême... jusqu'à l'effondrement final.

Le débarquement franco-américain en Provence, le 15 août, précipite la retraite générale des armées du Reich. Dès lors, les Alliés rattrapent leur retard. Paris est libéré le 25 août par la 2^e division blindée du général Leclerc et la 4^e division américaine. Patton atteint Verdun le 31 et Montgomery entre dans Bruxelles le 3 septembre.

Au début de l'automne, la plus grande partie du territoire français, à l'exception de l'Alsace et des « poches de l'Atlantique », a recouvré la liberté – souvent avec des mois d'avance par rapport à ce que les stratèges d'*Overlord* avaient espéré, voire imaginé.

Longs et douloureux, les affrontements en Normandie ont coûté la vie à 37 000 soldats alliés et 55 000 Allemands, sans oublier 20 000 victimes civiles. Ils ont laissé derrière eux une région entièrement dévastée et profondément meurtrie. Un désastre auquel échappera largement la plus grande partie de la France, épargné par les combats en raison du retrait allemand et de l'avancée foudroyante des Alliés.

A ce titre, il est juste de dire que c'est la Normandie qui a payé le prix de la libération de la France.

A RAPID LIBERATION OF FRANCE

The fighting in Normandy lasted considerably longer than expected, with German resistance pushed¹³⁰ to the limit – until the final collapse.¹³¹

The Franco-American landing in Provence on 15 August precipitated the general retreat of the Reich's armies.¹³² From then on, the Allies made up for lost time.

Paris was liberated on 25 August, by General Leclerc's 2nd Armoured Division and the American 4th Division. Patton¹³³ reached Verdun on 31 August and Montgomery entered Brussels on 3 September.

By early autumn, most of France, with the exception of Alsace and the “Atlantic pockets”, had regained its freedom –¹³⁴ often months ahead of what the Overlord strategies¹³⁵ had hoped for or even imagined.

The fighting in Normandy had been long and fierce, costing the lives of 37,000

¹³⁰ **Mistranslation/omission:** the omission of the French “en raison de” in the English version results in a lack of causality between clauses separated by a comma in this first sentence.

¹³¹ **Error in equivalence:** the translator here assumes an equivalent grammatical structure to match the ellipsis and concluding phrase in the French.

¹³² **Displacement of Agency:** Agency for the German military is here avoided by making the “landing” the subject of this sentence, creating an awkward sentence structure.

¹³³ **Assumption of cultural knowledge:** Both “Patton” and “Montgomery” have not yet been mentioned in this passage and thus need the title of “General” preceding their surnames, as is the case with General Leclerc.

¹³⁴ **Mistranslation/usage:** the dash does not have the same grammatical usage in English as it does in French and is improperly used in the English translation.

¹³⁵ **Mistranslation/vocabulary:** “Stratèges” does not mean “strategies” but rather “strategists,” thus confusing the agency of the sentence.

allied soldiers and 55,000 Germans, not forgetting some 20,000 civilian casualties, and leaving in its wake a region utterly devastated and deeply afflicted.

A disaster that most of France escaped, spared from suffering the same fate by the German retreat and lightning advance of the Allies.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ **Error in literal translation/syntax:** by maintaining the syntax used in the French text,

It is fair¹³⁷ to say that it was Normandy that paid the price for the liberation of France.

the translator here creates a translation that, in English, is a sentence fragment.

¹³⁷ **Mistranslation/omission:** “À ce titre is omitted.”

III. Commentary on Categories of Error as Outlined in Methodology and Annotation Sections

Having identified in the previous chapters the errors in translation in these selections from the museum texts, I now turn to a discussion of the reasons for and effects of these errors. As discussed in the introductory chapter, much is at stake in the acceptable translation of such politically and culturally weighted texts. The translation of the museum texts in the *Musée Mémorial* affects both the narrative that the museum wishes to communicate as well as the way in which a visitor or reader is able to understand and derive meaning from such a narrative. The term “cultural memory” was briefly offered as a means of considering the affective weight of such texts on the various peoples who encounter them. As an integrated part of the French education system and as a “must-see” tourist attraction for visitors from many countries, the museum and its texts necessarily contribute to the collective global understanding of the events surrounding D-Day.

This tall order is the one that faces any translator of these museum texts. As with any translation, the translated version of these texts must hold the same meaning and weight as the original utterance while adhering as closely as possible to both the syntactic structures of the original text and the linguistic restrictions of the target language. In the case of museum texts, the requirement for “sameness” of a translation may be somewhat more stringent, as the text must fit into the same amount of space. A translation of these specific texts, however, must also seek to preserve a specifically narrated cultural meaning that has been chosen by the museum creators to represent the event of the D-Day invasion. It is all of these guidelines above that allow me to draw a very complex line across what I see as translation “error” and why. The following commentary aims to identify moments of unacceptable translation based on conventional

translation methods as well as the intended meaning¹ and weight of the original texts in the context of their role in the museum.

The most global and structural points of critique will be presented first, followed by those that are identifiable as errors in several specific translation methods. Finally, any “unprovoked” errors that occur either inexplicably or as the effect of a simple oversight will be listed and discussed. The discussion for each of these topics will include an introduction of the type of problem as well as an elucidation of any terms needed to understand it; then, specific examples will be given of instances in which this error has been identified within the original translations studied in this work. In cases where the same error may result in different types of stylistic and syntactical problems, the examples will be divided into further sub-sections in order to discuss these instances separately. Finally, for each topic, a suggestion for preferable translational choices may be offered. Only pertinent or particularly significant examples of each issue will be used in each discussion – the complete set of identified errors is readily available in the annotated version of the original translation.

This chapter will serve both to explain the reasons for which I find the current translation unacceptable as well as to preface my own re-translation of the texts. My own choices for a re-translation have been crafted in light of my critique of the original translation in the last chapter as well as my analysis of its problems in this chapter. Ultimately, however, these final re-translations should be able to stand alone as acceptable and preferable translations of the original French museum texts. While they will certainly take into account and modify techniques used by the museum’s translator, they may, for reasons that will hopefully be clear after this chapter, use different methods of translation altogether to achieve a better translation match.

¹ By meaning here I refer to what I would identify as the meaning intended by the museum.

Topics of Discussion Listed in Order

1. Information Order within a Passage
2. Displacement of Agency
3. Assumption of Cultural Knowledge
4. Errors in Literal Translation, Borrowing, Calque, Modulation, Transposition, and Equivalence:
 - 4.1: Errors in Literal Translation
 - 4.1.1 Resulting in Verbosity
 - 4.1.2 Resulting in Problematic Syntax or Clause Order
 - 4.1.3 Resulting in Problematic Sentence Length
 - 4.1.4 Resulting in a Pronoun without a Clear Referent
 - 4.1.5 Resulting in Redundancy
 - 4.2: Errors in Calque
 - 4.3: Lack of Modulation
 - 4.3.1 Resulting in the Passive Voice
 - 4.3.2 Resulting in Conceptualization or Abstraction Unnatural to English
 - 4.3.3 Resulting in Unnatural Tendency toward Latinate Words
 - 4.4: Errors in Modulation
 - 4.4.1 Resulting in Awkward, Unidiomatic, or Unsuitable Phrasing in English
 - 4.4.2 Resulting in Problematic Syntax or Clause Order
 - 4.5: Lack of Transposition
 - 4.5.1 Resulting in Nominalization
5. Mistranslation
 - 5.1: Omission
 - 5.2: Vocabulary or usage error
 - 5.3: Added paragraph breaks

1. Information Order within a Passage

Perhaps the most significant structural element of these texts is the order in which information is presented to the reader; the order of the narrative and its different components are surely some of the biggest factors allowing for comprehension of the representation of World War II and D-Day in this museum. Just as with any other element of a text, however, a translator must critically analyze information order in the process of considering the original text. A sequence of events or descriptions may be perfectly logical for a Francophone reader but thoroughly confusing for an Anglophone reader. Depending on the context of the translation, the translator may or may not have the license to significantly shift the order of information presented in the text.² Nonetheless, there exist many instances in these museum texts in which the general order of information within the source text may appear disjunctive or illogical in translation.

For example, in the first page of text analyzed in this study, information is given in the following order: first, an initial explanation of the decision to build the Atlantic Wall and the preceding events that gave rise to this decision. Next is a secondary explanation of the same causes in more detail, again arriving at the decision to build the wall. Third and finally, a description of the start date and materials of the wall's construction as well as an explanation that it was not in fact a wall but a series of fortifications. While this order is by no means incomprehensible, it may not be the order that an Anglophone reader would be most accustomed to seeing in such a historical text.

As will be discussed in section 4.3.2, the French language favors conceptualization of events, and in this case the particular order of this passage reflects this basic difference between

² I am referring here only to the general order of information (i.e. paragraphs or sentences) within a text; the order of clauses is, of course, dependent on grammatical and stylistic choices.

French and English. The original French passage is based around two separate and static ideas: decision and construction. Two of the three paragraphs are devoted to descriptions of the motivation for building the Atlantic Wall as a series of existent and not necessarily sequential historical factors. The resulting order of information, therefore, is not dependent on the order of events but rather is organized around concepts that are each fleshed out in turn. An Anglophone reader might expect a more causal and chronological depiction of the Atlantic Wall, perhaps explaining the reasons for the wall in order before relaying the act of decision. The nature of the wall, too, might be described before the details of its construction, as this information seems elementary to understanding the benefits of having such a defense.

In this case, it is the French tendency towards conceptualization that makes the information order in the original French text less logical to an Anglophone reader, but there may be a number of stylistic or other differences between the two languages that produce similar differences in the order in which information is presented in each. As previously stated, it may not always be appropriate to significantly shift the order of information within a text when translating. In this case, considering the cultural stakes of the texts produced by the museum, I have chosen to limit any drastic changes to information order in order to respect the specific means of representation that the museum has chosen in writing the original texts.

2. Displacement of Agency

This category constitutes another instance in which the issue to be analyzed actually occurs in the French text – in both cases, one can hardly call it an error as it represents a curative, stylistic choice made by the person or team who created the original texts for the museum. In discussing the displacement of agency from these texts, although I might suggest a solution for retranslation, I will not integrate such a retranslation into my final reproduction of the text. To

change completely the structure of entire paragraphs and passages that avoid agency would be to stray significantly from the structure of the source text, and I have made the choice to adhere, to the degree that this is possible, to the original syntactical structures, rather than to re-structure completely in a way that might make more sense to an Anglophone reader.³ Further, by changing so dramatically the form of these utterances, I would actually be displacing a strategy used by the author of the texts to avoid blame or negative agency within such culturally sensitive texts.

The displacement of agency within the syntactical structure of these texts, specifically in cases where the implicit agent caused high levels of death or destruction, seems to be an intentional tactic to allay blame and to appear neutral in one's presentation of such a violent war and invasion. When one remembers, for example, that the museum is situated among the homes of those who may have lost family members in the air raids or that the texts are also translated into German for the frequent German visitors, the decision to express the air raids or the holocaust as events at a distance from direct agency becomes clearer.

The displacement of agency occurs in these texts in two primary ways: the passive voice and the nominalization of action. There are many cases in which the presence of either of these two features may not be identified as an intentional displacement of agency but rather as merely a stylistic choice that produces an awkward structure when translated into English. These cases will be discussed later in subsequent topics of this commentary.

Nominalization, for the purposes of this analysis, refers to the way in which an action or event is expressed primarily as a noun. In French, the noun is a predominant word class and is much more commonly used to describe action than a verb phrase. Charles Bally says of French, "il présente les événements comme des substances" rather than as actions that are occurring or

³ I further discuss my reasons for avoiding significant restructuring in the concluding chapter of this work.

becoming.⁴ Thus the French mode of expressing action is one that views the action as a substantive event. André Chevrillon writes something similar: “le français traduit surtout des formes, états arrêtés, les coupures imposées au réel par l’analyse.”⁵ While French tends toward nominal expression of action and events, English prefers verbal expression: “In [the case of a subordinated verb], French can express itself verbally, but the nominal expression seems to be more natural, whereas in English the opposite is usually true.”⁶ As shown in this citation, both verbal and nominal expressions are usually possible in both French and English, but the former tends more often toward nominalization while the latter tends toward verbal expression. For example, while it is possible to translate “après son retour” in French into “after his return” in English, a much more common way to express the same action in English would be to use an active verb: “after he comes back.”

While nouns may more commonly express action in French than they do in English, both nominalization and the passive voice are employed throughout these museum texts to create a neutral tone when expressing decisions that led to violence or destruction. The passive voice, which makes what is ordinarily an object of the sentence into its subject, is generally accepted as being more common in English than it is in French.⁷ Here, however, the passive voice is used frequently in the French text, sometimes to allay agency. In the following example, both nominalization and the passive voice, used in the original French text to allay agency from Hitler, create an awkward syntactic structure when translated into English:

⁴ Darbelnet, Jean, and Jean-Paul Vinay. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1958. Print, 100.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁷ Hinault, Catherine. “Traductions – Notions de Base.” *Technique de traduction LI S1, Université Rennes 2*. Print, 4.

La décision⁸ de construire le Mur de l'Atlantique **est prise** en décembre 1941. Elle résulte de l'évolution de la stratégie hitlérienne face à l'entrée en guerre des Etats-Unis et à l'échec de la *Wehrmacht* devant Moscou.

Taken in December 1941, **the decision** to build the Atlantic Wall was a result of the development of Hitler's strategy following the United States' entry into the war and the Wehrmacht's failure at the gates of Moscow.⁹

In both versions, the act of deciding to construct the Atlantic Wall is expressed as a noun: “the decision.” Further, this noun-action is qualified in the passive voice; the translator has chosen to create a compound sentence in the English version out of two sentences in the original French, creating a very long and encumbered sentence in English. The effect of making “the decision” the focal point of both texts and of using the passive voice is that the true agent of this sentence, Hitler, becomes completely obscured within this complex syntax.¹⁰ As will be discussed later in this commentary, the French version employs a conceptualized notion of the “result of the development of Hitler's strategy” rather than referring to a more concrete idea of his strategy or his will.

In French, the two cited sentences avoid agency for Hitler in a way that is sure not to accuse too heavily any one person, but that presents the events of the war as inevitable and as performed objectively. The translation of this delicate phrasing into English, however, is not as successful. The syntax of this translated sentence is awkward and overly complex, and its logic is practically lost amidst all of its qualifying prepositional phrases. It might be said that the failure to mimic the French displacement of agency actually exposes this tactic in the English version; the sentence is so completely foreign in the way it expresses its obscured information that an

⁸ Emphasis added to highlight relevant text, not added by author.

⁹ See Chapter 2, page 25 for full text.

¹⁰ There are, of course, several problems with the translated English version of this text; because this section only deals with the displacement of agency, that will be the only issue addressed in regards to the translation of this sentence at this point. Further, the displacement of agency in this sentence is the most global concern with its syntax, and resolution of this issue might incidentally resolve other finer points. This method of only addressing the relevant translational issue will be employed throughout this commentary.

Anglophone reader must wonder why the sentence goes to such great lengths to use the word and clause order it does. Hitler might be tucked away in the middle of the sentence, but grammatically, to an Anglophone reader, he might more logically be the main subject. Of course, the claim that agency is intentionally allayed in the French version (and attempted in the English) is conjectural, as the intent of the writer cannot be asserted conclusively. Nevertheless, the sentence does have the effect of shifting agency from Hitler, and whether or not this shift was intentional, it certainly provides a more neutral and objective tone to the text.

A retranslation that modifies this allayed agency might displace the effects of neutrality intended by these specific syntactical structures. It is for this reason that I maintain the basic structure of the information in my retranslation, despite the fact that any translation of this French syntax promises to be somewhat unnatural and definitely less successful in deflecting blame.

3. Assumption of Cultural Knowledge

The English translations of the wall texts at the *Musée Mémorial* make the material accessible not only to English and American readers but also to visitors of other nationalities who may not speak French but who speak English as a second or third language. Audioguides are available for purchase in many more languages than the three offered visually in the museum, but it may still be the case that the readers of these English translations come from a myriad of cultural backgrounds. It is therefore problematic for a translator of these texts to assume certain background knowledge, either historical or cultural, of his audience. This is true even in the case of native English speakers, whose historical and cultural backgrounds may also be quite varied.

In a few important instances, the translator of the texts at the *Musée Mémorial* assumes that the readers of the translation have a prerequisite understanding of certain terms or figures, but this may not necessarily be the case.

In two of the three cases where this situation arises, the terms in question are the names of well-known military commanders during World War II. These names are also left un-clarified in the original French text. While a Francophone visitor's knowledge of Allied war generals cannot be assumed, it is also reasonable to say that this error is perhaps not specific to the English translation but may apply to the text as a whole. While both General Patton and General Montgomery may have been identified more clearly in other texts in the museum, they are not identified within any of the other central texts of this specific exhibit and may therefore not be readily known to a visitor. Both generals are referred to simply by surname: "Patton reached Verdun on 31 August and Montgomery entered Brussels on 3 September."¹¹ While many people may know the names Patton and Montgomery, those who do not would be forced to conjecture about their roles in the war. My suggestion for a preferable presentation of these two historical figures may step slightly outside the category of a retranslation, as it critiques the choice of the writer of the original French text. However, I would, in the place of the current phrasing, describe each general as "General [Patton or Montgomery]" to increase clarity and to account for cultural knowledge that cannot be assumed of the readers of these texts.

The other example of a false assumption of cultural knowledge in these texts deals more directly with a translational choice.¹² On page 20 of the last chapter, "le bocage" in the French original is translated as "the 'bocage'" in English. Bocage refers to "the wooded countryside characteristic of northern France, with small irregular-shaped fields and many hedges and

¹¹ See Chapter 2, page 45 for full text.

¹² This error could also be described as borrowing, a translation method that will be described in more detail in the next section.

copses.”¹³ While the term may be found in an English dictionary, it is by no means common to even a native English speaker. Furthermore, the effects of wrongly assuming that an Anglophone reader would be familiar with “bocage” expand much further than just one phrase or sentence. The meaning of most of this passage is predicated on an understanding of the word “bocage”; without knowing what is meant by this term at the outset of the paragraph, where it is found, the rest of the paragraph makes little sense. The text goes on to explain what an ordeal it was to fight in these fields: “the GIs strove to gain the upper hand and suffered terribly for it. It was ‘the hell of the hedgerows.’”¹⁴ For a French reader, this sentence might make perfect sense; to an English reader, however, who more likely than not has no conception of the physical layout of a “bocage” landscape, the difficulty encountered by these GIs is unexplained. The phrase “the hell of the hedgerows,” then, seems incongruous with the text material without an understanding that hedges are an essential feature of the “bocage” landscape.

Interestingly, the translator seems to acknowledge that bocage may not be a familiar word to an English reader of these translations – the choice to put quotation marks around the word seems to identify it as borrowed while simultaneously offering no further explanation as to its meaning. In any case, the translator’s assumption (at least partial) that a reader would be familiar with the characteristics of bocage impedes a reader’s further understanding of the paragraph in which the term is found. A preferable translation of the term “bocage” might include either an explanatory phrase explaining bocage either as a replacement to the word altogether or as an appositive or parenthetical phrase following the italicized iteration of the term “bocage.”

4. Errors in Literal Translation, Borrowing, Calque, Modulation, Transposition, and Equivalence

¹³ "bocage." *Dictionary.com*. 2009. <[http:// http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/bocage?s=t](http://http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/bocage?s=t)> (22 February 2013).

¹⁴ See Chapter 2, page 43 for full text.

With the exception of the first three categories above, many of the instances annotated in the previous chapter may, of course, be called “errors” in translation. This fourth section of commentary, however, will discuss specific methods of direct and oblique translation that are identifiable in the translated text either when used incorrectly or not at all (in situations that required them).

Borrowing, calque, and literal translation are all identified by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet as direct methods of translation in their manual, *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A methodology for translation*. Direct translation procedures, according to Vinay and Darbelnet, should be used as the first weapon of attack to a source-language text after having identified the units of translation and evaluated the affective, descriptive, and intellectual content of these units.¹⁵ These direct methods, used before oblique methods, allow for a translator to capitalize on stylistic similarities between the source and target languages before using more interpretive techniques to account for stylistic differences.

Borrowing is a method used to overcome a gap in the target language¹⁶; when a term with the same meaning as the source language simply does not exist in the target language, translators may choose to borrow directly from the source language and repeat the term in question in its original language in the translated text. Borrowing may also be used for stylistic effect, such as maintaining the original name of a foreign currency.¹⁷

The second direct translational technique identified in the *Comparative Stylistics* manual is that of calque. Derived from the French term used to describe tracing paper, calque is a technique in which a well-known expression in the source language is borrowed by the target

¹⁵ Darbelnet, Jean, and Jean-Paul Vinay. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1958. Print, 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

language; in this case, each element of the source language expression is translated literally to produce the target language equivalent. Two types of calque may be performed. Lexical calque, which respects the syntactic structure of the target language, also introduces into the target language a new mode of expression.¹⁸ Structural calque, on the other hand, introduces an entirely new construction into the target language.

Literal translation, as defined by Vinay and Darbelnet, is “the direct transfer of a source language text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate target language text in which the translator’s task is limited to observing the adherence to the linguistic servitudes of the TL.”¹⁹ In other words, literal translation is the most direct means of translation possible and occurs in situations where similar stylistic structures exist in the target language to match those presented in the source language. The translator here acts as a governor over a fairly self-sufficient translation, so to speak. His or her only task is to ensure that the direct translation of the structure from one language to the other still conform to the “linguistic servitudes” of the target language. Vinay and Darbelnet also describe a literal translation as “reversible and complete in itself” – in other words, it is only possible when translation of the source language requires no outside or oblique measures to be a match in the target language. It is when literal translation, along with borrowing and calque, produce an unacceptable match in the target language that oblique methods of translation become necessary. An unacceptable match, according to Vinay and Darbelnet, is one that either gives another meaning than the one intended, has no meaning, is structurally impossible, has no corresponding expression in the target language, or has a corresponding expression that is in the wrong register (of formality).²⁰ In the case of such an

¹⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹⁹ Ibid., 33-34.

²⁰ Ibid., 34-35.

unacceptable match, a translator must turn to oblique translation techniques in order to find a more suitable alternative.

The three types of oblique or indirect translation relevant to the translated texts at the *Musée Mémorial* are transposition, modulation, and equivalence. Transposition is the act of replacing one word class (in the source language) with another (in the target language) without changing the meaning of the text's message.²¹ For example, a construction in French that favors a noun, such as “dès **son arrivée**,” might be translated more naturally as “as soon as **he arrives**” in English, exchanging noun for verb. Transposition can be both obligatory and optional; that is, there are certain linguistic structures that require transposition to another word class in the translated text. There are other situations, however, in which translations with and without transposition are both plausible. In cases where transposition is optional, Vinay and Darbelnet recommend that transposition be chosen if the resulting translation is a better fit in meaning, style, or nuance.²²

Modulation, another indirect or oblique method of translation, is a variation of the form of the message from the source language into the target language. It is used when a literal translation produces in the target language an “unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward” utterance.²³ In these cases, when a literal translation may produce an intelligible or even grammatically correct phrase in the target language, modulation takes into account that the same type of utterance might more idiomatically be described with a different term or syntax. For example, the preferable translation of “I read in the papers” might not be “j’ai lu dans les journaux” but instead “j’ai appris par les journaux.”²⁴ There are a certain number of “fixed” modulations –

²¹ Ibid., 34.

²² Ibid., 36.

²³ Ibid., 36.

²⁴ Ibid., 248.

commonly agreed upon translations for certain types of structures between languages – but modulation may also be used at the discretion of the translator.

Equivalence refers to the translational technique by which “idioms, clichés, proverbs,” and similar features unique to a particular language are translated into equivalent and pre-existing phrases in another language that hold a similar weight or meaning.²⁵ The simplest example of an equivalent translational unit between French and English is an expression or interjection: for example, while an English person might express pain by crying, “ouch!,” a French person would instead cry “aïe!”²⁶ More sophisticated examples include equivalent idioms or sayings, such as the English “it’s raining cats and dogs” and the French “il pleut des cordes.” Not only would it make no sense to a French person to say “il pleut des chats et des chiens,” but they also already have an equivalent expression. The primary characteristic of equivalence is that it is almost always fixed – that is, only idioms that are already commonly translated as equivalent may be used as such by a translator. Although equivalence is considered an oblique method of translation, as it does not constitute a literal translation of the utterance, it should be used as a primary method before calque – in other words, equivalences are created by certain calques being repeatedly used and accepted. As noted previously, however, translators must be cautious when translating idiomatic phrases from one language to the other. A direct translation using calque must make sense or at least be identifiable as a translation, and an equivalence should never be assumed in its place: “the responsibility of introducing such calques into a perfectly organised language should not fall upon the shoulders of translators.”²⁷ As will be discussed at length in the upcoming sub-sections, the translator of the texts at the *Musée Mémorial* often

²⁵ Ibid., 38.

²⁶ Ibid., 38.

²⁷ Ibid., 38.

inappropriately assumes this responsibility, presuming or asserting equivalence where it is not already fixed in the target language of English.

All of the above methods of translation, both direct and oblique, are present in the selected museum text translations presented and annotated in the previous chapter. In general, it can be said that the original translations displayed a tendency toward direct (and especially literal) translation, often when oblique methods would be preferable. The following sub-sections will discuss specific instances of errors in this vein.

4.1: Errors in Literal Translation

The category of “errors in literal translation” is a very broad one, and intentionally so. An overly insistent adherence to the syntax, diction, logic, or thematic structure of a source text can create a variety of obstacles to effective communication of meaning in a translation, as will be shown in the following sub-sections. These errors are situations in which an oblique translation would have been preferable to the chosen direct method, due to a difference in expression of a concept between the two languages.

4.1.1 (Errors in Literal Translation) Resulting in Verbosity

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, “in general it appears that English is shorter than French.”²⁸ More specifically, the English language is, ordinarily, more economical in its expression of equivalent signifiers or terms in French. Thus, in general, one would expect an English translation to be more economical and less verbose than its French source text. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, and as with much translation, stylistic choices are relevant to the context in which they appear: “each language has its own cases of comparatively greater economy which translators have to be aware of in order to find the most appropriate

²⁸ Ibid., 193.

expression.”²⁹ While every translation from French to English may not be shorter or less verbose, there are certainly instances in which French may use a more verbose means of expressing an utterance whose meaning may be conveyed with the same force by a much shorter or more economical term or phrase.³⁰

Errors in literal translation that result in verbosity constitute cases in which the translator’s choice to literally translate each element of an utterance from the source language produced a translation in the target language that retained French verbosity which is, as per the above discussion, not usually mirrored in English. This issue may, indeed, occur simultaneously with others, such as an adherence to French conceptualization or syntax, for example, as verbosity may be integrated into the expression of such characteristics of French. In the example below, literal translation of the French text resulted in uncharacteristic verbosity:

Au cours de l’été 1944, les Normands **se sont trouvés brutalement plongés au cœur de l’un des plus gigantesques affrontements** de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

During the summer of 1944, the inhabitants of Normandy **found themselves brutally caught up in the midst of one of the most gigantic confrontations** of the Second World War.³¹

Each element of the section in bold has been literally translated to produce the English translation seen here. The English text, however, does not need to use such explicative and verbose terms to describe the same content. A preferable translation of the original French text would be one that, as a result of relying less exclusively on literal translation, is less verbose than the current translation. In my retranslation, I choose to translate “brutalement plongés au cœur de

²⁹ Ibid., 196.

³⁰ Admittedly, translations in general (including my own retranslations of the texts in question) may often be longer than their source text due to the need for clarification. Vinay and Darbelnet acknowledge this as well on page 196 of their manual.

³¹ See Chapter 2, page 37 for full text.

l'un des plus gigantesques affrontements” to “brutally thrust into the heart of one of the largest battles” rather than the original and more verbose translation.

4.1.2 (*Errors in Literal Translation*) Resulting in *Problematic Syntax or Clause Order*

As discussed in the introduction to section four, stylistic and structural differences between French and English are such that that literal translation of each element of an utterance in its original syntax may not always produce a translation that observes the structural limitations of the target language. The translator of these museum texts often chooses to translate literally utterances whose syntax is incorrect or unidiomatic when translated literally into English. For various reasons of stylistic difference, this tactic is often unsuccessful, producing translations that are neither a match for the original text nor compliant with the conventions of the target language.³²

The resulting problematic syntax or order of clauses from such an error can be seen throughout the translated museum texts:

Contrairement à une idée reçue, le débarquement allié sur les côtes normandes porte le nom de code *Neptune* et non *Overlord* (réservé à la libération de l'Ouest de l'Europe) dont il constitue la première phase.

Contrary to popular belief, the allied landing on the coast of Normandy bore the codename Neptune not Overlord (which was reserved for the liberation of Western Europe as a whole), of which it constituted the initial phase.³³

As is evident in the above citation, the English translation follows almost exactly the syntax of the original French text, employing literal translation to each successive element of the sentence. The result is a sentence whose clause order is, in English, both belaboured and logically unclear. Whereas in French, the addition of the clause “of which it constituted the initial phase” after

³² These are instances in which the resulting problematic syntax cannot be categorized as resulting from a major stylistic difference such as the predominance of the nouns or conceptualization in French.

³³ See Chapter 2, page 29 for full text.

another adjacent clause qualifying its referent (“Overlord”) is not problematic, in English this addition contributes further to the tangle of information in this sentence.

This syntax, though not egregiously incorrect on a grammatical level in English, obscures meaning so heavily that to determine 1) that the plan for the allied landing was named Neptune, 2) that the plan for liberation of Western Europe was named Overlord, and 3) that Neptune constituted the initial phase of Overlord, takes considerable analysis and more time than most visitors might spend in front of a guiding text whose guidance is not always illuminating. Thus, literal translation, in this case as elsewhere in the museum texts, produces a syntactically problematic sentence in the English translation that belabours a reader's process of deriving meaning from the texts.

4.1.3 (Errors in Literal Translation) Resulting in Problematic Sentence Length

Just as the syntax of a literally translated sentence may be awkward or undesirable, so may the length of that sentence be much longer than conventional English sentences. At least in these selected texts from the Mémorial de Caen, the French language allows for much longer sentences than are common in English. Literally translating these sentences without allowing for a pause may create some sentences whose length is unnaturally long, that is, extended by artificial grammatical means. The problem of excessive sentence length resulting from choosing literal translation may occur in addition to, and indeed in conjunction with, problematic syntax or clause order within the same utterance. Such is the case in the following example, though only sentence length will be addressed in this section:

Les horaires ont été calculés pour permettre un débarquement à mi-marée montante afin d'éviter les obstacles de plage disposés par Rommel dans l'hypothèse – la plus plausible à ses yeux – d'une tentative alliée à marée haute.

The timetable had been calculated to enable landing at half high tide in order to avoid the obstacles that Rommel had placed along the beaches on the hypothesis – the most likely in his opinion – of an allied landing at high tide.³⁴

In this example, the syntactic structure of the French text is reproduced almost identically in the English creation, creating not only an overcomplicated syntax but a run-on sentence whose content is presented in such a run-on manner that it may be lost upon a reader. The sentence is presenting several different pieces of information: first, that the schedules of the allied landings were calculated according to the tides; second, that this scheduling had been done in order to avoid obstacles placed by Rommel; third, that Rommel had placed these obstacles under the assumption that the allies would attempt to invade at high tide.

This information does not necessarily require three separate sentences, but its current arrangement, packed into one overcomplicated sentence, does not adequately and clearly convey the information it contains. As discussed in the section regarding verbosity, the English language is often much more economical with words and phrases. For a French reader, to encounter this much information within a single sentence may be perfectly normal, but for an English reader, a sentence of this length and breadth is uncommon. Thus, by adhering to an insistent literal translation of the structure of this sentence, the translator has created, among other problems, a sentence that is uncommonly long for standard English usage.

4.1.4 (Errors in Literal Translation) Resulting in a Pronoun without a Clear Referent

The original French texts of the museum often use a pronoun whose referent may not be immediately clear. In these cases, contextual clues may eventually alert a reader to the correct

³⁴ See Chapter 2, page 29-30 for full text.

significance of such a pronoun; in English, however, pronouns are almost always explicitly connected to their referents.³⁵ This point can be elucidated by examples from the text:

In order to tip the balance, the Allies could count on the unwavering logistical support ensured by their total control of the English Channel, which provided them with constant additions to their manpower and supplies of weapons, equipment and munitions beyond anything the Germans could hope for.

They also had the advantage of powerful artillery and crushing superiority in the air, further reinforced by construction of some fifty “Advanced Landing Grounds” on Norman soil.³⁶

Here, the pronoun “they” is without a referent as a result of the literal translation of each element of the French text. Although one may assume that “they” refers to the Allies, as the word “also” alerts a reader that the advantages of the Allies are still being listed. The noun that most closely precedes “they,” however, is “the Germans,” which may lead a reader to connect “they” with “the Germans” rather than with the Allies. Again, the referent for “they” would need to be made more explicit in order to translate this information with respect to the limits of English grammar.

4.1.5 (Errors in Literal Translation) Resulting in Redundancy

In a small number of instances, by choosing to literally translate an utterance, the translator includes in the English translation redundant information that is not necessary for an Anglophone reader. To remove such redundant information is delicate, as the force of the utterance must be preserved, sometimes including seemingly unnecessary components of the original text. In the annotated cases of redundancy, however, the English translation retains redundant terms whose removal does not affect the force of the text in relation to the original. For example, in one instance, the translator chooses a literal translation of “leurs défenses sont ici plus redoutables qu’ailleurs,” thus producing the equivalent phrase, “their defences there were

³⁵ Hacker, Diana. “12b. Pronoun Reference.” *A Pocket Style Manual*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004.

³⁶ See Chapter 2, page 42 for full text.

consequently stronger than elsewhere.”³⁷ In the translated version, however, “than elsewhere” becomes unnecessary. While it is certainly not incorrect, it adds no new information or meaning to the idea that German defence was stronger near the Strait of Dover. “Than elsewhere” is implicit in English and thus redundant.

4.2: Errors in Calque

As noted in the introduction to section four, calque is a method of direct translation in which each element of a common expression from the source language is translated literally into the target language. As discussed previously, lexical calque respects the syntactic structure of the target language, while structural calque introduces a new construction into the language. Vinay and Darbelnet warn that it is not for translators to introduce new calques into a target language; in other words, calque is always “fixed,” following previously determined matches between the two languages.

In the translated museum texts, however, the translator chooses to assert deviant calques for expressions in the source language that already have equivalent, if not literal, matches. For example, in the text that discusses radio messages broadcast on the BBC for the French Resistance, “message d’alert” is translated literally as “message of alert” in the English text.³⁸ The equivalent term for “message d’alert” is, in fact, “alert message.” Instead of using this fixed equivalence, the translator translates literally the syntax of “message d’alert,” creating an unnecessary structural calque that ignores existing structures of the target language.

4.3: Lack of Modulation

³⁷ See Chapter 2, page 27 for full text.

³⁸ See Chapter 2, page 32 for full text.

As previously discussed, modulation involves the variation of the form of the message from the source language into the target language when a literal translation would produce an unsuitable or awkward translation. More specifically, modulation “articulates the contrast between two languages faced with the same situation but with two different modes of thinking, by exposing this divergence in expression form.”³⁹ The technique of modulation, then, is necessary in a process of translation at any time where a form of direct translation would produce either a result in the target language that is incorrect or inappropriate, or one which may be stylistically correct but is conceptually or grammatically unusual to a reader. In the following sub-topics, I discuss moments in which direct translation methods were erroneously chosen by the translator. In all cases, as will be shown, the technique of modulation would have better accounted for differences in expression between the two languages.

4.3.1 (Lack of Modulation) Resulting in the Passive Voice

As noted in section 2 of this chapter, stylistics manuals generally find that the English language favors the passive voice more so than the French language. Interestingly, then, the original French texts of the museum employ the passive voice heavily. As discussed above, this may be, at times, a strategy to allay agency from a party whose actions caused destruction or harm. In other cases, however, the insistent use of the passive voice within the original French text would appear to be unrelated to any political agenda of neutrality. Ironically, the literal translation of such instances of the passive voice, left un-modulated when translated into English, creates an overly insistent, syntactically problematic, and un-idiomatic occurrence of the passive voice in the original translations.

³⁹ Darbelnet, Jean, and Jean-Paul Vinay. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1958. Print, 248.

For example, in the following passage, the translator uses direct translation to maintain the passive voice rather than using modulation. The resulting translated sentence is awkward and obscures meaning:

Ce plan de destruction systématique, conçu avant le Débarquement, **est mis en œuvre le 6 juin vers 20 heures par l'US Air force**, relayée au cours de la nuit, par le *Bomber Command* de la RAF.

This plan of systematic destruction, which had been drawn up before the Landing took place, **was put into action by the US Air force at around 8 o'clock in the evening of 6 June**, with the RAF Bomber Command taking over from them during the course of the night.⁴⁰

Here, the passive voice in the original (“ce plan...est mis en œuvre”) is mirrored in the translated text (“this plan...was put into action”) creating an undesirable series of qualifying clauses that make the sentence overcomplicated and illogical. Instead, in translating this sentence, it would be appropriate to use modulation to employ a more active verb form that better integrated the qualifying information (or perhaps placed it in several, shorter sentences).

4.3.2 (*Lack of Modulation*) *Resulting in Conceptualization or Abstraction Unnatural to English*

Vinay and Darbelnet suggest that modulation applies “particularly to the modulations which permit French to remain at a conceptual level in contrast to the level of perception at which English expresses itself.”⁴¹ The modulation between abstract and concrete forms of expression, therefore, is one of the most crucial oblique methods of translation between French and English. The following discussion will explore this specific stylistic difference between the two languages and the implications of a failure to incorporate such differences through modulation.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 2, page 35-36 for full text.

⁴¹ Darbelnet, Jean, and Jean-Paul Vinay. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1958. Print, 248.

Abstraction and conceptualization refer here to the representation of objects or events in terms that are more conceptual and general than concrete or physical: “by concrete expression we mean a level at which the linguistic realization mirrors concrete reality. The level of abstract expression shows reality in a more general light.”⁴² Without placing any value judgment on either level of expression, one can say that French words tend more often toward abstraction than do their English counterparts.⁴³ Consequently, larger phrases or utterances in French may take on a more abstract or conceptual quantity than would those in English. Vinay and Darbelnet cite the words of Charles Bally, a French linguist from Switzerland, who commented upon the difference in abstraction between German and French; Vinay and Darbelnet feel that this same comparison can be applied to English and French. According to Bally, German [and English] “mise en présence d’une représentation complexe de l’esprit, tend à la rendre avec toute sa complexité, tandis que le français en dégage plutôt le trait essentiel, quitte à sacrifier le reste.”⁴⁴ Thus the French language tends generally toward more abstract forms of expression that capture the essential information of the message, while English more frequently insists on a representation of actions or material objects that is concrete, descriptive, and complex.

Such a stylistic difference should be taken into account when translating between French and English, but this is often not the case in the translated texts from the *Mémorial de Caen*. In many instances, the translator of these texts uses the direct translation method of literal translation and does not account for the English preference for concrete expression that must be observed and modulated accordingly. The result is an unnaturally conceptual representation in English that may obscure meaning for a reader. For example, the French text describing the Allies’ motives for bombing Norman towns presents these towns in a highly conceptual manner:

⁴² Ibid., 51.

⁴³ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 52.

Pour les Alliés, il s'agit en fait de détruire **les nœuds de communication que constituent les villes**, afin de retarder autant que possible la montée des renforts ennemis vers les plages.⁴⁵

Here, the towns are only identified secondarily as synonymous with “les nœuds de communication.” This description of the towns frames them as only being representative objects, which becomes problematic if retained in English, as we can see:

For the Allies, it was actually a question of destroying **the communication hubs that the towns represented**, so as to slow down the enemy reinforcements' advance towards the beaches as much as possible.⁴⁶

As can be seen, by choosing a literal method of translation rather than the oblique method of modulation, the translator has here retained an abstract and conceptualized means of representing the towns that is disjunctive and unnatural in English. For an English reader, towns are not as likely to *represent* something as they are to *be* or *do* something. The idea of the towns representing communication hubs adds no affective value to a reader who is more concretely concerned with a logical explanation of why the Allies bombed Norman towns. The crucial information of this sentence, to an Anglophone reader, is that it was *because* the towns *were used as* communication hubs by the Germans that the Allies felt they needed to bomb these towns.

Thus it would be necessary to employ modulation to modify the insistent conceptualization of the towns present in the French version in order to create a more concrete version in the English. The final retranslation of this sentence will depend upon the resolution of other translational errors present, but an acceptable translation would reduce the abstract quality given to the towns and attempt to suggest more explicitly the relationship between the air raids and the German use of these towns.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 2, page 33 for full text.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 2, page 34 for full text.

Another example of an instance in which the translator's choice to use direct translation maintained a level of abstraction unnatural to English can be seen below:

Face à eux, les Alliés peuvent compter **sur l'appui logistique sans faille que leur assure la maîtrise totale de la mer de la Manche**. Ils bénéficient ainsi **d'une croissance continue de leurs effectifs** et d'un ravitaillement en armes, matériel et munitions sans comparaison avec ce que peuvent espérer les Allemands.

Here, the logistic military advantages of the Allies are described entirely in abstract and conceptual terms. Thus, when the English translation is executed with a similar syntactical structure that employs primarily direct methods of translation, the result is that this abstract conception, both of the support offered to the allies and of the implications of this support, lacks a logistical and concrete sense that would more likely appear in an English text:

In order to tip the balance, the Allies could count on **the unwavering logistical support ensured by their total control of the English Channel**, which provided them with constant additions to their manpower and supplies of weapons, equipment and munitions beyond anything the Germans could hope for.

As in the previous example, a conceptual representation of an object or action creates an overcomplicated and less logical effect in English. Whereas this abstraction is common in the French language and anticipated by its speakers, this is not the case for English speakers – the meaning of this sentence, particularly the explicit connection between the words “support,” “control,” and “provided,” are not conveyed adequately. Further, the addition of “equipment and munitions...,” which mirrors the French syntax exactly, is not an accepted syntactical style in English and needs more concrete causal explanation than is provided in the French. Thus modulation is and was necessary in order for the translation of this sentence to be stylistically appropriate in the target language. This modulation would involve a shift from the abstract level of expression in the French original to a more concrete description in the English translation that

makes explicit the causal relationship between the support offered to the Allies and the advantages this support ensured for them.

4.3.3 (*Lack of Modulation*) *Resulting in Unnatural Tendency toward Latinate Words*

Whereas French vocabulary is derived primarily from Latin roots, English vocabulary has both Latinate and Anglo-Saxon sources, the latter of which is more common in everyday usage.⁴⁷ Saxon words in English are frequently shorter and more direct than their Latinate alternatives and are therefore preferable for idiomatic translation into English. Often, in the texts analyzed here, the translator chooses to literally translate a large number of words derived from Latin, which may give an utterance an overly formal or unnatural character in English. In these cases, modulation of the text to include more Saxon-derived words may resolve this issue.

For example, on the first page of the selected museum texts, the French sentence, “le mur de l’Atlantique n’est pas un **rempart continu**,” is translated as the following: “the Atlantic Wall was not a **continuous rampart**.”⁴⁸ By adhering insistently to a literal translation of these Latinate words, the translator creates an overly formal means of communicating the fact that the Atlantic Wall was, simply put, not an actual wall. While “continuous rampart” is certainly, in theory, an acceptable translation of “rempart continu,” in this context, it does not serve to communicate the same information to an Anglophone reader that “rempart continu” does for a Francophone reader. The failure to modulate these Latinate words when translating this sentence thus obscures meaning for the reader. A retranslation of this phrase would depend on the retranslation of the entire sentence and consideration of the larger context, but it would certainly reduce the presence of Latinate words in favor of those that are Saxon-derived.

⁴⁷ Hinault, Catherine. “Traductions – Notions de Base.” *Technique de traduction LI SI, Université Rennes 2*. Print, 2.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 2, page 25 for full text.

4.4: Errors in Modulation

In contrast to problems resulting from a lack of modulation, the following sub-topics describe instances in which the translator did choose to use modulation but did so unnecessarily or incorrectly. For example, the translator may have chosen to modulate an expression where a literal translation already existed, therefore making the modulation unnecessary. Alternatively, the translator may have correctly identified an opportunity for modulation but then modulated incorrectly. Both cases are present in the texts in question. As with the effects of a failure to modulate, the effects of an incorrect modulation expose fundamental stylistic differences between French and English.

4.4.1 (Errors in Modulation) Resulting in Awkward, Unidiomatic, or Unsuitable Phrasing in English

As stated in section four, the need for modulation may be identified by nothing other than “awkward, unidiomatic, or unsuitable” phrasing in the target language.⁴⁹ In the case of errors in modulation resulting in undesirable phrasing, the translator actually *produces* this effect *through* modulation, and more specifically, through incorrect modulation. For example, in the original translation, “privilégiant l’effet de surprise” is translated as “putting their money on the success of mounting a surprise attack.” Here, the translator chooses to modulate when literal translation may actually have produced a more idiomatic match: “privilégier” may be literally translated as “to favor,” which better expresses the motivation of the Allies’ decision to choose the beaches of Normandy. Further, saying that they favored the element of surprise is considerably less verbose and awkward than to say that the Allies “put their money on the success of...etc.” There is no

⁴⁹ Darbelnet, Jean, and Jean-Paul Vinay. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1958. Print, 36.

need to modulate this utterance as heavily as the translator has done here, and doing so only results in further obfuscation for the reader.

4.4.2 (*Errors in Modulation*) *Resulting in Problematic Syntax or Clause Order*

An error in modulation may also cause problematic syntax, particularly in clause order. Just as the failure to modulate an utterance may produce unusual or incorrect clause or word order, so may an incorrect modulation produce the same effect. As with other errors in modulation, these instances occur both when modulation is performed unnecessarily and when modulation is necessary but incorrectly executed. In the following example, the latter is the case:

La décision de construire le Mur de l'Atlantique est prise en décembre 1941. Elle résulte de l'évolution de la stratégie hitlérienne face à l'entrée en guerre des Etats-Unis et à l'échec de la *Wehrmacht* devant Moscou.

Taken in December 1941, the decision to build the Atlantic Wall was a result of the development of Hitler's strategy following the United States' entry into the war and the Wehrmacht's failure at the gates of Moscow.⁵⁰

Here, the translator has chosen to use modulation to alter the order of the original utterance when translating it into English. While the conceptualization of Hitler's decision in the French original certainly makes its translation into English difficult, the chosen modulation does not address that issue nor does it improve the clarity or idiomatic feel of the translated text. Instead, it actually further obscures meaning within the passage, beginning with an unqualified modifier, a syntax generally discouraged within English grammar.⁵¹ Thus an unnecessary modulation here produces a problematic clause order within the translated sentence.

4.5: *Lack of Transposition*

⁵⁰ See Chapter 2, page 25 for full text.

⁵¹ Hacker, Diana. "7c. Dangling Modifiers." *A Pocket Style Manual*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

Transposition has been defined as an oblique translation method in which a source language word is translated using one of another word class in the target language.⁵² Annotations of the original translations labeled “lack of translation” mark instances in which a translation should have, and did not, take into account the target language’s preference for using a different type of word class to express the same idea.

4.5.1 (Lack of Transposition) Resulting in Nominalization

Nominalization, as it has been defined already in this commentary, is the expression of an action or an event by means of a noun rather than a verb. The predominance of the noun word class in French thus makes transposition crucial when translating a nominalized action from French into English; in many, but not necessarily all cases, action expressed as a noun in French may be transposed to a verb in order to create a more common structure in English. In several instances in the original translations of the Mémorial de Caen wall texts, the translator does not transpose from French noun phrase to English verb phrase, creating an unnatural tendency toward nominal representation of action in the translated text.

For example, at the beginning of the second translated text, a sentence in the original French begins: “en janvier 1943, deux mois après **le débarquement allié** en Afrique du nord, ...”⁵³ The allied landing is here expressed as an event rather than as an action, as is typical of French. In translating this phrase into English, however, given the stylistic difference between the two languages detailed above, one might expect a transposition of word class from noun to verb in the translated text. Instead, the translator uses literal translation: “in January 1943, two

⁵² Darbelnet, Jean, and Jean-Paul Vinay. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1958. Print, 351.

⁵³ See Chapter 2, page 27 for full text.

months after **the allied landing** in North Africa, ...”⁵⁴ While this translation is by no means grammatically or syntactically incorrect, it is less idiomatic than, for example, “two months after the Allies landed...” This proposed re-translation uses transposition to respect the tendency of English toward active verbs rather than nouns, and it does not change the meaning of the utterance.

5. Mistranslation

The term “mistranslation” might seem appropriate for many of the previous subcategories; here, however, “mistranslation” is meant to signal errors in translation that are not a product of a misuse or a failure to use a specific method of translation. The following categories of error in the original translations of the museum texts refer to cases of oversight, misunderstanding of the target language, or even lack of editing. In fact, the causes of these mistakes cannot be reasonably presumed – they are, so to speak, “unprovoked.” There is no identifiable stylistic difference between the two languages that might account for these errors; thus, they are grouped together in this final category of “mistranslation.”

5.1: Omission

Throughout the original English translations of texts of the Mémorial de Caen, there are places in which the translator omits important words or ideas from the original French text. These are not cases in which the original utterance has been obliquely translated in order to better comply with the stylistic conventions of the target language; rather, they constitute unnecessary and often important omissions of the information given in the original text. In the selected portion of the museum texts, these omissions include everything from definite articles to historical dates; further, the omission often affects the logic or sense of a sentence, a paragraph,

⁵⁴ See Chapter 2, page 27 for full text.

or even an entire text. For example, in the museum text detailing the duration of the fighting in Normandy, the following translation occurs:

La bataille en Normandie aura duré beaucoup plus longtemps que prévu, **en raison d'une résistance allemande** poussée à l'extrême... jusqu'à l'effondrement final.

The fighting in Normandy lasted considerably longer than expected, **with German resistance** pushed to the limit – until the final collapse.⁵⁵

As is evident in the above citation, the phrase “en raison de” is omitted from the translation, and the placeholder “with,” which has no additive value in the logic of the sentence. Here, “en raison de” is crucial information – it explains a causal relationship between the duration of the fighting in Normandy and the German resistance. That is to say, the French text makes explicit that it is because of the German resistance having been pushed to the extreme (and not the limit, as is mistranslated in the above original translation) that the fighting in Normandy lasted longer than expected. In the English translation, this causal relationship is not made clear, due to the unexplained omission of “en raison de” and its replacement with the word “with,” which adds no causal link. Omissions like these are avoidable and may impair a reader’s understanding of the text.

5.2: Vocabulary or usage error

The task of a translator presumes a comprehensive, current understanding of both the source and the target languages in question. Understanding of both the interplay of the two languages as well as the nuances and contexts of each separate language is crucial to providing an acceptable translation. In the case of the texts in question, the stakes for appropriate translation of the content and meaning of the museum’s guiding texts are, as previously discussed, quite high. Errors in vocabulary and usage may indicate an imperfect command of the

⁵⁵ See Chapter 2, page 41 for full text.

target language or of the relation between the source and target languages, and their presence in these texts serve to undermine the readability and communicative power of the museum's narrative.

These “mistranslations” can be as minor as translating “à jamais **gravés** dans la mémoire” to “forever remain **graven** in the memories” (rather than the much less arcane **engraved**), but they may also be much more difficult for a museum visitor to navigate. In a paragraph from the first page already cited in this commentary, the original French text reads:

L'engagement de l'essentiel des forces allemandes sur le front de l'Est dégarmit dangereusement les défenses à l'Ouest, où plane désormais la menace d'un débarquement anglo-américain. **Il s'agit donc d'**édifier un tel système défensif qu'il permettra à la « forteresse Europe » de résister à un assaut amphibie allié.

The deployment of the bulk of Germany's troops on the Eastern front dangerously undermanned defences in the West, where the threat of an Anglo-American landing now hovered. **It was therefore a matter of** building a defence system that would enable “Fortress Europe” to withstand an allied amphibious assault.⁵⁶

Here, “il s'agit donc de” is incorrectly translated as “it was therefore a matter of.” Out of context, “it's a matter of” is certainly one possible translation of “il s'agit de.” In this specific instance, however, “il s'agit de” serves to link the building of the Atlantic Wall to the causes stated in the previous sentence – while “il s'agit de” is a perfectly acceptable way to do this in French, it does not have a matched expression in English that creates the same sort of causal connection that the phrase does in French. Further, as discussed above in sections on abstraction and conceptualization, the French “il s'agit de” leaves a logical ambiguity that is not as successful in the English “it was therefore a matter of.” Here, the translator's lack of consideration of the usage of this French expression as it relates to the English equivalent in the same context has obscured the clarity of the translated text. A more acceptable match for the phrase “il s'agit de”

⁵⁶ See Chapter 2, page 25 for full text.

might translate a larger unit of text from the French in order to more clearly grasp the meaning of the sentence in context.

5.3: *Added paragraph breaks*

In a small number of instances in the original English translations of the museum texts, the translator has chosen to make two paragraphs where only one existed in the original French text. Besides having no precedent in the source text, this choice often interrupts the narrative or logic of a passage. For example, in the text entitled “Mardi 6 Juin 1944: Le débarquement,” an entire paragraph in the original French text is broken up in the following way in the English translation:

In the American sector, the attack began at 6:30 a.m., an hour later than in the British sector, because of a difference in the rhythm of the tides.

The timetable had been calculated to enable landing at half high tide in order to avoid the obstacles that Rommel had placed along the beaches on the hypothesis – the most likely in his opinion – of an allied landing at high tide.⁵⁷

Not only does this separation have no precedent in the original text, but it also serves to make disjunctive what was originally one thought: the calculation of the “timetable” or schedule is directly related to the idea that the attack in the American sector began later than that in the British sector. In fact, it is actually an explanation of the preceding information, a connection that becomes obscured when the paragraph is interrupted as such. Thus, in this example, as in others in the text, the translator unnecessarily adds a paragraph break that may serve to undermine the flow of information being presented in that passage.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 2, page 30 for full text.

IV. Retranslations

La décision de construire le Mur de l'Atlantique est prise en décembre 1941. Elle résulte de l'évolution de la stratégie hitlérienne face à l'entrée en guerre des Etats-Unis et à l'échec de la *Wehrmacht* devant Moscou.

L'engagement de l'essentiel des forces allemandes sur le front de l'Est dégarmit dangereusement les défenses à l'Ouest, où plane désormais la menace d'un débarquement anglo-américain. Il s'agit donc d'édifier un tel système défensif qu'il permettra à la « forteresse Europe » de résister à un assaut amphibie allié.

La construction du « Mur » débute au printemps 1942. Pas moins de 11 millions de tonnes de béton seront nécessaires pour édifier plus de 15 000 ouvrages le long de 6 000 kms de côtes, de la Norvège à la frontière franco-espagnole. Le mur de l'Atlantique n'est pas un rempart continu. Il se compose d'une juxtaposition d'ouvrages fortifiés de tailles diverses, plus ou moins espacés les uns des autres.

The decision to build the Atlantic Wall was made in December of 1941 as a result of Hitler's military strategy following the United States' entry into the war as well as the failure of his troops in Moscow.

Having deployed the bulk of its troops to the Eastern front, Germany was dangerously undermanned in the West, which remained vulnerable to an allied invasion. The only thing left to do was to build a system of defence that would allow Fortress Europe to resist an amphibious¹ allied assault.

In the spring of 1942, the Germans began to construct the wall, which was not an actual wall but rather a series of fortifications comprised of 15,000 structures set at varying distances along 6,000 kilometres (3,728 miles) of coastline, stretching from Norway to the border between France and Spain. No less than 11 million tons of concrete were used during the construction.

¹ "Amphibious" here had to be retained, despite perhaps being unclear, because it describes the way in which the landing crafts allowed an invasion from the sea onto the land (beaches).

En janvier 1943, deux mois après le débarquement allié en Afrique du nord, Roosevelt et Churchill se rencontrent à Casablanca et s'accordent sur le principe d'un assaut plus direct contre l'Allemagne à partir des côtes du nord-ouest de la France. La conception du plan, qui reçoit le nom de code d'*Overlord* est confiée à un état-major (le COSSAC) dirigé par le général britannique Frederick Morgan.

En mai 1943, réunis à Washington (conférence *Trident*), les Alliés fixent la date du Débarquement : début mai 1944. Reste à déterminer le lieu. Compte tenu des limites de l'indispensable couverture aérienne, deux régions seulement sont envisageables.

Les Allemands s'attendent – logiquement – à un assaut dans le Pas de Calais, très proche de l'Angleterre. En conséquence, leurs défenses sont ici plus redoutables qu'ailleurs. En revanche, les côtes de la baie de Seine, entre Le Havre et Cherbourg, plus éloignées et apparemment moins menacées, ne sont pas aussi bien protégées.

Privilégiant l'effet de surprise, les Alliés réunis à Québec en août 1943 (conférence *Quadrant*) font le choix des plages de Basse-Normandie. En décembre 1943, le général américain Dwight D. Eisenhower reçoit le commandement en chef de l'opération *Overlord*. Son ordre de mission est clair : prendre pied en France et libérer l'Ouest de l'Europe !

In January 1943, two months after the Allies landed in North Africa, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Casablanca and agreed to make a more direct attack on Germany from the northwest coast of France. This plan was given the codename "Overlord" and was entrusted to the British COSSAC staff under the direction of British general Frederick Morgan.

In May 1943, the Allies met in Washington and fixed the date of the landing for May 1944, with only the location left to be determined. Only two places had the gaps in Nazi aerial coverage necessary for an invasion.

The Germans were, logically, expecting an attack in the Strait of Dover, which was very close to England. Consequently, their defences were much stronger there. The Seine Bay coastline, on the other hand, between Le Havre and Cherbourg, was further away and supposedly less likely to be attacked; it was, therefore, much less protected.

The Allies met again in Quebec in August of 1943 at the Quadrant Conference and, favouring the idea of a surprise attack, chose the beaches of Lower Normandy for the invasion. In December 1943, the American general Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed the Supreme Commander of Operation Overlord. His orders were clear: land in France and liberate Western Europe.

MARDI 6 JUIN 1944 : LE DÉBARQUEMENT

Contrairement à une idée reçue, le débarquement allié sur les côtes normandes porte le nom de code *Neptune* et non *Overlord* (réservé à la libération de l'Ouest de l'Europe) dont il constitue la première phase.

Les opérations commencent dans la nuit du 5 au 6 avec le largage des parachutistes, tandis que des bombardiers lourds pilonnent les batteries d'artillerie côtières jugées les plus dangereuses.

Pendant ce temps, une armada de 5 000 navires (dont un millier de vaisseaux de guerre) traverse la Manche et prend position au large des plages sans avoir été repérée par les Allemands, abusés par la tempête qui sévit toujours et handicapés par la destruction de leurs radars au cours des semaines précédentes. La surprise est donc totale.

A 5h45, les navires de guerre ouvrent le feu sur les défenses du Mur de l'Atlantique, alors que les barges transportant les premières vagues d'assaut approchent de leurs objectifs.

En secteur américain, l'attaque débute à 6h30, une heure plus tard en secteur britannique en raison du décalage des marées. Les horaires ont été calculés pour permettre un débarquement à mi-marée montante afin d'éviter les obstacles de plage disposés par Rommel dans l'hypothèse – la plus plausible à ses yeux – d'une tentative alliée à marée haute.

TUESDAY 6 JUNE 1944: THE LANDING

While it is commonly believed that the Allied landing on the coast of Normandy was named Operation Overlord, this is in fact the name for the plan to liberate all of Western Europe. The landing actually made up the first phase of a plan with the codename Neptune.

Operations began on the night of 5/6 June, as parachutists were dropped to the ground and heavy bombers pounded the coastal artillery batteries that were judged the most dangerous.

Meanwhile, an armada of 5,000 ships, including 1,000 battleships, crossed the English Channel. They stationed themselves offshore without being noticed by the Germans, who were preoccupied with the still-raging storm and handicapped by the destruction of their radars during the previous weeks. The Germans were therefore taken completely by surprise by the allied attack.

At 5:45am, allied battleships opened fire on the Atlantic Wall, while the first wave of assault troops approached the shore in landing crafts.

In the American sector, the attack began at 6:30am, an hour later than in the British sector, due to a difference in the tide. The schedule had been calculated to allow for a landing at half tide. This would allow the allies to avoid the obstacles placed on the beach by German General Rommel, who had anticipated that the Allies would likely land at high tide.

« VEUILLEZ ÉCOUTER QUELQUES MESSAGES PERSONNELS... »

Pendant l'occupation, la radio est un moyen de communication entre la résistance intérieure française et les forces alliées à Londres qui diffusent des « messages personnels ».

Contrairement à une idée reçue, les fameux vers du poète Verlaine diffusés par la BBC le 1^{er} juin (« Les sanglots longs des violons de l'automne »), puis le 5 juin (« Bercent² mon cœur d'une langueur monotone ») ne sont pas le message général annonçant le Débarquement, mais seulement l'un des messages parmi beaucoup d'autres. Ceux du 1^{er} juin ont pour but de mettre en alerte les diverses organisations de la résistance française. Les quelques 210 messages émis, pendant 16 minutes, le 5 juin vers 21h 15, donnent l'ordre de passer à l'action immédiate.

Les messages spécifiquement destinés à la région « M » des Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (FFI), dont font partie la Normandie et la Bretagne, sont les suivants :

Message d'alerte (1^{er} juin) : « L'heure du combat viendra ».

Message d'action (5 juin) : « Les dés sont sur le tapis » (*Plan vert* : sabotage des voies ferrées) ; « il fait chaud à Suez » (*Plan Guérilla*) ; « La flèche ne percera pas » (*Plan Tortue* : embuscades contre les colonnes de renforts allemands) ; « Ne faites pas de plaisanteries » (*Plan Violet* : sabotage des lignes téléphoniques).

² The line from Verlaine actually reads "blesent" and not "bercent." This is correctly translated to "wounds" in the English translation.

"BEFORE WE BEGIN, PLEASE LISTEN TO SOME PERSONAL MESSAGES."³

During the occupation, the radio was used as a means of communication between the Resistance movement in France and the allied forces in London, who would broadcast "personal messages."

Contrary to what many people believe, the famous lines from Verlaine's poem, "Autumn Song," broadcast by BBC radio on 1 June ("the long sobs of autumn's violins") and on 5 June ("wound my heart with a monotonous languor"), were not the main messages announcing the landing in Normandy. Rather, they were only some of many messages used by the Resistance movement. The messages broadcast on 1 June were meant to put the various French Resistance organizations on alert, and some 210 messages were broadcast at around 9:15pm on 5 June to give the order for immediate action.

The following messages were specifically aimed at region "M" of the French Forces of the Interior (FFI), which included Normandy and Brittany:

Alert message, 1 June: "The hour of combat will come."

Call to action, 5 June:

"The dice are on the carpet" (Green Plan: sabotage railway lines)

"It's hot in Suez" (Guerrilla Plan)

"The arrow will not pierce" (Tortoise Plan: ambush German reinforcement columns)

³ This is what the BBC radio broadcast would actually say (Tillman, *Brassey's D-Day Encyclopedia*).

“Don’t joke” (Purple Plan: sabotage of telephone lines).

UN DÉBARQUEMENT NON DÉCISIF

Le Débarquement a réussi. Mais il n'est nullement décisif ! Le sort de l'opération *Overlord* dépend désormais de la montée en puissance des deux camps dans les premières semaines de juin. A priori, les Allemands disposent de l'avantage. En une journée ou deux, ils peuvent diriger vers la Normandie une vingtaine de divisions, présentes dans un rayon de 250 kms autour de la tête de pont. Ils disposeraient alors d'un net avantage sur leurs adversaires, pour lesquels l'arrivée des renforts par voie maritime sera forcément plus lente ; ce qui pourrait permettre à Rommel de rejeter les Alliés à la mer.

Pour ces derniers, l'essentiel est donc d'employer tous les moyens pour ralentir l'arrivée des renforts allemands. Outre l'action de la résistance française, les Alliés feront jouer pleinement leur écrasante supériorité aérienne en détruisant les nœuds de communication que forment les villes normandes et en attaquant systématiquement les convois allemands sur les routes (voir l'avion *Typhoon* dans le hall du Mémorial).

Enfin, les Anglo-américains vont bénéficier des effets durables du plan d'intoxication « *Fortitude* », Hitler pensant, jusqu'en juillet, que l'opération en Normandie n'est qu'un leurre destiné à leur faire dégarnir les défenses du Pas-de-Calais où se produira l'assaut principal. Quinze jours après le Débarquement, les Alliés ont nettement pris l'avantage et disposent d'une solide tête de pont.

AN INCONCLUSIVE LANDING

The landing had succeeded, but the war was by no means decided. The fate of Operation Overlord was now dependent on the lasting power of each camp during the first weeks of June. Ostensibly, the Germans had the advantage: within a day or two, they could have sent some twenty troops to within 250 kilometres (155 miles) of the bridgehead in Normandy. They had, therefore, a clear advantage over the Allies, who would have to bring reinforcements by boat, a much slower process. This would then allow Rommel to push their troops back to sea.

Thus, for the Allies, it was crucial that they use all possible means to slow down the German reinforcements on their way to Normandy. Along with help from the French Resistance, the Allies made full use of the crushing superiority of their air force in order to destroy German communication hubs by bombing Norman towns (for an example of an Allied aircraft, see the Typhoon plane in the lobby). The Allies also systematically attacked German convoys on the roads.

Lastly, the Allies benefited from the deception plan, Operation Fortitude: well into July, Hitler was led to believe that the invasion of Normandy was only a decoy, designed to deplete his forces in the Strait of Dover, where he believed the main attack would take place. Two weeks after the landing, the Allies had gained the upper hand and established a solid foothold.

POURQUOI BOMBARDER LES VILLES NORMANDES?

De tous les souvenirs douloureux qui ont marqué l'esprit des Normands confrontés aux combats de l'été 1944, le plus effroyable est incontestablement celui laissé par les terribles bombardements déclenchés par l'aviation alliée. Le sifflement des bombes, les explosions assourdissantes, le sol qui tremble, les murs qui s'écroulent avec fracas, la poussière, les flammes, l'odeur de la poudre, les cris des blessés ensevelis sous les ruines, la perte d'être chers resteront à jamais gravés dans la mémoire des rescapés.

Contrairement à ce l'on croit souvent, ces bombardements ne visent pas directement les troupes allemands. Pour les Alliés, il s'agit en fait de détruire les nœuds de communication que constituent les villes, afin de retarder autant que possible la montée des renforts ennemis vers les plages.

Ce plan de destruction systématique, conçu avant le Débarquement, est mis en œuvre le 6 juin vers 20 heures par l'*US Air force*, relayée au cours de la nuit, par la *Bomber Command* de la RAF. À la demande des aviateurs américains, des tracts avaient été lancés dans la journée pour avertir les habitants du danger. Mais largués de manière trop imprécise, ils se dispersèrent souvent loin des villes et n'eurent pas d'effet. Les bombardements se poursuivent pendant la dizaine de jours suivants, visant d'autres villes, puis des carrefours routiers de moindre importance, voire parfois de simples villages quand ils représentent un enjeu stratégique. Les bombardements aériens ont provoqué la mort de près de 12 000 personnes.

WHY BOMB THE TOWNS OF NORMANDY?

Of all the painful memories held by the Norman people who lived through the fighting of the summer of 1944, those of the terrible air raids launched by allied planes are undoubtedly the worst. The whistling of falling bombs, the deafening explosions, the trembling ground, the walls crashing down, the dust, flames, and the smell of gunpowder, the screams of the wounded from beneath the rubble, the loss of loved ones: these memories will remain forever engraved in the hearts of those who survived.

These bombings were not, as is commonly thought, targeted directly at German troops. Rather, the Allies hoped, in bombing the towns, to destroy the Germans' means of communication and thus to slow down, as much as possible, the advance of enemy reinforcements toward the beaches.

This plan for systematic destruction, designed before the landing, was enacted at 8 o'clock on the evening of 6 June by the US Air Force and then carried on by Royal Air Force Bomber Command during the course of the night. At the request of American pilots, leaflets warning the town's inhabitants of the coming danger had been dropped the previous day. But, scattered haphazardly, these leaflets often landed too far from the towns to have any effect. The bombing continued over the next ten or so days, targeting first⁴ the towns, then less important crossroads, and finally even some smaller towns that

⁴ The original French text here uses the adjective "autres," but I have been unable to find original towns to which "autres" might refer. I have therefore chosen to omit it in my retranslation.

were deemed strategically important.
Almost 12 000 people died in the air
raids.

LES SOUFFRANCES DE LA POPULATION

Au cours de l'été 1944, les Normands se sont trouvés brutalement plongés au cœur de l'un des plus gigantesques affrontements de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Au plus fort des combats, en juillet, deux millions de soldats combattent dans les départements de la Manche et du Calvados dont la population totale ne dépasse pas un million d'habitants.

Certains se retrouvent en sécurité dans la tête de pont tenue par les Alliés ; d'autres n'ont pas cette chance, coincés sur la ligne de feu ou dans les zones encore aux mains des Allemands. Pour eux, il reste à se mettre, tant bien que mal, à l'abri des bombes, des obus et des balles, en creusant des tranchées dans les jardins, en se réfugiant dans des caves, dans des carrières souterraines, dans des galeries de mines... Par milliers, des Caennais on[t] trouvé asile à l'abbaye aux Hommes et dans l'église Saint-Etienne.

Plus de 150 000 hommes, femmes, enfants, et vieillards ont préféré fuir les combats et prendre le chemin de l'exode, au hasard de routes dangereuses qui les mèneront parfois fort loin de leur domicile, jusque dans le centre de la France pour certains.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE CIVILIANS

During the summer of 1944, the people of Normandy found themselves brutally thrust into the heart of one of the largest battles of World War II. At the height of the fighting in July, two million soldiers were fighting in the *départements* of La Manche and Calvados, where the combined population was less than a million people.

Some Norman citizens found safety at the Allied foothold, but others were not so lucky, cornered either in the line of fire or in areas still occupied by the Germans. For these people, their only option was to somehow find shelter from the bombs, shells, and bullets, either by digging trenches in their gardens or by seeking refuge in cellars, underground quarries, or mines. The residents of Caen sought shelter by the thousand in the Abbaye aux Hommes and in the Saint-Etienne church.

More than 150,000 men, women, and children chose to flee the fighting, taking to dangerous roads that often led them far from home, sometimes all the way to the centre of France.

LA JOIE DU PEUPLE LIBÉRÉ

La libération de la Normandie a laissé à ceux qui l'ont vécue deux images contrastées. Celle de destructions et de mort provoquées par des combats acharnés. Mais celle aussi de la joie intense d'une liberté retrouvée après quatre longues années d'occupation. Elle éclate avec d'autant moins de retenue là où la population n'a pas eu à souffrir directement de l'horreur de la guerre.

Le 14 juillet 1944, la fête nationale française est célébrée avec une grande ferveur dans les villes et les villages libérés. Partout, les troupes alliées s'unissent aux populations locales pour lui donner l'éclat particulier qui convient.

Drapeaux et banderoles fleurissent aux fenêtres. Les couleurs alliées sont même à l'honneur sur des vêtements confectionnés à la hâte en l'honneur des libérateurs. Quant aux enfants, ils sont particulièrement attirés par ces militaires débonnaires qui ne sont pas avares de chocolat, friandises et autres chewing-gum.

THE JOY OF LIBERATION

The liberation of Normandy left its inhabitants with two contrasting images: that of the death and destruction caused by bitter fighting, but also that of the intense joy of having regained their liberty after four long years of occupation. This outburst of joy was all the more intense in places where the people had not directly suffered from the horrors of the war.

On 14 July 1944, the national holiday of France was celebrated with great fervour in the liberated towns and villages. Allied troops everywhere joined with the French people to help celebrate the occasion with the proper splendour.

Flags and streamers hung from every window; the people proudly sported the colours of the Allies on clothes that they had hastily fashioned in honour of their liberators. Children were particularly drawn to these debonair soldiers who gave out plenty of chocolate, sweets, and chewing gum.

100 JOURS DE BATAILLES EN NORMANDIE

La bataille de Normandie devait durer quelques semaines tout au plus. Elle ne s'achèvera que le 12 septembre avec la prise du Havre, soit cent jours après le Débarquement.

Surpris le 6 juin, les Allemands se sont ressaisis et vont offrir une résistance opiniâtre, malgré une infériorité numérique croissante et l'absence quasi-totale de soutien aérien et naval. Mais ils disposent d'une artillerie anti-aérienne (FLAK) efficace, de troupes d'infanterie le plus souvent aguerries et combattives telles que les unités de chasseurs-parachutistes et surtout de onze redoutables divisions blindées (dont 6 appartenant à la SS) équipées de chars l'emportant nettement en qualité sur les blindés alliés.

Face à eux, les Alliés peuvent compter sur l'appui logistique sans faille que leur assure la maîtrise totale de la mer de la Manche. Ils bénéficient ainsi d'une croissance continue de leurs effectifs et d'un ravitaillement en armes, matériel et munitions sans comparaison avec ce que peuvent espérer les Allemands. Ils peuvent enfin tirer avantage d'une artillerie puissants et d'une supériorité aérienne écrasante, encore renforcée par la construction d'une cinquantaine de terrains d'aviation avancés sur le sol normand.

100 DAYS OF BATTLE IN NORMANDY

The Battle of Normandy was only supposed to last, at most, a few weeks. It did not end, however, until the Allies took Le Havre on 12 September, a full hundred days after the landing.

The Germans rallied after having been taken by surprise on 6 June. They regrouped and put up a stubborn resistance despite increasingly inferior numbers and practically no support by air or sea. They did, however, have effective anti-aircraft batteries called the FLAK as well as experienced and aggressive infantry and airborne troops. Above all, they had eleven formidable armoured divisions, six of which belonged to the SS, with tanks that were far superior to those of the Allies.

In the face of the Germans,⁵ the Allies could count on the steady reinforcements that were insured by their total control of the English Channel. They thus benefited from a constant increase in manpower, weapons, equipment, and munitions beyond anything the Germans could hope for. The Allies also had the advantage of both powerful artillery and the overwhelming superiority of their air force, which was further strengthened by the fifty or so "Advanced Landing Grounds" that were built on Norman soil.

⁵ As there is no clear referent for the pronoun "eux" of "face à eux" in the original French text, I have assumed that it refers to the Germans.

JUILLET 44: LES ALLIÉS PIÉTINES

Fin juin, les Américains ont remporté un succès important en s'emparant de Cherbourg, dont le port, une fois remis en état, servira de base logistique pour la reconquête de la France.

Mais le mois de juillet, qui voit la relance des assauts vers le sud, est beaucoup moins favorable. Dans le bocage du Cotentin, les GI's peinent et souffrent terriblement. C'est « l'enfer des haies ». Les champs, âprement défendus par les Allemands, doivent être conquis l'un après l'autre, au prix de pertes considérables et sans cesse renouvelées. La progression est d'une lenteur décourageant. « Cette foutue guerre peut bien durer dix ans ! », lance un général américain.

De leur côté, Britanniques et Canadiens sont bloqués devant Caen, qu'ils espéraient enlever le 6 juin au soir. Face à eux, il est vrai, le meilleur de l'Armée allemande avec les redoutables divisions blindées de la Wehrmacht et de la Waffen SS. Toutes les offensives de contournement lancées à l'ouest de la capitale bas-normande par Montgomery échouent les unes après les autres.

Ainsi, l'opération *Epsom*, déclenchée le 26 juin avec des moyens pourtant considérables (90 000 hommes et 600 chars) est brutalement stoppée par l'arrivée de deux divisions blindées SS rappelées du front de l'Est. Dès lors, les combats s'enlisent sur la terrible cote 112 où s'enchaînent attaque et contre-attaques aussi meurtrières pour un camp que pour l'autre.

JULY 1944: THE ALLIES ARE AT A STANDSTILL

The American victory at Cherbourg at the end of June was a major success; once the town's port was restored, it would serve as a logistical base for the efforts to regain control of France.

But the month of July, which saw a resurgence of attacks in the south, was much less favourable. The Allies struggled in the enclosed fields of Cotentin and suffered terribly for it. They called it the "Hedgerow Hell". The Germans defended these fields fiercely, and the Allies had to gain control of one field at a time, at the cost of significant losses each time. The Allied advance was, therefore, discouragingly slow. "This damn war could well last twenty years!" one American general bemoaned.

At the same time, the British and the Canadians were being blocked at Caen. They had hoped to take the city on the evening of 6 June but were confronted by Germany's best forces, including the formidable Wehrmacht and Waffen SS armoured divisions. One after another, each offensive that Montgomery launched from west of Caen failed.

In this way, Operation Epsom, which had been launched on 26 June with 90,000 men and 600 tanks, was brutally blocked by two SS armoured divisions recalled from the Eastern front. From there, the fighting was bogged down in the battle for Hill 112, where the endless attacks and counterattacks were equally deadly for both sides.

UNE RAPIDE LIBÉRATION DE LA FRANCE

La bataille en Normandie aura duré beaucoup plus longtemps que prévu, en raison d'une résistance allemande poussée à l'extrême... jusqu'à l'effondrement final.

Le débarquement franco-américain en Provence, le 15 août, précipite la retraite générale des armées du Reich. Dès lors, les Alliés rattrapent leur retard. Paris est libéré le 25 août par la 2^e division blindée du général Leclerc et la 4^e division américaine. Patton atteint Verdun le 31 et Montgomery entre dans Bruxelles le 3 septembre.

Au début de l'automne, la plus grande partie du territoire français, à l'exception de l'Alsace et des « poches de l'Atlantique », a recouvré la liberté – souvent avec des mois d'avance par rapport à ce que les stratèges d'*Overlord* avaient espéré, voire imaginé.

Longs et douloureux, les affrontements en Normandie ont coûté la vie à 37 000 soldats alliés et 55 000 Allemands, sans oublier 20 000 victimes civiles. Ils ont laissé derrière eux une région entièrement dévastée et profondément meurtrie. Un désastre auquel échappera largement la plus grande partie de la France, épargné par les combats en raison du retrait allemand et de l'avancée foudroyante des Alliés.

A ce titre, il est juste de dire que c'est la Normandie qui a payé le prix de la libération de la France.

A RAPID LIBERATION OF FRANCE⁶

The fighting in Normandy lasted much longer than expected, due to the continued resistance of the German troops, until the final collapse.

The Franco-American landing in Provence on 15 August hastened the retreat of the armies of the Reich, and from then on, the Allies made up for lost time. General LeClerc's 2nd Armoured Division and the 4th American Division liberated Paris on 25 August, General Patton reached Verdun on 31 August, and General Montgomery entered Brussels on 3 September.

By early Fall, most French territory, with the exception of Alsace and the coastal towns still held by the Germans,⁷ had been restored to freedom. In many places, this success was achieved months ahead of what the strategists of Operation Overlord had hoped for or envisioned.

The fighting in Normandy had been long and painful and had cost the lives of 37,000 allied⁸ soldiers and 55,000 German soldiers, in addition to some 20,000 civilians. The battle left in its wake a region completely devastated and deeply afflicted, a fate that most of France escaped, due to the Allies'

⁶ Although the use of "a" instead of "the" may seem unusual, it would be similarly unusual in French and thus will be mirrored in my translation.

⁷ "Poches de l'Atlantique" is a specific term in French referring to a number of Atlantic ports that the Germans maintained for a time after the invasion
(http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/poches_de_lAtlantique/106565)

lightning-fast advance and the Germans' retreat.

For this reason, it is fair to say that Normandy paid the price for France's liberation.

V. Conclusion

In my opening chapter, I posed the following question: why does the translation of a narrative of cultural memory matter, and what is the result of an inadequate translation? After having explored this question in my introduction and then dissected and reformulated an example of what I deem an inadequate translation, I would like to conclude with a few remarks about the process of translating and re-translating, about my original question, and about possibilities for further scholarship on this subject.

I would like, first, to reflect on my own process of re-translation and how it has informed and reshaped my opinion of any translator's task and particularly the task of translating these museum texts. While I maintain that the original translations constitute an unacceptable match for the original French texts, I have a much greater respect for the difficulty of translation in general and of these texts specifically. Perhaps my greatest challenge was in deciding how to treat the "French-ness" of the text. By "French-ness," I mean the linguistic structures and modes of representation that are so endemic to the French language that they pose a problem in translation. That is to say, how much do you change of a structure that reflects the way in which French speakers consider and retell an event? What is valuable in this mode of representation, and how does one balance a need for comprehension of the material with a respect for the way that the writer of these texts has chosen to express this information?

Many translators as well as theorists of translation agree that there may be many different and acceptable translations of a text. This allows for some flexibility in the way that I choose to answer the questions posed in the preceding paragraph. In very general terms, I might assert that the original translation of these texts is perhaps too conservative

in its adherence to French structures. The really difficult part, though, is this: how liberal may I be in my variance from French structures? Even among the various professors and translators I have consulted with in creating this project, there has been considerable disagreement as to how much license may be taken in this retranslation. I would like to offer a brief explanation of my reasons for choosing the method that I did.

As was mentioned briefly in the methodology that preceded my annotated version of the original translations, I have abstained from making significant structural changes to the texts in my retranslation, such as changing the order of ideas within a text or the way in which agency may be displaced or allayed. I have certainly changed much of the syntactical structure of these texts between the original and my own translation, but I have attempted to leave in place major forms of representation that I feel are integral to the way in which the original museum texts communicate their information.

As discussed in the opening pages of this project, the curators of the museum or writers of the text for these plaques have chosen to present the information in a way that has created a specific narrative of D-Day and of World War II. In the case of more technical instances of stylistic difference between the two languages, I often opted for a more idiomatic means of expression in English. For example, as cited in the commentary section, the English language tends more frequently toward concrete expression of actions and events, whereas French prefers the abstract level of representation. In the case of phrases that highlighted this stylistic difference, I would usually choose a more concrete form of expression in the English translation, in accordance with normal linguistic practices. In more global cases, however, this was not always the case.

One instance of this more global representative choice occurs in the very first sentence of the selected texts, which outlines Hitler's decision to build the Atlantic wall following the entry of United States troops into the war. If, originally, this text were written by an Anglophone writer, it is very likely that it would present the information of this sentence-paragraph in a different way, perhaps with much shorter and more historically sequential sentences. This is not out of the question for a translation; in fact, it would probably constitute the most truly comprehensible order of information for an Anglophone reader. What it might not do, however – and this is where I have hesitated to make any changes of this scale – is to constitute an accurate depiction of the *way in which the information is being relayed* in the original French. This, of course, is a very fine line to walk, and I do not claim to have mastered the discernment of where significant structural change is appropriate in the translation of these texts. I can only use my attempt to walk this line as some justification of the reasons for which even my improved translation of these texts may still, at times, sound just a little bit “off.”

While, as I said, I now have much more respect for the difficulty faced by the translator of these texts in considering how to treat some of this material, I must also point to the improvement in clarity that can be achieved in re-translating these texts, even without dramatically restructuring the order and presentation of information. In fact, it is perhaps the possibility of such a retranslation – one that may still serve these representational difficulties while clearly relaying its information – that makes explicit the ways in which the original translation was inadequate.

At the risk of being too harsh a critic of a very difficult task, I'd like to now consider another of the restraints that may have been facing the original translator of

these texts. In an interview with David Bellos, I was reminded of another possible pressure facing a translator of this type of text: the finished translations may not really be “checked” by anyone but another translator. A curator or manager of a French museum may not speak English and therefore must rely on a translator to accurately deliver the same information to a huge number of the museum’s visitors. In order to verify that the translations do, in fact, represent the original text, the person in this supervising role may want to look for signs that the translation, so to speak, matches up with the original.

Unfortunately, without a working knowledge of the target language, the only indications of what would appear to be accurate translation would be aesthetic ones, such as similar words appearing at similar points in the text. These indications, of course, do not by any means indicate success in translation, but a translator may feel a certain amount of pressure to provide these kind of visual similarities for someone in a curative or managing role within the museum to be able to “check” the finished product. David Bellos, in my interview with him, spoke to the reasons for this system: “I would say that this kind of translating is a good example of a problem that I deal with in another chapter of my book, which is the lack of trust of the translator.”¹ Such lack of trust results in a pressure for aesthetic similarity in translation that may come at the cost of accuracy to the conventions of the target language. This possibility is only conjectural and does not explain all of the problems within the original translation, but it should certainly be considered among the constraints facing a translator of this type of text.

Discussing these constraints, in a way, leads me back to my original question: why does the translation of these texts matter, particularly in a museum with so many

¹ Bellos, David. Personal interview. 23 Mar. 2013.

political and cultural obligations? After careful analysis and retranslation, I would have to say that these translations matter, in fact, for exactly the reason I originally intended to criticize: they represent a specific cultural and linguistic understanding of an historical event. That is, being exposed to a particularly “French” way of approaching a subject, for example by reading an order of events that might be illogical to an Anglophone reader, exposes the narrative strategy within the text. By no means should all parts of such a text be translated by direct methods, but certain key elements of the ways in which the museum has chosen to represent this information seem fundamental to the political and cultural aims of the museum. The specific way in which the museum creates a global cultural memory of D-Day (both intentionally and otherwise) may, at times, actually rely on linguistic structures within its textual representation of the event.

For example, the displacement of agency, particularly when referring to Hitler or to the Allied bombing of Normandy, serves to support a certain political neutrality within these texts. While English might more naturally state the subject and cause behind an action outright and then list his, her, or its results as a direct cause of those actions, this is not what is done in the original French text, and its absence promotes a certain cultural memory of this event. To change this utterance would be to change significantly the narrative aims of the text, even though it might provide a more idiomatic result for the Anglophone reader. Though, as Bellos argues, any translation may be an appropriation of the source text, this would be an appropriation of the *motives* of the source text, which I find to be outside the bounds of my role as a translator of these texts.

If the responsibility to represent information in conjunction with the museum’s narrative aims is why this type of translation matters, then what are the implications of

inadequate translation? Most obviously, there is the confusion resulting from reading the originally translated texts. But, as I have previously stated that measuring the “effect” of a text is rarely effective or useful, we must press a little further for a more fundamental problem in such a flawed translation. I would argue that to incorrectly translate a text would also be to create disruption within the museum’s narrative that renders it disjunctive, incomplete, or uncommunicative as compared to the way it was originally intended to be. Of course, I cannot speak authoritatively of the intent of the museum’s creators, but I can assert that the current translations do not accurately represent the message or information intended by these texts.

In light of the remarks above, I would recommend that a new translation of the texts throughout the museum be commissioned. Although it may not be economically feasible or deemed of interest to the museum’s managers, an acceptable translation of these texts is, for reasons discussed above, crucial to the aims of the museum. While I recognize that French translation practices may differ from English or American practices on the issue of using a target-language translator, I might suggest a joint team of two translators, both fluent in each language but each native to one. By this method, the translation team may be both more vigilant in their conservation of important elements of the mode of expression in the French and also more attentive to the stylistic conventions of English and the changes to syntax, vocabulary, etc. that must be made in order to facilitate comprehension of the translated texts. The idea of a two-pronged translation team is not a new one, and has recently produced some highly acclaimed literary translations, such as the 2002 translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. Such a pairing might also help to assure the managing powers

of the museum that the translation is both accurate and acceptable to experts in both languages, although this would still require an amount of trust that Bellos argues is somewhat lacking in the field.

For my part, I have found the study of these complicated and fascinating texts to be extremely rewarding, both as a scholar and as a lover of foreign language, culture, and history. The museum, as has been said, represents the stepping-stone for a visit to the beaches of Normandy, a profound physical experience that needs no translation. I greatly admire the motives of both the Musée Mémorial and the smaller museums located near the scenes of battle, and, above all, I believe that being a witness to the narrative of D-Day, in one form or another, is an important and truly moving experience.

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