



Translating Berlin #4

Lunapark/Wellenbad

- 1. Starter activity: What do you know about Berlin?**
 - a) Name five facts about Berlin.
 - b) Name one cultural connection between Germany and the UK.
 - c) Name three English writers in the 1920s.

 - 2. Read the English text below about the Lunapark/Wellenbad.**
 - a) Where was the Lunapark located?
 - b) Which role did the Lunapark and the Wellenbad play in the 1920s in Berlin?
 - c) Who used to meet there, and why?

 - 3. Present the Lunapark/Wellenbad to your neighbour or group.**
Your presentation should contain the answers to 2a), b), and c).
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The terraces on the shores of lake Halensee were renamed “Lunapark” in 1910. One of its greatest attractions was Europe’s biggest indoor swimming pool. Opened in May 1927, Lunapark sported orientalist architecture and special temporary features such as water slides, a mountain train, special swings etc. One entered Lunapark from the end of Kurfürstendamm to find oneself in a completely fantastic, very noisy and often colonialist world of make-belief. 10 000 visitors could be served on the restaurant terraces, thousands of people watched boxing matches, or were able to listen to the new medium of radio broadcasts at the so-called radio house, while others amused themselves on the large and ever-changing fair grounds. Contemporary newspapers and tourist literature include numerous accounts, and several authors wrote about their experience – not all of them favourable accounts. Alix Strachey, for instance, was reticent in her comments. Mass entertainment was not really her favourite pastime. That subtle class mechanisms existed at the amusement park passed her by: ‘Halensee is revolutionised by the opening of Luna Park. It happened on Saturday. There’s a dense mob there, between 3 & 10 p.m. Telschow’s is ransacked; & fireworks last night. Perhaps it’s only so marked on Saturdays & Sundays. I do not feel drawn to go inside.’



Lunapark Terrassen, Halensee. Historical postcard, c. 1904. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

Despite Strachey's reticence, many visitors felt compelled to include Lunapark as part of their Berlin tour. Virginia Woolf visited the ultrachic and modern swimming-pool during her only stay in Berlin to see her lover Vita Sackville-West. [...] The swimming pool had a sliding roof which could be opened in summer. The 40m long pool allowed men and women to swim simultaneously, which was unusual at the time. Its major attraction was the wave-making machine which made the experience even more novel. The amusement park got into financial trouble in the 1930s and was closed in 1934 by the National Socialists, who frowned upon what they deemed 'decadent' entertainment. The area was partly repurposed as a park, and partly used to build a road leading to the so-called "Reichssportfeld". Gesa Stedman.



Virginia Woolf

4. Who was Virginia Woolf? Scan the QR code to find out.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), essayist, novelist, critic, and publisher, was a leading member of the modernist writers' and artists' group named after the London district in which many of them lived: the Bloomsbury Group. A multi-perspective account of an ill-fated winter visit to Berlin can be found in Woolf's correspondence with her lover, Vita Sackville-West. Gesa Stedman.



Virginia Woolf.
Photograph by Lady Ottoline Morrell. Vintage snapshot print, c. 1917. NPG
Ax141319 © National Portrait Gallery, London

Translation Theory

5. Answer the following questions in pairs or in your group:

- a) Can you think of a German or English word or phrase that you cannot translate verbatim (exactly word for word) into the other language? What strategy would you use to translate it?
- b) Would you like to become a professional translator? Why / why not? What do you think would be the most interesting aspects of being a translator?

6. Read and discuss the text on translation theory.

- a) What is the difference between micro- and macro-level translation?
 - b) What is the difference between domestication and foreignisation?
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Translation theory often distinguishes between micro- and macro-level translation. The micro level refers mainly to the accurate translation of single words, terms, or shorter segments of a text from the source language into the target language. In this context, the emphasis is placed on linguistic accuracy. For the sake of precision, decisions on the micro level are often made independently.

The macro level, on the other hand, rather looks at a text in its entirety and takes into account not only linguistic accuracy, but also social and cultural aspects. For the sake of consistency, decisions on a macro level are often made for the entire text. How can local dialects be translated from one language into another? Should personal names be translated in such a way that their meaning can be understood in the target language? And how should certain cultural references be approached, especially those that foreign readers may not understand? All of these questions belong to macro-level translation.

Translation decisions, whether on the micro or macro level, can always be located between the poles of domestication and foreignisation. Domestication means not only translating a text, but also adapting its content to the culture of the target language. Foreignisation, on the other hand, means keeping a translation as close to the original as possible, both in terms of content and style.

Virginia Woolf und Vita Sackville-West

7. Read the German text 'Virginia Woolf und Vita Sackville-West':

- a) Choose three adjectives to describe the relationship between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West. Explain your answer.
- b) What did they think about Berlin?

8. Translate the text into English. Choose:

- a) Translate the text directly.
 - b) Rewrite the text in simpler German. Next, translate your simpler version into English.
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Virginia Woolf und ihre Geliebte Vita Sackville-West nahmen in ihrem Briefwechsel kein Blatt vor den Mund, wenn es um ihre geteilte Skepsis, ja fast schon um ihren Hass gegenüber Berlin ging. Vita Sackville-West musste ihren Ehemann, Harold Nicolson, *Chargé d'Affaires* an der Britischen Botschaft, nach Berlin begleiten, und ihr grauste davor. [...] Und obwohl ihre Beziehung mit Virginia Woolf auch ihr viel bedeutete, hinderte sie dies nicht daran, eine Affäre mit der deutsch-amerikanischen Romanautorin Margaret Goldsmith-Voigt einzugehen und Virginia in ihren Briefen davon zu berichten.

Gesa Stedman.

Glossary

Geliebte (m./f.)	lover
kein Blatt vor den Mund nehmen	not to mince matters
Skepsis (f.)	skepticism
grausen	to fill sb. with horror
eine Affäre (f.) eingehen	to start an affair

Letter to Vita Sackville-West

9. Read the excerpt from Virginia Woolf's letter to Vita Sackville-West (1929) and highlight all the words you know how to translate already.

10. Translate the text into German. Choose:

- a) Translate the text directly.
- b) Rewrite the text in simpler English.

Next, translate your simpler version into German.

Glossary

anyhow	trotzdem, dennoch
to be worth sth.	etwas wert sein
what a ...	was für ein/eine ...
to shiver	zittern
behaviour	Verhalten (n.)

Well anyhow it was worth the week with you. I think of the tower and the lights and the waves and the shell room at Sans Souci and you – Next week is Feb. 1st, so there's really not long to wait. But Lord! What a horror Berlin and diplomacy are! I'd no idea till I'd seen it. And I shiver at the thought of our behavior about that lunch. You and Harold were such angels. My love to him. Write.

Virginia Woolf to Vita Sackville-West, 29 January 1929,
in: A Reflection of the Other Person, pp. 8–9.

Plenary

11. Talk about your translation process.

- a) Did any difficulties or problems arise?
- b) Which translation strategies did you use ...
 - I. ... to translate from German into English?
 - II. ... to translate from English into German?