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**Text Meets Reality:
Challenges in Translating Personal Historical Diaries**



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Abstract:

Challenges in translating personal historical diaries and methods to deal with these issues will be discussed in this article. These hotspots in translation, such as realia, are tackled with text and content analysis methods. An innovative method called *Sentiment Analysis* will be introduced to the area of Translation Studies.

Keywords:

Translation Challenges, Transcription, Syntax Analysis, Frequency Analysis, Sentiment Analysis, Primary Translation, Secondary Translation, Realia, Historical Diaries

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1 The Context of the Study

Diaries are door-openers to past worlds and eras. Each entry in a diary reveals a reality which fundamentally differs from the reality that we experience in 2014. In general, diaries tell stories of individuals that also reveal their personalities, ways of thinking and how they lived their lives. Although they are subjective memories, they help us to gain an understanding of a wider cultural context even entire eras, including the circumstances of the lives of those who lived during these eras.

“We should not cut short our elders when they want to tell us something and we should not put their diaries into the garbage bin, for they are directed at us: these are the experiences of whole generations and we cannot afford to destroy them, this would be sheer waste. We have to bend down and pick up what must not be forgotten: It is our history.”(w1)

Thus, diaries have been scientifically examined from literary, sociological, historical and psychological perspectives. The majority of these were diaries kept by well-known authors with future publication in mind. A famous example would be Kafka’s diaries, in which complementary biographical information assists the reader in interpreting literature.

In contrast, little attention has been paid to personal historical diaries, which in this paper represent the source text to be translated. The author of these diaries is a woman from California named Violet Regina Easterly, who was a secretary and book-keeper by profession.



Figure 1: Violet at the age of 5 and at the age of 80 (Courtesy of Laura Jeffers and Gary Hesse)

Violet was born on February 19, 1918 in Bakersfield, California. Her parents were Elvina and George Loptien and were both of German origin. In 1921, George Loptien, Violet's biological father, died of typhoid and/or diphtheria. Her mother re-married a man named Orrie Easterly in the mid-1920s, and the family moved to East Los Angeles, then to Riverside, San Diego and then returned to East Los Angeles (cf. Easterly).

Violet started keeping a diary at the age of 9, shortly before she was headed toward Montana to spend the summer there. She continued writing on a regular basis until 1953, completing fourteen diaries and documenting her everyday life and habits for her own private use, without any intention of sharing them with the public (cf. Easterly 2000). Beside her handwritten entries, the diaries also integrated drawings, newspaper articles and notes. Since she never married and did not have any close relatives, following her death in 2008, her diaries were sold at auction.

These circumstances resulted in missing parallel texts. Besides the source text, supplementary information about the author and her life could not be provided upfront. Lacking this vital information is one of the main challenges faced by a translator who is attempting to translate a literary text corpus of approximately 2,000 pages comprising a literary text corpus of 200,316 words, from English into German. Additionally, it becomes the translator's task to create a communication scenario between author and receiver that by the very nature of a diary is based upon daily records that are both fragmentary and personal, and, moreover, never was intended by the author.

To establish this type of communication and create an adequate translation, translators need to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective text world. Understanding is only possible if translators have acquired a special skill set to adequately apply the methods and to identify cultural parameters of the source and translate them into the target culture (cf. Kornelius 2004, p. 435).

Two research questions need to be addressed in this article:

- Which are the prerequisites for a translation?

- Which skills do translators need to acquire before they are able deliver a successful translation?

To respond to these questions and shed light on how to deal with such challenges, this article will examine linguistic parameters and approaches which are generally considered in translation studies.

In this context, similar case studies have been previously conducted that focused on the success stories of famous companies and also on emigrant letters ([Silence 2010](#) and [Bilić 2013](#)).

2 Pre-Translation Considerations

This paper assumes that every translation will be in the context of a specific translation scenario, involving clients and translators. In this case, the situation for the translator will be as follows: A client, Mr. Schultz, approaches a freelance translator, Ms. Thanner, presenting thirteen personal historical diary books, similar to those shown in figure 2, written in the English language.

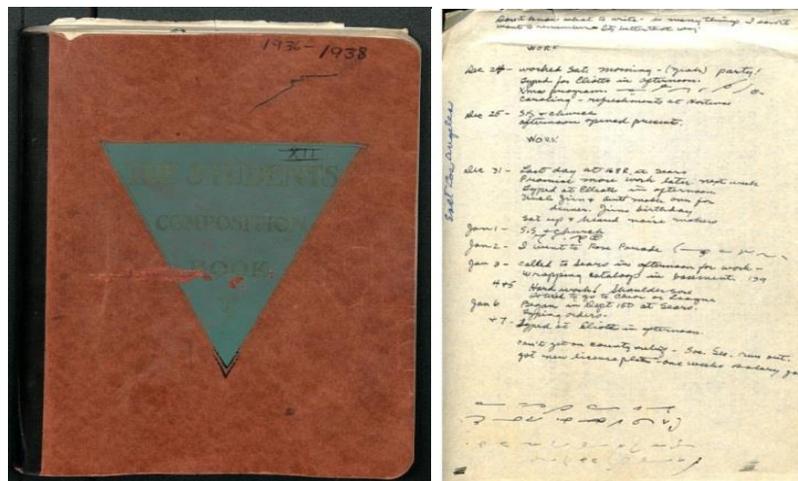


Figure 2: One of Violet Easterly's Diaries ([Easterly 1936-1938](#))

Mr. Schultz is a distant relative of Violet R. Easterly and a genealogy researcher himself, but he does not speak English. His wish is to find a reliable translator who can translate the

diaries into German and can help further him in exploring Violet's world and gaining a thorough understanding of her life in California.

To verify the quality and reliability of the translator, Mr. Schultz first requests a test translation of the diary entry as of October 17 from the freelance translator. He leaves a scan of the handwritten diary entry of book XIII with Ms. Thanner. This scan is displayed in Figure 3:

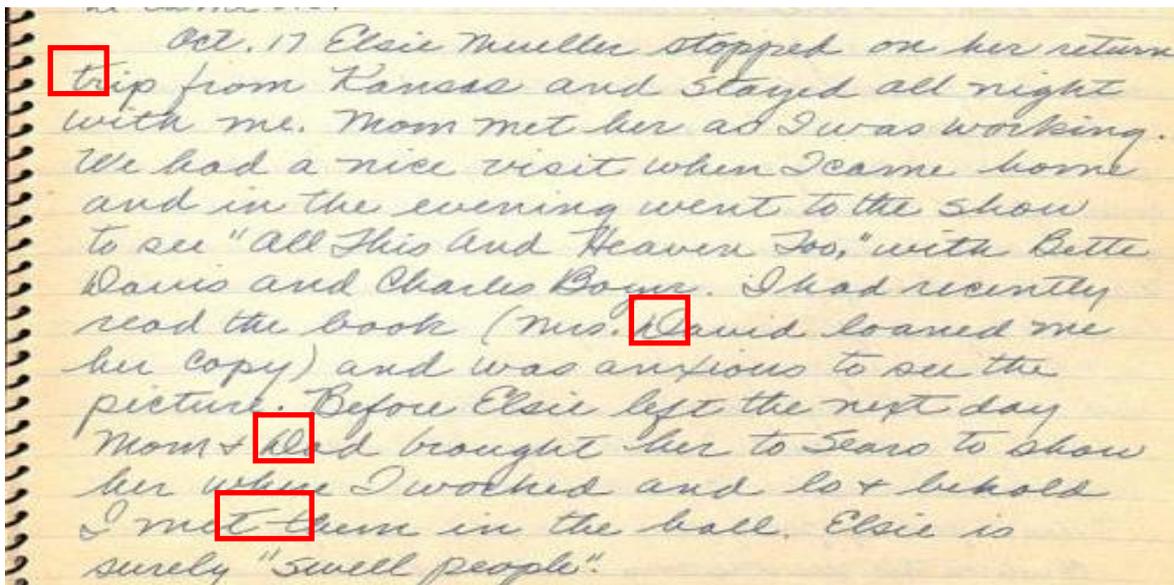


Figure 3: The original Diary Entry as of October 17, 1940 (Easterly 1939, p. 25)

To facilitate text analysis and optimize research and terminology work, an electronic version of the text will be required. Thus, the translator's first task is to create a transcription of the handwritten English letter and to type this into a separate file. This precise transcription process is a crucial part of the process, and it includes a series of considerations:

All transcription, however, is a form of translation and requires innumerable decisions about how to present documents ([w2](#)).

Fortunately, Violet R. Easterly's handwriting style follows the Standard Palmer method, and thanks to the writer's diligence it is legible and intuitive to read. The translator can easily access a Palmer alphabet template and compare letters with those seen in the diary entries. This allows the translator to obtain an almost natural feeling for Violet Easterly's writing

style, and allows her to identify similar letters occurring either at the end or at the beginning of a word, such as the letter *D* in Mrs. David and Dad or the letter *t* in met, trip and them. This prerequisite study of the handwriting style that was taught during Violet Easterly's formative years enables the translator to create an essential transcription of the source text, as shown below:

Oct. 17 Elsie Mueller stopped on her return trip from Kansas and stayed all night with me. Mom met her as I was working. We had a nice visit when I came home and in the evening went to the show to see "All This and Heaven Too," with Bette Davis and Charles Boyer. I had recently read the book (Mrs. David loaned me her copy) and was anxious to see the picture. Before Elsie left the next day Mom + Dad brought her to Sears to show her where I worked and lo + behold I met them in the hall. Elsie is surely "swell people" (Easterly 1939, p. 25).

After transcribing the source text, the translator can engage in a text analysis that identifies its research potential. As a result, two categories of inquiry emerge:

1. Word Choice and Writing Style: swell, lo+behold, show, picture, dates, abbreviations, long/short sentences
2. Life and Culture of Violet R. Easterly: Elsie Mueller, Bette Davis, Charles Boyer, "All This and Heaven Too", Sears

Category 1 includes new terms which the translator needs to look up in a dictionary, such as *swell* and *lo+behold*, and terms which are already known but need to be understood in the context of the diary entry, such as *show*. Category 2 refers to people and cultural parameters that belong to Violet R. Easterly's personal world. While translation challenges of category 1 are perceived as low, category 2 words require more extensive research as well as detailed and comprehensive text analysis methods. These dedicated methods will be explored in chapter 3.

3 Quantitative and Qualitative Text Analysis Methods

A first categorization of potential translation issues in chapter 2 leads to the conclusion that the major challenge lies in the deep structure of the text, including cultural parameters, as

well as the life and personal preferences of the diarist. To meet this challenge, the translator needs to equip herself to navigate the personal world of Violet R. Easterly.

This effort is of paramount importance, especially if the translator intends to translate the entire diary corpus. Text analysis methods borrowed from the field of sociology allow the translator to comprehend diary entries from a more global perspective, supported by a sound scientific background.

The exploration of the personal world of Violet Easterly encompasses three separate approaches. The first approach is to analyze the diarist's syntax and style, focusing on her style of communication, sentence structure and length.

Secondly, a quantitative content analysis will be conducted to reveal topics and fields located in the deep structure of the text. This approach adheres to the reliable method of Content Analysis in Cultural studies, which has been successfully applied by Annika Silence in her thesis (cf. [Silence 2010](#)).

Since personal diaries tend to be emotionally-rich texts, a *Sentiment Analysis* will assist in evaluating and quantifying these expressions. This analysis type was evolved from both marketing studies and computer linguistics.

3.1 Syntax Analysis

Analysis of the diarist's syntax and style is key for translators. Oftentimes individual diarists express considerable creative flair in their written entries, as reflected in idiosyncratic content, language, form and syntax. The diarist's individual language patterns represent one of the translator's main challenges.

This can be illustrated clearly in the diary entry of October 17, 1940, found in diary XIII. In total, this entry consists of six complete sentences that include both main clauses and subordinated clauses. The beginning of the entry marks the date *Oct. 17*. The month October is abbreviated *Oct*. Information about weekday and year is missing, and thus it is the

translators' task to determine from the context if Violet R. Easterly is referring to the year 1940.

In order to reflect the diarist's syntax and style in translation, the translator must be sensitive and aware of syntax categories. In the diary entry of Oct 17, an analysis of main clauses, subordinate clauses and ellipses in each sentence is described below. The indicator for the categorization is highlighted and underlined:

1. Parataxis: main clause + main clause

Oct. 17 Elsie Mueller stopped on her return trip from Kansas and stayed all night with me.

2. Hypotaxis: Main clause – subordinated clause

Mom met her as I was working.

3. Hypotaxis: Main clause – subordinated clause – main clause

We had a nice visit when I came home and in the evening went to the show to see "All This and Heaven Too," with Bette Davis and Charles Boyer.

4. Parataxis: Main clause+(main clause)+ main clause

I had recently read the book (Mrs. David loaned me her copy) and was anxious to see the picture.

5. Hypotaxis: Subordinated clause + main clause+to + subordinated clause+ main clause

Before Elsie left the next day Mom + Dad brought her to Sears to show her where I worked and lo + behold I met them in the hall.

6. Parataxis: Main clause

Elsie is surely "swell people".

Typically, the diarist's style is colloquial and narrative, including many parataxis and easily constructed hypotaxis. The syntax tends to be simple with many subject-verb-object constructions. The most complex sentence is sentence five with two subordinated clauses. For the translator, then, the challenges are few, with topics and sentences incorporated sequentially.

Stylistic peculiarities are noteworthy in diary-writing. Generally, in the German translation the sentences would be rather short, and oral expressions such as *lo + behold* and *swell people* would allude to the low register of the text. A successful translation should imitate the author's informal speech, and needs to reflect the peculiar language of the time period and age of the writer. Accordingly, it is essential that the exclamations be translated into the

language of a 22-year old in the 1940s, and not into the lingo of a modern 22-year old. Individualized signs such as + to represent *and* must also be copied.

3.2 Frequency Analysis

Following a syntax analysis, it makes sense for the translator to apply a frequency analysis to evaluate the text and extract concepts. While an extract from diary XIII with its six sentences poses few challenges, a 70-page diary involving 5,000 words can be more confidently and efficiently translated when a topic-overview is established so that preparatory terminology lists can be created. This method follows the frequency analysis performed by Frilling (2008) and Silence (2010), and takes advantage of the *Simple Concordance Program 4.09*. Since the corpus comprised more than thirteen volumes, it is too large for an analysis of all thirteen books, and so 1/6 of each diary can be considered as a sample.

A frequency analysis will be run with the October 17, 1940 entry as an example. After loading the file in .txt format, the *Simple Concordance Program* extracts all words from the text according to their frequency. To create this frequency list, the user selects *Decreasing Frequency Order* (Figure 4, point 1) and then selects the required layout in the tab labeled *Word List* i.e. *One Column* (Figure 4, point 2). After selecting *Key Words* (Figure 4, point 3) and then clicking on the button *Word List* (Figure 4, point 2), the *Simple Concordance Program* displays a word list (Figure 4, point 4) in decreasing frequency order starting with the most frequent words. Words lacking significant meaning, such as articles, prepositions and auxiliary verbs, can be filtered out by applying a stop list to the word list. This results in a decrease from 70 to 43 words.

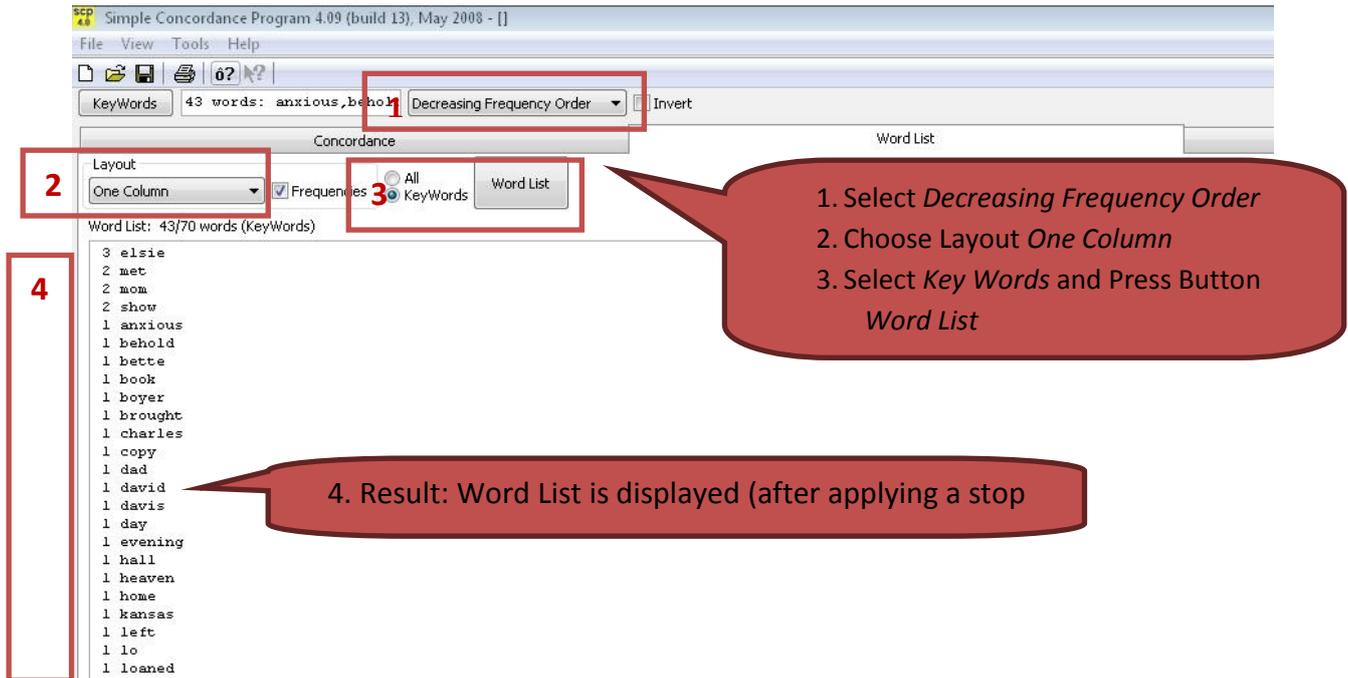


Figure 4: Screen Shot *Simple Concordance Program*

Based on the final word list, the semantic categories were created intuitively. Each single word was added to one of the thirteen categories labeled *People, Location, Work, Life, Leisure and Culture, Emotions, Quality and Evaluation, Date and Time* or *Miscellaneous*. For example, *Mom + Dad* were added to category 1 *People*. Since Violet is referring to a movie, “*All This and Heaven Too*” was added to category 8 *Leisure and Culture*. The initial categorization is summarized below:

- Category 1: People: Elsie (x3) Mueller, Mom (x2), Dad, Mrs. David, Bette Davis, Charles Boyer
- Category 2 Location: Kansas, hall, home
- Category 3 Work: Sears, work (x2; verb)
- Category 4 Life: come, stay, go, meet (x2), show (verb), loan (verb), bring (verb),
- Category 5 Leisure and Culture: return trip, visit, show (noun), All This and Heaven Too, book, picture, read, copy, see (x2; verb), leave (verb), stop (verb)
- Category 6 Emotions: anxious
- Category 7 Quality and Evaluation: nice, swell people

- Category 8 Date and Time: Oct. 17, night, evening, next day
- Category 9 Miscellaneous: surely, lo+behold, people, Mrs.

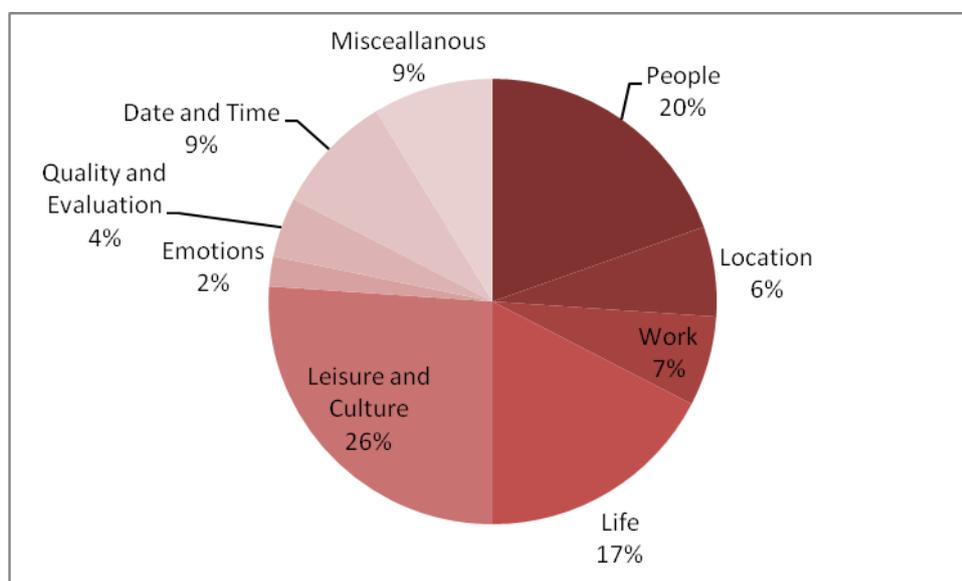


Figure 5: Distribution of semantic categories for diary entry October 17, 1940

Figure 5 shows that the main terms in this context refer to *Leisure and Culture*, *people and life*. Six per cent refer to opinions, evaluations and speculations, and will be considered separately in [chapter 3.3](#). The information gathered in the Frequency Analysis helps the translator to decide where to invest his/her time and make particular research efforts. The translator can use this categorization as a starting point for his cultural knowledge research. For example, the translator can start researching the term *picture* and its meaning as well as the title “*All This and Heaven Too*”. Context information in the source text provides the first hint for the translator about where to start the research process when both a *book* and a *picture* are mentioned in the context of “*All This and Heaven Too*”:

and in the evening went to the show to see “*All This and Heaven Too*,” with Bette Davis and Charles Boyer. I had recently read the **book** (Mrs. David loaned me her copy) and was anxious to **see the picture** ([Easterly 1939](#), p. 25).

Equipped with this discovery, the translator can enter the key words “*All This and Heaven Too*” in the search bar at *Amazon.com*. Since *Amazon* is a global online commercial enterprise that is especially well-known for its book and movie sales, the translator’s search efficiently led to a novel written by Rachel Field (cf. [w3](#)).

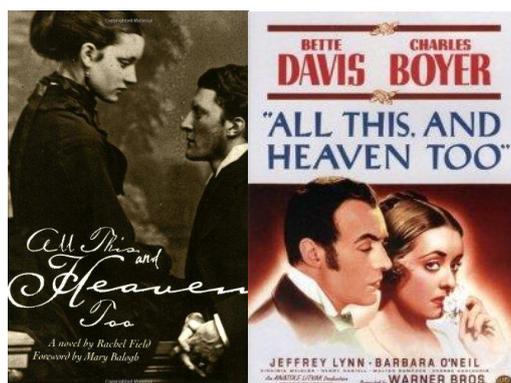


Figure 6: All This and Heaven Too – Results of Search Query at Amazon.com (cf. [w4](#), [w5](#))

Furthermore, in the 1930s the story was filmed starring the well-known actors *Bette Davis* and *Charles Boyer*. Both names have been contextualized and can be re-categorized to *Leisure and Culture*. In this context, the translator can also simultaneously begin the terminology work, and discovers, while researching the term *picture* in *Merriam Webster Online*, that it is an abbreviation for *motion picture* (cf. [w6](#)). Thus, *picture* is a synonym for *movie*, and can be translated with the word *film*.

The “*people*” category promises a wealth of research potential, particularly in the case of a diary entry. The translator learns that Elsie Mueller is Violet’s friend, who is visiting Violet on her return trip from Kansas, and Mrs. David is a neighbor of the Easterly family. Furthermore, the translator learns that the Easterly family consists of Mom, Dad and Violet. This information delivers the required background data that enables text production in German. A more thorough research is required if the entire diary corpus will be translated, in which case the translator will need to know the names of Violet’s family members. In some cases, a client can provide family background, yet oftentimes the translator realizes that he must also engage in genealogical research to fill in the gaps. In this case, online research strategies and genealogy research at *Ancestry.com* allowed the translator to explore the personal world of the diarist. *Ancestry* allows the user to conduct genealogy research online, manage research results in an online account, as well as network with other users. The translator’s research revealed the identity of Violet R. Easterly’s biological father, George Loptien, who died in 1921 of typhoid fever, and provided the name of her stepfather, Orrie Easterly, who married her mother, Elvina Schultz, after the death of George Loptien (cf. [w7](#), [Easterly](#)).

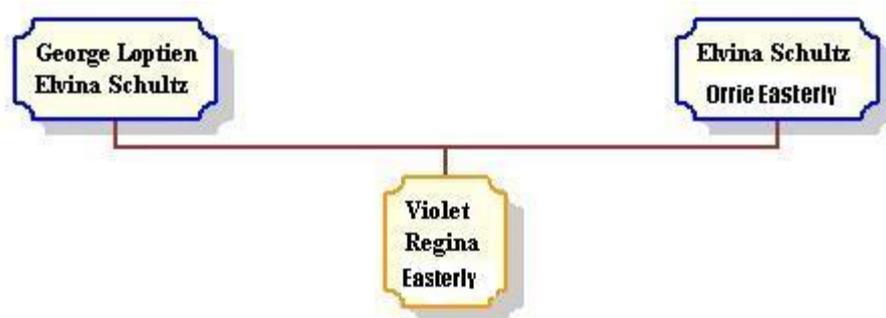


Figure 7: Pedigree for Violet Regina Easterly created with tree-maker software *GenBox*

In summary, frequency analysis supports both the translator's terminology and cultural concept research in a reliable and efficient manner, and thus represents a valuable translation strategy, especially when a large text corpus is involved.

3.3 Sentiment Analysis

The expressive nature of a personal diary requires the translator to analyze feelings and subjective evaluations written by Violet R. Easterly. Since she has the idiosyncratic talent of imitating oral speech in her diary entries, these passages pose special challenges for the translator. Considering that emotions evolve from the perspective of the world at her particular time and place in history, the translator requires special assistance in gauging the diarist's experiences within the context of her unique time and place. Thus, a successful translation of Violet Easterly's diary entries requires the translator to translate the diarist's emotions and opinions without judging or interpreting them from the vantage point of his own modern experiences.

The sentiment analysis provides a method which supports the translator in classifying and analyzing the diarist's emotions, and then reshaping the diarist's identity in another language. The origin of this method can be found in the business sector, in *Social Media Marketing* and in the stock market, where a so-called *Sentiment Analysis* is applied to understand customer thoughts and feelings towards a brand and/or product and to investigate his buying behavior. A Sentiment Analysis was accomplished by analyzing sentences and phrases and then extracting opinions and emotions. In general, the Sentiment

Analysis can be defined as “the task of identifying positive and negative opinions, emotions, and evaluations” (Wilson et al. 2005). Although it has not previously applied to personal diary texts, this method has been discussed from different perspectives and disciplines by Hatzivassiloglou and McKeown 1997, Turney 2002, Wilson et al. 2005 and Klenner 2009.

The *Sentiment Analysis* is a new concept in Translation Studies that can be incorporated into pre-translation steps, and can be accomplished both manually and automatically using electronic tools. One example of text analysis software that can be used to deal with a large amount of data and volume is *MAXQDA*. This text analysis software is recommended both for its efficiency and its simplicity. While the translator’s screen is divided into three separate windows, the source text file can be processed in various formats in *MAXQDA* (see Figure 8).

The window at the upper left shows all files that the user is working with in the text analysis project (1). Thus, the translator can switch between different files while the coding system is kept in the lower left corner. “A code is, in the language of empirical sociological research, a contextual category, which serves as an analytical tool for the systematic analysis of data” (w8, p. 27). A code is created manually by the software user and can be changed easily (cf. w8, p. 27):

Defining a code is like opening a drawer in which you can put any number of text segments. The drawer’s label, i.e. the code name, can later be changed without affecting the contents of the drawer. You can also print the “Code System” or export it (w8, p. 27).

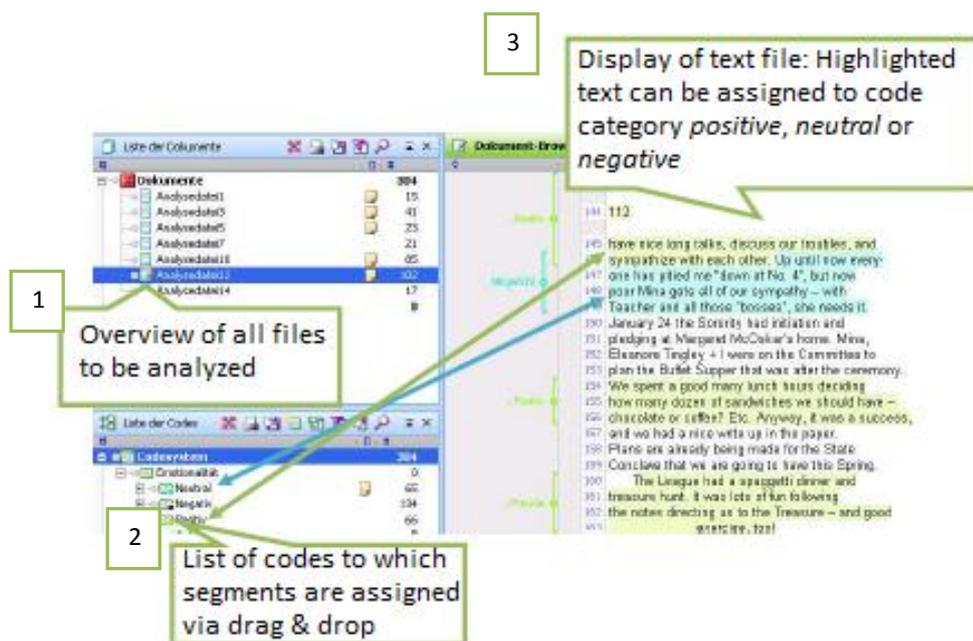


Figure 8: Sentiment Analysis with MAXQDA10

The main window on the right displays the main text that is currently being processed (3). In this screen, the translator starts to select segments of the text that contain subjective information and assign it via drag and drop to one of the sentiment categories: *positive*, *neutral* and *negative* (2 and 3). Following this, the text in the main window can be color-coded according to the respective category (3). Due to the subjective nature of the diary and translation challenges, the entire coding process was conducted manually. Considering that these categories must be individually determined by the translator, an automated process would not be recommended (cf. [w8](#), p. 27).

How a *Sentiment Analysis* is applied in the context of a translation can be explained by means of diary entry October 17. Since the source text consists of six sentences, sentiments can be analyzed without the support of software tools. The translator's first analytical step is to differentiate between facts and opinions, and then to highlight them in the source text (cf. [Liu 2010](#), p. 1). Facts are "objective expressions about entities, events and their properties" ([Liu 2010](#), p. 1). Opinions are "usually subjective expressions that describe people's sentiments, appraisals or feelings toward entities, events and their properties ([Liu 2010](#), p. 1). The words categorized in *Emotions* and *Quality and Evaluation* during Frequency Analysis

indicate subjective expressions. In four of six sentences, the following sentiments (underlined) were located:

1. We had a nice visit when I came home and in the evening went to the show to see “All This and Heaven Too,” with Bette Davis and Charles Boyer.
2. Elsie is surely “swell people”.
3. I had recently read the book (Mrs. David loaned me her copy) and was anxious to see the picture.
4. Before Elsie left the next day Mom + Dad brought her to Sears to show her where I worked and lo + behold I met them in the hall.

Underlying sentiments in the source text can be found in adjectives (*nice, swell*) and intensifiers (*surely*), in phrases (*be anxious to*) and in interjections (*lo + behold*). In general, punctuation could also refer to subjective expressions. In the Oct 17 diary entry, punctuation is rather an indicator for intertextual references, such as the movie “*All This and Heaven Too*”, and an abbreviation for *and*. Thus, punctuation can be copied to the target text; paying special attention to sentiments is not required.

The translator’s tools for verifying underlying sentiments include monolingual dictionaries and lists of subjective English words. Phrases and interjections can be best researched in monolingual dictionaries, whereas the subjectivity of adjectives has already been defined in specific word lists, such as Wilson’s *Subjectivity Lexicon*.

Wilson’s Subjectivity Lexicon is an online list containing terms and associated linguistic information, including their positive, neutral or negative connotations. Figure 9 displays an extract from the Subjectivity Lexicon. In total, the lexicon comprises over 8,000 entries accompanied by a *Readme* file which explains the abbreviations *type*, *len*, *word1*, *pos1*, *stemmed1* and *prior polarity* used in each entry. The abbreviation *type* refers to the term’s degree of subjectivity. The term *nice* has a high degree of subjectivity, whereas *neutralize* is perceived as weak. This means that this is the semantic connotation for *anxious* in most cases. The term *neutralize* can also be used in a non-subjective context. The category *len* stands for word length. Since the subjectivity lexicon addresses single terms and their connotations, the word length is *len=1* for all entries. *Word1* specifies the token of which the

connotation has been identified. The part of speech (adjective, noun, verb or anypos) of the term is indicated by the abbreviation *Pos1*. For example, *nice* is categorized as an adjective, *neutralize* as a verb in Figure 9. *Stemmed1* indicates if the word stem is the term (*y*=yes) or not (*n*=no). The subjectivity clue of the word is provided in the label *prior polarity* (*positive*, *negative*, *both* or *neutral*) (cf. [Wilson et al. 2005](#)):

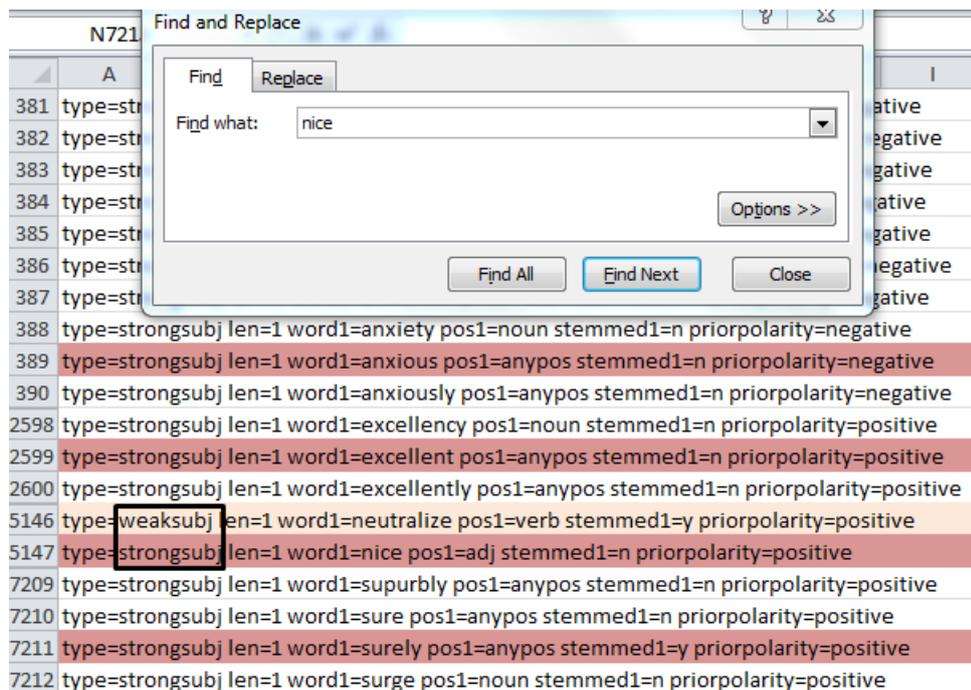


Figure 9: Sentiments found in Wilson’s Subjectivity Lexicon (cf. [Wilson et al. 2005](#))

For the translator, polarity is of key interest, since it indicates lack of context or if, the word “seem[s] to evoke something positive or something negative” ([Wilson et al. 2005](#), p. 347).

Based on these subjective clues, the translator must now seek to identify the polarity of terms and phrases len=1 in their contexts, as shown below:

1. We had a nice (POS) visit (NEUT) when I came home...
2. Elsie is surely (POS) “swell (POS) people (NEUT)”.
3. I ... was anxious to (POS) see the picture.
4. Before Elsie left the next day Mom + Dad brought her to Sears to show her where I worked and lo + behold (NEUT, surprise) I met them in the hall.

Figure 9 indicates that most lexical categories can be found in the Subjectivity List. Both the adjective *nice* and the adverb *surely* are tagged with positive polarity. The positive polarity of

the adjective *nice* also remains in the combination with the word *visit* (Sentence 1).

Equipped with this information, the translator can begin with the text production into the target language, choosing a possible translation, such as *eine schöne Zeit miteinander verbringen*.

The polarity of *surely* can only be determined in combination with the words *swell* and *people* since the adverb is “often used as an intensive” (w9) meaning *indeed* and *really*. The adjective *swell* is not listed in Wilson’s list but can be found in *Merriam Webster’s Online Dictionary* defined as “a generalized term of enthusiasm” (w10), with *excellent* as synonym for *swell*. *Merriam Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary* additionally notes that the adjective *swell* is an old-fashioned and informal term (cf. w11). This is a clue for the translator that an informal term with a positive polarity in German would fit well. *Excellent* can also be found in Wilson’s Subjectivity Lexicon with a positive subjectivity clue. Since both terms have been identified as positive, the sentiment *surely “swell people”* can be categorized as a strongly positive expression (sentence 2). An equivalent in German would be *wirklich/ehrlich klasse/spitze/toll/ wunderbar*.

Furthermore, the subjectivity list indicates that the verb *anxious* has a negative subjectivity, although in context, the meaning may be otherwise.. The meaning “ardently or earnestly wishing” (w12) proposed in *Merriam Webster* seems to be correct in this context, and thus the sentiment changes from negative to positive (sentence 3). It is important that the German translation reflects the desire of the diarist to watch the movie. A suggestion for *to be anxious to see sth.* would be *etw. unbedingt sehen wollen*.

The phrase *lo + behold* cannot be found in the Subjectivity Lexicon, and must be researched online.. The explanation “used to express wonder or surprise” (w13) in *Merriam Webster’s Dictionary* indicates a positive polarity. The *Free Dictionary* confirms this understanding with its definition: “something that you say when you tell someone about something surprising that happened” (w14). This rather outdated phrase expresses surprise and can be tagged as neutral, since a surprise can either be positive or negative. Thus, the German phrase *siehe da!* would equal the expression in the English source text.

4 Primary vs. Secondary Translation

The in-depth research has enabled the translator to begin with the translation into German from a content perspective. The next step is to internalize the purpose of the final translation product. The translator either needs to (1) establish communication between source text sender and target text receiver or (2) inform target text receiver about an already established communication situation between source text sender and source text receiver (cf. Diller and Kornelius 1978, p. 3). Those scenarios describe what Diller and Kornelius call “primary” and “secondary translation” based on Schleiermacher’s theory (cf. Diller and Kornelius 1978, p. 3).

The purpose of a translation, its structure and presentation primarily depends on the client’s translation purpose. As described in chapter 2, Mr. Schultz, the client in this scenario, kindly asked for “a reliable translator who can translate the diaries into German and can help him to explore Violet’s world and to gain a broad understanding of her life in California” (cf. chapter 2). Based on this goal, the translator can assume that she needs to create a secondary translation that informs the client about the content of the diaries, rather than producing a translation that establishes a communication between Violet R. Easterly and the client. She further expects that the aim will be to be as close to the source text as possible (adequate translation) instead of being consistent with target culture (acceptable translation).

To verify these assumptions, primary and secondary translation of the source text will be compared, highlighting the differences between each translation approach. Within the source text, so-called *realia*, are identified in the source text of October 17 as decision criteria. These cultural parameters pose challenges to a translator, since realia are specific to one culture and most likely unknown in another culture. Examples are names, places, book titles, animal species, plants, institutions etc. (cf. Albrecht 2005, p. 9f). This paper assumes that both text level and the underlying culture of realia need to be analyzed from a hermeneutic perspective (cf. Floros 2002, p. 78f).

A lexical gap may occur if an equivalent for the term does not exist in the target culture. It is the task of the translator to determine if these realia and their connotation are known to the receiver of the target text. If the receiver lacks such knowledge, the translator must be skilled in dealing with such lexical gaps. Possible strategies are proposed by Koller (1997), varying from calques, explanations of realia, adaptations to target culture, choosing an equivalent to keeping the word from the foreign language in the target text (cf. Koller 1997, p. 232ff). Keeping the client's request in mind, the best approach for translating these cultural parameters and potential lexical gaps will be demonstrated by means of the source text:

Oct. 17 **Elsie Mueller** stopped on her return trip from **Kansas** and stayed all night with me. Mom met her as I was working. We had a nice visit when I came home and in the evening went to the show to see "**All This and Heaven Too**," with **Bette Davis** and **Charles Boyer**. I had recently read the book (**Mrs. David** loaned me her copy) and was anxious to see the picture. Before Elsie left the next day **Mom + Dad** brought her to **Sears** to show her where I worked and lo + behold I met them in the hall. Elsie is surely "swell people" (Easterly 1939, p. 25).

All terms highlighted in red are cultural allusions on text level. A conceptual categorization helps to grasp the underlying reality. The highlighted lexemes and syntagmata can be grouped into the three categories *the diarist's social environment*, *places in the diarist's world* and *American culture*:

1. Violet's social environment: *Elsie Mueller, Mrs. David, Mom + Dad*
2. American geography: *Kansas*
3. American culture: "*All This and Heaven Too*", *Bette Davis, Charles Boyer, Sears*

To decode the cultural parameters (cf. Hennecke 2009), the translator needs to contextualize realia. Two categories (geography and culture) refer to US-specific knowledge; category one to Violet R. Easterly's personal reality. The translator will use a strategy to deal with spelling words and geographical places in the United States (Figure 10), American movies and actors (Figure 11), titles (Figure 12), family members and company names (Figure 13). The strategy can be that (1) all cultural elements will be substituted by cultural parameters known to the text receiver (Primary Translation) or (2) all cultural parameters

will remain in their spatio-temporal context and need to be explained to the text receiver (Secondary Translation).

Source Text	(1) Primary Translation into German	(2) Secondary Translation into German
Oct. 17 Elsie Mueller stopped on her return trip from Kansas and stayed all night with me.	17. Okt. Elsie Müller kam auf dem Rückweg von Thüringen bei uns vorbei und übernachtete bei mir.	17. Okt. Elsie Mueller kam auf dem Rückweg von Kansas ¹ bei mir vorbei und übernachtete bei mir. 1 Elsie Mueller ist eine gute Freundin von Violet Easterly, die im Oktober 1940 Verwandte im US-Bundesstaat Kansas besuchte.

Figure 10: Comparing Primary and Secondary Translation – Sentence 1

In sentence 1, differences in the two ways of translation are obvious in the spelling of umlauts and the US state of Kansas. For example, the name of Elsie Mueller is spelled with „ue“ in English. The natural way of presenting the name in German would be “Müller”. Transporting the text into the German culture as a primary translation would require a vowel change from *ue* to *ü*, whereas the orthography of the English source text will be copied in (2) to reflect the US culture where the text originated.

The US state of Kansas is a geographical place in the central Midwestern part of the country. The state name would require replacement with a state name in the middle Germany, such as Thüringen in the target text (1). If the client had been based in Austria or Switzerland, the state would have been chosen within their cultural mind frame as well. In the target text (2), the cultural references to Kansas as a US state remains as it is in the source text. To ensure that the reader will be provided with sufficient information, the context of this sentence will be explained in a footnote that includes additional data, such as the date and year of the diary entry, the relationship between Violet R. Easterly and Elsie Mueller, and the reference to Kansas as a US state.

Source Text	(1) Primary Translation into German	(2) Secondary Translation into German
[...] when I came home in the evening went to the show to see “All This and Heaven Too,” with Bette Davis and Charles Boyer.	[...] als ich von der Arbeit nach Hause kam, gingen wir ins Filmtheater und schauten uns „Kleider machen Leute“ mit Herta Feiler und Heinz Rühmann an.	[...] als ich von der Arbeit nach Hause kam, gingen wir ins Filmtheater und schauten uns „All This and Heaven Too ² “ mit Bette Davis und Charles Boyer ³ an. 2 Amerikanische Literaturverfilmung aus dem Jahr 1940, dt. Titel „Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg“ (Kino) bzw. „Das Glück in der Glaskugel“ (TV) (1947) 3 Hauptdarsteller des Films: Ruth Elizabeth (Bette) Davis und Charles Boyer

Figure 11: Comparing Primary and Secondary Translation – Sentence 2

While translating sentence 2, the translator was aware of the cultural allusions in the proper names of movies and actors. In the secondary translation (2), the movie title in English was used for the German translation. For the reader, contextual information about the movie was provided in two footnotes explaining the American origins, the year that the movie was made (1940), and the movie title in German, the main actors and the clue that the movie is based on a novel (cf. [w15](#), [w16](#)).

For the primary translation, a movie that is closer to the German culture will be found to substitute the American movie “All This and Heaven Too”. This German movie should comply with the following prerequisites: (a) The movie is a film adaptation based on a book; (b) The movie was shot in 1940; (c) The movie stars two well-known German actors. This is true in a movie called “Kleider machen Leute”. The content of this movie differs from “All This and Heaven Too,” but it was shot in Germany in 1940 starring the actors Heinz Rühmann and Herta Feiler, also famous actors at that time. The idea for the movie comes from a novella that was written by Gottfried Keller at the end of the 19th century (cf. [w17](#)). In the translation scenario (1), the English movie title was substituted by “Kleider machen Leute”, the American actors by the German actors Herta Feiler and Heinz Rühmann.

Source Text	(1) Primary Translation into German	(2) Secondary Translation into German
I had recently read the book (Mrs. David loaned me her copy) and was anxious to see the picture.	Ich hatte kürzlich das Buch gelesen (Frau David lieh es mir aus) und ich wollte nun unbedingt den Film dazu sehen.	Ich hatte kürzlich das Buch gelesen (Mrs. David lieh es mir aus) und ich wollte unbedingt den Film dazu sehen.

Figure 12: Comparing Primary and Secondary Translation – Sentence 3

In Figure 12, honorifics in the German translation are the focus. To make German readers aware that they are navigating in a world that is different from their home country, the term of address *Mrs.* also appears in the German version (2). In contrast, the German title *Frau* is used in the primary translation. The reference to the US culture vanished.

Source Text	(1) Primary Translation into German	(2) Secondary Translation into German
Before Elsie left the next day Mom + Dad brought her to Sears to show her where I worked [...]	Bevor Elsie am nächsten Tag abreiste, fuhren Mutti + Vati noch mit ihr zu Kaufhof und zeigten ihr, wo ich arbeitete [...]	Bevor Elsie am nächsten Tag abreiste, fuhren Mom + Dad ⁴ noch mit ihr zu Sears ⁵ , um ihr zu zeigen, wo ich arbeitete [...]
		4 Violet Easterly bezieht sich hier auf ihre Mutter Elvina und ihren Stiefvater Orrie Easterly. 5 Sears, Roebuck & Company (heute: Sears Holding Corporation) ist ein amerikanisches Einzelhandels-Unternehmen mit Firmensitz in Chicago, Illinois.

Figure 13: Comparing Primary and Secondary Translation – Sentence 4

Figure 13 displays two critical areas in sentence 4, the family concept words *Mom + Dad* and the proper name *Sears*. In version (1), the English nicknames for mother and father have been translated with the German equivalents *Mutti + Vati*. In scenario (2), the English words *Mom + Dad* are copied in the German translation. Additionally, the secondary translation also offers the additional information in a footnote that *Mom* and *Dad* as of 1940 refer to *Elvina* and *Orrie Easterly*. It becomes then clear to the text receiver that in 1940, her

stepfather already has become part of Violet R. Easterly's family. This aspect is not revealed by *Mutti + Vati* in the primary translation.

The proper name *Sears* alludes to the company where Violet Easterly works. Sears, Roebuck and Company has a long history as a retailer of “general merchandise, tools, home appliances, clothing, and automotive parts and services” ([w18](#)). The company was founded in 1886 in Minnesota. Today's main location of the business is Chicago, Illinois (cf. [w18](#)). Most of these details have been added in the footnote to the secondary translation, the company name *Sears* has been adopted. In scenario (1) of sentence 4, the translator searched for an equivalent to the company Sears which is prominent in the German culture. The German company Kaufhof comes close to this and is therefore selected.

Figure 10 to Figure 13 prove that the only way to meet the client's expectations of understanding Violet R. Easterly's daily world is to provide a secondary translation with annotations. This is not covered in the primary translation, since the diarist's world disappears entirely. As a consequence, an adequate translation into German can be produced, assuming that most of the context is adequately explained to the target text receiver by adding the valuable insights gained during syntax, frequency and sentiment analysis.

Leveraging the know-how acquired during a thorough research process, the translator can offer a translation of the source text, as shown below. All English sentiments discussed in [chapter 3.3](#) and their equivalents in German are set in *Italics* to underline the importance of subjectivity for this type of text:

Oct. 17 Elsie Mueller stopped on her return trip from Kansas and stayed all night with me. Mom met her as I was working. *We had a nice visit* when I came home and in the evening went to the show to see “All This and Heaven Too,” with Bette Davis and Charles Boyer. I had recently read the book (Mrs. David loaned me her copy) and *was anxious to see* the picture. Before Elsie left the next day Mom + Dad brought her to Sears to show her where I worked and *lo + behold* I met them in the hall. Elsie is *surely “swell people”* ([Easterly 1939](#), p. 25).

17. Okt. Elsie Mueller kam auf dem Rückweg von Kansas¹ vorbei und übernachtete bei mir. Mom holte sie ab, da ich arbeitete. *Wir verbrachten eine schöne Zeit miteinander*, als ich von der Arbeit nach Hause kam, und abends gingen wir ins Filmtheater und schauten uns „All This and Heaven Too²“ mit

Bette Davis und Charles Boyer³ an. Ich hatte kürzlich das Buch gelesen (Mrs. David lieh es mir aus) und ich *wollte unbedingt* den Film *dazu sehen*. Bevor Elsie am nächsten Tag abreiste, fuhren Mom + Dad⁴ noch mit ihr zu Sears⁵, um ihr zu zeigen, wo ich arbeitete und *siehe da*, ich traf sie in der Empfangshalle. Elsie ist *wirklich eine tolle Freundin* (Translated by Kathrin Thanner).

1 Elsie Mueller ist eine gute Freundin von Violet Easterly, die im Oktober 1940 Verwandte in Kansas besuchte.

2 Amerikanische Literaturverfilmung aus dem Jahr 1940, dt. Titel „Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg“ (Kino) bzw. „Das Glück in der Glaskugel“ (TV) (1947)

3 Hauptdarsteller des Films: Ruth Elizabeth (Bette) Davis und Charles Boyer

4 Violet Easterly bezieht sich hier auf ihre Mutter Elvina und ihren Stiefvater Orrie Easterly.

5 Sears, Roebuck & Company (heute: Sears Holding Corporation) ist ein amerikanisches Einzelhandels-Unternehmen mit Firmensitz in Chicago, Illinois.

The analysis of the source text and the final translation clearly demonstrate that the challenges for the translator lie in the deep structure of the text. The article has proved that the translator first needs to comply with several prerequisites. It is the translator's initial task to transcribe the handwritten original diary entry and transform it into an electronic version. This digital version then facilitates various text analysis methods, such as syntax, frequency analysis and sentiment analysis. Research results led to the conclusion that the most formidable challenges for the translator lie in the diarist's world that includes her social and cultural environment, realia and lexical gaps, as well as her individual writing style, including syntax and subjective phrases.

Secondly, the article has substantiated that when a translator is translating a personal historic diary, he must possess a broad skillset, from cultural knowledge and sensitivity to linguistic expertise. These are mandatory requirements that yield responsible translations of diary entries that protect both the legacy and privacy of the diarist. These conclusions are in agreement with those of Annika Silence, who analyzed the American success story of the Eskilson family. Her statement provides an accurate description of the ideal translator for this text type, a professional who can assume the role of a creative author:

An ideal translator for this kind of texts is an individual who possesses practical knowledge in the field of translation as well as a strong media competence. Moreover, the translator must acquire a [...] working knowledge of both genealogical research and the terminology specific to the industry behind the

success story. Inconsistencies and errors in the original source text must be located and corrected by means of genealogical and historical research strategies. Additional research may be called upon to assume the role of creative author to complete the project (Silence 2010, p. 507).

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