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**FEATURES OF BOB DYLAN'S MID-1960S
LYRICS AND THEIR TRACES IN THREE
FINNISH TRANSLATIONS OF "LIKE A
ROLLING STONE"**

ABSTRACT

Sami Pulliainen: Features of Bob Dylan's mid-1960s lyrics and their traces in three Finnish translations of "Like a Rolling Stone"

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This thesis examines some distinguishing characteristics of Bob Dylan's mid-1960s lyrics and whether there are traces of them in three Finnish translations of "Like a Rolling Stone." Due to the high literary esteem of Dylan's lyrics, the subject is approached from the point of view of poetry translation, and writings on the subject by Octavio Paz, Liisa Enwald, Barbara Folkart, Willis Barnstone, and others are reviewed. There emerges the idea of the poetry translator as rewriter, and this is contrasted with André Lefevere's and Riitta Oittinen's ideas about translation in general as rewriting.

After the theoretical background of the thesis has been laid out, the problematic nature of the solely literary point of view vis-à-vis Dylan's performative distinctiveness is acknowledged. After that, Dylan's mid-1960s work is placed in the context of his career and features of "Like a Rolling Stone" are discussed in detail. The song's content is seen as rather straightforward except for the colourful imagery; its rhyme scheme is found to be quite complex.

In addition to Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone," three of its Finnish translations are used as material. These are "Olet yksin taas" by Timo Ulkuniemi (Nuuskamuikkunen), "Enää itkeä voit" by Petri Tiili (Pelle Miljoona), and "Yhä alaspäin" by Mikko Koivusalo. Two aspects of the translations are examined: content, from a mostly semantic point of view, and rhyme structure.

In the chapter discussing Dylan translations, an earlier study by Karri Savonen is briefly reviewed, after which the three translations are compared with the source text and each other. Ulkuniemi's translation is found to be quite faithful to the syntax of the source text, at times to the song's detriment, while its imagery is noted to be more banal than in the source; it is found to have no consistent rhyme scheme. Tiili's song is found rather faithful to the source in content as well as register; its rhyme scheme is noted to be fairly regular but not quite as intricate as that of the source text. Koivusalo's translation is found faithful to the meanings of the source text but in rather more creative ways than the other translations; its rhyme scheme is noted to be highly similar to Dylan's original. Finally, the inexhaustiveness of the thesis is reiterated and further research possibilities from Dylan's career are suggested.

Keywords: translation, poetry, lyrics, rhyme

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Sami Pulliainen: Features of Bob Dylan's mid-1960s lyrics and their traces in three Finnish translations of "Like a Rolling Stone"

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Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan joitakin Bob Dylanin 1960-luvun puolivälin lyriikan erityispiirteitä ja sitä, onko niitä nähtävissä kolmessa "Like a Rolling Stone" -kappaleen suomenkielisessä käännöksessä. Dylanin sanoitusten korkean kirjallisen arvostuksen takia tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys on runouden kääntämisen teoriassa, ja siinä käydään läpi mm. Octavio Pazin, Liisa Enwaldin, Barbara Folkartin ja Willis Barnstonen näkemyksiä aiheesta. Esiin nousee ajatus runouden kääntäjästä uudelleenkirjoittajana, ja tätä peilataan André Lefeveren ja Riitta Oittisen ajatuksiin kääntämisestä yleensä uudelleenkirjoittamisena.

Teoreettisen taustoituksen jälkeen tutkielmassa huomioidaan puhtaasti kirjallisen näkökulman ongelmallisuus Dylanin performatiivisen omintakeisuuden valossa, asetetaan Dylanin 1960-luvun puolivälin lyriikka kontekstiin hänen muuhun uraansa nähden sekä esitellään "Like a Rolling Stone" -kappaleen erityispiirteitä. Tutkielmassa todetaan, että kappaleen viesti on sen värikästä kuvastoa lukuun ottamatta helposti ymmärrettävä, mutta sen riimirakenteen huomataan olevan monimutkainen.

Dylanin "Like a Rolling Stone" -sanoituksen lisäksi tutkielman materiaalina on kappaleen kolme suomennosta, Timo Ulkuniemen (Nuuskamuikkunen) "Olet yksin taas", Petri Tiilin (Pelle Miljoona) "Enää itkeä voit" sekä Mikko Koivusalon "Yhä alaspäin". Suomennosten piirteistä tarkastellaan sisältöä ennen muuta semantiikan näkökulmasta sekä riimirakennetta.

Dylan-käännöksiä käsittelevän luvun aluksi esitellään lyhyesti Karri Savosen aiempaa tutkimusta aiheesta. Sen jälkeen vertaillaan "Like a Rolling Stonen" kolmea suomennosta keskenään ja lähtötekstiin nähden. Ulkuniemen käännöksestä todetaan, että se noudattaa sisältönsä osalta lähtötekstin lauserakenteita välillä liiankin tarkasti ja sen kuvastoa banaalistaen ja että siinä ei ole säännönmukaista riimirakennetta. Tiilin suomennoksen todetaan olevan sisällöltään ja kielelliseltä rekisteriltään melko uskollinen lähtötekstille; riimejä Tiilin todetaan käyttävän melko johdonmukaisesti mutta ei kuitenkaan alkutekstin tiheydellä. Koivusalon suomennoksesta todetaan, että sisällön osalta siinä päädytään muita suomennoksia luovempiin ratkaisuihin kuitenkin alkutekstin merkityksissä pitäytyen ja että se noudattaa Dylanin riimirakennetta hyvin tarkasti. Lopuksi toistetaan huomio tutkielman näkökulman puutteellisuudesta ja ehdotetaan mahdollisia jatkotutkimuskohteita Dylanin uralta.

Avainsanat: kääntäminen, runous, sanoitukset, riimi

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1 Introduction

In October 2016, Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize in Literature for “having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition” (Nobel Prize, n.d.). This caused an uproar in literary circles, and many wondered how a songwriter could be awarded the most prestigious prize in the field of literature. But there were voices of approval too, accepting the widening of literary horizons – though some argued that Leonard Cohen should have won instead. The Nobel was far from Dylan’s first prize, however, and some have long considered him part of the canon of world literature. Given the elevated status of Dylan’s writing and the recent prize, a look at what shapes his lyrics (or poems) have taken when translated into Finnish is in order.

Despite Dylan’s prolificness, Finnish covers of his songs are not abundant. A quick look at the database of Finnish pre-2000 recordings gives one some idea: there are only 36 hits for songs whose original lyricist is Bob Dylan, roughly a third of the number for Paul McCartney (with or without John Lennon), Dylan’s equally prolific contemporary with a similar career trajectory. Most of these are single songs (and a few are even in the original English), but there have been at least three recordings released with the intention of translating and performing several of Dylan’s songs at the same time: the LP *Nuuskamuikkunen soittaa ja laulaa Bob Dylania* (1976), Vesa Lattunen & Company’s EP *Lauluja Dylanilta* (1979), and *Dylan suomeksi* (2016), a compilation album featuring various artists and made to coincide with Dylan’s 75th birthday. Some of Dylan’s songs have attracted multiple Finnish cover versions, with “Blowin’ in the Wind” and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, “Man Gave Names to All the Animals” in the lead, though not all of the versions can be considered translations of Dylan. The overall scarcity may have much to do with Dylan’s perceived difficulty. Indeed, Mikko Koivusalo has said that translating Dylan requires a degree of arrogance, as one has to assert knowledge of what the songs mean before commencing work (Rantanen 2012).

For my choice of material, I have firstly aspired to select a song that would be somehow characteristic of Dylan’s work – although his career is much more heterogenous than is often thought. Secondly, examining the translations of a song that is notably difficult to translate will, in a backwards way, shed some light on why there are so few Finnish Dylan covers. Thirdly, I wanted to select a song with multiple translations available for comparison. Of the

songs filling these conditions, “Like a Rolling Stone” provides the most fruitful basis for study, for reasons elaborated on later. I will compare three translations of the song, those by Timo Ulkuniemi, Pelle Miljoona, and Mikko Koivusalo.

Finnish translations of Dylan’s songs have already been examined by Karri Savonen (2007; 2008). However, he approaches Dylan as a specimen of rock lyric writing. I feel that given Dylan’s status as a writer and indeed the distinctiveness of his oeuvre, a study focusing on the characteristics of his “literature” is in order. For this reason, I have decided to disregard the musical, auditive and performative aspects of his lyrics to the extent that they can be disregarded, although I realise that that decision is counteractive to the recent movement towards multimodal studies of song lyrics (cf. Toivonen 2018, 6–9). As an exception to this, I will look at how the translators have dealt with the elaborate rhyme scheme of the source text, a distinguishing characteristic of Dylan. In addition, I will compare the content of the original song with the content of the translations, from a mostly semantic point of view, but these are by no means the only features that could be discussed as regards the songs at hand, and it follows that the thesis will be inexhaustive by nature.

As my viewpoint is solely word-based, I will look at the translated lyrics as poetry in translation, referring to writings by Octavio Paz (1992), Susan Bassnett (1998), Liisa Enwald (2000), Barbara Folkart (2007), Willis Barnstone (1993), and others. What emerges is the idea of the poetry translator as a creator in an analogous position with the original poet. This relates to Lefevere’s (1992) and Oittinen’s (1995; 2000) ideas about translation in general as rewriting.

After providing the theoretical basis for the thesis in the next chapter, I will introduce the materials selected and the methods used. Chapter 4 will discuss Dylan’s career as a lyricist. In its first section, I will briefly deal with the problematic stance this thesis will take, namely that of studying lyrics on paper, and the special case, as a performer and Nobel laureate, of Dylan. After that, I will place the lyrics of his iconic mid-1960s period in context and offer a detailed look at the lyrics of “Like a Rolling Stone,” one of the defining works of the period in question. Chapter 5 will begin with a look at previous studies of Dylan in translation. Finally, I will examine how the Finnish translators have dealt with the problems that “Like a Rolling Stone” presents.

2 Theoretical background

As I am not approaching the translated Dylan songs as entities that exist in time and with musical accompaniment, it follows that I must regard them as art consisting of words, i.e. poetry. Poetry is often regarded as the most difficult mode or genre of writing for a translator. A famous, and famously extreme, remark regarding this is attributed to the poet Robert Frost: “Poetry is what gets lost in translation” (Bassnett 1998, 57). Bassnett impugns the idea that poetry is an intangible thing that “although constructed *in* language cannot be transposed *across* languages” and notes that poets themselves have different roles in different societies – which leads to different circumstances (1998, 57–58, emphases in original). Others besides Frost, however, have gone as far as saying that poetry is impossible to translate. While there is ample evidence to prove otherwise in the form of published translations of poetry, even many of those who say it is very much possible note that poetry can be regarded as a language of its own, its special properties including multiplicity of meaning, the auditive qualities of words, and issues relating to rhythm, metre, etc. (see Enwald 2000, 176–180; Paz 1992, 158–159; Lehto 2008, 30–34). Ezra Pound has differentiated three different kinds of poetry: *elopoeia*, which concerns the musical properties of language; *phanopoeia*, involving the creation of images in language; and *logopoeia*, “the dance of the intellect among words” (Bassnett, 1998, 64). According to Pound, of these only the second easily lends itself to translation (*ibid.*).

Due to these various special properties involved, verbatim translation is seen as an especially questionable strategy when it comes to poetry. Speaking generally, Paz sees word-for-word translation as not translation at all rather than a mechanism or glossary to facilitate reading of the original text (1992, 154). He states that a translated poem should be analogous to rather than identical with the source poem and sees the process as the inverse of writing poetry, with the translator “dismantling the elements of the text, freeing the signs into circulation, then returning them to language” (*ibid.*, 158–159). The result, he notes, is “less a copy than a transmutation” (*ibid.*, 160).

Similarly, Folkart writes that “[t]he thinking translator does *as* (not *what*) the source-language author did” (2007, 8; italics in original) and that the goal of poetry translation should be to “create a target text that really *is* a poem” (*ibid.*, 156, italics in original). She states that a poem should “break out of the already-said, to force its way through the wall of language”

(ibid., 1), and calls for a theory of translation that would focus on the act of writing itself, on the *writerly* translator-subject's actions instead of the original text (ibid., 81).

Enwald speaks of the importance of connotations as opposed to denotations, as while dictionaries are helpful with the latter, the former are what poetry activates (2000, 184). She states that a poetry translator should carefully consider those elements, including connotations and hidden messages, which remain behind verbal expression when language is used: "There remain opportunities to *say things differently*. There remains rhythm, heartbeats both audible and inaudible, breathing" (ibid., 185; my translation and emphasis).

Barnstone states that poetry translation is possible once there has been a "declaration of difference" between the source and target poems (1993, 18). Afterwards, the act of translation should be judged "not on its attainment of identity but on the quality of its difference in seeking identity and equivalence" (ibid.). Later, he says: "Translation is not a mirror. Nor is it a mimetic copy. It is another creation. Of course every translation owes form and content to its source, yet it has become a new text" (ibid., 261–262).

These statements tie in with the general idea of translation as a form of rewriting on a par with other forms of it, put forth by André Lefevere. According to him, rewriting of works of literature is manipulation undertaken because of motivations that are poetic or ideological, and it can be either innovatory or repressive (Lefevere 1992, vii). Oittinen, too, sees all translation as rewriting, an activity which happens under particular circumstances, in particular places and particular contexts, all of which influence the translator's work (1995, 9). She sees the original text as a text which is always read and understood as something, and as a source from which the translator can take the elements needed under the particular circumstances, for the purposes of the particular target text, and with the expectations of the target audience in mind (Oittinen 2000, 266–267). Rewriting always changes the content of the message, and translation by definition involves a different way of communication in that the language used is different (ibid., 269).

To get back to poetry in particular, large parts of this thesis are concerned with rhyme and rhyme forms, which are closely related to metre – though as I will explain in Chapter 4.1, metre matters less in the case of Dylan. Rhymes are prevalent in song lyrics in both English and Finnish, but their translation is no simple matter. Finnish words are long, so a translator cannot fit as much into one line and has to find a solution by e.g. summarising, combining

elements or changing the order of presentation, and all of this may prove a hindrance when trying to fit the translation into the selected (if metre is selected) metre (Enwald 2000, 186–190). On the other hand, thanks to its numerous cases, different syntax and types of word-formation, Finnish offers an almost infinite number of possibilities for rhyming when compared to English (Salo 2014, 165). There is also a difference between the languages as regards tradition; in Finnish folklore other poetic means like alliteration and rhythm are more prominent (Vilén 1997, 17).

Translation of poetry, then, is a balancing act, and a doubly difficult one if one is to retain form as well as meaning. Lefevre notes that rhyming translation involves a “losing battle against self-imposed restrictions” and that most failures in translation are due to excessive concentration on one aspect instead of the totality (1975, 98–99). Folkart elucidates the extreme dangers involved in retaining form: “Translated verse that merely goes through the motions of rhyme and rhythm without succeeding in being poetry, verse that leaves the target-language reader cold, is simply not worth it” (2007, 156). I will now elaborate how I hope to find out whether the three translations succeed in being poetry.

3 Materials and methodology

To see how the translators have succeeded in bringing Dylan’s work into Finnish, I have aspired to select a song as “Dylan-esque” as possible – problematic though the word may be – and with as many potential problems for translators as possible. As I will expand upon in Chapter 4.2, this is not altogether as straightforward a task as it may sound. I have selected “Like a Rolling Stone” (hereafter LARS) for reasons further discussed in Chapter 4.3 (more specifically, I will examine the version of the song that appears on the album *Highway 61 Revisited*). While not quite as complex as some of the other songs from the same period, it does fill the prerequisite of having Finnish translations in existence – at least four. Of these I will discuss three, all of which have been performed under titles referring to Dylan specifically and thereby positioning themselves (at varying levels of explicitness – n.b. the back-translations) as translations of Dylan’s work.

Nuuskamuikkunen soittaa ja laulaa Bob Dylania (‘Nuuskamuikkunen plays and sings [the music of] Bob Dylan’) includes the first of the translations, “Olet yksin taas” (‘You’re alone again’; Ulkuniemi 1976). The album consists of twelve Dylan songs translated and performed by Timo Ulkuniemi using the name Nuuskamuikkunen. Ulkuniemi has had a long career in

music and sound engineering, but the album seems to be his only foray into song translation. The lyrics have been transcribed from the recording.

“Enää itkeä voit” (‘There’s nothing left for you to do but cry’; Tiili 2016) is the work of Petri Tiili, better known as Pelle Miljoona, an icon of Finnish music. He is a prolific and acclaimed songwriter who has also written novels and translated a few songs. “Enää itkeä voit” was first released on Pelle Miljoona & 1980’s album *Pelko ja viha* (1979), but as Dylan’s fourth verse is not translated either on that version or the version on a 1992 live album, I will examine the version released in 2016 on *Dylan suomeksi* (‘Dylan in Finnish’). The fourth verse may or may not have been translated especially for that jubileum album. The lyrics have been gleaned from the lyric insert in the CD version of the album.

In contrast with the other two, there exists no (public) recording of the third LARS translation at hand, “Yhä alaspäin” (‘Ever downwards’; Koivusalo 2016) by Mikko Koivusalo. However, it too was written to be sung. It was performed several times in 2012 and 2013 in Turku City Theatre’s production *Vapaa mies – Dylania suomeksi* (‘A free man – [some] Dylan in Finnish’), an evening of Dylan songs, all of which had been translated into Finnish by Koivusalo. Unlike the other two writers, Koivusalo is a professional translator who has translated, among other things, many musicals and the songs for similar Leonard Cohen and Paul Simon events.

By way of comparison with the source text, this thesis seeks to investigate to what extent the three songs can in fact be considered translations of Dylan. I have aspired to select features that are characteristic of Dylan for examination, but the somewhat arbitrary scope of subject material, combined with the fleeting nature of poetry, means that conclusive answers to the question will be unattainable. With that said, in the analysis I will first discuss the semantic content of the translations vis-à-vis LARS. To illustrate the strategies used by the translators, I will offer, alongside various general remarks at times departing the field of semantics, a detailed look at the third verses of LARS and the other songs.

As I will explain in the next chapter, adventurous rhyming is a distinguishing characteristic of (some of) Dylan’s art. This applies to both the rhyme words themselves and the elaborate rhyme schemes he was particularly prone to using during his most fertile period. Accordingly, I will look at the rhyme patterns of LARS and the three translations. For the purposes of this comparison, throughout the thesis I will regard assonant rhymes or near-rhymes as rhymes –

firstly for the sake of simplicity and secondly for the pragmatic reason that they have, in most cases clearly, been meant as such by the writer in question (this will apply both to Dylan and to the Finnish translations). For the same two reasons, I will use *x* to mark any intentionally unrhymed lines, i.e. lines that do not contribute to the construction of the scheme that is being used.

Rhyme, an identity in sound, is by definition an auditive feature (Vilén 1997, 8–9), but I will otherwise disregard such aspects in my study. I will now explain why my decision is problematic particularly when discussing Dylan.

4 Dylan as lyricist

4.1 Literature, performance and the case of Dylan

Bob Dylan’s Nobel prize caused a frenzy. Many were appalled that the most prestigious literary prize had been awarded to a mere songwriter.¹ There ensued a widespread reiteration of the rather tired debate on whether song lyrics “qualify” as poetry, as though the latter was somehow an inherently superior (or unquestionably separate!) form of writing (see Nyqvist 2019, 138–145; Toth & Otiono 2019, 1–5). There is no room here for a lengthier consideration of the matter, but since there is universally agreed to be a difference between Bob Dylan’s lyrics on paper and Bob Dylan’s lyrics as performed by Bob Dylan, a brief discussion of performance-related matters is in order. Even more pertinent here is the fact that “Bob Dylan’s lyrics” is itself also a rather ephemeral concept.

Inevitably, there have been book-length studies of Dylan from this point of view, too, including Bowden (2001) and Otiono and Toth (2019). Dylan considers performing to live audiences his mission. He has shown little concern about possible mistakes made in his studio recordings; they capture only a moment in time and cannot be considered definitive or final versions of the songs. His songs often bear very little resemblance to their original versions when played in concert² (or even when transcribed to his official lyric collections), not just musically but sometimes lyrically as well (see Heylin 2010, 9–13). While the words of LARS, the subject of this thesis, have changed very little in the course of over 2000 live

¹ In reality, Dylan can only be considered the first writer of popular (rock) songs to win, as songs (some seen by one of his translators as untranslatable!) form a major part of the oeuvre of Rabindranath Tagore, the 1913 laureate (Eden 2017).

² Anecdotal evidence: at Pori Jazz 2014, a concert-goer wondered “why he doesn’t play any of the old stuff”–during a performance of “She Belongs to Me” (1965).

performances, other songs have not been so stable, with, perhaps, “Tangled Up in Blue” and its dozens of alterations being the quintessential example.

There is much to discuss even when leaving aside all musical instruments other than Dylan’s vocals. As case in point, Daley (2007) manages a look at Dylan’s vocal prowess with only a single verse of LARS as illustration. His versatile singing, in many songs non-melodic or speech-like, is another one of his trademarks, and he can convey numerous different meanings with the same set of lyrics (see e.g. Bowden 2001, 104–123). As further illustration of his abilities, the same musical passage may be crammed with syllables in one verse and very loose and relaxed in the next, with his phrasing remaining effortless throughout. All this also means that musical boundaries and metre have less importance than usual on the formal qualities of his lyrics.

The amount of literature on Dylan is endless, and his voice itself (or various voices) has been written about at length as well. Some assertions about these matters border on the preposterous. Carrera goes as far as to say that “Dylan [...] is not a writer,” claiming that he does not even use English rather than a “language he has largely fashioned for himself, where the rules of grammar, syntax, and logic are in constant probation” (2009, 95). He continues that to translate Dylan is to translate his voice – a task he deems impossible – and that Dylan’s writing (which, apparently, somehow does emerge from the non-writer) is merely a “supplement to his voice” (ibid.).

After all this, it may seem foolish to look at Dylan from the angle of lyrics only. Generally speaking, however, lyrics do exist as a template on which to base a performance (I am excluding special cases like improvised lyrics here), and in the other direction, orally transmitted language can be presented in written form. Personally, I see literature and poetry as, essentially, strings of words, and I find it an odd notion that strings of words should no longer be regarded as strings of words if spoken or sung. What follows next is a look at Dylan’s writing – his strings of words – with the focus on the much-lauded mid-1960s period.

4.2 The mid-1960s period in context

Much of what is written, understood and, indeed, thought of Dylan applies only to a very brief period, and one which is not at all typical in the grand scheme of his almost 60-year lyrical career: the mid-1960s. That incredibly prolific period, however, was even what the Nobel committee chiefly had in mind – in an interview after the prize was announced, the

Academy's Permanent Secretary Sara Danius recommended the uninitiated start with *Blonde on Blonde* (1966).

Dylan first became famous as a “protest singer” during the latter days of the American folk music revival. His songwriting career began with two songs on his eponymous 1962 debut and continued with his second LP, considered one of his classics. As soon as he began writing songs, he appropriated elements from earlier music and texts, as per the traditions of the so-called “folk process” – a tendency which characterises his writing to this day (Yaffe 2011, 93–124; see also Cran 2014, 187–211 for an examination of Dylan's collage techniques). Many of Dylan's early songs are topical, and some of them became anthems of the 1960s civil rights and anti-war movements, but this certainly does not apply to all his early lyrics. However, his fourth album was so visible a step toward non-political writing that the lighter fare caused his label to name it *Another Side of Bob Dylan*.

The albums of what is sometimes among Dylan fans called, indicating the shift in musical accompaniment, the “electric trilogy” – *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde* (a double album) – were released during a 16-month period in 1965–66. Dylan's lyrics during this period contain plenty of wordplay, complex rhyme schemes and peculiar imagery. He had experimented with abstract, surrealistic imagery and intricate rhyming patterns even before *Bringing It All Back Home* – “A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall” (1962) and “Chimes of Freedom” (1964) being notable examples – but these tendencies reached their zenith with the electric trilogy. The era's lyrics became to show a visible influence of French symbolists like Rimbaud and Verlaine along with poets of the Beat generation, with Dylan parading a “macabre carnival” of characters into his songs (Negus 2008, 110).

Among other things, Dylan is well known for his adventurous and ubiquitous use of rhyming. This inventiveness applies not only to the choice of rhyme words, which are at times outrageous or even corny, but to the often very elaborate rhyme schemes. Many of Dylan's rhymes will not register as such until one hears them sung by him; *mirror*, for instance, is in several songs pronounced as *mear* would be, to rhyme with various *-ear* words. Erudite scholars of Dylan's rhyming tendencies include e.g. Ricks (2011, 30–48) and Crotty (2017, 307–321). As for the schemes, Dylan's early work mostly employs more traditional rhyme forms like simple couplets. Gradually, there came to be more variation in his schemes, with the use of elaborate patterns, too, climaxing with the trilogy (see Curtis 2019, 103–111 for a

passable look at this transition), although there have been further clusters of rhyme in his later work. The three albums, in any case, feature a proliferation of intricate rhyme arrangements, culminating, perhaps, in the intense, cascading *aaaaab cccccb dddddb eeb* structure of “It’s Alright, Ma (I’m Only Bleeding).”

After *Blonde on Blonde* and his 1966 world tour, Dylan went on a hiatus following a semi-mythical motorcycle accident. He re-emerged with 1967’s *John Wesley Harding*, an LP with an enormous contrast to its predecessor. It contains songs with sparse, biblical lyrics, arranged mostly in a simple three-verse form. After that, his lyrical career has had many twists and turns, containing everything from nonsense verse and simple love songs to gospel sermons and postmodern collage. Alas, there is no room here for a more detailed breakdown (for a succinct summary of the features, methods and inspirational sources of his lyrics, see Negus 2008, 98–122), and I will next offer a look at the lyrics of “Like a Rolling Stone,” one of Dylan’s many classics from the mid-1960s period.

4.3 “Like a Rolling Stone”

“Like a Rolling Stone” is arguably Dylan’s most iconic song. Released in 1965 first as a single and then as the leading track on *Highway 61 Revisited*, it has garnered numerous accolades over the years, including being named the greatest song of all time by *Rolling Stone* magazine in 2004 and 2010. In the following subsections, I will look at the song’s relatively simple content and its complex form.

Dylan’s official written sources are notorious for inaccuracy when it comes to lyrics (Heylin 2010, 10–12). For the most part, the quotations from LARS in this thesis appear as they can be heard on *Highway 61 Revisited*. I will retain the division of lines as given by official sources. A few stumbles and clear mistakes that Dylan makes on the recording have been omitted (for a very detailed orthographic rendition in which these, along with everything else, are included, see Marcus 2006, vii–xi). One addition, which does not appear on the album version but does on all other studio attempts that made it to that point in the lyrics (see Dylan 2015) as well as a plethora of subsequent live versions, will appear in brackets.

4.3.1 Content

LARS is decidedly not among the most indecipherable songs of the electric trilogy. It consists of the speaker rather matter-of-factly reproaching the addressee, “Miss Lonely,” who has

fallen from grace. Using “blunt street language” (Bowden 2001, 79), the singer-speaker-narrator contrasts various things that the addressee used to enjoy in her former life with her current predicament. As with all of Dylan’s work, deep dives into the song’s meanings – with or without dreary *roman-à-clef* musings – abound despite its relative plainness (see e.g. Marcus 2006; Ricks 2011, 179–192; Bowden 2001, 72–101).

One peculiarity of LARS is that though it is overflowing with *you*, it uses no first-person pronouns, so the speaker remains somewhat at the edge of the frame, their stance and tone toward Miss Lonely offering many possibilities for interpretation. Bowden sees the speaker as identifying with the *bums* and other tramp figures and claims that the *I* pronoun can be inferred from the recurring *i* sounds in the song (2001, 78–79). Much has been made, also, of the song’s fairy-tale opening line, *Once upon a time you dressed so fine*, with many pointing it out as a pithy way to bring the contrast between past and present straight into the listener’s consciousness, and of the *How does it feel* refrain, which Dylan imbues with various meanings by his delivery.

From a translational point of view, the content of LARS seems simple enough. Despite the message being rather easy to understand, however, the song does contain some colourful imagery with no unambiguous meaning, like *mystery tramp* and *Napoleon in rags*. As an illustration of this, below is the third stanza of the song in full. Here, a prospective translator needs to decide, for instance, whether to include the vehicle (or vehicular animal) being used, the occupation of the man (or, perhaps, description of his character), or the breed of the cat on the shoulder – or, indeed, the cat on the shoulder itself.

- (1) You never turned around to see the frowns on the jugglers and the clowns
 When they all did tricks for you
 You never understood that it ain’t no good
 You shouldn’t let other people get your kicks for you
 You used to ride on the chrome horse with your diplomat
 Who carried on his shoulder a Siamese cat
 Ain’t it hard when you discover that
 He really wasn’t where it’s at
 After he took from you everything he could steal

In Chapter 5.2.1, I will examine how the problems in this verse have been approached by the Finnish translators.

4.3.2 Rhyme scheme

While the content of “Like a Rolling Stone” may be relatively straightforward within the context of its era, structurally it is more complex. It is not, however, quite as convoluted as Curtis (2019, 107), in his equally convoluted book, posits; he manages to see three different rhyme schemes in the four verses (for example, he gives the first verse, below, as *abcbddeef*). If one takes a pragmatic stance and regards near-rhymes as rhymes, it becomes clear that Dylan uses the same scheme in all four verses: *xaxabbbbc*. As noted previously, in another move to simplify the scheme, I have used *x* to mark unrhymed lines. In addition to the end-rhymes, there are internal rhymes (in bold below) on the first four lines (i.e. the *xaxa* sections) of each verse. The location and number of these vary from verse to verse. Below is the first verse.

- (2) Once upon a **time** you dressed so **fine**
 Threw the bums a **dime** in your **prime**, didn't you?
 People'd **call**, say, “Beware **doll**, you're bound to **fall**”
 You thought they were **all** kiddin' you
 You used to laugh about
 Everybody that was hangin' out
 Now you don't talk so loud
 Now you don't seem so proud
 About having to be scrounging your next meal (Dylan 2003 [1965]).

The verses end with the words *meal*, *deal*, *steal* and *conceal*, thereby rhyming with the first and second lines of the chorus. Taken as a continuation of the verses' rhyme scheme, the chorus has a scheme of *ccd(d)dd*.

- (3) How does it feel
 How does it feel
 To be on your own [first time: To be without a home]
 With no direction home [omitted the first time]
 (Like) a complete unknown
 Like a rolling stone?

Curtis (2019, 110) thinks LARS is unique in blending chorus and verse in this way, which may be true in a literal sense, but there are other songs in which Dylan rhymes the last line of the verse with a line in the chorus or refrain. Irrefutably, however, the effect here is quite distinctive. In the next chapter we will see if there is a similar one in the translations.

5 Dylan in translation

Bob Dylan's music – and by extension his writing – has transcended borders both national and linguistic. In this chapter, I will first provide a look at previous studies of Dylan in translation and then move on to analyse the three previously introduced Finnish translations of “Like a Rolling Stone.”

5.1 Previous literature

Bob Dylan's career has attracted widespread academic interest, and inevitably this applies to translation studies as well. There have been papers focusing or touching on Dylan translations in languages including but not limited to French (Froeliger 2007), Italian (Garzone 2012; Carrera 2009) and Norwegian (Greenall 2015). Ferraz (2017) has compared Brazilian Portuguese translations of "Mr. Tambourine Man," while Rollason (2007, 122–124) offers a look at written translations of Dylan in Spanish. Doubtless there are further examples as well.

The largest undertaking so far in studying Finnish translations of Dylan is Karri Savonen's MA thesis (2007; see also Savonen 2008). Savonen examines five translations of three different Dylan songs. These are Juice Leskinen's translation of "Changing of the Guards," translations of "Is Your Love in Vain?" by Leskinen and Rauli Nordberg, and, of particular interest here, Nordberg's and Pelle Miljoona's translations of "Like a Rolling Stone."

In his thesis, Savonen makes use of Peter Low's pentathlon theory of song translation (e.g. Low 2005), studying the translations from the five different, slightly overlapping points of view of singability (this includes e.g. word length, syllabic structure, phonetic qualities and avoidance of forced elements), naturalness (register, fluency, syntax, effectiveness of communication), sense (semantic content, overall "spirit"), rhyme (adherence to the rhyme schemes of the original song), and rhythm (syllable count, stress). Regarding the LARS translations, Savonen concludes that both Nordberg's "Kuin kivi alaspäin" and Tiili's "Enää itkeä voit" "succes[s]fully [reproduce] the irregularity of the original without adhering strictly to the structure of the original" (2007, 108).

Savonen approaches the translated Dylan songs as specimens of song translation, whereas I will study how they relate to distinguishing features of Dylan's writing. Furthermore, while Low's pentathlon theory may be useful as a prescriptive recipe for creating a good song translation for performance, it does seem somewhat mathematical when used to examine existing poetry (song lyrics). These approaches are far from mutually exclusive, however, and as I now proceed to explore the Finnish LARS translations, the endeavour could be seen, essentially, as reducing Low's theory to a biathlon, with occasional visits to the arena of a third sporting event.

5.2 The Finnish translations of “Like a Rolling Stone”

I will now examine the different ways in which the three translators have dealt with the content and structure of LARS. I will first go through both aspects one translation at a time, and in the final subsection I will offer some concluding remarks and comparisons.

5.2.1 Content

As noted previously, the content of LARS is fairly straightforward but does present some problems for translators. As an illustration of content-related matters, Table 1 below shows the third verses of all four songs in full, in the order of discussion (all back-translations mine).

Table 1. The third verses of LARS and the Finnish translations (with back-translations)

	third verse	back-translation
Dylan (2003)	<p>You never turned around to see the frowns on the jugglers and the clowns When they all did tricks for you You never understood that it ain't no good You shouldn't let other people get your kicks for you You used to ride on the chrome horse with your diplomat Who carried on his shoulder a Siamese cat Ain't it hard when you discover that He really wasn't where it's at After he took from you everything he could steal</p>	
Ulkuniemi (1976)	<p>et koskaan kääntynyt huomaamaan kun klovnit tuli luoksesi temppuineen sua katsomaan et tiennyt että siinä sä virheen teit ja annoit toisten ruveta sua potkimaan sä ajoit autolla kanssa miehen sen joka kantoi kissaa harteillaan eikö ollut kovaa, kun huomata sait hän sinua hyväkseen käytti vain ja otti pois kaiken minkä irti sai</p>	<p>you never turned around to notice when the clown came to see you with his/her tricks you didn't know you made a mistake in doing so and you let other people start kicking you you drove a car with that man who carried a cat on his shoulders wasn't it hard when you discovered he was only using you and took away everything he could</p>

Tiili (2016)	koskaan eivät edes hymyä saaneet ne lukuisat pellet jotka kanssa on maanneet, olit jäätä ain et viihtynyt sä lain, sulla kiire oli ain tahdoit löytää jonkun rikkaan miehen kai ja luulit että sait äveriään kun nait miehen joka ajoi kromihirviöllään ah, te olitte niin kaunis pari mutta prinssisi olikin vain huijari mukanaan hän vei tuhkatkin uunistasi	they never got even a smile, the several clowns who've slept with you, you were all ice you didn't enjoy yourself at all, you were always busy you wanted to find some rich man, I guess and you thought you got a wealthy one when you married the man who drove his chrome monster oh you were such a beautiful couple but your prince was just a fraud he took with him even the ashes from your fireplace
Koivusalo (2016)	Kun sulle taitojaan näytti tempuillaan isot starat maan sä et kuullutkaan heidän vitsejään Et koskaan tajunnut, miks ne jätti sut – noin toisilla teettää kannata ei kiksejään Muistan mersusi loiston, kromin kiiltelyt siamilaiskissat, piirit pyntätyt Eikö käykin luonnolle nyt kun jokainen on häippässyt? Pöllineet kaiken ne on, joku huikkaa ”moin”	when the country's big stars were showing you their skills with their tricks you didn't even listen to their jokes you never understood why they left you you shouldn't make others get your kicks for you that way I remember the shine of your Mercedes and the sheen of chrome the Siamese cats, the dolled-up society types doesn't it get you now that everyone's gone? they've stolen everything, someone shouts “bye!”

Ulkuniemi's "Olet yksin taas" is a rather faithful translation of LARS. Most lines are straightforward renderings of the source text, often down to word order and syntax, which at several points in the song leaves an awkward impression. Some lines follow LARS so closely that their meaning would seem obscure if one did not have the source text in mind. Dylan's *thinkin' that they got it made* is rendered almost verbatim as *mieltii aina vaan kuinka tekisi sen* ('keep thinking how they would do it'), completely leaving aside the phrase's idiomatic meaning of success. Knowing LARS, the fourth line above, *ja annoit toisten ruveta sua potkimaan* ('and you let other people start kicking you'), seems to balance on the line between translation error and rewriting. As can be seen in Table 1, the imagery of "Olet yksin taas" is much simpler than that of LARS. One *klovni* ('clown'), and a non-frowning one at that, takes the place of several *jugglers and [...] clowns*. *Chrome horse* becomes *auto* ('car'), the man

ceases to be a diplomat, and the cat's breed is not disclosed. *Napoleon*, elsewhere, is still present (*oli sulla aina hauskaa niin / kun Napoleonina kuunneltiin* – ‘you had such fun / when we listened to Napoleon’), but his *rags* are not, which makes the phrase seem even more peculiar than in LARS.

Like Ulkuniemi's song, Tiili's "Enää itkeä voit" is also quite faithful to the content of LARS. Unlike in the former, however, some elements move to different lines, and some others are replaced by new ones. As Savonen (2007, 97–98) points out, the song struggles at points to maintain cohesive register, at times changing straight from extremely colloquial slang to relatively old-fashioned language or very literary idioms (see e.g. the first three lines in Table 1 and Example 10 in Chapter 5.2.2 below). While Dylan himself has a penchant for mixing registers (Savonen 2007, 83), some of Tiili's lines do appear unrefined. Since the translation is of a freer kind, some of Dylan's colourful images disappear, but as if to compensate there are new ones like *minkkiturkeissaan lampaat suussa vampyyrien hampaat* ('the sheep in their mink coats, with vampire teeth'). This can be seen in Table 1 as well. The cat disappears altogether, the man is no longer a diplomat rather than a prince – a monarchic one or not – and *chrome horse* becomes *kromihirviö* ('chrome monster'). There is also an idiomatic translation in the last line, though a slightly more unusual one (presumably motivated by assonance) than the expected *tuhkatkin pesästä*. Another thing worth pointing out is that Tiili's speaker uses at times even harsher words than in LARS: *halveksuen nauroit jokaista / jota saatoit päähän potkaista* ('with contempt you laughed at everyone / that you could kick in the head').

Like the others, Koivusalo's translation is faithful to LARS, but not as much on a word-level or syntactically. Although there are rather straightforward renderings of passages of LARS in "Yhä alaspäin," more often than not the equivalence exists in spirit rather than semantic congruity. For instance, the addressee 'begs for mercy' (*anot armoa*) instead of *scrounging for [her] next meal*. Below, a quite word-for-word line is complemented by a logical addition.

- (4a) And nobody has ever taught you how to live out on the street
 And now you're gonna have to get used to it (Dylan)
- (4b) Kukaan opettanut kadulla ei pärjäämään ['nobody taught you how to manage on the street']
 muka kopeana astelit suureen maailmaan ['you stepped into the great world all hoity-toity']
 (Koivusalo)

At some points Koivusalo takes a key word and uses it for a slightly different take on the same idea. Below, for instance, *alibis* receives a somewhat related counterpart, while the action in the second line is inverted (my emphases).

- (5a) [...] He's not selling any *alibis*
 As you *stare into* the vacuum of his *eyes*
 And say, "Do you want to make a deal?" (Dylan)
- (5b) Käytät *verukkeet* ja *makeilut* ['you use *excuses* and *flattery*']
Vaikka katso silmiin, tunteehan ne sut ['though you cannot bear to *look them in the eye*, they know you alright']
 kun pyydät, "Velaksi kai ostaa voin?" ['when you ask, I can buy with credit, right?']
 (Koivusalo)

The *dramatis personae* of "Yhä alaspäin" are more general than those of LARS. *Mystery tramp* disappears altogether, and the *Napoleon in rags* line is rendered as *joku sössö kun jatkoi örveltämistään* ('when some schmuck kept up their drunken racket'). As seen in Table 1, the *diplomat* situation is no more, with rather more persons having left the addressee. The *chrome* is retained, however, and the cat, with breed intact, has received company. It is also noteworthy in the verse that the speaker appears as a character (*Muistan* – 'I remember'), unlike in LARS or the other songs. As another instance of this, the last stanza concludes with the speaker very much present: *Sä oot näkymätön, salaisuuteskin nähdä voin* ('you're invisible, I can see even your secrets').

5.2.2 Rhyme scheme

In this section, I will compare the rhyme scheme of LARS, elaborated upon in Chapter 4.3.2, with those of the three translations. Table 2 below shows the rhyme patterns present in the four songs.

Table 2. Rhyme schemes in LARS and the three translations

	Dylan (2003)	Ulkuniemi (1976)	Tiili (2016)	Koivusalo (2016)
verses	all: xaxabbbbc	1: aabcccccd 2: abcdeeeef 3: aabacaddd 4: abcdeeffg	1: xaxabbccx 2: aaxabbccx 3: xaaabbccc 4: xaxabbbbx	all: xaxabbbbc
chorus	1: cdddd 2–4: cdddd	aabca	dddddd	ccccddd

There is no consistent rhyming pattern in “Olet yksin taas,” neither when compared with LARS nor between the different verses. Ulkuniemi does make some use of rhymes, but they occur in different places in the verses. So while he has evidently had no intention to follow a particular scheme, instead of marking all lines with *x* I have given the end-rhymes that do occur in the song in Table 2. As can be seen in the table, the only traces of the source scheme are the beginning of the third verse and the lines corresponding to Dylan’s *bbbb* section in the first, shown below, and second verses.

- (6) sä aina nauroit vaan
 kun joku luopui toivostaaan
 et enää itsestäsi kerrokaan
 et ylös nokkaasi nostakaan

In the third line of the first verse there is some internal assonance (*kaikki sano hei varo*) corresponding to LARS but there are no further clearly discernible instances of this. The rhyming lines in the chorus are the near-identical (as in LARS) first and second lines, and the final line, an assonant rhyme with the first and second lines.

- (7) miltä tuntuukaan
 hei, miltä tuntuukaan
 kun ei kotia näy
 eikä yhtään ystävää
 olet yksin taas

Unlike “Olet yksin taas,” “Enää itkeä voit” has a consistent rhyme structure. The caveat mentioned in Chapter 3 that some of the lines that for simplicity’s sake I regard as rhymes are actually half-rhymes or assonant rhymes applies particularly to Tiili’s translation; some also require an unnatural prosody to work. With that said, the basic formula in the verses of “Enää itkeä voit” is *xaxabbccx*, which is quite close to Dylan’s *xaxabbbbc*. Here is the second verse:

- (8) hienoimpaan kouluun sinut laitettiin
 mutta siellä jouduit vain eksyksiin, eikö niin?
 koskaan et tiennyt mitä elämä on
 ja siksi olet nyt onneton, eikö niin?
 et voinut sietää varkaita
 jotka varastivat vain rikkailta
 itse viet nyt vaikka köyhältäkin
 mistä vain saat uuden takin
 sillä kylmä on ja olet koditon

In the above verse, the final line rhymes with the internal rhymes of the third and fourth lines, but it seems unlikely to have been purposeful since the lines occur far from each other and there are no other instances of this, so I have marked them as unrhymed in Table 2 (and in any case the border between the *x* and *a* lines in LARS is blurry, and they could also be regarded as one very long line). As exemplified by the first four lines above, the second, third and fourth verses all have additional rhymes occurring in different places and thereby deepening

the rhyming, but they all still comply with the pared-down structure established in the first verse. As another example of this, in the last verse the *bbccx* section is taken a step further to *bbbbx*, nearing the LARS structure.

- (9) se on sulle nyt jonkun toisen elämää
 ei kukaan sua täällä tunne enä
 vihdoinkin saatat hengittä
 ilmaa joka ei kuulu kenellekä
 oot näkymätön, kuljet ajassa ilman salaisuuksien taakkaa harteillas

Tiili also retains some of the internal rhymes that occur in the first half of the verses of LARS. There is a consistent number of two rhyming words in each *xa* section, in varying places.

- (10) vuosia sitten kun olit vielä **teini** sul oli fyrkkaa
 ja sä pukeuduit kuin **leidi**, eikö niin?
 niskojasi **nakellen** kuljit muita **katsellen** kuin saastaa
 näin tää juttu mulle kerrottiin

The chorus, on the other hand, does not follow LARS. It consists of six lines, all assonant rhymes with each other.

- (11) kuinka nyt voit
 sano kuinka sä voit
 kun kaikki on pois
 vaattees syöneet on koit
 pääsi tyhjyyttään soi
 enää itkeä voit

Mikko Koivusalo has said that keeping Dylan’s textual and rhythmic structure intact has been as important for him as translator as the songs’ content (Rantanen 2012; Koivusalo 2016). It comes as no surprise, then, that of the three, his translation of LARS is the most faithful to the rhyming pattern in the source text. All verses of “Yhä alaspäin” follow the *xaxabbbbc* structure of LARS. Below is the second verse.

- (12) Sait käydä sä hienot koulut aivan yksin
 et päätytyksi lukujas saanutkaan
 Kukaan opettanut kadulla ei pärjäämään
 muka kopeana astelit suureen maailmaan
 Et myönnetyksiin suostunut
 siitakin periaatteestas oot luistanut
 Käytät verukkeet ja makeilut
 Vaikket katso silmiin, tunteehan ne sut
 kun pyydät, ”Velaksi kai ostaa voin?”

The chorus resumes the *c* rhyme established at the end of the verse. Unlike LARS it has an additional fifth *d* line (the line division shown is by Koivusalo).

- (13) Kuinkas nyt noin? Kuinkas nyt noin?
 Olit tyylikkäin
 – nyt näen pelkän täin
 äitiä pillittäin
 Ja kivi vierii näin
 yhä alaspäin

Koivusalo retains the internal rhyming of the *xaxa* sections. It is noteworthy that his translation in fact even keeps the exact numbers and locations – at times down to the syllable – of the internal rhymes in the source text; as in LARS, the rhymes occur in different places in different verses. In the second *xa* section of the second verse (see Example 4 above), there are also additional assonant sounds (*kukaan opettanut / muka kopeana*) with no clear equivalent in LARS. The example below is from the first verse.

(14a) Once upon a **time** you dressed so **fine**
 Threw the bums a **dime** in your **prime**, didn't you?
 People'd **call**, say, "Beware **doll**, you're bound to **fall**"
 You thought they were **all** kiddin' you (Dylan)

(14b) Niinkuin kuningas voimissas
 näytit almuillas alempas, eikö niin?
 Ihmiset sanoi "Kestä **et**,
 sä prakaillet" - sä kuvittelet me pilailtiin! (Koivusalo)

Remarkably, Koivusalo is equally faithful to the length of the rhymes. Dylan's two-syllable and one-syllable rhymes have their counterparts in "Yhä alaspäin."

(15a) Princess on the **steeple** and all the pretty **people**
 They're all **drinkin'**, **thinkin'** that they got it made
 Exchanging all precious gifts [and **things**]
 But you'd better take your diamond **ring**, you'd better pawn it babe (Dylan)

(15b) Tähtönen kun **loistaa**, ne ylistää ja **toistaa**
 ne **juo ja - Luoja!**- siitä tekee pron
 Ne luksuslahjoja antaa ja **saa**
 mut sun pitää korus toimittaa panttilainaamoon (Koivusalo)

5.2.3 Discussion

Once upon a time there were three translations of a song, but none of them explicitly retained the fairy-tale qualities of the opening line, though Koivusalo does hint toward that general direction with *Kuin kuningas* ('like a king'), and, as noted (also by Savonen 2007, 105), Tiili uses *prinssisi* ('your prince') elsewhere in his song. Other than that, however, the three can rather easily be placed on a line according to their level of faithfulness to the content of LARS.

At one end is Ulkuniemi's at times word-for-word rendition. It cannot quite be called a "glossary" (Paz 1992, 154), though, since the imagery is noticeably more banal than in LARS and there are also passages that have been translated liberally rather than literally. The overall awkward feeling that the song emits does, however, diminish the objective examiner's goodwill somewhat, which leads to it being hard to see the song as an example of creative rewriting.

In the middle there is Tiili's translation, which does keep some of the original's syntax while rewriting other lines altogether. Its vocabulary, besides showing traces of the distinctive voice found elsewhere in his writings, is perhaps the closest in spirit to the urban sounds of LARS.

At the other end is Koivusalo's song, which, while saving the word order of some of the source lines, usually finds more creative ways to carry the meaning over. Succinctly put, the content of his "bold adaptation" (cf. Enwald 2000, 195) "moves away from the poem only to follow it more closely" (Paz 1992, 158).

Rhyme-wise, the order of the three songs is inverted. Koivusalo follows LARS so closely that he places even his internal rhymes at identical or near-identical places, even if they seem to occur at arbitrary points in the different stanzas of LARS. Tiili, meanwhile, clearly shows an awareness of the source paradigm and utilises parts of it in his own song. Ulkuniemi's translation, finally, has little use for rhymes in general, let alone the patterns of LARS. It may be a question of preference how much of Dylan's rhyming should be left in when translating his work, but it is unquestionably a major aspect of his art. It is, however, worth noting that Finnish and English have very different histories and traditions as concerns end-rhyme, and their substantial structural differences also affect the matter. It could be argued that inferior rhyming has more dire consequences in Finnish than in English, so it is natural that some writers may want to shun the practice altogether.

Overall, it is difficult to proclaim definitively how close the translations come to warranting the title to which they all, at least implicitly, have laid claim: Bob Dylan in Finnish.

Ulkuniemi's "Olet yksin taas" seems rather tentative and awkward but does have an endearing, homespun quality to it. Tiili's "Enää itkeä voit," although inelegant at points, can be said to be very much in line with his own (stage) persona. It is clear, however, which of the three is the most *writerly* in its structural acrobatics, and that is Koivusalo's "Yhä alaspäin."

6 Conclusion

Bob Dylan's Nobel prize was the final push on his way to the world's literary pantheon.

While it would be quite foolish to state that the Finnish translators have had as much of a role as in most other cases in making this particular Nobel laureate's work available to local audiences, Dylan's status alone makes even obscure translations of his work essential material for analysis. Can the three translated songs, then, be called, as they have been, translations of Dylan? That may ultimately be a question of taste, but what I have shown is firstly that

translating Dylan, specifically his mid-1960s work, is far from an easy task, and secondly that the three Finnish translators of “Like a Rolling Stone” are quite distinct in the manner in which they have incorporated elements of the source text into their own work. The present analysis might be further complemented by conducting interviews with the translators in question.

Apart from the emphasis on rhyming, in the thesis I have largely ignored the auditive, performative and musical aspects of the works under study. This is contrary to the recent move towards multimodal studies of lyrics and song translation, and, given Dylan’s distinctiveness not only as writer but as performer, may even seem positively ill-advised. However, in my view words are words, and even when taking other elements into consideration, one needs to be careful not to diminish the written word to the extent that the spoken (sung) word was diminished in some circles when Dylan’s Nobel was announced. It is worth remembering that words have auditive properties even on paper. Indeed, the prospect of grasping and analysing each and every aspect at play in lyrics or poetry and the translation thereof seems so hopeless that I cannot help but think that such pursuits much resemble, to appropriate the famous witticism, “dancing about architecture.”

The thesis is also somewhat counterproductive in another way: in selecting “Like a Rolling Stone” for analysis, I have perpetuated the already quite overemphasised stature of Dylan’s mid-1960s work in comparison with the rest of his long career. However, when it comes to translation studies, it is that period which may yield the most interesting results. Not only have the songs from that era attracted the most cover versions in Finnish, they also have the distinction – allowing for some generalisation – of being the most difficult for a prospective translator to tackle. Indeed, there are also several Finnish versions of “Mr. Tambourine Man,” an early illustration of the era’s distinguishing features. Juice Leskinen, master songwriter and translator, is also known to have translated much of Dylan’s 1960s work as a novice, and while these efforts remain largely unpublished, his rather liberally localised version of “Desolation Row” is available and could be worth studying. On the other hand, it might be fruitful to see if the translations of a simpler Dylan song like “Girl from the North Country” have retained that most elusive of features: the essence of Bob Dylan’s writing.

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