

**MATTHEW REYNOLDS
AND OTHERS**



**PRISMATIC
JANE EYRE**

**Close-Reading a World
Novel Across Languages**



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Matthew Reynolds et al., *Prismatic Jane Eyre: Close-Reading a World Novel Across Languages*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023,
<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0319>

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ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-842-5

ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80064-843-2

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-844-9

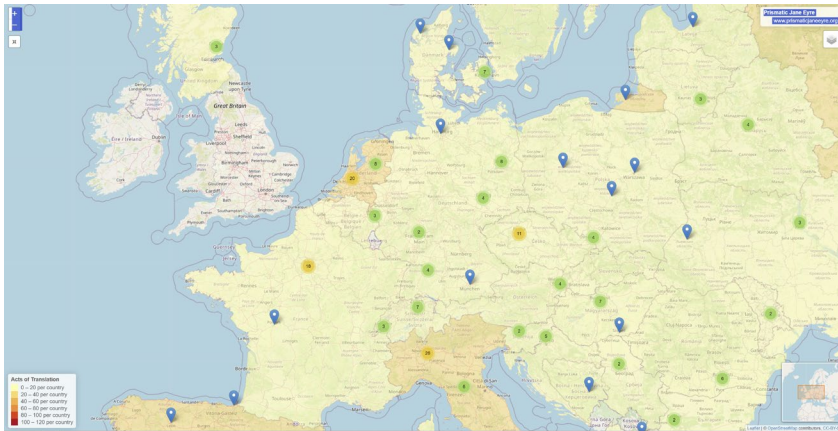
ISBN Digital ebook (EPUB): 978-1-80064-845-6

ISBN XML: 978-1-80064-847-0

ISBN HTML: 978-1-80064-848-7

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0319

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Cover design by Katy Saunders

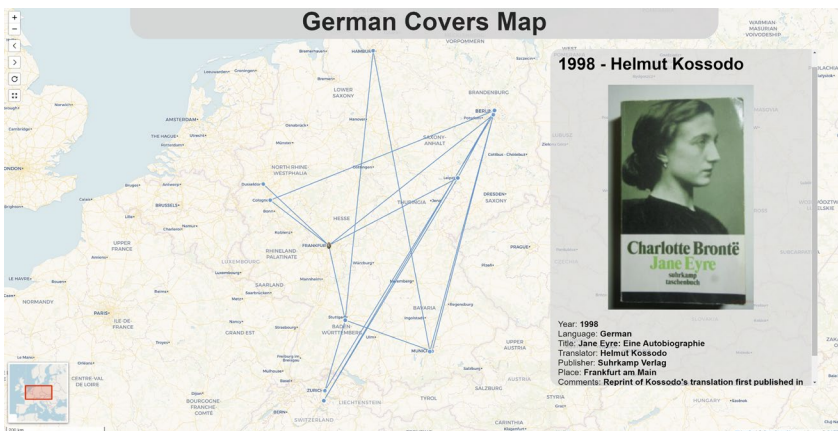


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The German Covers Map

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Researched by Mary Frank and Tom Cheesman; created by Giovanni Pietro Vitali and Simone Landucci



13. Formality of Address and its Representation of Relationships in Three German Translations of *Jane Eyre*

Mary Frank

German is among the many languages that use both a formal second-person personal pronoun (*Sie*, accompanied by the second-person plural verb form) and an informal one (*du*, accompanied by the second-person singular verb form). The requirement for the translator from English into German to choose either *Sie* or *du* where English has only the undifferentiated *you* will inevitably influence the target-text reader's perception of the degree of formality of a particular relationship. This essay traces the decisions made by three translators of *Jane Eyre* into German about the use of *Sie* and *du*. It does so through the lens of Jane's interactions with three characters: Mrs Reed, Edward Rochester and St John Rivers. In the case of the relationship between Jane and Rochester, it further relates these decisions to the translators' handling of a marker of formality vs. informality already present in the original text: Rochester's addressing of Jane with the diminutive 'Janet'. It asks what effects arise from three translators' decisions about the use of *Sie* or *du*, compared with the original text, and whether these effects can be considered a gain or a loss in translation.

The translations used for this investigation are: Marie von Borch's, first published in 1887–90 — this was the first translation into German that did not omit large parts of the source text; Helmut Kossodo's, first published in 1979 — this was the first largely complete twentieth-century translation and is also the translation that has been most

reprinted;¹ Melanie Walz's, first published in 2015 — at the time of writing, this is the most recent translation.

It has not been possible to obtain any biographical information about von Borch, but it is clear that she was a quite prominent translator into German of her time, notably of works by pioneering Scandinavian writers such as Jens Peter Jacobsen, Knut Hamsun, and Henrik Ibsen. Kossodo (1915–1994) set up his own publishing house in 1945 that gained a reputation in the 1960s for promoting unorthodox and provocative authors. When this venture failed in the mid-1970s, he turned to translation, from both English and French, to make his living.² Walz (born 1953) is a literary translator from English and French whose many translations range from Charles Dickens and Jane Austen, to Salman Rushdie and A. S. Byatt.

Knowing something of the translators' backgrounds and their other works makes it possible to consider, as a secondary question, whether any connections may exist between a translator's handling of *Sie* and *du* in this instance and his or her broader life and career. Further, the translations to be discussed here together span almost 150 years, and this will also allow consideration of the extent to which each translation reflects its historical moment.

Sie/du in Jane's Relationship with Mrs Reed

All three translators have Jane address her aunt Mrs Reed formally as *Sie*. Given the coldness between the two, it would be unthinkable for Jane to use *du*. Furthermore, even in close aunt-niece relationships, it would have been expected in the nineteenth century that a niece would address her aunt as *Sie*.³ It is significant, then, that von Borch has Jane switch temporarily to the informal *du* form in Chapter 2 when pleading with her aunt to be released from the terror of the red room (here shown by singular verb forms, in bold):

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- 1 A detailed history of translations of *Jane Eyre* into German until the 1990s can be found in Stefanie Hohn, *Charlotte Brontës Jane Eyre in deutscher Übersetzung: Geschichte eines kulturellen Transfers* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1998), pp. 211–12.
 - 2 'Zeitmosaik', 28 October 1984, <https://www.zeit.de/1994/44/zeitmosaik>
 - 3 Until the early nineteenth century, middle- and upper-class children even addressed their parents as *Sie*. See Werner Besch, *Duzen, Siezen, Titulieren: Zur Anrede im Deutschen heute und gestern* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), p. 105.

„Oh, Tante, **hab** Erbarmen! **Vergib** mir doch! Ich kann, ich kann es nicht ertragen. — **Bestrafe** mich doch auf andere Weise!“⁴

(‘O aunt, have pity! Forgive me! I cannot endure it — let me be punished some other way!’)

In Chapter 4 of von Borch, Jane again switches temporarily to addressing her aunt informally when, in another moment of emotional turmoil, she objects to having been portrayed to Mr Brocklehurst as a liar (shown here by *du* in the accusative and dative cases, in bold):

„Ich bin nicht falsch, nicht lügnerisch, wäre ich es, so würde ich sagen, dass ich **dich** liebe, aber ich erkläre **dir**, dass ich **dich** nicht liebe, ich hasse **dich** ...“⁵

(‘I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved you; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you ...’)⁶

Immediately following this exchange, and perhaps somewhat unconvincingly given that Jane is still ‘thrilled with ungovernable excitement’, von Borch has her regain control and revert to addressing her aunt as *Sie*. This does, however, produce a marked contrast when Jane subsequently quotes the words with which, in *du* form, she had earlier pleaded with her aunt to be released from the red room (in this quotation the *Sie* form is marked in italics and the *du* form in bold):

„Ich werde niemals vergessen, wie *Sie* mich heftig und rau in das rote Zimmer *zurückstießen* und mich dann *einschlossen* — bis zu meiner Sterbestunde werde ich es nicht vergessen. Obgleich die Todesangst mich verzehrte, obgleich ich vor Jammer und Entsetzen fast erstickend aus allen Kräften schrie und flehte: „**Hab** Erbarmen, Tante Reed! **Hab** Erbarmen“ Und diese Strafe *ließen Sie* mich erdulden ...“⁷

(‘I shall remember how you thrust me back — roughly and violently thrust me back — into the red-room, and locked me up there, to my dying day; though I was in agony; though I cried out, while suffocating with distress, “Have mercy! Have mercy, Aunt Reed!” And that punishment you made me suffer...’)⁸

4 Von Borch, p. 8. Page numbers refer to the edition (very lightly) revised by Christian Reichenberg as it is the most easily available printing: all quotations have been checked against the 1887–90 Ph. Reclam text as presented in TextGrid Repository (2012). Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre. Digitale Bibliothek, <https://hdl.handle.net/11858/00-1734-0000-0002-454B-6>

5 von Borch, p. 18.

6 *JE*, Ch. 4.

7 von Borch, p. 19.

8 *JE*, Ch. 4.

These juxtapositions of *Sie* and *du* in von Borch create two potential effects on the reader. The first is to give a signal of Jane's emotional turmoil that is not present in the original text. In this rendering into German, Jane's very grammar displays her fear and despair, so great that she forgets herself and addresses her aunt informally. The second is to suggest traits in Jane's character that are also not apparent in the original text, since — it might appear — she can switch between the *Sie* and *du* forms at will. In the first instance she does so deliberately to manipulate her aunt, seeking with her informality to establish a closeness between them that will move the latter to compassion. In the second instance, she does so to offend her aunt.

Whether these effects should be considered positive or negative, a gain or a loss in translation, depends on one's view of what translation can and should do. Should a translation offer additional or alternative readings of the source text? Given that the translator into German has no choice but to opt for either *Sie* or *du*, the effect will inevitably be one of destabilisation: a single personal pronoun in English must become one of two in German, with the corresponding effects that this choice brings. One might regard the fact that the juxtaposition of *du* and *Sie* heightens the sense of emotional turmoil as a positive effect of translation, building on what is already present in the text. On the other hand, for this juxtaposition to also suggest new character traits might be considered rather problematic.

Neither Kossodo nor Walz have Jane switch, even *in extremis*, to addressing her aunt informally. As outlined above, this may, or may not, be considered a lost opportunity in terms of the potential effects of switching to *du*. What is clear is that any switch between *Sie* and *du* needs careful handling by the translator. In Kossodo, Jane uses the *Sie* form when pleading for release from the red room:

»Ach, Tante! Haben *Sie* Mitleid! Verzeihen *Sie* mir doch! Ich kann es nicht ertragen! Strafen *Sie* mich anderswie!«⁹

However, when in Kossodo Jane later reminds her aunt of this episode, she quotes words that are in the *du* form (*Sie* form marked in italics and *du* form in bold):

»Bis zu meiner letzten Stunde werde ich es *Ihnen* nie vergessen, wie *Sie* mich hart und grausam *zurückstießen*, wie *Sie* mich in das Rote Zimmer gestoßen *haben* und trotz meiner Todesangst und Verzeiflung dort

9 Kossodo, p. 24.

eingeschlossen, trotz meiner flehentlichen Bitten, ›**hab** Erbarmen! **hab** Erbarmen, Tante Reed!‹ Und diese Strafe *haben Sie* mir auferlegt ...«¹⁰

It is possible that, like von Borch, Kossodo felt that the emotional intensity of Jane's rebellion against her aunt merited a switch to the *du* form. If this is the case, then he overlooked the fact that, in the original exchange in Chapter 2, he had remained with the *Sie* form. Alternatively, Kossodo may simply have been drawing on an earlier translation and failed to remember that he had altered the words in Chapter 2. In either case, the effect is incongruous: Jane's sudden and fleeting use of the *du* form simply leaves the reader puzzled.

Sie/du in Jane's Relationship with Edward Rochester

In all three translations, Jane's relationship with Edward Rochester begins on a formal footing, each using the *Sie* form as would befit the master-servant hierarchy. As their relationship turns to love, each translation introduces informality, but with significant contrasts, both between translations and between how Jane and Rochester each use *du*. These contrasts will be explored below, but should be prefaced by setting the wider social context. In the nineteenth century, German-speaking middle-class women generally addressed their husband formally as *Ihr* (later replaced by *Sie*), while they were addressed by their husband informally as *du*.¹¹

It is possibly with this context in mind that none of the three translators ever have Jane cross the barrier into using *du* with Rochester when addressing him face-to-face. On his first proposal, Rochester invites Jane to 'give me my name'.¹² Despite this, even in Chapter 38 (when they have been married for ten years) she refers to him more often as 'Mr Rochester' than 'Edward', and it seems all three translators felt that this persistent formality in his presence indicated against the switch to *du* that would normally accompany using a person's first name. It is only when Jane speaks to him in his absence or in her mind that the translators consider switching to *du*. This is first seen at the end of Chapter 24, during their month of courtship.

¹⁰ Kossodo, p. 50.

¹¹ Besch, *Duzen, Siezen, Titulieren*, p. 105.

¹² *JE*, Ch. 23.

Here, von Borch and Walz both have Jane use the *du* form when she speaks to Rochester in her mind:

„Jetzt vermag ich **dich** durch vernünftige Behandlung im Schach halten,“ dachte ich bei mir ... (von Borch)¹³

(‘I can keep you in reasonable check now,’ I reflected ...)

»Ich weiß jetzt, wie ich mit **dir** umspringen muss«, dachte ich ... (Walz)¹⁴

Jane’s continued use of *Sie* when addressing Rochester directly shows appropriate respect from a nineteenth-century wife for her husband, especially a husband who is a former employer. However, these two translators’ decision to shift to *du* when she speaks to him indirectly mirrors the overall plot context in which these words are spoken and arguably enhances their effect. At this point, Jane is determined to show that she cannot be won over too easily by Rochester. Her use of *du* in von Borch and Walz places the couple on equal terms, indeed even highlights the way in which Jane subtly manipulates Rochester while outwardly appearing compliant and meek (reflecting her words, ‘I thus thwarted and afflicted him’).

In Chapter 35, all three translators have Jane call out to Rochester in the *du* form in response to hearing his voice. In contrast with the use of *du* casting Jane as consciously manipulative in the example above, here it seems an involuntary response to deep emotion:

„Ich **komme!**“ rief ich. „**Warte** auf mich! Oh, ich will kommen!“ Ich flog an die Tür und sah in den Korridor hinaus, er war dunkel. Ich lief in den Garten; er war leer. „**Wo bist du?**“ rief ich aus. (von Borch)¹⁵

(‘I am coming!’ I cried. ‘Wait for me! Oh, I will come!’ I flew to the door, and looked into the passage: it was dark. I ran out into the garden: it was void. ‘Where are you?’ I exclaimed.)

»Ich **komme!**« rief ich. »**Warte**, ich komme!« Ich lief zur Tür und schaute in den Gang. Es war dunkel. Ich lief in den Garten. Er war leer.

»**Wo bist du?**« rief ich laut. (Kossodo)¹⁶

»Ich **komme!**« rief ich. »**Warte** auf mich! Oh, ich komme bald!« Ich eilte zur Tür und sah in den Flur: Dunkelheit. Ich lief in den Garten hinaus. Niemand war dort. »**Wo bist du?**«, rief ich. (Walz)¹⁷

13 von Borch, p. 157.

14 Walz, p. 362.

15 von Borch, p. 241.

16 Kossodo, p. 549.

17 Walz, p. 554.

In all three translations, Rochester switches to addressing Jane informally as *du* at the point of his first proposal in Chapter 23. On the one hand, the translator can treat this event, like Jane's pleading to be released from the red room, as a point of particularly heightened emotion that can be highlighted in translation with an apparent involuntary shift to informal address. On the other, it can be treated as an 'official' milestone in their relationship which 'entitles' Rochester to now address Jane as *du*. In von Borch and Walz, the shift from *Sie* to *du* is highlighted through its occurring in the course of a single sentence (*Sie* form marked in italics and *du* form in bold):

„*Kommen Sie* zu mir — *kommen Sie* für Zeit und Ewigkeit zu mir,“ [...] „**Mach du** mein Glück.“ (von Borch)¹⁸

(‘Come to me — come to me entirely now,’ [...] ‘Make my happiness...’)

»*Kommen Sie* zu mir — *kommen Sie* und *seien Sie* die Meine«, [...] »**Mach** mich glücklich.« (Walz)¹⁹

It is in the latter sense that von Borch and Kossodo pursue Rochester's switch to addressing Jane informally: after this point, they do not have him revert to using *Sie* to her. In contrast, Walz seems to pursue the former sense, treating the proposal as a passing moment of heightened emotion that can be spotlighted by, but only merits, a temporary switch to *du*. This appears to be confirmed by the fact that, in Chapter 37, Walz again has Rochester 'lapse' into the *du* form at a point of heightened emotion, when he is recalling the moment at which he called out to her:

»Wie verlangte es mich nach **dir**, Janet! Oh, wie verlangte es mich nach **dir** seelisch und körperlich!«²⁰

(‘I longed for thee, Janet! Oh, I longed for thee both with soul and flesh!’)

It is interesting to note that this one of only two points in the novel where Brontë uses the old-fashioned *thee* instead of *you*. It is possible to speculate that, alongside this being a moment of emotional intensity, Walz's choice of the *du* form at this point was influenced by the fact that *thee* is a cognate of the Low German *di*. If this was the case, then it did not influence Walz's decision-making at the other point (in Chapter 23) where Brontë uses *thee*. Here, having had Rochester temporarily

18 von Borch, p. 145.

19 Walz, p. 337.

20 Ibid., p. 589.

switch to *du* when proposing to Jane a short time before, Walz has swiftly had him firmly revert to *Sie* (*Sie* form marked in italics):

»Ich hätte bis zum Morgen so mit *Ihnen* sitzen können, Jane.«

(‘I could have sat with thee till morning, Jane’)²¹

Sie/du in Jane’s Relationship with St John Rivers

It has been noted that the translator may regard a proposal scene as a turning point at which it becomes appropriate to have characters switch from using *Sie* to using *du*, both because it is a moment of emotional intensity and because it represents a ‘formal’ milestone. This was seen to pertain in all three translations in the case of Rochester’s first proposal to Jane, albeit only temporarily in Walz. In contrast, however, von Borch is the only translation in which the same rationale is applied when Jane’s cousin St John proposes to her in Chapter 34. In this translation, St John switches from *Sie* to *du* in the space of an intervening sentence (*Sie* form marked in italics and *du* form in bold):

„Und was sagt *Ihr* Herz *Ihnen*?“ fragte St. John.

„Mein Herz ist stumm — mein Herz ist stumm,“ entgegnete ich bebend und schauernd.

„Dann muss ich für dasselbe sprechen,“ [...] „Jane, **komm** mit mir nach Indien! **Komm** mit mir als meine Helferin, meine Mitarbeiterin.“²²

(‘And what does *your* heart say?’ demanded St. John.

‘My heart is mute, — my heart is mute,’ I answered, struck and thrilled.

‘Then I must speak for it,’ continued the deep, relentless voice. ‘Jane, come with me to India: come as my helpmeet and fellow-labourer.’)

The absence of a switch from formal to informal address can say as much as its presence. One can interpret the fact that Kossodo and Walz do not have St John switch to addressing Jane as *du* at this point of emotional intensity as reflecting their response to Brontë’s portrayal of St John as a man who puts religious duty before love. While he may have feelings for Jane, St John’s religious calling is his highest priority and he perceives her first and foremost as somebody who can help him fulfil this calling, rather than as a wife to be loved in her own right. The decision of these translators thus reveals a value

²¹ Walz, p. 338.

²² von Borch, p. 231.

judgment: in their view, he is not sufficiently capable of true love to call Jane *du*. Given that the translators must choose between *Sie* or *du*, a value judgment is inevitable, but it is one that steers the target-text reader towards forming an additional impression of St John that is not present in the source text.

In the light of St John's privileging of duty over love, it is somewhat surprising that, in von Borch, his switch to addressing Jane informally is permanent. By analogy with the cases discussed above, where the switch from *Sie* to *du* takes place at moments of emotional intensity when the person concerned is temporarily swept away by their feelings, one might expect that von Borch would have St John swiftly return to his usual rational self and revert to *Sie*. The fact that this is not the case suggests to the reader, whether deliberately or not on von Borch's part, that St John should perhaps not be regarded as entirely devoid of human feeling.

For her part, Jane does not deviate in any of the three translations from addressing St John as *Sie*. This would have been normal between male and female cousins at the time (in contrast, Jane and St John's sisters Mary and Diana address each other as *du* in von Borch and Walz even before they know they are cousins, and in Kossodo thereafter), and is thus not marked in Kossodo and Walz. In von Borch, the fact that St John switches to using *du* towards Jane means that her continued use of *Sie* towards him becomes marked. It is a lexical sign of what is contained in the original text but does not sit directly on the surface in the way that the contrast between *du* and *Sie* in this translation does: while St John wants to bind Jane to him in pursuing his calling, her continued love for Rochester means that she cannot forge an emotional connection with St John, a state made clear in the target text through her failure to switch from using *Sie*.

The Contrast Between 'Jane' and 'Janet' as a Marker of Formality

Brontë uses 'Janet', a diminutive of Jane, to signal the increasing closeness of the relationship between Rochester and Jane. Rochester first uses this term of endearment in Chapter 22, at the point when Jane returns from having spent a month at her aunt Reed's deathbed (one could speculate that this is intended to suggest that her absence has increased his affection towards her, and their relationship is now entering a new phase of intimacy). In total, he addresses Jane as Janet

four times before his first proposal in the following chapter, and fifteen times thereafter. One can trace some interesting connections between the use of the informal and formal personal pronouns between Rochester and Jane and his addressing of her as Janet.

None of the three translators replicate Rochester's pre-proposal use of Janet, except, on just one occasion, Walz. If one sets this single use in Walz aside as statistically insignificant, then it is possible to construct an understanding of the use of a diminutive in the translators' eyes as being necessarily connected with, indeed triggered by, the switch from *Sie* to *du* by Rochester at the point of his proposal. Kossodo and Walz show a very similar pattern, the former using Janet the first time that the name is used by Brontë after the proposal, and on eleven of the fifteen occasions thereafter, and the latter using Janet twelve times after the proposal. It is as if, in these translators' minds, a term of endearment cannot be used unless, at the same time, the person to whom it is directed can also be addressed as *du*. In the case of Walz, this use of *du* does not need to be permanent. Recall that, in this translation, Rochester reverts to addressing Jane as *Sie*. It is apparent that, for Walz, there is no contradiction between using a term of endearment together with the formal mode of address, as long as that term has been introduced hand-in-hand with informal address.

In contrast, von Borch delays replicating Rochester's use of Janet until Chapter 37. Stefanie Hohn argues that many of the decisions present in this translation (lexical choices, additions and omissions) suggest that, motivated by her religious beliefs, 'Von Borch ist ganz offenbar bemüht, das leidenschaftliche Temperament der weiblichen Hauptfigur in respektablen Grenzen zu halten' ('Von Borch is very clearly concerned to keep the passionate temperament of the female main character within respectable boundaries').²³ Hohn does not mention von Borch's significant delay in introducing Rochester's use of Janet compared with the original text in this regard, but it can be seen to correspond with the pattern that she identifies. In addressing Jane familiarly as Janet, Rochester suggests a (possibly physical) closeness with her that von Borch, seeking to portray Jane as innocent and pure, does not wish to allow to enter the narrative until Jane is a mature, independent woman and Rochester is at last free to marry her, thus making their closeness respectable.

23 Hohn, *Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre*, p. 103 (my translation).

One could regard Brontë's placing of the term Janet in Rochester's mouth as to some degree an 'equivalent' device to the ability of the translators into German to have him switch from *Sie* to *du* in addressing Jane, in that both devices allow the signalling of a growing intimacy in their relationship. In this case, one can detect both similarities and differences in usage between the English and German devices. Compared with the use of Janet, all three translators have Rochester switch to using *du* later. On the other hand, Kossodo then replicates Brontë's placing of Janet in his mouth by having Rochester consistently use *du* thereafter. Walz both follows and deviates from Brontë's usage: to some degree, the effect of using Janet to signal growing intimacy is negated by Walz's decision to have Rochester revert to addressing Jane as *Sie*. Finally, von Borch delays the replication of the term of endearment the longest. While this appears to be a deliberate measure designed to cast Jane as innocent and pure, the loss of a sense of intimacy that would have arisen from its usage is to some degree mitigated by the permanent switch to Rochester addressing Jane as *du* at the point of the first proposal.

It should be noted, finally, that the effect of Rochester's use of Janet on the German-speaking reader is of course dependent on that reader understanding that this is a term of endearment. None of the translators exploit any of the measures that would have been at their disposal to explicate the term. Such measures might have included a footnote, a neologism constructed on German diminutive patterns, such as *Janelein*, or a gloss on first usage, along the lines of 'Meine liebe, kleine Jane, meine Janet' ['My dear little Jane, my Janet']. Kossodo and Walz, however, exploit the power of the contrast between *Sie* and *du* to provide guidance for their readers as to the significance of Janet. By delaying the term's introduction until after Rochester has proposed (and addressed Jane as *du*), they signal that his use of Janet should be read as similarly indicating that the couple's relationship has entered a new phase. In von Borch, the time that elapses between the proposal and Rochester's use of Janet may well be too long for the reader to make this connection. Instead, the term's sudden appearance in Chapter 37 seems rather unmotivated.

Discussion

Any translator from English into German, and indeed from English into many other languages, cannot avoid having to choose between the formal and the informal second-person personal pronouns. In her introduction to the notes that accompany her translation, Walz draws attention to the difficulty this can pose the translator:

... es bleibt [...] der Phantasie des Lesers und des Übersetzers anheimgestellt, an welchen Stellen die Personen des Romans sich duzen können oder sollen. Dass die kleine Jane von ihrer Tante geduzt wird und sie siezt, ist naheliegend; schwieriger wird es, wenn Rochester Jane umwirbt und ihr Liebesworte ins Ohr flüstert, denn auch wenn er noch so vertraulich zu ihr spricht, bleibt sie in ihren Kommentaren an die Adresse der Leserschaft immer bei der distanzierten Bezeichnung *my master*, und sie nennt Rochester nie beim Vornamen, nur das eine Mal, als er sie darum bittet.²⁴

(... it is a matter for the imagination of the reader and the translator to decide where in the novel the characters can or should call each other du. It is obvious that young Jane is addressed as du by her aunt and that she calls her aunt Sie; it becomes harder when Rochester courts Jane and whispers words of love in her ear, because even though he speaks to her very intimately, she continues to refer to him in her comments to her readers with the formal term *my master*, and she never uses Rochester's first name apart from on the one occasion when he asks her to do so.)

Walz's assessment of this issue can be expanded. It is the translator who must first make decisions about whether to use *Sie* or *du*. As Walz indicates, these decisions are sometimes uncomfortable. Inevitably, too, they will influence the readers' perceptions of the relationships between characters. But as Walz also indicates, readers are not passive 'consumers' of a translator's decision-making. The fact that the translator has chosen either *Sie* or *du*, or indeed has deliberately contrasted the two, then invites — even forces — the reader to ask in turn whether, in his or her view, the use of *Sie* or *du* sits well with a particular character at a particular moment of the plot. Readers must make their own decisions and engage with the text in a way that the neutral *you* of the original text does not require them to.

If the need to choose between *Sie* and *du* prompts the reader to engage with the text, it is regrettable that the tone of Walz's statement

²⁴ Walz, p. 631 (my translation).

also verges on the apologetic, suggesting that this choice could damage the original text. One can also pursue a line of argument that challenges the idea that the existence of two possible levels of formality prompts reader engagement with the text. According to this view, it inhibits it. The choice made by opting for either *Sie* or *du*, with their clear implications of (in)formality which do not exist in the neutral *you*, brings a layer of explicature to the target text that does not exist in the original. The original reader gradually assesses for him- or herself the various characters' closeness, or distance, on the basis of Brontë's lexical clues (as Walz further points out in her note, Jane's use of *my master* indicates the hierarchy of their relationship, for example), whereas in the case of the target text that assessment has been made already by the translator and sits on the surface in its very grammar, already set out for the reader rather than awaiting discovery. Something of the 'mystery' of the original has thus been lost.

To take this argument further, it has been seen that a translator's decision-making with regard to shifts between *Sie* and *du* can have the effect of suggesting a value judgment on a character or of suggesting character traits not present in the original text. By either having St John continue to address Jane as *Sie* after proposing to her (Kossodo and Walz), or by having him switch to *du* (von Borch), the translators implicitly judge him as somebody who is either relentlessly cold or, alternatively, capable of loving. In the case of von Borch's decision-making regarding shifts between *Sie* and *du* in the relationship between Jane and her aunt, the introduction of a shift from *Sie* to *du* can be interpreted by the reader not as a character's involuntary response at a time of heightened emotion, but as a signal of a deliberate violation of the conventions of formal and informal address, in order to manipulate or cause offence. This, then, suggests a character trait that is not present in the original. For the translator's decision-making to have the effect of shaping the reader's view of a character can again be seen as undermining the reader's own journey of discovery and interpretative abilities.

One can, on the other hand, regard the contrast between *Sie* and *du* as introducing a welcome and enriching nuancing into *Jane Eyre* in German. The availability of two second-person personal pronouns in German can be seen as filling a gap left by the neutrality of the English term *you*. The target-text readers' experience is enhanced by the existence of an additional means of tracing the shifts in the various relationships. One cannot help wondering whether, if an

equivalent device had been available to Brontë, she would have gladly used it (indeed, her use of the diminutive Janet to signal the growing closeness between Jane and Rochester could be interpreted as her seeking precisely such a device). In particular, the way in which the contrast between *Sie* and *du* is used in translation to signal and add emphasis to a moment of emotional intensity can hardly be seen as a translation 'loss'. Rather, the way the translators allow grammar to work hand in hand with lexis and plot to create such moments should be seen as an example of how a text, necessarily disquietened as it moves from one language to another, can gain in translation. This effect is particularly successful in the von Borch and Walz translations of Rochester's first proposal, where the shift from *Sie* to *du* takes place within a single sentence and is thus especially marked. No language can ever be complete in itself. In this case, German can give *Jane Eyre* something that English lacks. The necessity of choosing between *Sie* and *du* becomes a virtue.

The foregoing discussion has highlighted trends in the usage of *Sie* and *du* in these three translations that can now be considered in the light of the individual translators' backgrounds and of the wider socio-cultural contexts in which the translations were undertaken.

One might expect that von Borch, the translation made only a few decades after *Jane Eyre* was published, would demonstrate the most formality in address. In fact, the opposite is the case. As has been seen, it is in this translation that the possibility of switching from *Sie* to *du* at moments of emotional intensity is most exploited (it is the only translation to use this technique in relation to Jane's relationship with her aunt). It is possible to read into this — for the time — progressive stance on formality a connection between von Borch and the modern Scandinavian authors she was also translating and, more generally, a connection with the arrival of this literature in Germany. On the other hand, however, this translation can be regarded as the most conservative in its treatment of the use of the term Janet, which is very delayed compared with Kossodo and Walz. It stands, then, on a cusp between the traditional moral context of the early and mid-nineteenth century and the emerging literary world of the late nineteenth century. It seems that, at this point, von Borch judged that to also use Janet, Brontë's own device for indicating familiarity, would have taken informality too far.

In line with a general trend for *du* to be used increasingly readily nowadays, one might expect that the most recent translation, Walz,

would show a tendency in this direction. Again, the opposite is the case. This is the only translation in which Rochester switches only temporarily to addressing Jane as *du* at the moment when he proposes to her. One might understand Walz's opting for greater formality between Jane and Rochester as a conscious effort to return *Jane Eyre* to its nineteenth-century context. The fact that this translation was made to mark the 200th anniversary of Brontë's birth may well have strongly influenced Walz to adopt this strategy. In the same vein, this translation is subtitled 'Eine Autobiographie' (*An Autobiography*), as was the novel when first published. It should be noted, too, that Walz's other translations include a considerable number of literary classics.

A return to greater formality in *Jane Eyre* in translation may also be an indication of a changing tide in translational interpretation of the novel. Hohn observes how Kossodo, in the notes to his translation, highlights Jane's desire to be a strong, independent woman.²⁵ Kossodo's observation firmly aligns with the context of production, the Women's Liberation Movement being very active in the years running up to 1979, the year of first publication of this translation. It is somewhat surprising, then, that Kossodo does not tend towards greater equality between Jane and Rochester in terms of the formality of their address. As in von Borch, dating from nearly one hundred years earlier, in Kossodo Rochester addresses Jane as *du* after his proposal, but she continues to address him as *Sie*. There is, however, a very notable non-grammatical marker of greater informality in Kossodo compared with the original text and with the other two translations. Here, many of Jane's uses of the words *sir* and *master* are omitted, or greater equality between the two is introduced through these words being rendered with the less loaded *Mr Rochester* or *er* (he). Here, then, it is possible to discern some connection with Kossodo's desire, during his career as a publisher that preceded his work as a translator, to promote progressive views.

25 Hohn, *Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre*, p. 92.

Conclusion

Studying the contrasting formality and informality of address in three translations of *Jane Eyre* into German has highlighted the fact that translation cannot be a neutral process. Every time the translator chooses between the personal pronouns *Sie* and *du*, there is potential for this choice to shape readers' perceptions of the relationships between characters. Juxtaposing *Sie* and *du* can both heighten emotional intensity and, in the case of Jane's interaction with her aunt, suggest character traits that are not apparent in the original text. Switching from *Sie* to *du* indicates a dimension of meaning in the progression of relationships, especially that of Rochester and Jane, that is not contained in the neutral English personal pronoun *you*. Even the fact of the absence of a switch, in the case of Jane's addressing of St John, indicates more than is present in the original text. To some observers, the explicitation that accompanies the use of either *Sie* or *du* is a loss in translation, a transformation that robs the original text of some of its mystery. A sensitive translator, however, can turn the inevitability of having to switch between *Sie* and *du* into a virtue. Through creative decisions that will challenge readers, the translator's handling of formality of address has the potential to invite deeper engagement with the text.

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