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TRANSLATION OF A WILD TALE

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MEANING IS CREATED.[1] And its creation relies on the construal of experience through a particular medium, be that a specific language, a visual representation, or some other symbolic system. Once meaning has been created, its recreation through another system necessarily demands that the translator make choices along a number of parameters. This paper examines the original creation of a wild tale by one of Bulgaria's most successful modern authors, Nikolai Haitov, in relation to the recreation of this tale into: 1) the English language by translator Michael Holman; and 2) a Bulgarian film directed by Edward Zahariev.[2]

1. HAITOV'S TALE. Nikolai Haitov (1919–2002) is a regional author whose stories not only portray the local color and ethnographic flavor of Bulgaria's Rhodope Mountains with its mixed Christian and Muslim population, but also examine deeper moral issues, permanent traits of the national character, and universal ethical values. His protagonists are heroic and strong, brave and independent, and care about truth, justice, and personal honor. Haitov, born in a village in the area where his stories are set, trained for and spent his early adult years as a forestry engineer. It was not until 1954 that he began to turn these experiences into literature. *Wild Tales*, '*Divi Razkazi*' (1967) in Bulgarian, is his most successful collection; "When Men Were Men," "Məžki Vremena" in Bulgarian, is the first, and perhaps best known, tale in this collection. In 1977, Haitov merged this story with another one from *Wild Tales*, "Getting Wed" "Svatba," and wrote the script for Edward Zahariev's film also entitled *Məžki Vremena*.

In 1979, Michael Holman translated *Wild Tales* into English. Bulgarian literature is little known in the West, and *Wild Tales* is one of the few pieces of Bulgarian fiction available to an English-speaking audience.[3] Published by Peter Owen, London, the book was favorably reviewed, including a review by Elizabeth Berridge in the *Daily Telegraph* (16 June

[1] The authors would like to thank A. Shurbanov, A. Stoevsky, C. Moskovsky and two anonymous reviewers for comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

[2] Haitov's work has been translated into other media as well: 1) theater (award-winning actor Marius Kurkinski's one-man show of three Haitov short stories; 2) music (by Krasimir Kyurkchiyski for the ballet *Kozijat Rog*, *The Goat's Horn*, a long short-story which was included in later editions of *Divi Razkazi*, *Wild Tales*; 3) dance (the same ballet); and 4) film (*Kozijat Rog*, a wildly popular film originally made in 1972 and more recently a less popular remake; other tales from *Divi Razkazi*).

[3] See *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. Peter France (Oxford University Press), 2000, section on Bulgarian literature by Michael Holman (pp. 193–96).

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1979) that states: "By use of homely language and the occasional regionalism, Mr. Holman has neatly closed the gap between cultures [Bulgarian and British]." In 1980, one of the co-authors of this paper saw a copy in a local public library in the north of England; the numerous dates stamped on it and the condition of the book indicated it had been borrowed over and over again.

"When Men Were Men" is the tale of the traditional Rhodope custom of bride stealing. The hero begins his story by stating: "I was a right daredevil in my young days. Bold as brass and blood on the boil" (Haitov 1979:19). This macho young man, lawless but honorable, is hired by a rather timid bridegroom to steal a "young lass" he has taken a fancy to. They bargain the price and the adventure begins. The lass turns out to be something of a Shakespearean Kate who has a mind of her own and definitely does not want to marry the "little slobberchops" who lusts after her. She is portrayed as tough and stubborn but "a fine piece of woman." Declares the narrator: "I've stolen a fair number of brides in my time, but never a woman like her!" (Haitov 1979:22) She tenaciously fights back, giving the central character/narrator and his two confederates a struggle to remember. This is not a timid woman but one who matches move for move the he-man tactics of the narrator. As might be expected, these two assertive individuals are attracted to each other. When brute force does not liberate her, the bride tries to negotiate with the central character by offering herself to him instead. Our hero hesitates but opts for honor, and after several more travails, delivers the bride to her groom. Not surprisingly, this forced marriage turns out badly. At the first opportunity, the bride escapes, the bridegroom is thankful to be rid of her, and the narrator negotiates to steal another bride, this one "meek and mild" (Haitov 1979:29).

2. *SKAZ* STYLE. An important organizing principle of Haitov's stories is that of a first person narrative in the *skaz* style (though Haitov himself was not versed in either skaz or literary theory).[4] We owe the untranslatable term 'skaz' to the Russian Formalists, notably Boris Eichenbaum, and to Mikhail Bakhtin, who use it in the sense of "stylization of oral every day narration" (Bakhtin 1981:262), "a technique or mode of narration that imitates the oral speech of an individualized narrator" (1984:8). This technique creates the illusion of everyday, oral speech through the choice of syntax, lexis, and phraseology that relies more on the ear than what the eye sees on the written page.

Coming out of the rich Russian tradition of folklore and folkloric studies, skaz moves the oral storytelling mode of the folk into the literary realm. In skaz, viewpoint is transferred from the author, the monologic, to the hero narrator. The voice of the author, however, never disappears completely. This aspect is what Bakhtin refers to as double-voiced discourse. Someone else's voice is infused with author intentions, resulting in irony, parody, or stylized skaz. Bakhtin asserts: "The hero's discourse is treated precisely as someone else's

[4] But Haitov did study the work of other authors and noted in his diary about I.S. Turgenev's "A Sportsman's Sketches" that he [Turgenev] wrote about ordinary things using ordinary words, but that somewhere among the words there lurked the shadow of art (Zaharieva 1989:54–55). Haitov also noted in his diaries that once he decided to use first person narrative everything else clicked in place (Zaharieva 1989:58–59).

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discourse, as discourse belonging to some specific characterological profile or type, that is, it is treated as an object of authorial understanding, and not from the point of view of its own referential intention" (Morris 1994:105).

This dialogic feature transmits not just 'the word' but a world view. And although Bakhtin repeatedly claims that linguistics is not adequate for explaining skaz, he seems to restrict 'linguistics' to attending to the sign while using the term 'metalinguistics' for exploring aspects of language that extend beyond syntax. Whatever the terminology, for Bakhtin, language and world-view are inextricable. He begins Chapter 5 of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* with this statement: "We have in mind 'discourse', that is, language in its concrete living totality [...]" (Morris 1994:103). Here Bakhtin is exploring the literary, the work of Dostoevsky, but Bakhtin extends the notion of double-voiced discourse to any semiotic form. Thus, while in a literary work one would examine language in the analysis of skaz, other semiotic features would be used in film or theater. Bakhtin insisted that context is absolutely essential to meaning, with the author a constituent element of the text. So, too, is the translator a vital element in the conveying of meaning, be s/he a literary translator, director, composer, choreographer, or performer.

Haitov employs skaz to create empathy with the people portrayed. By using the language and style of this rural population, Haitov's hero is able to narrate his own story, "refracting reality", in the words of Jeremy Hicks, "through the point of view of [...] a character-participant" (Hicks 2000:78). The author goes to great lengths to replicate the sound of the local Rhodope dialect so that we, as readers, have a sense of listening to a story told in a tavern or by the fire in the evening, among comrades, men like the narrator. Haitov speaks with his people for his people—even though the medium is written and literary. This illusion of improvisation, of being acted out, attempts to replicate an unrepeatable live event involving a speaker and a listener. In this sense, Haitov's tale is deictically grounded, not just in dialogue as might be any piece of literary work, but also in the narration itself. To this end Haitov infuses his work with colorful language throughout the text, employing the syntax and vocabulary of the people portrayed.

In his tale "Məžki Vremena," Haitov presents a strong, brave, and independent hero whose primary concern is the honor circumscribed by an entrenched patriarchal system. The narrator's voice is confident to the point of bravado. Haitov accomplishes this by ample use of Turkish loan-words, colloquial expressions, and earthy regionalisms.

3. HOLMAN'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION. Michael Holman's English translation preserves the global meanings and orients the text towards the new target audience and culture by choosing resources from English rather than translating literally from the Bulgarian. His rendering of the text is then less concerned with directly reproducing word order, clause structure, and figures of speech, and more concerned with telling the same essential tale in English. In an article on the translation of the Bulgarian author Yordan Yovkov, Holman contrasts his own philosophy with that of another English translator, John Burnip. He portrays Burnip's approach as "excessively author-oriented" and literal, resulting in "foreignness and occasional awkwardness of expression." By contrast Holman characterizes his own approach to translation this way: "I [am] more oriented towards the reader and

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the receiving culture." This frees Holman, he says, from the syntax and word order of the original and allows him to construe meaning by, in John Burnip's critical words, "expansion, embroidery, and embellishment" (Holman 2003:145).

In a contribution to the centenary celebration of Bulgarian author Iliya Volen, Holman dissects the English translation (not his) of the sole Volen story to appear outside Bulgaria. He focuses on three areas where he feels the translation fell short: difficult words, colorful phrases, and rhythm and word flow. In his critique, we see clearly Holman's own philosophy. Volen's story "Groudka," like "When Men Were Men," depicts rural life and includes colloquial, everyday speech. In such a story, the translator needs to take great care in choosing English equivalents, ones that retain the flavor of the story. Holman points out that much of the sexual double entendre of "Groudka" is lost in translation. For example, the translator might have chosen 'stripping' the corn cob instead of the more technical 'husking' (Holman 2005:7). Holman points out other places where a literal rendering of a Bulgarian phrase takes the juice out of the dialogue. A Bulgarian phrase that has the sense of 'kill', for example, might have been worded in a more lively, earthy manner as 'bump off' (Holman 2005:7). Holman objects to the "dumbing down and smoothing out" of text (Holman 2005:8). He feels that the translator's "version is conscientious and for the most part correct, but peasant fun and games in the hay-loft, seduction at the sheep pens, and night-time frolics on a bouncy bed of maize leaf strippings" are lost in translation.

Holman believes that it is important to first assess the overall meaning and feel of a text. He then makes conscious choices on how to transfer that meaning from Bulgarian into English. A particular problem for Holman in the translation of "When Men Were Men" was deciding how to render the dialectal speech of the narrator, which is direct, simple, and lacking cant. Choosing an idiolect that will communicate to the target audience the basic character of the narrator has its challenges, which Holman discusses in his introduction to *Wild Tales*. This narrator "draws on a rich store of colourful words and expressions so colloquial, dialectal or downright obscene they have not merited an entry in standard Bulgarian reference works" (Haitov 1979:15). In addition, speech is peppered with words of Turkish origin which by their nature import a "spicy, earthy" (Haitov 1979:15) feel for Bulgarian readers, much as French words add a certain cachet to English. Because it is these very folksy, nonstandard elements that convey the warmth and solidity of the characters, they are essential to meaning—and they are difficult to translate. Holman "ran the risk" (his phrase) of transforming the Bulgarian Rhodope peasants "into homegrown Yorkshire yokels" (Haitov 1979:16).

Holman's approach to translation is apparent from the very beginning of Haitov's tale. The Bulgarian title "Məžki Vremena" ['manly times'] is rendered as "When Men Were Men," shifting from the Bulgarian NP to the English minor clause. In doing so, he captures perfectly the flavor of the original: this is a story about a more macho time, before the age of feminism, when men ruled.

In the Volen centenary speech, Holman contends that "[s]tyle is a part of content. Get the style wrong and the content too is distorted" (Holman 2005:6). This means foregoing literal, word-for-word translation in favor of attention to the emotional highs and lows, the spirit of each character, and the right word within the context. In such a way, Holman frees

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himself from any tyranny of syntax in order to expand, explain, and explore the essence of the original story. In the text proper, he recreates the skaz style by employing English syntactic devices not found in the original Bulgarian: copula, and often subject, deletion, phrasal verbs of a colloquial nature, and marked word order. To this Holman shows his own creative bent through careful—and colorful—lexical choice, original phraseology, and a staccato style formed through alliteration of bold sounds.

4. ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF WRITTEN TEXTS. Holman's first translation decision was to choose a nonstandard English dialect, one that would convey the macho, country feel of the original Rhodope Bulgarian vernacular. A close look at the first two paragraphs of the tale reveals some of the features Holman employs. The most prominent one is the use of bullet sentences, existential processes lacking copulas and sometimes subjects: "Bold as brass and blood on the boil." "Not big, just tough." "daggers in my belt" "a revolver here at my side." With this device—one not present in the original Bulgarian—Holman immediately establishes the swagger of the narrator. To this grammatical bullet effect, he adds a staccato alliteration in "bold as brass and blood on the boil." This very Anglo-Saxon alliteration is reinforced by the word 'daredevil'.

The Bulgarian original puts all of this in a single first sentence:[5]

(1) *na onija mladite godini, bjax delikanlija, bujna krəv.*
in those young-the years be-p.1st.s wild[Tk] wild/hot blood
'I was a right daredevil in my young days. Bold as brass and blood on the boil.'

Holman chooses to begin with an overt 'I', shifting the time phrase to the end. As Bulgarian is a null subject language, Haitov has the choice of eliminating the overt subject pronoun—and he does. Haitov's is a more traditional beginning for a tale, especially an oral, spoken narrative in the skaz style: establishing a time-frame. But Holman makes the decision to put the narrator in Thematic position; this leaves the time-frame for Rheme. Word choice presents a challenge for Holman. In the original, Haitov uses both the Turkish borrowing for 'wild', *delikanli,* and then repeats it in Bulgarian, *bujna krəv*, perhaps because the Turkish loan-word (*ija* is the Bulgarian morphological adaptation of the Turkish *delinkanli*) is a word unknown to younger generations.[6] Holman gives us instead two metaphors: 'bold as brass' and 'blood on the boil', as well as the evocative 'daredevil'.

[5] Examples give the original Bulgarian text with English gloss below, followed by Holman's English translation. The Bulgarian Cyrillic of the original is transliterated into Latin script according to E. Scatton, *A Reference Grammar of Modern Bulgarian*, Slavica Publishers, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, 1984, with the exception of rendering Ъ [*er golyam*] with *ə* [the phonetic schwa symbol]. Gloss symbols include: p=past; pr=present; (?)=interrogative; imper=imperative; Turk.=Turkish borrowing; s=singular, pl=plural.

[6] *A Turkish-Bulgarian Dictionary* (G. Klasov & S. Gavazof, *Tűrkçe-bulgarca sözlűk*, Ambelino Art Publishers, Sofia, n.d.) translates *delikanli* as 'a young man, lad, bachelor'; *deli* means 'wild', *kan* is 'blood,' and *-li* is an adjectival suffix.

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Thus, we can clearly see, Holman's translation differs dramatically from the original in phrasing and lexis. The rhythm is probably slower in Bulgarian and more dynamic in English. The time adverbial in Bulgarian is not so obviously related to the speaker/main character and thus emphasizes the distance in time: "I am going to tell you something that happened a long time ago, once upon a time." The English is more personal.

While sentence (2) is another verbless sentence in English, omitting both the copula and the subject pronoun, the Bulgarian is a fully-formed clause, though one with colloquial overtones. The conjunction *ala* is a 'folksy' alternative for 'but' (instead of Bulgarian *no*); and Haitov uses the neuter adjectives *edr-o* and *jak-o* instead of the masculine *edər* and *jak*. The neuter is partly explained by the young age of the character in those days (*momče* 'boy' is neuter although there is no grammatically neuter word present) but it also expresses emotional involvement and greater intimacy.

(2) *ne bjax edro, ala jako.*
not be.1st.s big, but tough
'Not big, just tough.'

Sentence (3) presents Holman with both word and punctuation choices. For the most part, Holman sticks to a fairly close translation, but there are a few places of note.

(3) *Martinkata mi laeše na gərbinata, v pojasa*
Martini.fem.the my was.barking.1st.s on back.the in sash.the

nož do nož. Dva li, tri li bjaxa, ne gi pomnja,
knife next-to knife two (?) three (?) be.3rd.p not them remember.1st.s

a livorverət— ej tuka, na kəlkata.
and LevoRver.the right here on thigh.the

'A Martini-Henry barked from my shoulder, daggers in my belt—two and sometimes three—and a revolver here at my side.'

The Bulgarian *gərbinata* is a colloquial, expressive—and perhaps, augmentative—alternative to the neutral *grəb*. Holman places his Martini-Henry on the 'shoulder' instead of 'on back in the sash'. The phrase *nož do nož* is a colloquial syntactic pattern, with the repetition of the noun having the special effect of meaning 'plenty of them'. Holman translates *nož* as 'dagger', giving the word a menacing flavor; knives are legitimate, utilitarian objects while daggers are intended for nefarious deeds. Besides a Martini-Henry and a knife, the narrator mentions a third weapon: his revolver. Haitov renders this with the uneducated metathesis of the [l] and the [r]; Holman simply translates 'revolver'. Haitov locates the revolver on the thigh, using the colloquial, even slightly indecent, *kəlka* to refer to this human body part. Holman uses the less intimate 'side', a choice devoid of any raciness, leading one to wonder why he did not, instead, use 'hip'.

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The punctuation of the Bulgarian is complex: there are two sentences, each with a dash. The first sentence consists of two clauses separated by a comma. The second clause is verbless. The dash stands for the missing verb—an existential verbal expression— *imaše* 'there was' in this case. Intonationally the dash represents a pause. Both the verblessness and the pause are again features of colloquial syntax. This second clause starts with the thematic *v pojasa*, which takes up the Rheme of the previous clause *na gərbinata* (both parts of the body/clothing), and the emphatic *nož do nož* is Rhematic. The second sentence consists of three clauses, but the first two are connected by subordination and they form a unit coordinated with the third clause. So in a way we have coordination of two syntactic units as in the first sentence and thus some parallelism. However, the two clauses in the first sentence are asyndetically coordinated (the comma/pause showing their boundary), while in the second sentence the two parts are linked by the conjunction *a* ('and' with a mild contrast implied). *Dva li, tri li bjaxa* ['if/whether' 'they' were 'two or three'] is an object clause to *ne gi pomnja* 'I don't remember them'; *gi* repeats/doubles the missing 'they/them'. In this object clause (an indirect question, hence the interrogative *li*) there is ellipsis of 'knives', which is in the previous clause *nož do nož*; there is an implied 'they' in *bjaxa*, of course. A comma separates the two alternatives of the question: 'two or three?' The last clause here is again verbless, with a missing existential verb, this time 'was', represented by a dash. Here Theme/Rheme are switched again to 'weapon'/ 'body part'. But the body part is first deictically indicated (the narrator may even be pointing to the place as he is telling the story) by *ej tuka* 'right here', which is then additionally specified by *na kəlkata*. This specification is separated from the preceding deictic locative expression by a comma and a pause. It almost comes as an afterthought, but not quite; it is a more precise and specific attempt to indicate the place. All these commas and dashes have a syntactic function and intonationally correspond to longer or shorter pauses. The syntax is very natural and markedly colloquial.

Sentence (4) is another long sentence in Bulgarian, and Holman divides it into two sentences in English.

(4) a. *Vsički me znaexa če si ne popljuvam,*
everyone me knew.p.3rd.pl that dat.reflex. not spit.pr.1st.s
'Everyone knew me, and when I took anything on, there was no messing about.'

Haitov's (4)a contains the colloquial idiom *ne si popljuvam*, which Haitov gives a further folksiness by inverting the clitics *ne* and *si*. *Si* is prosodically stressed when preceded by *ne*, the emphasis actually being on the negation, but in Haitov's version there is also prominence on the lexical verb *popljuvam*, giving added emphasis to this idiom. One dictionary translates the idiom as "call a spade a spade; stand no nonsense" (Philipov 2003). These, especially the first, apply to verbal behavior which is decisive, but the meaning can refer to other types of decisive behavior that is carried out without delay. Another dictionary gives: "stick at nothing, stand no nonsense; handle without mittens/gloves" (Boyanova & Ilieva 2002). Folk etymology traces the origin of the idiom to "I don't waste time spitting on my hands before getting down to starting the job." Holman's translation then, "there was no messing about," is effective but more modest in not mentioning explicitly that "I" is the

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decisive and efficient guy. The second half of sentence (4) has the literal translation: 'so that when someone was planning to steal himself a woman, they called me.'

(4) b. *ta štom njakoj se nakaneše da si krade žena—*
so that when someone refl. plan.p.3rd.s that dat.reflex. steal.pr.3rd.s woman

vikaxa mene.
call.p.3rd.pl me

'If a bride needed stealing, it was me they called in.'

The *ta* and *štom* are mildly colloquial adverbial conjunctions more suitable in an oral delivery, versus the more formal/neutral *taka če* and *kogato*. The same is more or less true of the lexical choice *nakanja se*. As there is no infinitive in Bulgarian, Haitov uses a *da*-finite clause. Holman does have a choice and his choice is an interesting one: instead of opting for an infinitive clause, he uses the vernacular *need*-passive. This puts 'bride' in thematic position and omits the actor entirely. The result is to put the emphasis on the narrator's role, de-emphasizing any decisions by a potential bridegroom. The spotlight here is on the narrator. Holman also makes the lexical choice of 'bride' instead of the more generic 'woman'. This may be a bid to his English-speaking audience who would not have a reference for bride-stealing. The final part of (4)b illustrates Holman's deft ability to render the colloquial flavor of the original. In the Bulgarian *vikaxa mene*, the 'me' is emphasized by giving it Rhematic prominence and using the full stressed form of the pronoun, not the weaker *me*. Holman makes the syntactic choice of a cleft sentence, playing on the nonstandard import of this phrasing.

The first part of sentence (5) would get the literal translation: 'getting married then did not occur with cajoling.' *Kandarma* is a recognizable Turkish borrowing but one that is known to every Bulgarian speaker. Holman takes an entirely different tack on this, using the quaint phrase 'cooings and wooings' with its assonant rhyming. This lends the English version a cuteness, one that is to be denied in those "manly times."

(5) a. *ženeneto ne stavaše togava s kandarmi—*
wedding-the not occur.p.3rd.s then with cajole.pl [Turk.]
'No time for cooings and wooings'

The end of sentence (5) is a restatement of the title. Haitov plays this up by setting off the phrase *v onija məžki vremena* 'in those manly times' with a dash, a punctuation, however, that is far more common in Bulgarian than in English, representing a pause, in this case an afterthought. Still Holman decides to not make use of the dash; indeed, he uses no punctuation at all between the main clause and the phrase that contains the title. To "when men were men" Holman adds the prepositional phrase "in those far-off days," an addition that rounds out the English nicely.

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(5) b. *v onija məžki vremena.*
in those manly times
'in those far-off days when men were men.'

Haitov's statement of sentence (6) is straightforward: "I had a neighbor." Once again, this is very story-like, introducing the character of his neighbor. And here again, Haitov uses the Turkish borrowing *komšija* instead of the native Bulgarian *səsed*; as with *kardarma*, this Turkish word has made its way into the general vocabulary of Bulgarian speakers. Holman brings a distinctly colloquial flavor to this statement, beginning with 'this' instead of the more standard indefinite article which he follows with the double genitive "of mine." The resulting NP has a nonstandard feel.

(6) *imax edin komšija,*
have.p.1st.s one/a neighbor [Turk.]
'This neighbour of mine'

While the Bulgarian divides the idea into two independent clauses, using what would be a comma splice in English (but not in Bulgarian) to separate the two clauses, Holman poses this as a single clause, one that assumes decoder knowledge, bringing an intimacy to the statement. To this Holman puts the verb in the nonstandard "had took," followed by the noun phrase "a fancy" to form the expression 'to take a fancy to'. By contrast, Haitov simply says 'had liked'. And while Haitov again uses the generic *žena* 'woman', Holman makes the lexical choice of "young lass." The total effect is that the English version is more familiar, more in line with orality.

(7) *xaresal be v Nastan edna žena*
had liked.3rd.s in Nastan one/a woman,
'had took a fancy to a young lass in Nastan,'

In (8), the freer word order of Bulgarian allows Haitov to phrase the idea in a way that sounds very natural in oral conversation. This word order is not possible in English, so Holman must choose another way to construe this same notion. He does this with the colloquial "he called me round."

(8) *ta me vednaž izvika toj:*
so me once call.p.3rd.s he
'and one day he called me round.'

Sentence (8) is followed by dialogue, which Haitov sets off with a colon and Holman paragraphs after a full stop. In (9), *kazvaj* is the imperfective aspect verb in the imperative, which is a more urgent and impatient order/request, as well as more colloquial, compared with the perfective imperative *kaži*. *Da ja dokarame do* is a colloquial expression, with its choice of the verb, and especially the 3rd person singular accusative feminine pronoun *ja*,

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possibly referring to an ellipted feminine *rabota* 'business'. Holman finds an opportunity to use the Turkish word *hodja* 'Muslim cleric', which is not in the original.

(9) *—Kazvaj kakvo šte iskaš, za da ja dokarame do svatba!*
say what will want.pr.2nd.s in order to it bring.pr.1st.p to wedding
"'What would be your price,' he asked, 'for bringing her to the *hodja*?'"

Sentence (10) is the narrator's reply. The Bulgarian *vikam*, whose basic meaning is 'shout', is used here as a casual way of saying 'say'. This is the colloquial historical present tense, 'says'. Holman often uses 'I says' to achieve a similar effect, but in this first piece of dialogue he does not tag the narrator response. '*troitsa*' is a folksy, homely word for 'three people', the standard of which would be the stylistically-neutral and colorless *trima*. Holman again eliminates the verb 'give me' and imparts the informal flavor of the original '*troitsa*' by the use of 'mates'. Holman's numbers are a little less specific: Haitov uses the actual numerals, while Holman writes out 'a hundred', 'a couple of hundred', and 'five hundred'. While Haitov says, "your wedding is ready," Holman renders this "she's yours."

(10) a. *Daj— vikam— na troitsa po 100 leva, 200 leva otdelno za piene,*
give-imper. say.pr.1st.s to three each 100 levs 200 levs separately for drink
'A hundred levs each for me and my two mates, plus a couple of hundred extra for drink.'
b. *ta vsičko 500 i svatbata ti e gotova*
so altogether 500 and wedding.the your be.pr.3rd.s ready
'Five hundred and she's yours.'

5. FILM. The film, directed by Edward Zahariev, also entitled *Măžki Vremena* with a script written by Haitov himself, shifts to the nonverbal for the construal of experience; with little dialogue, there is a reliance on facial close-ups and long, sweeping panoramas of mountain vistas to create meaning. While the written tale, in both Bulgarian and English, is a first person narrative, ironically perhaps, the film does not attempt to impart the skaz style; it gives the viewer knowledge the narrator does not have, at times focusing on the inner thoughts of other characters, especially the stolen bride, whose animated face communicates vividly her inner turmoil, fear, and determination. Thus a different impression is made by the film translation of the story. This is due to several factors: 1) the transfer from the linguistic/literary to the visual/cinematic medium; 2) the decision of the author/script writer to combine two stories into one, involving changes in plot, character development, and the time span covered; 3) political factors; and 4) the choice of actors.

A look at the opening scene illustrates some of the cinematic and script decisions made. The film begins with a close-in shot of the main character shaving. We view him as from within the shaving mirror: his face is full of concentration and his dark eyes, fully dilated, gaze intently into the mirror/at the camera. One side of his face is in shadow. The sound track is silent, directing the attention of the viewer totally toward the visage of the hero. This is the face of a rugged man in mid-life but at the height of his virility, handsome and seasoned—not young and impulsive. After several prolonged minutes in this intimate focus,

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the camera shifts to the two mates and the bridegroom making preparations to depart. Still inside a dark stable, we follow the hero as he struts up an inner staircase, striding two steps at a time. Within these first few minutes, the director projects an assertive, self-confident hero; by contrast the other three men are barely distinguishable figures moving about in the shadows, and only later are we able to sort out their roles.

Foreshadowing where the men are going, the camera pans to a window beyond which the surrounding mountains shine brightly, in sharp contrast to the barely visible gloom of the stable interior. The camera lingers briefly and then swings back to the hero's preparations: he cinches on a wide leather girdle; throws a knife into a thigh holster; fondles another knife strapped to his calf; picks up a large revolver, checks to see if it's loaded, and then stuffs it into his waist; gently unloops a fob watch that dangles from a nail; scoops a pile of coins from a shelf into his palm and pockets them. Finally he strides over to the wall, takes a coil of rope from a hook, and tosses it to a mate. We see each of these actions in close-up isolation. There is no story yet, only the fine details of setting the scene.

As the men climb a narrow dirt path out of the village and up into the mountains, the title and credits scroll and the sound track softly nudges its way into our consciousness, quiet piano tinkling and the sounds of nature: the clop of the mule's hooves; the thump of soft-leather shoes; the bark of a dog—but no voices. These are taciturn men. The hero commands respect with his mere presence—in contrast to the bravado voice of the narrator of the written tale. The voice in his head that is articulated in the written skaz style can only be intimated on screen by his expressive face and his body language.

Unlike the skaz tales, the film does not single-mindedly follow the hero. Almost immediately the quartet of men leave the village and begin their trek; the camera sweeps, in long lingering panoramic shots, across the peaks and valleys, settling on an isolated farm compound nestled at the base of a hill. The camera pauses and then slowly zooms in on the farmyard. We see a pretty, young woman doing chores. Suddenly the camera jerks to a young man out on the mountain whizzing through trees, dashing over rocks, leaping obstacles, and careening into the door of the farm compound. He bolts through the outer door, slams it shut and latches it. In a single stride he grabs the startled woman and yanks her inside the house. This is our first glimpse of the bride, and in that few seconds, she communicates both a vulnerability and a self-composed stubbornness. In contrast to the written stories, in the film the bride becomes a main character. The director allows her to present herself; thus we see the bride through her own expressions—and later her own extensive words—a person in her own right, not just a creation of the hero/narrator.

A major deviation in the film is the decision to combine two short stories: "When Men Were Men" and a quite different tale with a different narrator entitled "The Wedding." The merging of the two stories is not seamless, and when the film shifts to the latter tale, the storyline becomes muddied. For our purposes here, however, the effect of this merger is a hero who is more mature, both in years and in maturity of action, than the one in Haitov's original "*Məžki Vremena,*" and he is most definitely not the swaggering braggart of Holman's "When Men Were Men." This more mature central character is less impulsive, more responsible—definitely no longer "a right daredevil." He is also more of a romantic. As the film progresses and the attempts of the bride to escape become more frantic, the

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hero becomes increasingly sympathetic to, even concerned about, her plight, and in the end becomes her rescuer. In the penultimate scene before the film shifts to "The Wedding," the hero and the bride struggle across a raging stream where they are swept into the current. After the hero carries her safely to the opposite shore, the camera pans in on what is perhaps the longest of many long close-up sequences: the bride gazes with utter adoration, for a disquieting length of time, into the hero's eyes, strokes his cheek, and finally they kiss. This is not the raunchy lust of the written tales but pure, romantic worship. This bride is not trying to buy her way out of a bad deal; she is absolutely and utterly in love with the hero, whose actions are tender rather than lascivious.

Haitov wrote "When Men Were Men" in the 1960s. By the time the film was produced in 1977, the political climate had changed. Bulgarian policy on 'the national question' had been and continued to be inconsistent and not very successful. Though minorities had even been given minor privileges at times, the so-called *Vuzroditelen Protses* ('revival process' or 'renaissance') was an attempt to assimilate the Turkish, and other, minorities into a single Bulgarian-ness. This process began in the 1970s and culminated in the mid-1980s with the forceful change of Muslim names, resulting in mass emigration to Turkey. Thus, at the time the film was being produced the push for a Bulgarian national identity was at its height,[7] explaining the shift in characters' names and dress from Muslim to traditional Christian Orthodox Bulgarian.

Finally, in the film, the characters become flesh and blood, and the choice of actors is an important element in the construal of meaning. The most essential choice is, of course, the main character, the narrator in the written stories. Grigor Vachkov (1932–1980) was an extremely popular film and theater actor, a factor most likely in the decision to cast him in this role. His performance is superb, but his age and maturity make his portrayal of the main character diverge widely from that of the skaz narrator. Mariana Divitrova (1954–2005) was also a veteran of film and theater. Her recreation of the stolen bride is sassy and assertive, and her age seems more in line with the written versions. Both actors are very natural on the screen, a feat not always carried off so well by Bulgarian actors.

6. CONCLUSION. Recreating the meaning of a text in another language, let alone another medium, results in something which is, at least to some extent, different from the original. This is a truism. Most of us in principle subscribe to the doctrine of translatability; otherwise there would be no communication across languages. However, we also know that, except for some trivial cases, no translation is one hundred per cent successful, in the sense of faithful to the original. This is at least partly due to the complex and multi-layered nature of meaning. There are various kinds of meaning and some are easier to translate than other. As we move along the conceptual/universal end of the scale towards those aspects of meaning which are more closely tied-up with language-specific means of expression (stylistic, pragmatic, sound/meaning relating effects) and with culture-specific peculiarities, translation becomes more and more difficult. The divisions between the different kinds of meaning, however, are not watertight. The various aspects of meaning work together and

[7] See Crampton 1987:204–206 for a fuller discussion.

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complement each other in the creation of the overall effect. They are often difficult to differentiate from each other. That is why we prefer to speak of a scale or a continuum rather than of discrete categories. The genetic and cultural distance between the source and the target language is another restricting factor (Shurbanov 2004).

In this paper, we have analyzed some of the ways meaning is created and recreated as we view experience through the lens of different modes of expression. Each time a story is told, its construal of experience changes. Haitov's original Bulgarian short story imparts a young, dashing hero. His voice is all we hear, as Haitov has chosen to tell the tale in the skaz style of a first person narrator. As told by this bold and assertive character, the story of stealing a bride takes on the flavor of a youthful prank gone wrong. Holman's English translation presents essentially the same tale, but the very act of translating into another language forces Holman to make choices in style, and pitch the story for another audience. In the process, Holman amplifies Haitov's dynamic hero into a distinctly macho one, and the smooth narrative style of the original takes on a more energetic movement that has a rapid bullet-like effect. In contrast to both print versions, the film gives us a hero who is more mature and romantic. More importantly, the film allows the viewer to access the story from a perspective other than that of the narrator.

The exotic and primitive world of the tucked-away Rhodope hamlets, with their houses scattered wide apart, has been criticized as conservative and even retrograde, but Haitov's wild tales have proved immensely popular with the Bulgarian readers and have gone through innumerable editions. They have also provided the base for several Bulgarian films. This success is probably at least partly due to the fact that with their strong, romantic, fully-rounded characters of high integrity, they offer a counterpoint to the modern consumer society. We believe that in their English and film versions Haitov's *Wild Tales* have a lot to offer to the world at large too.

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