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The Translation Process in Interaction

between Purpose and Context

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## Abstract

This paper examines the translation process between a 16<sup>th</sup> century German religious text and Modern English. The text in question is a religious dialogue published by Lutheran Hans Sachs in 1524, to be translated for the purpose of allowing modern readers to gain a greater understanding of the issues of the time period as they were understood by those living at that time. Based on the tenets of Skopos theory, this purpose interacted with the source text context and target text context to support translation decisions based on accuracy of content, maintaining a consistent and helpful linguistic style, and including historical explanation. The result was a completed translation that fulfills the purpose established at the outset, though still requiring revision and further work in historical background before eventual publication.

### **The Translation Process in Interaction between Purpose and Context**

The process of translation is often complicated, requiring many individual decisions toward the production of the intended result. Because different translations come from and speak to an infinite variety of different cultural, linguistic, and contextual backgrounds, each translation must be approached as a unique linguistic transaction. There are few studies that follow the decision-making process involved in translation, and the situationally unique character of each translation means that further literature in this area will only add to this growing field. The main theory upon which translation methodology was based, the Skopos theory, is also not often paired with literary translation. There are, therefore, few studies on how this theory can and does relate to literary translation. Over the course of this project, I completed a translation project between a 16<sup>th</sup> century piece of German religious literature, Hans Sachs' "A Dialogue Concerning Avarice," (Zoozmann, 2017) and modern English. The goal of this translation was to create a product that gives the target audience insight into the culture and situation in and about which Hans Sachs wrote. In this case, my target audience was the average educated English speaker. Although my original intention was to find the best possible translation style for this piece, reference to the Skopos theory convinced me that there would be no objective "best" style. Rather, the methods and style of translation should be based on my original purpose for the translation. In the application of this theory to my work, I made decisions following three main themes: accurately conveying the content of the piece, utilizing a linguistic style that fit with the context of the source text, and including historical explanation. The result was a completed translation that fulfills the purpose established at the outset, though still requiring revision and further work in historical background before eventual publication.

## Literature Review

### Skopos Theory

The work of translation itself was built on the foundation of Skopos theory. At its core, Skopos theory views translation as “an action with a purpose” (Du, 2012), *skopos* being the Greek word for “purpose.” The intended purpose of the translation is what determines which strategies and methods should be employed to complete it. Any “rightness” or “wrongness” in any translation strategy depends entirely on the context and purpose of the translation, and these adjectives cannot be applied inherently to a strategy regardless of context. The origin of Skopos theory was as a part of Hans J. Vermeer’s “Framework for a General Translation Theory” (1978), the goal of which was to “bridge the gap between theory and practice” (Nord, 1997). Vermeer viewed translations that focus on the linguistic level alone as inadequate, saying that “linguistics alone won’t help us. First, because translation is not merely and not even primarily a linguistic process . . . so let’s look somewhere else” (as cited in Nord, 1997). Vermeer instead wanted a theory that would speak to cultural and situational differences attached to the specific translation being produced. While previous theories on translation put a large emphasis on preserving or communicating the source text (ST) as accurately or naturally as possible, Skopos theory shifted the focus to the target text (TT). According to Vermeer, “translation never is (as comparative linguistics may be said to employ) a transcoding of a source text into a target language” but rather is a “target text production . . . in a target situation for a specific target addressee” that has a source text as its starting point (Vermeer, 1992). A good translation would be one that accomplishes the communicative goal toward the intended target audience in terms of their “culture-specific world-knowledge, their expectations and their communicative needs” (Nord, 1997).

Within Skopos theory, there are five basic rules that apply:

1. A *translatum* (or TT) is determined by its skopos.
2. A TT is an offer of information (*Informationsangebot*) in a target culture and TL concerning an offer of information in a source culture and SL.
3. A TT does not initiate an offer of information in a clearly reversible way.
4. A TT must be internally coherent.
5. A TT must be coherent with the ST.
6. The five rules above stand in hierarchical order, with the skopos rule predominating.  
(Reiss and Vermeer, as cited in Munday, 2001).

Rule 1 is the foundation for the entire theory, stating that the purpose of a translation determines what form it will take. Rule 2 explains the function of both ST and TT as inherently focusing on their respective cultural contexts and their status as separate entities. In Rule 3, the key point is that the purposes of the ST and the TT are not necessarily the same. Therefore, an attempt to retranslate the TT back into the ST with no reference to the original would not result in the same ST which existed at the beginning. Rules 4 and 5 refer to two concepts within the skopos theory: the coherence rule and the fidelity rule. The coherence rule states that “the TT must be translated in such a way that it is coherent for the TT receivers, given their circumstances and knowledge” (Munday, 2001). On the other side, the fidelity rule says that “there must be coherence between the *translatum* and the ST” (Munday, 2001). It is important to note that internal coherence is more important under Skopos theory than is fidelity to the ST. This is because of Rule 6, which explains the order of importance of these 5 rules. This sequence aligns with the theory’s overall focus on the TT rather than the ST.

Skopos theory will apply to my work of translation in that all of my methodological decisions will be determined by the intended function of the text that I am creating: to be a presentation of German culture during the time of the Reformation and give the readers a greater understanding of the values, beliefs, and norms that were held during that time. It is also applicable in that the function of my text clearly differs from that of the source text, which was to convey religious teaching to the common people in an understandable and practical way. The translation will be completed with a clear focus on the situation and understanding of the target for which I am writing.

### **Influential Translation Theories and Concepts**

Skopos theory was chosen as the basis for this translation because of its functionality and flexibility. Several other key theories were considered as potentially applicable to this work of translation but were ultimately rejected as insufficient to fully result in the intended product. However, they did often play a role in individual translation decisions. There were also several concepts that helped to define the kind of translation which I intended to complete, adding further insight into appropriate application of the skopos.

#### **Documentary translation.**

The purpose for this translation defines it as documentary translation, or a “a target-culture text informing about a source-culture text or any of its aspects and dimensions” (Nord, 1991). This is in contrast to instrumental translation, which does not obviously refer back to the original text. Although purposes for such instrumental texts vary, they are often the exact same for the TT as for the ST. The target audience would then read the text as if it were originally in their own language. Documentary translation tends to be more literal than instrumental in order to best convey aspects of the ST. It also can often include exoticizing elements, “culture-specific

lexical items in the ST . . . retained in the TT in order to maintain the local colour of the ST” (Munday, 2001, p. 81). One example of this would be retaining source-culture words in the translated work.

### **Domestication vs. foreignization.**

Domestication and foreignization refer to the degree to which the strangeness of the source language and culture is minimized or embraced during the translation process. The main proponent of domestication, Eugene Nida, was in favor of functional equivalence, in which the TT reader would ideally get the same understanding and appreciation from the text as the original audience (Yang, 2010). His stance, however, is overwhelmingly based on his focus on Bible translation, specifically how to best help non-Christians understand biblical teachings and convert. Proponents of foreignization, on the other hand, criticize domestication as ethnocentric. Under this view, assimilation of the foreign piece to norms of the target language deprives its readers of the opportunity to better understand the world outside their borders (Wright, 2016). This criticism is most often applied to translations into English, as the lingua franca of the civilized world. Foreignization does not necessarily mean retaining foreign elements of the ST. It can also call for creation of “an artificial foreignness in the target text, a foreignness that does not depend on the foreignness of the source text for inspiration” (Wright, 2016, p. 42). While foreignization aligns with the purpose for this translation in that it would best assist in conveying cultural and situational concepts to the reader, the debate between domestication and foreignization is mainly applied to translation of modern literary texts, where the possible ethnocentrism in domestication could negatively affect the expression of a current culture. Both theories can also be said to be more applicable than the other to different texts and purposes. As a general translation theory, Skopos theory applies better in that it eclipses such debates, as “the

Skopos of a particular translation task may require a ‘domestication’ or a ‘foreignization’, or anything between these two extremes, depending on the purpose for which translation is needed” (Yang, 2010, p. 79).

### **Literal vs. free translation.**

Although specific definitions on literal translation vary greatly, the concept generally refers to a translation “that is formally close to its source but nevertheless grammatical” (Chesterman, 2011), with a free translation being simply less close to the source. This can refer to word choice, content, or grammatical structure. Literal translation can be used in literary translation to maximize the experience of the foreign (Berman, 1992), although it has historically been utilized most often in translation of scientific and technical texts (Barbe, 1996). Although the question of how close a translator stays to the ST is helpful to consider, different sections or phrases within one text may require more or less of a literal translation, depending on the situation. This terminology, therefore, is also insufficient to fully encompass the scope of this project, though it adds useful insight into the translation of specifics throughout the project.

### **Background to the Source Text**

To create a translation product that accurately reflects the context of the source text, research into the cultural background was required. This included the cultural, historical, and religious environment as well as linguistic differences between the two languages involved. The four religious dialogues written by Hans Sachs, of which the ST is the third, are intricately linked to the Reformation in Germany. His purpose for writing them was to support religious reform and influence the cultural and religious shift taking place. Sachs’ city, Nuremberg, accepted and enforced Lutheran teaching beginning in 1525, only one year after Sachs published the four dialogues (Broadhead, 1995). Sachs used these dialogues to make his voice heard among the

dissent and division rampant in his city. His position among the Reformation writers of the time was unique. Of the eighteen primary evangelical publicists, Sachs was one of only four laity (Edwards, 1994, p. 26). He used this unique perspective in the four dialogues to relate Lutheran reform to real issues that the common people would deal with and may feel strongly about.

As this is a pure dialogue, Sachs neither directly addresses the reader nor offers explanation. Instead, the work is made up of a discussion between two people: a Roman Catholic cleric and an evangelical Christian businessman. Romanus, the Catholic, seeks out Junker Reichenburger, the businessman, at his home to confront him about what he sees as the unbiblical practices of evangelicals and businesspeople. Reichenburger responds by defending business and at times turning the reproach back onto Romanus and practices of the church. As they debate, both parties make good points and there are some points of agreement. As befits a religious discussion, the two characters quote Scripture incessantly. While the majority of these quotations are correct and applicable, they several times take verses and passages out of context or misquote them. It is unclear whether these are mistakes by Sachs himself or an intentional representation of the biblical literacy of the characters. The ending is indecisive, as there is no clear winner and the characters end by agreeing to speak more on the topic later.

One of the main questions which Sachs deals with in this specific dialogue is how Christians should treat the poor. The Catholic church had previously functioned by gathering all donations to themselves and distributing them as they saw fit. They would use as much as was necessary to sustain themselves and give the rest to those in need. Luther critiqued this system by confronting the church in their tendency to take far too much for themselves to the detriment of the poor (Thomley, 2015, p. 17). Sachs references this discussion in the dialogue, with the

Roman Catholic taking the side of the church and the Evangelical Christian supporting individual donations to the poor.

Another cultural topic discussed at length by Sachs' characters is that of usury, in this context referring to questions of interest on loans. Luther also published a treatise on usury in 1524, the same year as this dialogue was published. In essence, Luther "rejected profit derived from financial transactions, especially the practice known as *Zinskauf*" (Hillerbrand, 2017, p. 132). This practice is also discussed by Sachs' character Romanus with no clear conclusion. Interestingly, Sachs does not seem to take such a hard line against *Zinskauf* as Luther does. Although the evangelical Christian Reichenburger is the protagonist in the majority of the dialogue, Romanus is "allowed to score many telling points . . . which remain unrefuted in the text" (Broadhead, 1995, p. 55). This contributes to an ambivalence in the dialogue which often makes it difficult to interpret. The most likely cause is that Sachs simply acknowledges the validity of a variety of opinions in certain topics and therefore chooses not to take a firm stance on them himself.

A major factor in the translation process was the difference between the modern German language and the German of 1524, Early New High German. During this time period there were a variety of dialects and no clear prestige variant that defined orthography. Luther's New Testament, which proved such a great influence on the development and standardization of the German language, had only been published in 1522, not nearly enough time for its influence to work. As a result, each author from that time period functioned according to their own spelling norms. Not only did Sachs differ from other authors, but also varied his own spelling of various words throughout the ST. Differences in grammatical structures added another level of difficulty in interpretation, as "Early New High German differs syntactically from modern German in

allowing surface word orders that are ungrammatical or rare in later German” (Bies, 1996, p. 1). The differences are not enough to make texts from this era incomprehensible but do require more time for a modern German speaker to accustom themselves to the differences.

## **Methods**

### **Tools**

#### **SIL Language Explorer.**

The translation was completed in SIL’s Fieldworks software (Version 8.3.12), specifically the Language Explorer program. This software was chosen because of its interlinear capabilities. Because my ST was in a physical book, it was necessary to first type the original German text into a document. I input this text into the program, which automatically divided it into individual words and sentences. The automatic numbering of sentences was invaluable as I took notes on difficult or interesting passages. Because of the program’s format, I was able to first translate each word individually, researching to determine specific semantic meaning. After completion of this literal, word-by-word translation, I reworked it into a cohesive, sentence-by-sentence free translation. Figure 1, in Appendix A, depicts the interlinear functionality of the software. An additional beneficial feature of the Language Explorer software was its translation memory. As I researched and selected accurate translations for individual words, these translations would be suggested whenever the word came up again later in the text. This aided in making the final translation cohesive.

The decision to use a translation software, and ultimately Language Explorer, was made after first attempting to use a physical book for the ST and translate directly into Google Docs. This method made it difficult to reference previously translated passages for coherency. The comment function was helpful, but only for a smaller number of comments than I needed. It also

lacked the ability to keep track of both word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence translation, which hampered my ability to revise previously translated sentences.

### **References.**

The translation process itself required reference to a variety of sources. My primary sources for semantic meaning were the *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm* (Grimm, 1854-1971) and *LEO* ([dict.leo.org/englisch-deutsch/](http://dict.leo.org/englisch-deutsch/)). The first of these was written between 1838 and 1961, having been begun by the Grimm brothers and continued after their deaths. It was especially useful for my project because of its descriptions of semantic usage shifts in High German words from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century on. Because Hans Sachs wrote in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the definitions of older words in relation to their more modern counterparts were invaluable. The online dictionary *LEO* served as a modern supplement to aid me in choosing the best words for each given context.

Because Bible verses are used throughout the text, I also made use of several different Bible translations to determine individual context and background for any given Scripture reference. The primary versions that I referenced were the King James Version, the Apocrypha, the English Standard Version, the Lutherbibel, and the modern German Hoffnung für Alle. Comparisons between contemporary versions to Sachs' writing and modern-day versions helped me to both understand the text better and choose translations that reflected biblical terminology.

### **Methodological Decisions**

#### **Temporal distance.**

One aspect of the source text that I wanted to preserve was the fact that it is based in an older historical time period. Hans Sachs wrote during the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Early New High German was spoken. This language would have sounded very different to modern German

and was spelled differently as well. Sentences were also constructed slightly differently. To a speaker of modern German, the result would be a text that was basically understandable, but which sounded very antiquated. For an English speaker the effect would be comparable to reading the King James Bible, which was written a little less than a century after Sachs' religious dialogues. To retain the sense of temporal distance I attempted to translate in a partial King James style when possible. This was accomplished by using sentence formations now seen as old-fashioned, such as "What think you now, dear Junker?" However, I did not choose to copy the King James era form which includes "-th" at the end of second-person singular verbs. That I found to be unnecessarily distracting when reading as a modern English speaker. Remaining fairly syntactically literal also lent itself well to achieving a sound consistent with the time period as well. Because older forms of German bear many similarities to older forms of English, the ST often gave a useful guideline on how to best translate in an older style. This method aligns with Landers' treatment of a similar situation, in which he "chose a register that without being slavishly imitative nevertheless resonated (perhaps subconsciously) on the King James Version" (2001, p. 121). This decision on his part was deemed appropriate because of the religious themes of his text as well as the older historical setting, both descriptors that also apply to my translation.

### **Scripture.**

The Christian nature of this text means that there are Bible verses quoted throughout. There are never any verse numbers given, only book and chapter, because modern-day verse divisions would not be widely accepted until the divisions made in 1551 by Robert Estienne ("Robert I Estienne", 1998). Instead of inserting a modern English translation or the King James Version into my translation for each Bible verse, I chose to translate each verse directly from

Sachs' text. Sachs wrote this piece in 1524, twelve years before Martin Luther completed his full translation of the Bible, including the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha. Thus, Sachs would have been reading most likely the Latin Vulgate. Because a reader's understanding of the text would be aided by referencing the Bible verses in their modern-day translation, I also decided to include in a footnote the specific verse reference to each Bible passage that is directly quoted in the text. This will help the reader to compare how Sachs' characters interpret and quote the text of Scripture with their preferred modern version. Considering that there are often differences between the text's quotations and modern, generally accepted translations, this will aid readers toward the purpose of understanding the religious context. The choice not to insert verse numbers directly into the text also avoids anachronism by not inserting information that would have been unavailable and nonexistent at the time of Sachs' writing.

### **Idioms.**

At several points during the text, the speaker uses a German idiom that would not be understandable by an English-speaking audience if directly translated. There are several options for how to deal with this issue. The first would be to translate the idiom for meaning, transferring the meaning into an idiom-free English sentence. Another option would be to try and find a comparable English idiom to replace it with. The final option would be to leave the idiom as is, only translating the individual words, and add a footnote to explain its meaning in the context. In this translation I decided to go with the third option. Because part of my primary goal was to give a glimpse into the cultural context of the source text, removing the idiom from the sentence would take out an important opportunity for greater cultural understanding on the part of the reader. The second option was not chosen both for the same reason and because no English idioms fit into the context and tone of the translation very well. Translating idioms literally and

adding an explanation will give readers a sense of cultural background and flavor, as well as providing insight into which practices were so common that they became idioms for something else. An example of this is when Romanus asks Reichenburger “ob ir Laien wol gleich Waßer mit uns Geistlichen an einer Stangen trüget des Geiz halben?” The phrase “Wasser an einer Stangen trügen” refers to “those of equal height who could easily carry water together, and figuratively those of equal moral failings” (Clark, 1918, p. 86). The translation of “What think you now, dear Junker? Could you laity could carry water on one pole with us clergymen in terms of greed?” will give the reader a culturally specific mental image even as the idiom’s meaning is explained using a footnote.

#### **Words lacking direct English translations.**

There are several cases in which much context and meaning is contained in one German word which does not have a good English translation. Circumstances in which this happens are mainly related to specific business situations. For example, Sachs’ characters speak of Fürkaufen (also spelled Vorkaufen, which literally means “to buy before”) in several instances. This specifically refers to the practice of buying up products which are necessary for life, such as grains and food, to selfishly gain profit from them by hoarding and selling them as best benefits oneself, regardless of the needs of others (Grimm, 1854-1971). There are significant negative connotations to this word, and no single English word contains enough meaning to suffice as a direct translation. One option would be to translate the word into an explanatory phrase. This, however, would not be feasible in the context in which Sachs uses it. It is used in several different forms in the space of several sentences, so translation into a phrase would result in an uncomfortably bulky and unnatural translation. I chose instead to leave the word Fürkaufen as it was and add an explanation as a footnote at its first use. This both saved space and drew

particular attention to a cultural issue that was prevalent at the time period, aiding in the goal of instructing the reader on the context of the time period. Other words with similarly complicated meanings were treated in a similar way when necessary. The choice to retain certain source-culture words is often made in translation to “exoticize” the translation (Munday, 2001). Readers are thus reminded of the foreign nature of the ST even as the rest of the TT flows in natural, if antiquated, English.

### **Run-on sentences.**

Both characters in Sachs’ dialogue tend to speak in very long and complicated sentences. These sentences sound quite complicated to the ear of an English-speaker. The goal of producing a translation that sounds foreign without being confusing could take the translation of these sentences a few different ways. A longer sentence would preserve more of the exotic linguistic flavor of the German language and the original writer’s personal style. Other options would be to break up the passage into smaller sentences, insert semicolons at appropriate points, put in dashes at various points, or even completely rewrite the passage into a shorter form (Lander, 2001). I chose to break up uncomfortably long sentences in this translation because I believe the benefit of leaving them is not great enough to make up for the off-putting sound of the resulting English translation. The other methods by which I preserve some linguistic features of the original language are sufficient to make the translation sound foreign without sounding stilted. In the case of Sachs’ style, length of sentence is really a hindrance in comprehension for an English-speaker, which would contradict my skopos of greater understanding on the part of the reader.

**The interjection “Ei.”**

One case that required specific attention was the often-used interjection “ei”. Although I could find no definitions for the word in any dictionary, context indicated that it was primarily used to express indignation but was in general used to intensify the emotional tone of the sentence following it. While there are interjections in English that also express indignation, none of them fit the various contexts of the dialogue well. Because of this, I decided to retain the “ei” in my translation, explaining it in a footnote the first time it appears and also utilizing punctuation to indicate the feeling behind the word. For example, Sachs’ character Reichenburger at one point says, “Ei! That is unchristian dealing.” Use of interjections across languages pair with contextual clues such as punctuation and content to make clear the meaning of the specific communication in question (Rusu, 2016). It is, therefore, reasonable to employ punctuation and context even with an unfamiliar interjection and expect readers to understand meaning, especially when considering the initial explanation in the first footnote. Retention of this interjection will also serve the purpose of retaining one more element of linguistic foreignness in the text, as in the previous discussion of words with no semantic equivalent in English.

**Target Audience Feedback**

To gain a sense of how fully I had accomplished the skopos for my translation, I enlisted two members of my target audience. These participants were both students at Cedarville University, a junior and a senior. Each participant read through the entire translation, taking notes on confusing passages or phrases. After their read-through was complete, I interviewed them individually. The following prompts were used to get discussion flowing, but the main point of the interviews was to determine what the readers got out of the text:

- Do you have any first impressions of the piece?
- Did you find any sections hard to understand?
- What are your impressions of the two speakers?
- Whose arguments did you find most compelling?
- Did you learn anything from the piece?

The main things I looked for in their responses were understanding of the content and impressions on readability of the text.

### **Discussion**

The goal of this translation project was to give the target audience insight into the culture and situation in and about which Hans Sachs wrote. The methods detailed above were designed to create a final product that would achieve this goal when read. During the translation process, three overarching themes became clear in fulfillment of the skopos: accurately conveying the content of the piece, utilizing a linguistic style that fit with the context of the source text, and including historical explanation. Accuracy of content was affected through research into semantic meaning and cultural context as well as translating on the literal end of the spectrum. The linguistic style that was chosen reflected the foreign, historical situation of the ST by attempting to retain Sachs' original style and parallel it to the style of English used around the same time. Finally, footnotes were used to offer historical background to readers by including additional explanation of certain words or phrases as well as scriptural or cultural context.

The section including feedback from the target audience was added fairly late in the process and was not extensive enough to support any firm conclusions. It did, however, offer an idea of how well the translation fulfilled its skopos. There were several significant insights that I gained from their feedback. First of all, both readers indicated the presence of phrases in the

translated text that were difficult for them to grasp. Looking at their written notes on the translation, these seem to be certain of the phrases which I left fairly literal. The readers did say, however, that context helped them to understand many of the phrases even when their specific meaning was unfamiliar. During discussion of the topics in the work, both readers exhibited understanding of the concepts and situations discussed by Sachs' two characters. They were able to pick up on the unresolved nature of the argument and the expression of good, biblical points by both characters in the dialogue. This ambiguity in Sachs' presentation is an integral part of understanding his viewpoint. The readers also brought up the dense and heavy nature of the piece, describing it as academic and old-sounding. However, they did say that it did not sound like a translation, with one mentioning that she would have forgotten that it was originally in German except for the German words included. Finally, the readers indicated that their main take-aways from reading the piece were contemplative in nature, such as increased consideration of Bible passages on interest and how the church should treat the poor, or thoughts on how Bible-based arguments, such as the one described by Sachs, should be carried out. Rather than focusing on what the text was saying about the culture in question, they thought about what influence the topic and mode of the dialogue would affect their own beliefs and actions. Overall, feedback from the target audience readers indicated that they understood the overall content of the piece despite running into individual difficult passages and that they took practical applications out of it.

### **Limitations**

Several circumstances influenced my completion of this project. The most influential of these was my prior inexperience with Early New High German. Accustoming myself to both Sachs' individual spelling habits as well as the vocabulary and grammatical differences added a

level of difficulty in my own interpretation of the original ST. I also lacked expertise in Renaissance culture and Reformation issues before the beginning of this project. Fuller understanding of background issues and situations would have improved my ability to add helpful explanations for readers of my translation. The time-frame of this project meant that I was unable to become an expert in these areas during the process. Time constraints affected the target reader feedback section as well. Because that section was added late in the process, there was not enough time to obtain enough interviews to produce significant conclusions on the effectiveness of my translation methods.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this project was to determine the best ways to fulfill my purpose for translating a work by Hans Sachs, “A Dialogue Concerning Avarice,” into English according to the principles established by Vermeer’s Skopos theory. The skopos for this translation defined at the outset aimed to create a product that would give the target audience insight into the culture and situation in and about which Hans Sachs wrote, the target audience being average educated English speakers. Methods used to achieve this included maintaining the original style of Sachs’ work as much as possible, translating idioms and Scripture passages literally, retaining several German words which could not be easily translated, and including footnotes with explanations on words, phrases, and historical background. Interviews with members of the target audience indicate that the original skopos was fulfilled, though there are still areas where certain sections of the translation could be improved for clarity and readability.

In addition to revision of unclear passages, further work within this specific piece would include expansion of the historical background explained in footnotes, which could be achieved through collaboration with experts in the fields of Reformation or Renaissance culture. There is

also further work to be done in the translation of other writings by Hans Sachs. Of the other three dialogues in the set of four, only one has been translated into English. Translation of the last two would add even further to the literature on Reformation culture and beliefs.

Of the lessons learned through completion of this translation project, the greatest was that translation is an art, rather than a science. Though establishing certain methods to guide decision-making helps to achieve continuity throughout the piece, each word, phrase, and sentence must be considered against the purpose of the translation to achieve the desired end product. At its core, the process of translation is focused not on words, but on people. Understanding the real-life people for whom one's text is intended is essential to producing a good work. The translator must consider what background they might bring to the piece, how they might interpret each phrase, and ultimately what they want and need from their reading of the piece. Establishment of a purpose that aligns with these considerations is an essential part of crafting an excellent, useful translation.

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## Appendix A

27.3 **Word** Kumbt es nicht auß dem Geiz ?  
**Word Gloss** Comes it not out of the greed  
**Free** Does it not come from greed?

*Figure 1.* Screenshot of a line of interlinear text.