

BEISPIEL / BY-PLAY IN HEGEL'S WRITINGS

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Abstract. *In the sense-certainty chapter of the Phenomenology of Spirit, we find one of Hegel's famous puns, which utilizes homophonic affinities and differences between the verb beiherspielen and the noun Beispiel. I argue that the effect of this pun is that the word Beispiel acquires, beyond its usual meaning of 'example' or 'instance', the meaning of a play of something inessential, a play in passing. After reviewing all available translations into English, I suggest that, in order to preserve this wordplay, one can translate Beispiel as 'by-play'. Furthermore, I analyse other occurrences of the word beiherspielen in the Phenomenology and elsewhere in Hegel's texts. Next, I focus on the crucial importance of this pun for Derrida's interpretation and critique of Hegel's dialectic. Only for a certain loose translation of beiherspielen does Derrida's reasoning appear plausible. I conclude with a discussion of the ideal of terminological uniformity in translating Hegel's texts. In preserving the wordplay by translating Beispiel as 'by-play', one is forced to sacrifice the uniformity of translation.*

Keywords. *Hegel; translation; pun; example; by-play*

The classical definition of a pun is «to treat homonyms as synonyms»¹. Hegel is well known for his creative use of language, especially for his puns or wordplays². These puns make substantial use of the intricacies of the German language. They serve not only to poetically enliven an otherwise ponderous text, but also as rhetorical devices, usually expressing a philosophical point. Obviously, such linguistic and philosophical factors may pose

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¹ W. Redfern, *Puns*, London, Blackwell, 1984, p. 17.

² On his university webpage, Marshall Brown provides a useful list of these puns in Hegel's *Phenomenology*: <http://faculty.washington.edu/mbrown/hegel.puns.pdf> (accessed 29 Sep. 2019).

challenges for translators. In this article, I want to closely look at one of these puns, which utilizes homophonic affinities and differences between the verb *beiherspielen* and the noun *Beispiel*³. We find this pun in the sense-certainty chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but there are echoes elsewhere in the *Phenomenology* and in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*. My aim here is twofold. Firstly, I will present, compare and evaluate available English translations of the passages in question. Secondly, I will discuss the philosophical relevance of this pun for our understanding of the sense-certainty chapter and other passages in Hegel's work. Moreover, I will consider modern deconstructive interpretations of Hegel's system which draw on this specific pun.

1. Beiherspielen and Beispiel in the Phenomenology of Spirit

Let me begin with the original passage from the *Phenomenology*⁴:

¶92 An dem *reinen Sein* aber, welches das Wesen dieser Gewißheit ausmacht, und welches sie als ihre Wahrheit aussagt, **spielt**, wenn wir zusehen, noch vieles andere **beihert**. Eine wirkliche sinnliche Gewißheit ist nicht nur diese reine Unmittelbarkeit, sondern ein **Beispiel** derselben⁵.

³ One may wonder whether there is any etymological connection between these terms. It must be stressed that any suggested etymological link is highly tenuous. The German word *Beispiel* does not derive from *Spiel*, but rather from the old German root **spel* which means 'narrative', 'saying' or 'tale'. We can recognize the same root in the English words 'spell', 'spelling' or even 'gospel' (God's/good story). The connection between *Spiel* and *Beispiel* comes only from Middle High German. An etymologically proper translation of *Beispiel* would be 'by-spell'. Cf. *Beispiel*, in W. Pfeifer et al., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, 1993, <https://www.dwds.de/wb/Beispiel> (accessed 2 Oct. 2019).

⁴ Italics are always original; I have highlighted in bold the expressions that make up the relevant pun, and I shall follow this convention throughout this article. I refer to the *Phenomenology* by paragraph (¶) number and insert such numbers even in editions where they originally do not appear.

⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9, ed. by W. Bonsiepen and R. Heede, Hamburg, Meiner, 1980, p. 64.

The core of the first sentence is: «An dem reinen Sein [...] spielt [...] noch vieles andere beiher». The verb *beiherspielen* is a compound of the preposition *beiber* and the main verb *spielen*. In most contexts, *spielen* can be unproblematically rendered as ‘to play’. The preposition *beiber* is, however, rather peculiar and uncommon, and was in Hegel’s time too⁶. There are a few occurrences in Lessing⁷ in the sense of ‘something inessential in addition to’. There is also the compound *beihersagen*, which means ‘to say something in passing’. The usual translation of *Beispiel* is ‘example’. However, given this specific context, the word *Beispiel* acquires, beyond its usual meaning, the meaning of the substantivized form of *beiherspielen*, that is, as we will see later, *das Beiherspielende*: a play of something inessential, a play in passing, a by-play. This is confirmed in the next paragraph, where Hegel makes a distinction between *Wesen* and *Beispiel*:

¶93 Diesen Unterschied des Wesens und des **Beispiels**, der Unmittelbarkeit und der Vermittlung, machen nicht nur wir, sondern wir finden ihn an der sinnlichen Gewißheit selbst [...]⁸.

The distinction between *Wesen*/essence and *Beispiel* makes sense only if *Beispiel* expresses something inessential, possibly in addition to its usual meaning of instance⁹. The word *Beispiel* acquires in itself a certain dialectical opposition between an instance

⁶ More common German prepositions with similar meanings are *nebenbei* and *nebenher*. The latter is closer to *beiber*, whereas *nebenbei* has devaluating connotations which *beiber* does not.

⁷ In *Nathan der Weise*, 2.2 and *Emilia Galotti*, 4.7.

⁸ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 64.

⁹ Warminski thinks that, on later occasions, Hegel uses *Beispiel* as ‘instance’, i.e. in its normal usage: «That ‘an actual sense-certainty is not only this pure immediacy, but an example (*Beispiel*) of it’ means both ‘by-play’ – particular, inessential and so on – and ‘example’ as it later appears in the text (and as in its ‘normal’ usage)» (A. Warminski, *Readings in Interpretation: Hölderlin, Hegel, Heidegger*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 177). I think, in contrast, that *Beispiel* appears in both meanings in ¶93.

of essence and a play of something inessential. The challenge for a translator is to preserve this dialectical tension.

1.1. Translations into English

There are two older translations of the *Phenomenology*: James Baillie's from 1910 and Arnold Miller's from 1970. Moreover, there are three recent translations: Terry Pinkard's from 2018 (drafts of this translation have been available online since 2008), Michael Inwood's from 2018 and Peter Fuss and John Dobbins's from 2019. Beside these, there is a translation of the section on consciousness by Kenneth Westphal from 2016 and a translation of the sense-certainty chapter by Kenley Dove from 2001¹⁰. Here are the translations of the passage in question:

Baillie (1910):

¶92 But, when we look closely, there **is** a good deal more **implied** in that bare pure being, which constitutes the kernel of this form of certainty, and is given out by it as its truth. A concrete actual certainty of sense is not merely this pure immediacy, but an **example**, an **instance**, of that immediacy.

[...]

¶93 It is not only we who make this distinction of essential truth and **particular example**, of essence and instance, immediacy and mediation; we *find* it in sense-certainty itself

[...].

Miller (1970):

¶92 But when we look carefully at this *pure being* which constitutes the essence of this certainty, and which this

¹⁰ I have tried as far as possible to list and consider all translations of the *Phenomenology* or at least of the sense-certainty chapter. There are many more translations of these paragraphs spread throughout Hegel scholarship. Cf., for example, H.S. Harris's translation and commentary in *Hegel's Ladder (I: The Pilgrimage of Reason)*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997, p. 213) where the pun is preserved, or Derrida's translation, discussed below. I cannot consider all such translations here.

certainty pronounces to be its truth, we see that much more **is involved**. An actual sense-certainty is not merely this pure immediacy, but an *instance* of it.

[...]

¶93 It is not just we who make this distinction between essence and **instance**, between immediacy and mediation; on the contrary, we find it within sense-certainty itself [...].

Dove (2001):

¶92 In *pure being*, however, which constitutes the essence of this certainty and which this mode of knowing claims as its truth, there **is** a good deal more **at play** when we look on. An actual case of sense-certainty not only is this pure immediacy, but also **plays the role of being an example** of it.

[...]

¶93 This distinction of essence and **example**, of immediacy and mediation, is not merely one that we make; we find it in sense-certainty itself [...].

Westphal (2016):

¶92 If we look closely, however, much more **is involved** in this *pure being* which constitutes the essence of this certainty, and which it pronounces as its truth. An actual sense certainty is not only this pure immediacy, but an *example* of it.

[...]

¶93 This difference between essence and **example**, between immediacy and mediation, isn't made just by us, rather we find it within sense certainty itself [...].

Inwood (2018):

¶92 But in this *pure Being*, which constitutes the essence of this certainty, and which this certainty claims to be its truth, much more **comes into play**, if we look. An actual sensory certainty is not just this pure immediacy, but an *exemplifying by-play* of it.

[...]

¶93 It is not just we who draw this distinction between the essence and the **byplay**, between immediacy and mediation; we find it in sensory certainty itself [...].

Pinkard (2018):

¶92 However, if we take a look at it there **is** a good deal more **in play** in this *pure being* which constitutes the essence of this certainty and which declares it to be its truth. An actual sensuous-certainty is not only this pure immediacy but also an **example** of it.

[...]

¶93 It is not only we who make this difference of essence and **example**, of immediacy and mediation. Rather, it is that we find this difference in sensuous-certainty itself [...].

Fuss and Dobbins (2019):

¶92 Yet as we watch, we see that a lot more **is in play** in the ‘sheer being’ that constitutes this certainty’s essence and that it asserts as its truth. In actual occurrence sense-certainty isn’t just ‘pure immediacy,’ but rather an **instance** of such.

[...]

¶93 It is not just we who make this distinction between essence and **instance**, between immediacy and mediation; on the contrary, we find it within sense-certainty itself [...].¹¹

¹¹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by J.B. Baillie, Mineola, New York, Dover Publications, 2003, p. 55.

Id., *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 59.

Id., ‘Sense-Certainty’, from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Chapter 1*, trans. by K.R. Dove, «The Philosophical Forum», XXXII (4), 2001, p. 400.

K. Westphal, *The Beginning of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit: Introduction (Einleitung) and Consciousness: Sense Certainty, Perception, Force & Understanding*, «The Owl of Minerva», XLVII (1-2), 2015-2016, p. 16.

We can see that Pinkard's, Inwood's, Fuss and Dobbins's and Dove's translations render *beiherspielen* as 'being in play' or 'coming into play'. They preserve the term *Spiel* ('play') from the original *beiherspielen*. The other translations use other verbs ('implied', 'involved') which are not etymologically related to play. The pun is lost here. If *Beispiel* is translated as 'instance' or 'example', there is no homophonic relation to 'play' from the previous sentence. Here too the pun is not preserved¹². The only translation that preserves 'play' in both cases is Inwood's, which renders *Beispiel* as «exemplifying by-play», and as 'by-play' in the second paragraph. Inwood's translation sustains the dual meaning of *Beispiel*: 'example' and 'by-play'. In ¶93, *Beispiel* means both example in our normal usage (exemplifying 'this pure immediacy' of essence) and 'by-play' (of accidental moments). Inwood's translation as «exemplifying by-play» is an attempt to preserve both meanings.

1.2. *Beiherspielen* elsewhere in Hegel's texts

Later in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel uses the verb *beiherspielen* or its substantivized forms *das Beiherspielende* and *ein Beiherspielen* in a privative manner and in contrast to essence or substance. In sense-certainty, the wealth of sensory knowledge is *only* in play beside it ('nur das Beiherspielende') (¶112). The translations are: 'merely

G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit: Translated with introduction and commentary*, trans. by M. Inwood, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 43-44.

Id., *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by T. Pinkard, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 61.

Id., *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by P. Fuss and J. Dobbins, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2019, p. 49.

¹² Similarly to Pinkard, the following French translations – by Jean Hyppolite (1941), Bernard Bourgeois (2006), Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (2012) – preserve, in various ways, 'play'/'jeu' in *beiherspielen*, but convey *Beispiel* as 'un exemple'.

G.W.F. Hegel, *La Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, trans. by J. Hyppolite, Paris, Aubier, 1941, pp. 82-83.

Id., *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, trans. by B. Bourgeois, Paris, Vrin, 2006, pp. 132-133.

Id., *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, trans. by J.-P. Lefebvre, Paris, Flammarion, 2012.

alongside' (Baillie), 'source of instances' (Miller), 'merely incidental' (Westphal), 'only ancillary' (Pinkard), 'only in play beside' (Inwood), 'merely an abundance of instances' (Fuss and Dobbins). Miller and Fuss and Dobbins, in my view mistakenly, translate *das Beiherspielende* as 'instance', which does not capture *Beiherspielen* at all. All other translations render the accidental moment. On top of that, Inwood also preserves the moment of play.

Later, in the section on religion, Hegel alludes to the sense-certainty chapter when he writes:

¶687 Der Inhalt, den dies reine Sein entwickelt, oder sein Wahrnehmen ist daher ein wesenloses Beiherspielen an dieser Substanz, die nur *aufgeht*, ohne in sich *niederzugehen*, Subjekt zu werden und durch das Selbst ihre Unterschiede zu befestigen¹³.

Baillie translates «ein wesenloses Beiherspielen» with the verb 'play', Miller renders it as «an essenceless by-play», Pinkard similarly as «an essenceless byplay», Inwood surprisingly less aptly as «an essenceless sideshow» and Fuss and Dobbins, quite oddly, as «a manner of instantiation that has no essence».

Similar wordings can be found in Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*, translated by Thomas Knox. Art can have various external purposes and then be «a mere passing amusement»¹⁴ («ein bloßes Beiherspielen»). In conscious symbolism, the meaning is primary, and its concrete visualization (*Verbildlichung*) «is only something accessory and an accompaniment to it»¹⁵ («nur das Danebenstehende und Beiherspielende»). Forms should only appear in genuine works of art «as mere accessories»¹⁶ («als ein bloßes Beiwesen beiherspielen»). In the classical mode of representation, «here and

¹³ Id., *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 371.

¹⁴ Id., *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. by T.M. Knox, 2 vols., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 7.

¹⁵ Ivi, p. 381.

¹⁶ Ivi, p. 396.

there some symbolic ingredients have their part to play too»¹⁷ («symbolische Ingredienzen beiherspielen»). When Hegel speaks of rhyme in poetry, he says that the artistic imagination, by focusing on the spiritual meaning, strips away the corporeal side of language and leaves it as «insignificant by-play»¹⁸ («unbedeutend beiherspielen»). Although such sensuous forms have «only a subordinate part to play»¹⁹ in communication («die sinnliche Seite der Mitteilung das nur Beiherspielende bleibt»), they provide material for artistic treatment by the poet. As we see, Knox translates *beiherspielen* as something accidental (passing, accessory, accompaniment, insignificant, subordinate), but occasionally preserves the moment of play (part to play, by-play). Each occurrence of *beiherspielen* is translated differently. In the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, however, Hegel seems neither to be using this expression in any technical sense nor alluding to his usage in the *Phenomenology*.

It has often been observed that the meanings of some of Hegel's key terms are close to those of their etymological German, Latin or Greek equivalents. Before moving on to a discussion of the philosophical relevance of the wordplay in question, I would like to note the etymological affinity between Hegel's usage of *Beispiel* and *beiherspielen* and the (old) Greek term *para-deigma*. The prefix *beiher* has a meaning close to the Greek prefix *para*, whose meaning revolves around 'from the side of', 'from beside' and 'alongside'²⁰. It might be that Hegel, in coining this prefix, aimed to approximate the Greek *para*. In that case, however, there is a way of understanding the by-play as a mediation between a singular example and a universal paradigm/model. That is what I shall argue for in the next section.

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 432.

¹⁸ Ivi, p. 1023.

¹⁹ Ivi, p. 964.

²⁰ Cf. the entry on 'παρά' in H. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1889, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0058:entry=para/> (accessed 24 Oct. 2019).

2. *By-play as a mediation between singular and universal*

In ¶92, Hegel states that the essence of a sense-certainty is pure being, a pure this, a pure singular. But there is something more in play: a host of distinct qualities («Menge unterschiedlicher Beschaffenheiten») of the I and the object. The pure certainty is thus mediated by the I and the object with all their accidental properties. But what does the by-play mediate? I argue elsewhere²¹ in detail that essenceless by-play is the mediation between the singular this and the universal moment of the concept. By-play is, thus, the particular which mediates between the singular and the universal.

In today's usage, an example exemplifies the essential properties of what it is an example of. The table I am now sitting at exemplifies the essence of the universal concept of a table (having some legs, a tabletop, etc.). This table also has accidental properties that do not belong to the essence of the concept of a table (having exactly four legs, being made of wood, etc.). Another example of a table must exemplify the same essence but can have different accidental properties (having one leg, being made of metal, etc.). To make an example of a table, one can take *any* table, *whatever* table. Its accidental properties do not matter; what matters are the essential properties. Being an example also suggests that there is something more, that there are other examples that have different accidental properties. An example, even in its usual usage, is never a pure singularity. That is, incidentally, the reason why the translation of *Beispiel* as 'example' or 'instance' is not quite wrong and does not render the passage as a whole incomprehensible.²² Only the accidental or inessential moment of the by-play gets lost. In one sense, an essenceless by-play is the negation of the essence. However, in this essenceless by-play, accidental properties do matter. They, in some sense, become essential. More generally, in the

²¹ J. Mácha, *Reverberating the glas: Towards a Deconstructive Account of Particularity in Hegel's Logic of the Concept*, «Hegel Bulletin» (forthcoming).

²² Cf. Robert Brandom's discussion of ¶92 – quoted in Miller's translation – in his *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2019, p. 116.

dialectical process, the accident becomes the essence and, conversely, the essence becomes the accident. This twofold becoming is what Catherine Malabou calls *plasticity*²³.

2.1. Deconstructive perspective

Let us move now to Derrida's deconstructive interpretation of Hegel. This final section is a kind of case study illustrating the importance of translation decisions. Hegel's redefinition of *Beispiel* as both example and by-play is a crucial part of Derrida's argument in *Glas*, his book-length interpretation of Hegel's philosophy. Moreover, the dialectical or speculative nature of examples is one of the key insights driving Derrida's deconstructive project. Derrida repeatedly notes that an example points at something beyond its singularity. An example is never singular. Here is an illustrative passage:

What example? This one. And certainly, when I say this very example, I already say something more and something else; I say something which goes beyond the *tode ti*, the this of the example. The example itself, as such, overflows its singularity as much as its identity²⁴.

Similar formulations can be found throughout Derrida's writings. The singularity of an example is its essence. In overflowing this singularity, it, thus, overflows its essence: that is, a play of accidental moments, an essenceless by-play. Derrida then focuses on the logic of this by-play, that is, on how it is supposed to reach the general law which is the universal moment of the concept. The by-play can be conceived as a series of examples that issue in an exemplary example or 'the exemplarity of the example', i.e. a universal paradigm/model. This is, in a nutshell, how the initially singular example becomes the universal concept.

²³ C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. by L. Doring, London, Routledge, 2005.

²⁴ J. Derrida, *Passions: 'An Oblique Offering'*, in *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, ed. by D. Wood, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, pp. 5-35, p. 15.

This straightforward passage is complicated by the fact that the distinction between the essence and the by-play/*Beispiel* (asserted at the beginning of ¶93 above) is not clear. It is, rather, obscure and fluctuating (or ‘plastic’) in the by-play. Some essential properties may become accidental; they may, so to speak, be drawn into the by-play. If so, it is conceivable that the whole essence could turn into an accident. The by-play would absorb the essence. What would be left is a pure accident that never achieves the status of universal concept. The by-play would negate the dialectic. Derrida, in fact, considers this negation when he says that the logic of exemplarity can lead to an ‘abyss’²⁵.

What is important for present purposes is that Derrida finds support for his argument in Hegel’s discussion of the luminous essence in the *Phenomenology*. Derrida argues that the luminous essence is, in fact, a pure being without essence. His main reference is ¶687, quoted above:

[The all-burning is] an essenceless by-play, pure accessory of the substance that *rises* without ever *setting* (*ein wesenloses Beiherspielen an dieser Substanz, die nur aufgeht, ohne in sich niederzugeben*), without becoming a subject, and without consolidating through the self (*Selbst*) its differences.

(The German wording in the round brackets is provided by Derrida himself). He goes on:

A pure essenceless by-play, a play that plays limitlessly, even though it is already destined to work in the service of essence and sense. But as such, supposing that ‘as such’ can be said of something that is not some thing, this play does not yet work, does not yet have any onto-theo-teleological horizon: fire artist without being. The word itself (*Beiherspielen*) plays

²⁵ J. Derrida and E. Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow ... (A Dialogue)*, trans. by J. Fort, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2004, p. 120. Elsewhere, Derrida uses expressions such as ‘explosion’, ‘explosive surprise’, ‘gelignite dynamite’, ‘absolute interruption’, ‘the Absolute Other’, ‘the uncontrollable as such’, ‘the unsteadiness’.

the example (*Beispiel*) beside the essence. Here the pure example plays *beside* the essence so much, holds itself so diverted from [*à l'écart de*] the essence, that it has no essence: pure example, without essence, without law. Therefore without example, like God about which Hegel says that an example cannot be made, but because he, God, merges with the pure essence, pure essence is also without example²⁶.

What is of interest for present purposes is not the plausibility of Derrida's reasoning, but translational issues pertaining to these passages. Both texts, the quotation from the *Phenomenology* and Derrida's comment, were translated into English by John Leavey and Richard Rand, and published in 1986. The translators did not make use of any existing translation of Hegel, but apparently translated into English Derrida's own translation into French. Derrida translates *wesenloses Beiberspielen* as «un jeu sans essence, pur accessoire», whereas Jean Hyppolite's translation, which was available in the 1970s, renders the passage as «un jeu sans essence, accessoire». Leavey and Rand translate *wesenloses Beiberspielen* as «essenceless by-play, pure accessory». The addendum 'pure accessory', which does not occur in Hegel's text, prioritizes Derrida's critical interpretation of Hegel's dialectic. Why 'pure accessory'? Hegel's position is clear: he thinks that there is a 'pure being' and «essenceless by-play» in addition or as an accessory to it. To call this accessory *pure* suggests that there might exist only this accessory without any essence, i.e. a pure accident – a rupture in the dialectical process. This is what Derrida's interpretation is getting at.

Another translational issue related to Derrida's interpretation is this: Derrida connects the dialectics between essence and by-play from ¶92 with the essenceless by-play of the luminous essence from ¶687. He understands the two occurrences of *beiberspielen*, in ¶92 and ¶687, in the same sense. To comprehend Derrida's interpretation, one has to translate both occurrences uniformly – or at least preserve the root word 'play'. As we see above, only Pinkard's translation fulfils this condition.

²⁶ J. Derrida, *Glas*, trans. by J. Leavey Jr. and R. Rand, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1986, pp. 238-239.

3. *Concluding remarks*

I do not want to suggest that one translation is superior to another in all respects. Each of the proposals discussed above has some merits and translates this or that passage more aptly than another. The same is true for the older translations by Baillie and Miller. It is obvious that each translation depends on the translator's grasp of the text and their particular interpretation. Hegel uses everyday words (*Begriff*, *aufheben*, *Geist*, *Wirklichkeit*, etc.), but sometimes gives them a very technical meaning, or rather a plurality of meanings. On the one hand, to preserve the everydayness, the translator can decide which meaning is the right one in a given context. This means, however, that the terminological uniformity of the text cannot be preserved (*aufheben* can be translated, depending on the context, as 'cancel', 'elevate', 'abolish', 'supersede' and so forth). This was Baillie's and Miller's choice. On the other hand, the translator may aim to preserve the uniformity rather than the everydayness (translating *aufheben* uniformly as 'sublate'). This is, at least to a certain extent, what the modern translations strive for²⁷.

Our wordplay puts this either-or choice between uniformity and everydayness into question. *Beispiel* is a very common German word and there is an equally common English counterpart, 'example'. However, in rendering *Beispiel* consistently as 'example', as most of the translations do, the crux of the wordplay gets lost. In order to preserve the wordplay, Inwood translates *Beispiel* as «exemplifying by-play» and «byplay» in ¶92 and ¶93 respectively. However, *Beispiel* must be rendered as 'example' on many other occasions, e.g. in the phrase 'zum Beispiel'. Inwood thus gives up uniformity²⁸. However, 'by-play' is not a common word in English,

²⁷ Cf. Pinkard's critique of the practice of translating Hegel's key terms non-uniformly. T. Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 17-19.

²⁸ David Charlston argues that striving for consistency or uniformity may be an expression of translational *hexis*, i.e. favouring the translator's own interpretation. D. Charlston, *Translatorial hexis: The politics of Pinkard's translation of Hegel's Phenomenology*, «Radical Philosophy», CLXXXVI, 2014, pp. 11-22. Cf. also the

but a rather technical term. Inwood thus gives up everydayness too. It seems that the price to pay for preserving the wordplay is to give up both uniformity and everydayness.

In contrast, I do not see any reason not to translate *beiherspielen* and its substantivized form uniformly in such a way that the word 'play' is preserved (i.e. as 'be in play', 'be at play', 'come into play'). However, none of the English translations we have discussed preserves 'play' on all three occasions in the *Phenomenology*, i.e. in ¶92, ¶112, ¶1687. It may be the case that the translators – in contrast to Derrida – did not understand *beiherspielen* as a technical term which connects these paragraphs and so should be translated uniformly²⁹.

discussion in N. Walker, *Translating Kant and Hegel*, in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Philosophy*, ed. by J.P. Rawling and P. Wilson, London, Routledge, 2018, pp. 358-374.

²⁹ As someone who is a native of neither of the languages discussed in this article, I would like to thank Herbert Hrachovec, Ken Westphal, Fritz Kiesow, Dinda Gorlee and Terry Pinkard for their comments, especially for sharing their linguistic intuitions. This work has been supported by the Czech Science Foundation, project no. GA19-16680S.