In Other Words
A Defense of Paraphrase

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FlugSchriften⋀

IN OTHER WORDS / A DEFENSE OF PARAPHRASE
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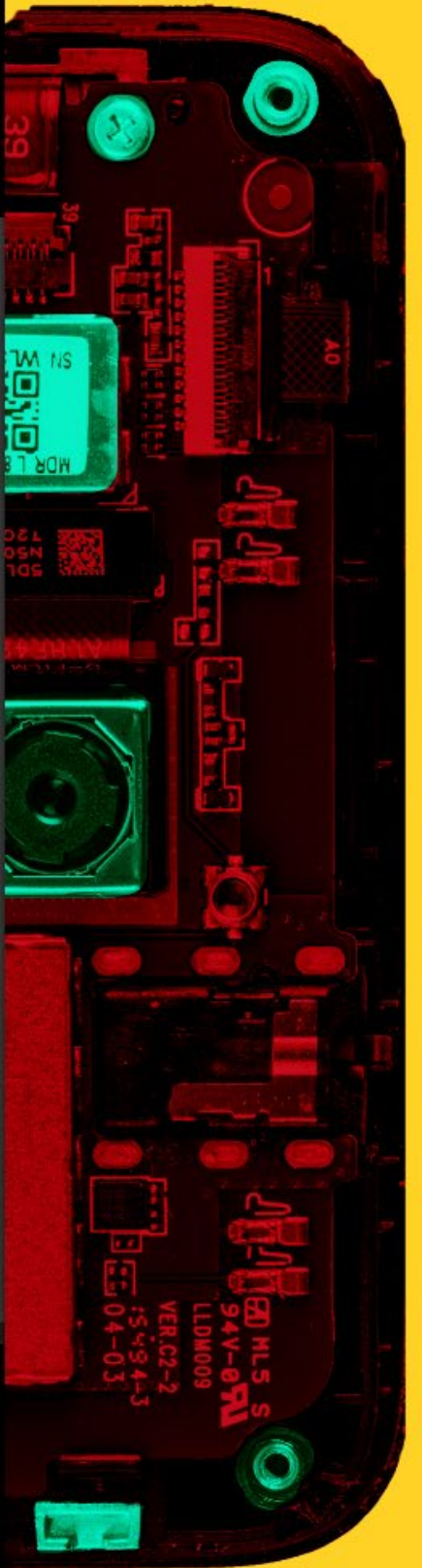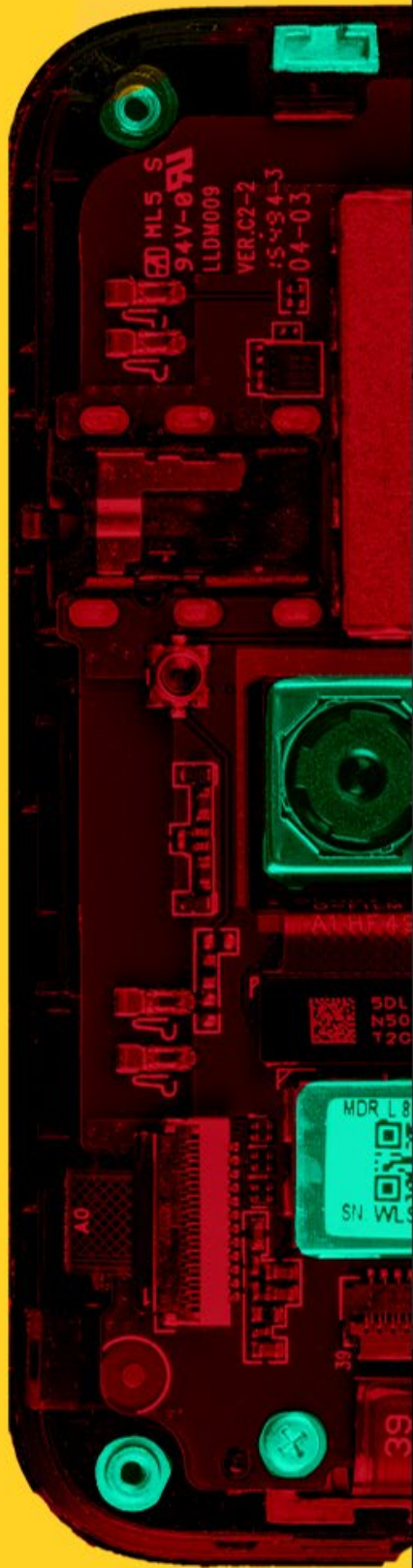*Flugschriften* rekindles the long tradition of 16th-century pamphlets –or 'flying writings'–giving heterodox, experimental, challenging writings a pair of wings with which to find like-minded readers. *Flugschriften* publishes short, sharp shocks to the system–whether this be the political system, literary system, academic system, or human nervous system.

Here is a definition of paraphrase:

(1) A rewording of something written or spoken by someone else, esp. with the aim of making the sense clearer; a free rendering of a passage.[1]

And here is a paraphrase of the definition of paraphrase:

(1a) A restatement of someone else's writing or speech, particularly to clarify the meaning; an approximate version.

Can there be a definition, in turn, of paraphrase (1a)? No: a definition captures the general linguistic potential of a word or phrase, abstracted from any particular statement. A paraphrase reprises a particular statement, as (1a) reprises (1). For the same reason, there cannot be a definition of a definition. (Though of course there can be a definition of "definition.") What about a paraphrase of a paraphrase? Ah, yes.

(1b) A rephrasing of alien text or talk, usually to shake out the gist; a rough take.

Definition may not be recursive, but paraphrase is. You can paraphrase the paraphrase of a paraphrase and on and on. Which is not to say, however, that every definition of paraphrase is a paraphrase of another definition of

paraphrase. "The fact that there was nothing wrong with the call was also powerfully confirmed by Chairman Schiff's decision to create a false version of the call and read it to the American people at a congressional hearing, without disclosing that he was simply making it all up."[2] The ad hoc definition of paraphrase here is "false version," an act of treason, or a heresy.

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Here is an example of paraphrase:

(2a) We've been very good to your country. Very good. No other country has done as much as we have. But you know what? I don't see much reciprocity here. I hear what you want. I have a favor I want from you, though. And I'm going to say this only seven times, so you better listen good.[3]

And here is its original:

(2) I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time. Much more than the European countries are doing and they should be helping you more than they are…I think it's something you want to look at but the United States has been very very good to Ukraine. I wouldn't say that it's reciprocal necessarily because things are happening that are not good but the United States has been very very good to Ukraine…I would like you to do us a favor though because our country has been through a lot and Ukraine knows a lot about it.[4]

An example of paraphrase can be an example of many other things as well—of innuendo, of movie mafia talk—but it cannot be an example of its original. An example is a sample, made of the stuff it stands for. A paraphrase, by contrast, is defined by its use of different stuff, other words. It is closer to translation. Nothing in the language of (2a), taken out of context, identifies it as an example of paraphrase. There are no paraphrase marks (whatever those would be—a triple set of inverted commas?), and no special syntax of secondariness or indebtedness (as some languages use the subjunctive for reported speech). You have to set it side by side with its original, side by side, the *para-* in *paraphrase*, to see the work it does. That comparison opens a set of questions. Is it accurate?—a formal question. Is it faithful?—an ethical question. Do you understand now?—a practical question.

N:subj:V <- find-> V:obj:N -> answer -> N:to:N
"**X** found answer to **Y**"

N:subj:V <- solve-> V:obj:N
"**X** solved **Y**"

FIGURE 2 – MADNANI & DORR (2010), P.352.

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Here is the beginning of the original, again:

(3) I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time.

And here is a translation into Ukrainian:

(3a) Я скажу, що ми робимо багато для України. Ми витрачаємо багато зусиль і багато часу.

And here, a translation of the Ukrainian back into English:

(3b) I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time.

The results are courtesy of Google Translate, and they are impressive: the Ukrainian translation, cut and pasted from the target-language box back into the source-language box, returns the original, word-for-word. What makes for an ideal translation, however—here, double translation—makes for a poor paraphrase. Paraphrase requires a productive difference, and is always subject to collation with its original. Translation must stand alone, and it seeks equivalence as best it can in the face of the inevitable difference between languages. That said, translation enjoys a contentious latitude to favor tone, spirit, literal sense, any of them at the potential expense of the others.[5] There is a translation politics of liberal, conservative, and radical. Paraphrase operates under a narrower mandate, and its political potential

arises from something in its nature that can only be called conservative. The liberties translation might take in the name of a larger fidelity will tend to carry paraphrase away from itself, into polemic, for instance, or parody. A polemical paraphrase is not a disqualifying contradiction, but it nonetheless opens the paraphrase to the charge of that it has betrayed its kind by inaccuracy, or disloyalty.

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Paraphrase can be particularly vulnerable to such charges in the case of official speech. "Schiff made up what I actually said by lying to Congress"; "Congressman Adam Schiff should resign for…fraudulently fabricating a statement of the President of the United States and reading it to Congress, as though mine."[6] And finally:

> Rep. Adam Schiff illegally made up a FAKE & terrible statement, pretended it to be mine as the most important part of my call to the Ukrainian President, and read it aloud to Congress and the American people. It bore NO relationship to what I said on the call. Arrest for Treason?[7]

"Arrest for treason?" *Traduttore, traditore!* as the Italian saying has it. *Translator, traitor!* Or more accurately, and without the rhyme, *Paraphrast, traitor!* There is no accepted account of U.S. law under which the paraphrase at stake would count as an act of treason. But the not-quite-command, a question mark's flinch shy of a performative ("you are under arrest!"), shows

how power can come to regard its own utterances as sacred speech. That assumption underlies the White House Counsel's accusation, a few days later, that "Chairman Schiff chose to concoct a false version of the call," and the telling question from the same letter: if the call had in fact been compromised, "why would Chairman Schiff feel the need to make up his own version?"[8] "False version" becomes "own version," as though anyone else's version were by definition false, as though paraphrase were a device that could only violate the original speaker's sovereign right to have his speech repeated word-for-word.

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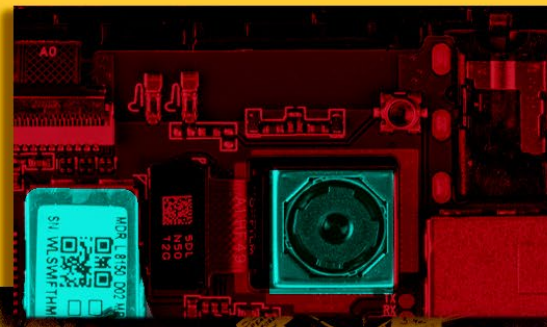
What are the formal charges that put paraphrase in such jeopardy? Each charge is also a would-be definition. One is that paraphrase is a reduction, shortening and simplifying. This account brings it close to its cousin the summary, which promises a useful reduction of complex material. The difference, however, is clarifying. Summary not only compresses, but it can freely reorganize and prioritize its materials, in the interest of getting on to the next steps. It serves an economy of efficiency. (The bullet-pointed, not to say weaponized genre of the executive summary perfects this ambition.) Paraphrase, by contrast, aims more modestly at clarification, and is expected to track, more or less, the order of its original. Example (2a) does just that, replicating the progress of (2) from a reminder of past benefactions, to a reproach about reciprocity, to a sideways ask. It eliminates some redundancies, but preserves enough ("Very good") to convey the habit of repetition, driving it home at the end ("only seven times"). It does so while also being half as long.

Shorter, then; but simpler? It is not easy to be simpler than "I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine." There is a radical project in paraphrastic simplification, the Natural Semantic Metalanguage, that makes a useful test. NSM is a line of research developed by the Polish linguist Anna Wierzbicka in the 1970s, and carried on since then by a marginal but tenacious community of fellow travelers. Here it is:

I, you, someone, people, something/thing, body; this, the same, other; one, two, some, all, much/many; good, bad; big, small; think, know, want, feel, see, hear; say, words, true; do, happen, move; there is, have; live, die; when/time, now, before, after a long time, a short time, for some time; where/place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside; not, maybe, can, because, if; very, more; kind of, part of; like.[9]

These words comprise the English set of "semantic primes" from which more complex meanings are built, and to which they can be reduced. The clarifying power of paraphrase, on this account, is maximized by reliance on these terms, which have equivalents across all languages. (Any difference between paraphrase and translation virtually disappears; once you have recast a statement in NSM, you simply substitute one-for-one the corresponding terms in the target language.) The word-set is small, but not so small that it does not already encompass most of the vocabulary of (2). "I say (I + someone) do much for you," NSM might offer, by way of clarification. Paraphrase (2a), "We've been very good to your country," does not much stretch that limited word-set. The difference between them cannot be said to lie in the simplicity of their respective lexicons, and whatever clarification the paraphrast has brought does not depend on being closer to the foundations of the language. Simplification is not in itself an end or a test of the success of paraphrase. Paraphrase cannot be reduced to reduction.

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If not simplicity, what about complexity? Another account of the work of paraphrase (and another line of reproach against it) cites its dilations of difficult texts. The virtuoso paraphrasts among the British Practical and the American New Critics sometimes seem to value a poem for the ratio of text to comment it occasions. Precisely this disproportion, however, is what concerns Cleanth Brooks, from whose pulpit the charge of heresy was first pronounced, in his 1947 *Well-Wrought Urn.* Imagine trying to produce an adequate paraphrase of *The Rape of the Lock*, he asks, wringing his hands. Is its heroine Belinda a goddess, or a clueless ingenue?[10] "Whichever alternative we take," he writes, "there are elaborate qualifications to be made."

> Moreover, if the simple propositions offered seem in their forthright simplici-
> ty to make too easy the victory of the poem over any possible statement of its
> meaning, then let the reader try to formulate a proposition that will say what

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the poem 'says.' As his proposition approaches adequacy, he will find, not only that it has increased greatly in length, but that it has begun to fill itself up with reservations and qualifications—and most significantly of all—the formulator will find that he has himself begun to fall back upon metaphors of his own in an attempt to indicate what the poem 'says.'[11]

The betrayal of the original, for Brooks, lies not in polemic or parody. The pursuit of sheer nuance carries paraphrase away. The paraphrastic critic endlessly proffers new ingenuities, new words and new figures, in an effort to capture subtleties of tone and argument, and ends up as the author of a different and inferior poem-in-prose. Brooks concedes the pedagogical usefulness of the practice in the textbook he wrote with Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry*.[12] But he fears the overestimation of its powers, and the risk that its pedantic charisma, its virtuosic ratios of source to supplement, might crowd the poem out. The poem, he insists, is "an action rather than a formula for action or a statement about action."[13] The success of a paraphrase cannot be measured by the duration of the critic's monologue, carrying on talking after the poem has said what it says, or rather, done what it does.

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There is another charge against paraphrase in Brooks' reproach to the critic for making "metaphors of his own": not just "own" ("his own version"), but "metaphor." You can paraphrase a metaphor, Brooks implies, but not with another metaphor. This conservative impulse in paraphrase

informs its industrial as surely as its literary applications. The most tireless present-day paraphrasts are the search engines, working in reverse as they seek to channel the human variety of natural language queries toward the sites that everyone means, or discovers they mean. Most projects of algorithmic paraphrase exploit the massive inductions of machine learning. (For example, algorithms that sift a corpus for what is called "distributional similarity," on the assumption that different phrases occurring frequently in similar contexts will have similar meanings, functioning as paraphrases of one another.)[14] There are still, however, instances to be found of good old-fashioned structuralism among the computational linguists. Rahul Bhagat and Eduard Hovy offer twenty-five answers to the question, "What is Paraphrase," which they take as the title of their jointly-written paper in *Computational Linguistics*. No 1. is "synonym substitution," as in,

(4a) Google bought YouTube. ⇔ Google acquired YouTube.

No. 2 is "antonym substitution,"

(4b) Pat ate. ⇔ Pat did not starve.

No. 11 is "manipulator/device substitution,"

(4c) The pilot took off despite the stormy weather. ⇔ The plane took off despite the stormy weather.

No. 14 is "part/whole substitution," as in,

(4d) American airplanes pounded the Taliban defenses. ⇔ American airforce pounded the Taliban defenses.[15]

Synonym substitution is the degree zero of paraphrase, the replacement of each word by its best equivalent. As Bhagat and Hovy proceed down their list, the kinds of paraphrase shift from synonymy into figuration, in particular, species of metonymy. The associations of manipulator and device or part and whole rely on the how the terms lie side by side in experience, pilot and plane, air force and air power. The two researchers do allow "metaphor substitution" into their taxonomy of paraphrase, as no. 13. But their example is telling.

> (4e) I had to drive through fog today. ⇔ I had to drive through a wall of fog today.[16]

The wall of fog replaces a familiar word by a familiar phrase, and the metaphor, such as it is, is dead on arrival. Paraphrase resists metaphor's potential for extravagant alterity, for an altogether novel association. It could be said that paraphrase aspires not to be a figure at all.
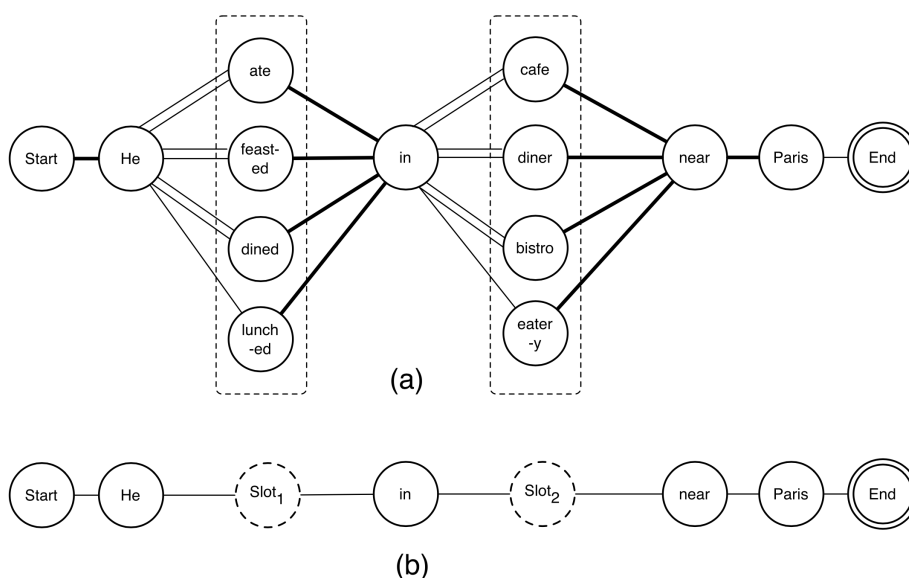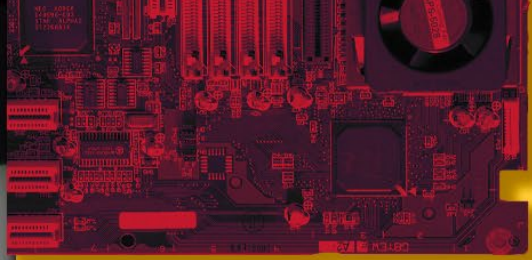

FIGURE 7 – MADNANI & DORR (2010), P.366.

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chest

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These charges, these definitions, can be expressed as degrees of betrayal on a spectrum. Of length: longer, shorter, or just the same length as the original. Or of figuration: at one limit, the extravagant metaphor; at the other, high abstraction. A third spectrum, of style, might capture the relation to parody: running from plainness to mimetic exaggeration, through stylistic equivalence at the center. Arrange these three continua crosswise to one another, as x, y, and z axes, and they will define the space of paraphrase in three dimensions:

abstract

plain

long

short

stylized
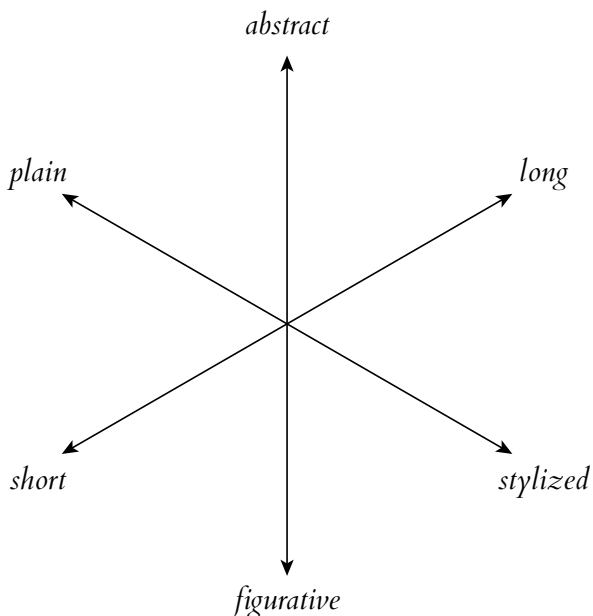
figurative

Particular acts of paraphrase will fall somewhere in this space. (2a) would be displaced toward the limit of brevity and, if slightly, toward parody, while being just about at the center in its balance of figuration and abstraction. (The position is judged not in absolute terms, but in comparison to the original.) What exactly stands at the fulcrum, at the intersection of the three axes? The greatest utility of the diagram is to define the ideal of paraphrase located there. Neither

longer nor shorter, carried away neither by figuration nor by abstraction, and stylistically commensurate, it is the degree zero of rewording—as though the promise of the synonym, at the level of the word, could be extended across the sentence and beyond. Such a project will strike a literary critic as naive. There is no such thing as a perfect synonym, after all, no word that is semantically equivalent to another in any context, "universally substitutable," as the philosophers put it.[17] So much less a phrase, a sentence, a telephone call, a poem. This failure of synonymy is the foundation on which the charge of heresy depends. But there never was such a thing as a true synonymy.

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These formal species of treason—reducing, dilating, metaphorizing—all require comparison with an original. Sometimes, however, the treachery lies in the attempt to conceal that origin. A Google search for "paraphrase services" will discover throngs of contenders, rephrase.org, quillbot.com, rewordify.com, simplish.org, goparaphrase.com, spinbot.com. For visitors—say, college students—who need to explain to themselves what they are looking for, rephrase.org offers helpful answers to the question, "Why Do You Need to Do Rehashing?" You rehash, rephrase.org explains, to show you understand; also, to adapt writing to a different audience, to simplify it, or to improve poor style in the original. These are all honorable reasons. Finally, the site allows that you might paraphrase "to avoid any possibility
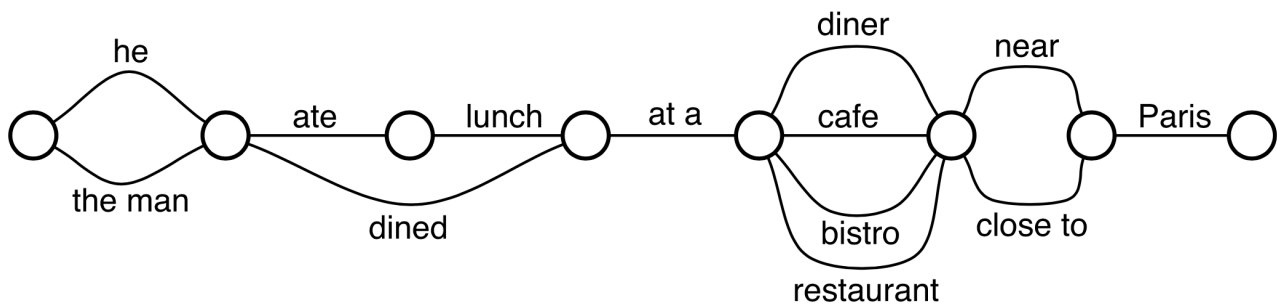
of plagiarism: often you may want to write something rather than reinventing the wheel." Many of its competitors offer such protection for free, paraphrasing pasted-in text at the push of a button. The results are various. Given "I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time," quillbot.com returns, "I'm going to say we're doing a lot for Ukraine. We're spending a lot of time and energy." Paraphrasing-tool.com prefers "ton," as in "I will say that we do a ton for Ukraine. We spend a great deal of exertion and a ton of time." Simplish.org favors "mass": "a mass for Ukraine," and so on. If these interventions seem slight for the trouble, rephrase.com offers something more adventurous, taking pains even to replace "Ukraine": "I will say that we do a pile for Ukrayina. We spend a tidy sum of movement and a lot of prison term."

All of these rudimentary engines are basically slot-thesauruses, swapping out synonyms with greater or lesser regard for context and consistency of diction. Rephrase.org is among those that also offer a paid service, with a staff of writers on call and a twenty-four-hour turnaround for $12.47 US per

page. (One suspects that the free, automated version exists for the purpose of warning visitors against entrusting their academic integrity entirely to an algorithm.) Customer service is exceptionally polite, and so is the paraphrase their writers return, ahead of deadline: "I highly value your comments, and there is no doubt that we've done a lot for Ukraine as the United States of America." (It continues, "I would humbly like to request for your assistance in determining the occurrences between Ukraine and our nation most of which are attributed to Crowdstrike.") The generosity of writer #223975 extends to mitigating the repetitions by diplomatic variation: "we've done a lot for Ukraine…continued to build significant ties with Ukraine…offering unconditional support even in tough situations."[18] Testimonials on the site are disproportionately from Malaysian students, but if you ask on the telephone where the organization and its writers are based, they will tell you, with uncharacteristic curtness, "Albany," which may be a paraphrase, or may simply be a lie.

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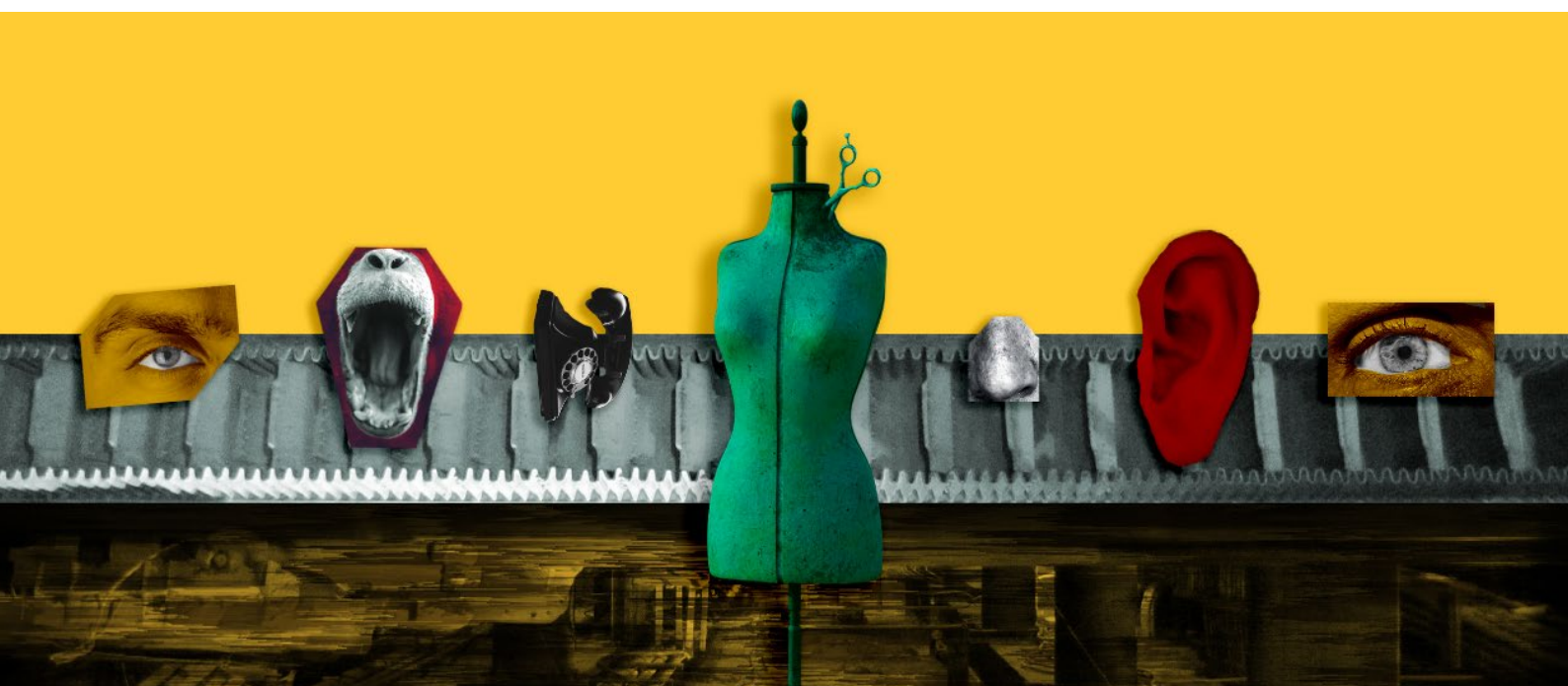
The charge of heresy is still heavier than the charge of lying, perhaps even than the charge of treason. It is as though the original text—for Brooks, the poem—were not only an impossibly rich and complex verbal artifact, but one whose language had a ritual or magical power. Ritual script and magic spell are demanding speech acts. They require for their efficacy that the original words be spoken in the original order; a paraphrase will have little power to convene the faithful, let alone summon a spirit. In the case of a poem, the spell cast is meant to effect understanding, in an expanded sense of what it is to understand. Its paradigm is the sudden clarification of figurative language, which is always something like a spell. (Like a spell, insofar as a metaphor is a kind of action at a distance; there is no stepwise account of how you get from vehicle to tenor.) Given that paraphrase abjures such magical efficacy, refusing to incant, how could it possibly account for a poem—how could it do to us what a poem is supposed to do, how could it act that way upon us? To put a paraphrase in for the specific ritualized rhythm of the original (rhythm, something else paraphrase characteristically, advisedly neglects) is the heresy. But heresy is a charge from inside the church, or inside the poem, and that is by no means the only place for the critic to stand, just as the citizen need not stand only and always within the language of the state and its avatars.

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Here is an example of paraphrase, now familiar:

(2a) We've been very good to your country. Very good. No other country has done as much as we have. But you know what? I don't see much reciprocity here. I hear what you want. I have a favor I want from you, though. And I'm going to say this only seven times, so you better listen good.

And here is a paraphrase of that paraphrase, made from memory:

(2b) We've been very good to your country, much better than other countries I could name. But there's not much reciprocity here. And I have a favor to ask you. I'm only going to ask seven times, so you better listen good.

The slippages from (2a) to (2b) remind us that much day-to-day paraphrase is the ordinary business of recalling something heard or read after the fact. Such recollection is also a test of understanding. The need for paraphrase may testify to the limits of verbatim recall, but it is also a tool, for teachers and students, for friends and lovers, for presidents and citizens, one of the basic ways we know what we know and what others know. It is different from carrying on in the manner of its original, from what philosophers call "knowledge how." Instead it doggedly goes back to the start, to try again. It is a test of "knowledge that," propositional knowledge.[19] Pedagogically, it is not altogether unlike practicing a scale on an instrument, but practicing by transposing it, inverting it, stating it otherwise each time, and each time from the top.

That tolerance for starting over is one of the reasons why paraphrase is different from explanation. All explanations come to an end somewhere, as Wittgenstein says, meaning that the psychoanalyst will arrive at a drive, the Marxist at a class contradiction—a stopping place, at least for the day, a moment of clarification, a fulcrum for a lever. Whereas there is something potentially endless about paraphrase, which is neither a theory, nor a trope, but a practice. If a paraphrase is unclear, you can produce another one, a paraphrase of the original utterance or even a paraphrase of the paraphrase. It is, like language itself, both concatenative and recursive. Brooks has a certain horror of that keeping going, as it distends the poem, breaks the boundaries of the ritual occasion, dissipates the action into discourse. But the indefinite potential of paraphrase is also a commitment to abiding in language. It need never arrive at that decisive moment at which a parable, or an allegory, insisting on its own gnomic form, excludes once and for all those who do not understand its truth. Nor does it reach the point of command. "Arrest for treason?" A paraphrase of a command, qua paraphrase, is not a command, any more than a paraphrase of a spell is a spell or a paraphrase of a prayer is a prayer. Paraphrase can just continue looping back until everyone is satisfied, until everyone agrees, or at least agrees on what was said: agrees at least that the paraphrase agrees.

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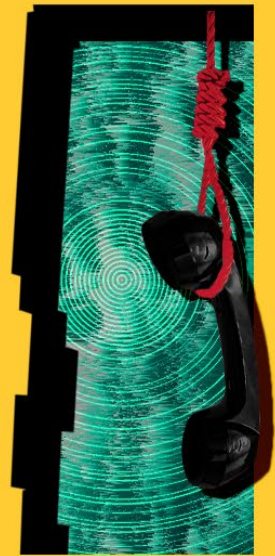
Another way of putting it: none of the formal criteria by which para-phrase can be assessed—fidelity or deviation, copiousness or efficiency, complexity or simplicity—looks into the eyes of its audience. The limit case of paraphrastic formalization is the simple lexical set of NSM, and its limitations are exemplary. "The adoption of the reductive requirement that a definiens be simpler than a definiendum is misguided," writes the philos-opher Nick Riemer. Relative simplicity is not the right criterion for a good paraphrase. "What guarantees explanatory success is not that the definiens be simpler, but that it be already known."[20] Already known, that is, by the audience. Paraphrase is not only of, but for, and what makes for success is that the terms are familiar to whoever needs the help. "Guarantees" is a strong word, and "explanatory" is not quite right, either; "clarifying" is better. What Riemer is properly after, though, is a sense that successful paraphrase

finds terms and constructions that define a shared world, or that operate in a world already shared by the paraphrast and the audience, precisely not the schismatic world of heresy and treasonous speech, or for that matter, of madness. Paraphrase does not incant. It does not point outside itself, *don't think, look!*, to an example in the world; nor does it perform experiments there. It seeks a mutually intelligible idiom.

Which is to say that the readiness to paraphrase others—"rewording of something written or spoken by someone else," as the *OED* has it—depends on readiness to paraphrase ourselves. Our own words, the words we choose first, are our compulsions, our symptoms. "I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine"; "the United States has been very good to Ukraine"; "the United States has been very good to Ukraine." When we speak, we blurt them out. We repeat ourselves, until the formulae are crystalline as kidney stones. But when we are asked to say it again, so someone else can understand, we are given occasion to test our intentions in different language, to see how someone else responds, and to hear ourselves again. The work of art is silent, says Northrop Frye; criticism alone speaks. I suspect I paraphrase, from memory, and I will do it again: the autocrat is silent; democracy alone speaks. By his aphorism Frye must mean that the work of art will only ever say itself, again and again. Not silent, exactly, but mad in its monologic intensity, and unable to converse. Criticism, by contrast, is free to speak into the world, phrase and rephrase itself, confer and adapt. Which is not to say that criticism cannot be lapidary and definitive, final and enigmatic.

It can sing along with art, and be authoritative, even mad in kind. But it need not, to be of service.

<p style="text-align:center">•</p>

This is not a paraphrase:

(5) That's fake, that's not the real call. That's not the evidence here. That's not the transcript that Mr. Cipollone just referenced and we can shrug it off and say we were making light or a joke, but that was in a hearing in the United States House of Representatives discussing the removal of the President of the United States from office. There are very few things, if any, that can be as grave and as serious. Let's stick with the evidence.[21]

But this is:

(5a) That is not the real call, it is a paraphrase of the real call; and rather than credit the paraphrase with attempting to help understand what the real call said, I am going to imply that it was meant as a substitute, meant to take the place of the transcript as evidence. To paraphrase a president is equivalent to deposing him. Therefore I am going to dismiss this paraphrase for being something that it never pretended to be, and rather than looking at the call more closely, we can all look away.

A free paraphrase, granted, and a polemical one. With the two side by side it is possible to argue over its accuracy, and to try again, if it is challenged. The practice of paraphrase may arise from frailty of memory and of understanding, but it is not a symptom of those mortal frailties, so much as an attempt at a remedy. Its difference recalls us to the world we share.

Notes

1	"paraphrase, n.1a." *OED Online*. June 2005. Oxford University Press.

2	Pat A. Cipollone to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Chairmen Schiff, Engel, and Cummings, October 9, 2019.

3	Louis Jacobson, "Adam Schiff's Retelling of Trump's Ukraine Phone Call Isn't Treason," politifact.com, https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2019/oct/01/donald-trump-adam-schiff-and-accusations-treason/ (accessed February 24, 2020).

4	Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky, "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation: Telephone Conversation with President Zelensky of Ukraine," July 25, 2019.

5	See the discussion of the relation between instrumentalist theories of translation (which assume an invariant tertium quid that can be carried between languages) and hermeneutic theories (which treat every translation as a tendentious interpretation) in Lawrence Venuti, *Theses on Translation: An Organon for the Current Moment* (Pittsburgh and New York: Flugschriften, 2019).

6	@realdonaldtrump. "Like every American…" *Twitter*, 29 Sep 2019, 3:53 p.m., https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1178442759499370496 (accessed February 24, 2020).

7	@realdonaldtrump. "Like every American…" *Twitter*, 29 Sep 2019, 3:53 p.m., https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1178442759499370496; @realdonaldtrump. "Congressman Adam Schiff…" *Twitter* 2 Oct 2019, 7:16 a.m., https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1179399836883394562 (accessed February 24, 2020).

8	Cipollone to Pelosi et al., October 9, 2019.

9	Cliff Goddard, "The Search for the Shared Semantic Core of All Languages," in C. Goddard and A. Wierzbicka, eds., *Meaning and Universal Grammar: Theory and*

Empirical Findings, 2 vols., (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2002), 1.14.

10   Perversely masterful examples of strong-minded paraphrase are everywhere in William Empson's work, from *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) forward; his work is a locus classicus for discussion of critical paraphrase over the next generation in England and America. Helen Thaventhian's essay "Empson and the Orthodoxy of Paraphrase" undertakes a defense of paraphrase on different terms from mine, exploring how Empson's "heresies, because so overt, unsettle this orthodox prohibition and so may remind us of some strengths of paraphrase"; among them, explaining poems "without falling into the discursive traps of explanation" (*Essays in Criticism* 61.4 [2011]: 383, 393). See also John Carey's *Wording and Rewording: Paraphrase in Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), which more or less accepts Brooks' charge, produces some spectacular examples of paraphrastic liberty, and argues for critical attention to historical circumstance instead.

11   Cleanth Brooks, *The Well-Wrought Urn* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1947), 198-99.

12   Among the prescribed exercises is "a precise paraphrase of what is said in stanza 3," though the suspicion of paraphrase is still felt: "If we come to know a poem well and are asked what it 'means,' we may well be hesitant about answering the question with a statement that attempts to paraphrase the total meaning." *Understanding Poetry*, 4th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 1988), 311, 345.

13   Brooks, *Urn*, 197, 204. Angela Leighton asks, "Why should paraphrase be applied only to the finished thought-content of a poem and not to its thinking process?" ("About About: On Poetry and Paraphrase," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 23 [2009], 172). But where the original is not a text, but an inferred process, perhaps the proper category is description rather than paraphrase.

14   Nitin Madnani and Bonnie J. Dorr describe this and other NLP (natural language processing) approaches in "Generating Phrasal and Sentential Paraphrases," *Computational Linguistics* 36.3 (2010): 341-87.

15   Rahul Bhagat and Eduard Hovy, "What Is Paraphrase?" *Computational Linguistics* 39.3 (2013), 465-67. They are well aware that their formalizations require

a tolerance for difference. "By studying various existing paraphrase theories," they write, "and through an analysis of paraphrases obtained from two different corpora, we have discovered that one can identify a set of 25 classes of quasi-paraphrases, with each class having its own specific way of relaxing the requirement of strict semantic equivalence" (464).

16   Bhagat and Hovy, "Paraphrase," 467.

17   See for example the discussion by Nelson Goodman in "On Likeness of Meaning," *Analysis* 10.1 (1949): 1-7; E. D. Hirsch, Jr. summarizes these arguments in "Stylistics and Synonymity," *Critical Inquiry* 1.3 (1975): 559-79.

18   Text ordered from rephrase.org on December 19, 2019.

19   The distinction, much elaborated in the literature, was first articulated by Gilbert Ryle, "Knowing How and Knowing That," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* N.S. 46 (1945-46). 1-16.

20   Nick Riemer, "Reductive Paraphrase and Meaning: A Critique of Wierzbickian Semantics," *Linguistics and Philosophy* 29 (2006): 347–79

21   Michael Purpura, in "Trump Defense Team Opening Argument Transcript: Jan 25 Impeachment Trial Statements from Cipollone, Philbin, Sekulow, Purpura," rev.com, https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/white-house-lawyer-pat-cipollone-argument-transcript-jan-25-impeachment-trial-statement (accessed February 24, 2020).

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