Translating Timon:
The Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *Shakespeare Translation/Adaptation Project*

By Scott Kaiser

There's theory, and then there's practice.

In the last *Voice and Speech Review*, a great deal of ink was spilled between language mavens John McWhorter and David Crystal in debating the question of whether "translating Shakespeare" into modern, understandable English is necessary or worthwhile.

In proposing that Shakespeare begin to be performed in translations comprehensible to the modern spectator, John McWhorter suggested:

> The translations ought to be richly considered, executed by artists of the highest caliber well-steeped in the language of Shakespeare's era, thus equipped to channel the Bard to the modern listener with the passion, respect and care which is his due. [McWhorter, 2011]

In his skeptical rebuttal, David Crystal retorted:

> That sounds good. OK, so do it. Which artists does McWhorter have in mind? And, having found some, let's see some examples of their work. I'd love to see a translation which retains the poetic quality of the original, avoids banality, and approaches the 'full comprehension' demanded in his original piece.
> [Crystal, 2011]

In light of this theoretical debate, you might be surprised to learn that the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the oldest and largest regional theatre in the United States, has, for the last few years, been putting the idea of "translating" Shakespeare into practice, actively commissioning playwrights to create translations of Shakespeare's plays.

These commissions are being generated under an initiative called *The Shakespeare Translation/Adaptation Project,* overseen by Bill Rauch, the Festival's Artistic Director, and Lue Douthit, Director of Literary Development and Dramaturgy.

You might well ask, given the Festival's reputation as a stalwart of Shakespearean tradition, how this project came into being. It began with an offer from Dave Hitz of the Hitz Foundation of Palo Alto, California, who wrote to Bill Rauch expressing a passion for Shakespearean translations:

> I have a fantasy. Before I die, I would love to see a high quality production of Shakespeare translated into my native language, modern American English.
> [Hitz, 2010]

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Going further, Hitz expressed his willingness to put this passion into practice by providing a grant:

> My proposal is to commission high-quality translations worthy of production at OSF…Perhaps we would call it the *Shakespeare Adaptation and Translation Project*. [Hitz, 2010]

Never one to shy away from a challenge, Rauch took up the gauntlet thrown down by Hitz:

> We believe that every age, while hewing close to the original texts on one path, creates a parallel path of experimentation, exploration, revisioning, owning, and changing the language…*The Shakespeare Translation/Adaptation Project* is firmly, proudly, and ambitiously on this second path, and we are thrilled to support the great playwrights of our generation in transforming Shakespeare texts through their artistry into the language of our time. [Rauch, 2010]

With funding from the Hitz Foundation agreed upon and secured, the question became, where to begin? After experimentation with a few potential titles, *Timon of Athens* was the first work commissioned by the Festival to inaugurate *The Shakespeare Translation/Adaptation Project*.

Timon was chosen because it was deemed to be among the least known, least produced, and least understandable of Shakespeare's plays. Indeed, there is no written record of *Timon of Athens* having been performed even during Shakespeare's lifetime. Most critics believe that what appears in the First Folio of 1623, the sole source for *Timon*, amounts to little more than a working draft of a play that Shakespeare, in collaboration with Thomas Middleton, never finished. Furthermore, many editors theorize that the uncompleted play was hastily inserted into the Folio when the text for *Troilus and Cressida,* possibly for reasons of copyright, was delayed. All of which may explain the numerous challenges inherent in the text: large gaps in the plot, unevenness in the writing, erroneous and inaccurate stage directions, confusion in the delineation of characters, verse printed as prose and vice versa, a fool which appears in only one scene, discrepancies in the value of money, two contradictory epitaphs, and an obtuse, unsatisfying ending.

Despite these textual challenges, OSF has produced *Timon* thrice in our history—in 1955, 1978 and 1997. And we're due to produce it again soon, as many members of our extraordinarily loyal audience have been waiting for more than fifteen years to see the play, hoping to complete their canons.

The first playwright offered a Hitz commission to craft a translation of Shakespeare for OSF was Kenneth Cavander, whose translation of *The Trojan Women* was produced with great success in Ashland in 2000. During his long and distinguished career, Kenneth Cavander's plays, adaptations and translations have been performed in London, on and off-Broadway, and in most leading regional theatres in the United States. He has

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translated and adapted numerous plays of Sophocles and Euripides, and is known in particular for *The Greeks,* a 10-play cycle created in the 1970s with co-author John Barton for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The terms of OSF's commission specified that Cavander would create a version of *Timon of Athens* that remained faithful to the meaning, poetry, and dramatic intent of the original, yet was absolutely intelligible to a contemporary audience from beginning to end while also being dramatically effective. As to the question of what the translations might actually look like on the page, Bill Rauch leaves that up to the playwright, stating:

> Questions of versification, vocabulary, cultural references and setting will be answered by the artist, just as happens in the translation of non-English works into English. [Rauch, 2010]

Phase One in the development process of the *Timon* script was a workshop held in New York City in December of 2011, for which a cast of seven accomplished Shakespearean actors was assembled. That ensemble included the esteemed actor John Douglas Thompson reading the role of Timon, as well as Kenajuan Bentley, Sean Arbuckle, Jonathan Lincoln Fried, Alex Morf, Kate Skinner, and Carson Elrod. The director was Sarah Rasmussen.

In February of 2012, it was my privilege to direct Phase Two—a workshop in Ashland with a group of eight veteran members of OSF's acting company that culminated in a staged reading. The cast was comprised of eight distinguished artists each of whom has acquired decades of experience performing in Shakespeare's plays: Robert Vincent Frank, Kevin Kenerly, Jeff King, Miriam A, Laube, Mark Murphey, Robin Goodrin Nordli, Douglas Rowe, and Derrick Lee Weeden.

Ideally, the Cavander translation of *Timon* would be accessible on the web to enable readers of this essay to evaluate the work by perusing it themselves. Unfortunately, due to copyright laws, that isn't possible. Or a recording would be made available where one could hear the script read aloud by seasoned Shakespearean actors. But in accordance with the rules governing members of Actor's Equity Association, no audio or video recordings could be made during either of these workshops.

How, then, is the reader of this essay to judge the work? Without examples and samples, how are we to know, those of us who wish to participate in this debate, what it is we're actually arguing about?

Perhaps at some point in the future, OSF will present the Cavander translation of *Timon of Athens* on one of our stages, making it possible for you, the reader, to judge the work by experiencing it firsthand. At this moment, however, the best I can offer is an explication of the working mechanics of translating Shakespeare—a detailed guide to how it is actually done—through the posing of pertinent questions. The answers offered below are based on my experience working with artists of the highest caliber engaged in the act of translating Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* while attempting to remain faithful

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to the poetic quality of the original. As I undertake this hypophoric exercise, I will deliberately reserve my own opinion and let you, the reader, judge for yourself whether the work is an outrage or a blessing, an abomination or an enhancement, utterly vile or completely worthwhile.

Did every line in the text of *Timon* get translated?

Almost every line, but not quite all. Many lines in the play required no alteration whatsoever in order to be understood by an audience and were therefore left untouched in the Cavander version. For example:

> FLAVIUS: I bleed inwardly for my lord [Arden 1.2.208 & Cavander]

As you can see, the line is perfectly clear to modern readers and audiences, so Cavander did not emend it.

Here's another such example:

> ALCIBIADES *(reads the epitaph):* Here lie I, Timon, who alive all living men did hate [Arden 5.5.70 & Cavander]

Again, as the line was clear and understandable, Cavander left it intact.

And here is a third example:

> APEMANTUS: Men shut their doors against a setting sun. [Arden 1.2.144 & Cavander]

Once again, the listener needs no help in grasping the meaning of the line, so Cavander let it stand, unaltered.

Is the translation written in iambic pentameter?

Although the Cavander version is written as dramatic verse, it is not penned in iambic pentameter. Working line by line, Cavander strives to honor the meaning of each line rather than strictly adhering to Shakespeare's original meter.

For example, here are five lines, written in verse, where Timon finds that the servants have locked his doors to keep out his creditors:

> TIMON: What, are my doors opposed against my passage?
> Have I been ever free, and must my house
> Be my retentive enemy, my jail?
> The place where I have feasted, does it now,
> Like all mankind, show me an iron heart? [Arden 3.4.77]

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And here are the same five lines from the Cavander translation, written in free verse:

> TIMON: What's this? My doors locked—to shut me in!?
> Haven't I been always open with my friends,
> And now my own house turns against me,
> Becomes my jail? Does my home, where I heave feasted,
> Show me, like the rest of mankind, an iron-heart? [Cavander]

As you can see, Cavander aims to honor the sense of the verse first, rather than strictly adhere to the meter of the original.

What happens to prose? Is that also translated line by line?

In the case of prose, Cavander translates the text more phrase by phrase, or sentence by sentence, than line by line.

By way of example, here are four lines, written in prose, where Apemantus scolds Timon for his extreme ways:

> APEMANTUS: The middle of humanity thou never knewst, but the extremity of both ends. When thou wast in thy gilt and thy perfume, they mocked thee for too much curiosity; in thy rags thou knowst none but art despised for the contrary. There's a medlar for thee—eat it. [Arden 4.3.300]

And here are the same lines from the Cavander translation:

> APEMANTUS: Your whole life has been all or nothing. You never learned there is a middle ground. When you wallowed in perfumed luxury, people made jokes about your oh-so-delicate feelings, and now that you've lost them and wear rags, you seem just vulgar and pathetic. Here's a prune for you. Eat it. [Cavander]

As you can see, Cavander's method in prose, as in verse, is much more than a mundane word by word conversion of the original text, for it not only enhances the intelligibility of the speech, but preserves the tone and imagery of the original as well.

How is punctuation handled?

Cavander uses punctuation in precisely the same manner as any reputable edition of Shakespeare, but with one notable exception…the ellipsis. As in modern playwriting, Cavander uses the ellipsis in his translation of *Timon* to indicate a pause in the flow of a sentence, or in the flow of dialogue.

For example, here's an original verse dialogue between the Jeweller and the Merchant regarding a jewel—a gift for Timon:

> JEWELLER: I have a jewel here.

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MERCHANT: O, pray, let's see't.
For the Lord Timon, sir? [Arden 1.1.13]

And here's the Cavander translation where the ellipsis is used:

JEWELLER: I have a jewel here…

MERCHANT: Oh, let's see it. Please…For Lord Timon, sir? [Cavander]

In the Cavander version, we see the ellipsis used twice, suggesting, in both cases, dramatic action that involves a lull in speaking. The first ellipsis signals a delayed cue pick up, as the Jeweller presents the jewel to the Merchant. The second ellipsis indicates an internal pause as the Merchant examines the jewel.

Here's another example, this time in prose, where Cupid introduces the Five Senses to freeloaders enjoying a banquet at Timon's house:

CUPID: Hail to thee, worthy Timon, and to all that of his bounties taste! The five best senses acknowledge thee their patron and come freely to gratulate thy plenteous bosom. There taste, touch, all, pleased from thy table rise,
They only now come but to feast thine eyes. [Arden 1.2.121]

In translating this passage, note how Cavander uses the ellipsis to suggest theatrical action or non-verbal moments:

CUPID: Hail to you, worthy Timon, and to all who savor the feast he provides…The Five Senses salute their patron, and gratefully honor your unstinting hospitality. I will now present…Taste…Touch…and the rest of them. Please rise, everyone…You have been well fed, so now—a second feast…For your eyes only! [Cavander]

Here, we can see that Cavander uses the ellipsis as an implied stage direction, indicating the entrance of each of the Senses, and the rising of the banqueters.

Are all the pronouns modernized?

Yes, the Cavander version converts all of Shakespeare's pronouns to their contemporary cousins.

So, for example, here's a moment where Timon speaks of the hypocrisy of the Poet and the Painter:

TIMON: Wilt **thou** whip **thine** own faults in other men? Do so, I have gold for **thee**. [Arden 5.1.36]

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And here's the Cavander version, where "thou" becomes "you;" "thine" becomes "your;" "thee" become "you."

> TIMON: Will **you** whip **your** own vices in others? Do so—I've gold for **you**. [Cavander]

What about all those Shakespearean verbs, like art, wilt, dost, wast, and shalt?

All those verbs get modernized, as well.

So, for example, here's a moment where Timon is speaking to Alcibiades:

> TIMON: Promise me friendship, but perform none.
> If thou **wilt not** promise, the gods plague thee,
> For **thou art** a man; if thou **dost** perform,
> Confound thee, for **thou art** a man. [Arden 4.3.73]

And here's the Cavander version, where "wilt not" becomes "won't;" "thou art" becomes "you're;" and "thou dost" becomes "you do."

> TIMON: Promise me friendship, but fail to perform.
> If you **won't** promise, may the gods plague you,
> Since **you're** a man. If you **do** perform,
> The hell with you—**you're** still a man. [Cavander]

Here's another example, where Timon's Page challenges Apemantus:

> PAGE: **Thou wast** whelped a dog and **thou shalt** famish a dog's death. [Arden 2.2.86]

In the Cavander version, "thou wast" becomes "you were;" and "thou shalt" becomes "will."

> PAGE: **You were** whelped a dog, and **will** croak a dog's death. [Cavander]

Are all obsolete words changed to words that are currently in use?

Yes, if a word has fallen into disuse since Shakespeare's time, Cavander changes it to a word we will instantly understand.

Here, for example, when Apemantus says grace at Timon's banquet, Shakespeare goes for a rhyme with a word we no longer recognize:

> APEMANTUS: Immortal gods, I crave no **pelf**
> I pray from no man but myself [Arden 1.2.62]

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"Pelf"—which means "riches" or "goods"—is used thrice in Shakespeare's works: in *Timon*, *Pericles*, and in *The Passionate Pilgrim*. But it's certainly not a word you hear every day. Here it hobbles the rhymed couplet. So Cavander substitutes the word with a near-rhyme, "wealth."

> APEMANTUS: Immortal gods—I don't lust after **wealth**,
> I pray for no man but myself [Cavander]

In this example, Timon is discussing the praise heaped upon the jewel offered to him by the Jeweller:

> TIMON: A mere **satiety** of commendations—
> If I should pay you for't as 'tis extolled,
> It would **unclew** me quite. [Arden 1.1.170]

As the modern ear gets stuck on "satiety," which means "excess or overabundance," and "unclew," which means "unwind, undo, or ruin," Cavander finds modern equivalents for both in his translation:

> TIMON: Just a **superfluity** of praise. If I should pay you
> What they all say it's worth I'd **drain**
> My entire fortune. [Cavander]

In this next example, Apemantus warns Timon that he plans to stay and observe his folly by saying:

> APEMANTUS: Let me stay at thine **apperil**, Timon. [Arden 1.2.33]

This is Shakespeare's only use of the word "apperil," which means "peril, risk, or danger." The attentive listener may discern the word "peril" in "apperil," but Cavander's substitution of a familiar modern phrase makes the warning crystal clear:

> APEMANTUS: If you let me stay, Timon, **on your own head be it**.
> [Cavander]

In this example, Apematus blesses himself after saying grace:

> APEMANTUS: Much good **dich** thy good heart, Apemantus. [Arden 1.2.72]

The word "dich," meaning "do it," appears in Shakespeare only in *Timon*. There's some scholarly debate suggesting this word is, perhaps, a typesetter's corruption. But no matter—it's much clearer when translated by Cavander to "may do it."

> APEMANTUS: Much good **may it do** your noble soul, Apemantus.
> [Cavander]

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Here, Timon offers an extravagant gift to an attending lord:

> TIMON: And now I remember, my lord, you gave good words the other day of a bay **courser** I rode on. 'Tis yours because you liked it. [Arden 1.2.214]

The context might tell you that "courser" means "swift horse, sprinter, or charger;" but Cavander's translation to "stallion" makes the meaning explicit:

> TIMON: Now that I think of it, my lord, the other day
> You admired a bay **stallion** I was riding.
> You liked it—it is yours. [Cavander]

Here, Timon encourages Alcibiades to wreck havoc on Athens:

> TIMON: Follow thy drum,
> With man's blood paint the ground **gules, gules**. [Arden 4.3.60]

The word "gules," which is also used in *Hamlet*, means red. Cavander simply says so:

> TIMON: Follow your drum,
> Paint the ground with human blood, **red, red**! [Cavander]

In this line, Timon baits a Senator from Athens who has come to the wilderness seeking his military assistance:

> TIMON: But yet I love my country and am not
> One that rejoices in the common wrack,
> As common **bruit** doth put it. [Arden 5.2.76]

The word "bruit" means "news, rumor, tidings," which Cavander translates as follows:

> TIMON: And yet—I love my country. I am not
> One who rejoices at its total ruin
> As all the **rumors** have it. [Cavander]

Here, Timon urges Timandra and Phyrnia—two whores—to spread disease among Athenian men:

> TIMON: Crack the lawyer's voice
> That he may never more false title plead
> Nor sound his **quillets** shrilly. [Arden 4.3.152]

The word "quillets" means "quibbles," which Cavander, for clarity, has translated to the modern idiom "split hairs:"

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TIMON: Crack the lawyer's voice
So he can plead false arguments no more
Nor interrupt to **split hairs**. [Cavander]

Earlier in the same speech, Timon tells them:

TIMON; You are not **oathable,** [Arden 4.3.135]
Although I know you'll swear

"Oathable"—a word Shakespeare uses only here—means "oath-worthy, fit to take an oath." Again, Cavander makes that meaning explicit:

TIMON: You're not to be **trusted with an oath** [Cavander]
Although I know you'll swear

And later in the same speech, Timon urges:

TIMON: **Hoar** the **flamen**
That scolds against the quality of flesh
And not believes himself. [Arden 4.3.154]

The word "hoar"—another word Shakespeare uses only in this speech— means "make white with disease." And the word "flamen"—which also makes an appearance in *Coriolanus*—means "priest serving a particular diety." Cavander updates them both:

TIMON: **Cover with white mold** the **holy man**
Who rails against the flesh, believing none of it
Himself [Cavander]

Still later in the same speech, Timon entreats:

TIMON
Ensear thy fertile and **conceptious** womb [Arden 4.3.186]

The word "ensear"—again, a Shakespearean coinage appearing only in this speech—means "dry up." And "conceptious"—another singular coinage—means "prolific, teeming, fruitful." Cavander simplifies them both in his translation:

TIMON: **Dry up**
Your **fertile** womb, swarming with life [Cavander]

What about words that are not obsolete, but are merely unfamiliar?

If a word or phrase in the *Timon* text was not readily understandable, Cavander translated it to something listeners would find instantly familiar.

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For example, here Flavius, Timon's loyal servant, defends himself against an accusation of malfeasance:

> FLAVIUS: If you suspect my **husbandry** of falsehood,
> Call me before th'exactest auditors
> And **set me on the proof.** [Arden 2.2.155]

In this context, the word "husbandry" means "careful management." It's a word you'll find in any dictionary, but many would be hard pressed to accurately define. The meaning of the phrase "set me on the proof," which the Arden glosses as "put me to the test," is also not instantly clear. To avoid confusion, Cavander translates them as follows:

> FLAVIUS: If you suspect there are **errors in my bookkeeping**
> Bring in your strictest auditors, have them
> **Examine me**. [Cavander]

In the next example, Timon, living alone in the wilderness, compares humans to beasts with Apemantus:

> TIMON: Wert thou a leopard, thou wert **germane** to the lion, and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life—all thy safety were **remotion** and thy defence absence. [Arden 4.3.339]

The word "germane" is not obsolete, but obscure—it means "near related, closely akin." And the word "remotion," which appears only twice in Shakespeare, means "removal, or departure." In his translation, Cavander removes the confusion:

> TIMON: If you were a leopard, you'd be **first cousin** to a lion, only with spots, and those spots of your relatives would be evidence of your bad character—you'd be safe only if you stayed **under cover**, your defence, absence.
> [Cavander]

In this example Timon suggests to two Senators that all Athenians should come to his tree to hang themselves:

> TIMON: I have a tree which grows here in my **close**
> That mine own use invites me to cut down,
> And shortly I must fell it. [Arden 5.2.90]

This is Shakespeare's only use of the word "close," which means "an enclosure." For clarity, Cavander translates it to "little estate:"

> TIMON: Here in my **little estate** there grows a tree
> Which I am forced to cut down soon
> For my own use. [Cavander]

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What happens to words we think we know, but whose meaning has changed?

David Crystal uses the term "false friends" for words and phrases we think we understand, but whose obsolete meanings mislead us.

A good example of a "false friend" in *Timon* appears in this moment, where Timon realizes that Flavius, his steward, is a genuinely honest man:

> TIMON: Had I a steward
> So true, so just, and now so **comfortable**? [Arden 4.3.485]

"Comfortable," in this context, means "comforting, encouraging, or reassuring," not "well-off" as we might mistakenly read it now. Cavander makes Shakespeare's intended meaning clear through translation:

> TIMON: Did I have a steward so true, so honest
> And now so **kind**? [Cavander]

Another example of a "false friend" appears in this line, when Apemantus rails on the Merchant:

> APEMANTUS: **Traffic**'s thy god, and thy god confound thee! [Arden 1.1.244]

"The meaning of "traffic" here is "trade, commerce, business, or merchandise." Today we still hear about "drug trafficking" which is about as close as we get to the meaning expressed here. Again, Cavander simply makes the intended meaning plain though translation.

> APEMANTUS: **Business** is your god—and may your god ruin you! [Cavender]

What about expletives and exclamations?

Timon, like all of Shakespeare's plays, is littered with expletives and exclamations, as in this line, where Flavius screws up his courage to confront Timon about his spending:

> FLAVIUS: I must be round with him, now he comes from hunting.
> **Fie, fie, fie, fie.** [Arden 2.2.8]

Here, Cavander simply replaces the Shakespearean word "fie" with the ever-modern word "damn."

> FLAVIUS: I'll have to level with him…Here he is,
> Home from the hunt…**Damn, damn, damn, damn!** [Cavander]

In this example, Lucullus, a nobleman who owes Timon money, blusters when asked to pay off his debt:

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LUCULLUS: **La, la, la, la!** Nothing doubting, says he? [Arden 3.1.22]

Here, Cavander replaces the generic exclamation “la” with the contemporary expression “whoa.”

LUCULLUS: **Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!** Absolutely sure, is he? [Cavander]

What about insults and curses?

Timon contains a cornucopia of insults and curses, many of which are only partially understood by modern audiences.

For instance, this line, which appears in a long exchange of pithy insults between Timon and Apemantus:

APEMANTUS: Thou art the **cap** of all fools alive. [Arden 4.3.357]

Although most listeners will get the idea of “cap” meaning, figuratively, “the top,” very few will also hear the allusion to a fool’s cap. Cavander addresses this in his translation by turning a cap into a crown:

APEMANTUS: You are the crowning glory of all idiots. [Cavander]

In this example, Alcibiades curses the senators who have ordered the immediate execution of a friend:

ALCIBIADES: Now the
Gods keep you old enough, that you may live
Only in bone, that none may look on you! [Arden 3.6.103]

Again, while audiences may get the gist of the curse, Cavander’s translation makes the meaning completely unambiguous:

ALCIBIADES: May the gods preserve you past old age, to live
As skeletons that none can bear to look at. [Cavander]

In another example, Timon, upon leaving Athens, delivers a forty line diatribe cursing all the inhabitants of the city, from which this is an excerpt:

TIMON: Matrons, turn incontinent;
Obedience, fail in children; slaves and fools,
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench
And minister in their steads. To general filth
Convert o’ th’ instant, green virginity,
Do’t in your parents eyes. Bankrupts, hold fast;

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Rather than render back, out with your knives
And cut your truster's throats! Bound servants, steal:
Large-handed robbers your grave masters are
And pill by law. Maid, to the master's bed,
Thy mistress is of the brothel. Son of sixteen,
Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire,
With it beat out his brains. [Arden 4.1.3]

Though much of this tirade is perfectly clear without amendment, Cavander's translation restores much of the shock value of the curses by making the long chain of maledictions completely comprehensible:

TIMON: Wives, spread your legs
For all comers…Children, rebel…Servants
And clowns, kick the grizzled old senators
Out of their offices and legislate in their place…
Innocent virgins, turn sluttish now—why wait?—
And do it while your parents watch…Bankrupt?
Keep your money, and if your creditors demand
Payment, pick up a knife and cut their throats.
Workers, steal—your bosses are crooks
In fine suits, gangsters raking in their loot,
Legalized pirates. Servant girl, hop
In your master's bed—his wife
Is in the local cathouse turning tricks.
Sixteen-year old son, grab the padded crutch
From your limping old dad and with it beat out
His brains. [Cavander]

What about Latin phrases?

It's not unusual, in modern theatrical practice, for Latin phrases to be cut by a director, or replaced with a contemporary translation. So there's nothing at all shocking about Cavander doing so as well, as in this example, where Timon describes Apemantus' misanthropic nature.

TIMON: They say, my lords, ***ira furor brevis est,***
But yon man is ever angry. [Arden 1.2.28]

The Latin phrase "*ira furor brevis est"* means "anger is a brief madness" which Cavander approximates in his translation:

TIMON: They say, my lords, that **anger is a temporary**
Lunacy, but this fellow has a case
Of chronic rage. [Cavander]

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What happens to classical allusions?

Although Shakespeare's audiences readily understood references drawn from classical mythology, they are mostly lost on members of a modern audience.

So, for example, in Timon's prayer for the earth to provide him with roots, listeners are likely to get lost when they hear:

> TIMON: Whereon **Hyperion**'s quickening fire doth shine [Arden 4.3.184]

"Hyperion" is simply the god of the sun—often referred to as "Phoebus"—which Cavander makes clear as follows:

> TIMON: On which **the godlike sun** sheds light [Cavender]

In another example, Timon addresses the gold he found while digging for roots by using multiple classical names in succession:

> TIMON: Thou bright defiler
> Of **Hymen**'s purest bed, thou valiant **Mars**;
> Thou ever young, fresh, loved and delicate wooer
> Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow
> That lies on **Dian**'s lap [Arden 4.3.378]

"Hymen" is the Greek god of marriage; "Mars" is the Roman god of war; and "Dian" is Diana, the Roman moon goddess, patron of virginity. So, in the Cavander version, for complete lucidity, "Hymen" becomes "marriage;" "Mars" becomes "seducer;" and "Dian" becomes "a virgin:"

> TIMON: You bright defiler
> Of the purest **marriage**, magnificent **seducer**,
> Always young, fresh, adored and charming
> In your winning ways, whose blush thaws out
> The snow of sacred chastity between
> **A virgin**'s thighs [Cavander]

How do dense sentence structures get translated?

Often in *Timon*, though all the words are familiar to us, the structure that contains them is so prolix and perplexing, that they require translation to be understood.

In this example, Apemantus makes an observation about the relative happiness of the rich and the poor:

> APEMANTUS: Best state, contentless,
> Hath a distracted and most wretched being,

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Worse than the worst, content. [Arden 4.3.244]

Here, Cavander makes the antithesis expressed by Apemantus' aphorism clear:

APEMANTUS: The rich are never satisfied, they live
Distracted in the land of Not Enough.
The lowest of the low—they are content. [Cavander]

Here, as Timon speaks to himself in the woods, we comprehend all the words, but cannot extract the thought:

TIMON: Not nature,
To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune
But by contempt of nature. [Arden 4.3.6]

Cavander, with a little translation magic, makes it clear that Timon is talking about *human* nature:

TIMON: Our nature
Drives us—though all alike are besieged
By life's wounds, still the lucky few
Must look down with contempt on those less fortunate. [Cavander]

Later in the same speech, the word "dividant"—which Shakespeare uses only in *Timon*—is a stumbling block to intelligibility. But even if the listener knows it means "divisible," the architecture of the lines is so Baroque as to resist full comprehension:

TIMON: Twinned brothers of one womb
Whose procreation, residence and birth
Scarce is dividant, touch them with several fortunes,
The greater scorns the lesser. [Arden 4.3.5]

Cavander makes the difficult structure accessible by translating the thought into a proposition of sorts, as in: "imagine, if you will, twin brothers…"

TIMON: Consider twins, conceived, carried in one womb,
Born within seconds of each other, then give them
Separate destinies, and watch: one, more blessed,
Will despise his brother. [Cavander]

In this example, the Poet tries to impress the Painter with a lofty description of his latest work, dedicated to Timon. Unfortunately, the Poet's language is so pretentious, so impenetrable, so dense, it leaves most modern listeners in a state of utter bewilderment:

POET: Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill
Feigned Fortune to be throned. The base o' th' mount

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Is ranked with all deserts, all kinds of natures
That labour on the bosom of this sphere
To propagate their states. Amongst them all
Whose eyes are on this sovereign Lady fixed,
One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,
Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her,
Whose present grace to present slaves and servants
Translates his rivals. [Arden 1.1.65]

Cavander takes the Poet's elevated language, image by image, phrase by phrase, and makes it manageable to the modern ear:

POET: So, I have imagined Lady Luck enthroned
On a high and pleasant hill. At its foot—
Rows upon rows of people, some good, some bad,
Some noble, others low born, everyone who labors
On the bosom of the planet to advance himself.
They are all transfixed, staring up at this sovereign lady.
One of them I describe in terms that identify him
As Lord Timon, whom Luck, with a wave
Of her ivory hand, beckons to her, and by this favor
Transforms his rivals into slaves and servants. [Cavander]

How are figures of rhetoric and wordplay handled in translation?

In general, Cavander tries to honor figures of rhetoric and wordplay as much as possible.

In this speech, for example, where Alcibiades sues for mercy for a fellow soldier who is condemned to death, note how Shakespeare uses the word 'virtue' in two different senses:

ALCIBIADES: I am an humble suitor to your **virtues**,
For pity is the **virtue** of the law. [Arden 3.6.7]

In his translation, Cavander finds a way to honor this rhetorical repetition by playing on the word "excellence" instead:

ALCIBIADES: I humbly come before your **Excellencies**,
Since pity is the chief **excellence** of the law. [Cavander]

In another example, where Timon chases his servant Flavius away, note how the repetition of the phrase "ne'er see" gives some potency to the curse in the scene's final couplet.

TIMON: Fly whilst thou art blest and free,
Ne'er see thou man, and let me **ne'er see** thee. [Arden 4.3.530]

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In his translation, Cavander maintains this repetition by repeating the phrase "stay away from" instead:

> TIMON: Leave while you are blessed and free,
> **Stay away from** man, and **stay away from** me. [Cavander]

In these lines, where a Senator offers a deadly concession to a victorious Alcibiades, note how Shakespeare repeats the words "spotted" and "die" in reverse positions:

> SENATOR 2: Take thou the destined tenth,
> And by the hazard of the **spotted die**
> Let **die** the **spotted**. [Arden 5.5.33]

In his translation, Cavander replaces the figure created by "spotted" and "die" by repeating the word "chance" in two different senses: opportunity and luck.

> SENATOR 2: Take one citizen
> In ten by lottery, and execute them—
> A **chance** to redress wrongs by resort to **chance**. [Cavander]

How are rhyming couplets handled?

Seven percent of the lines in *Timon of Athens* are rhymed, as in this example, where Apemantus observes the guests feasting at Timon's house:

> APEMANTUS: I wonder men dare trust themselves with men,
> Methinks they should invite them without **knives**—
> Good for their meat and safer for their **lives**. [Arden 1.2.43]

In Cavander's translation of this line, the exact rhyme is left intact—both "knives" and "lives" remain unaltered, though the rest of the verse is changed.

> APEMANTUS: I am amazed that people trust each other.
> They should set dinner tables without **knives**—
> And so economize on both meat and **lives**. [Cavander]

In this couplet, where the Painter urges the Poet to seek out Timon, note how Shakespeare's rhymed lines create a sense of the character coining an aphorism:

> PAINTER: Then do we sin against our own **estate**
> When we may profit meet, and come too **late**. [Arden 5.1.39]

In his translation, Cavander coins a new couplet, using half of the original rhyme—the word "late"—while changing the word "wait" to "estate."

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> PAINTER: It's a crime against ourselves when we **wait**
> To seek our fortunes and arrive too **late**. [Cavander]

In this couplet, where Timon orders Flavius to invite all of his debtors to return to his house for another feast, note how the rhymed couplet enhances the power of Timon's commands.

> TIMON: Go, I charge thee, invite them all, let in the **tide**
> Of knaves once more: my cook and I'll **provide**. [Arden 3.5.11]

In his translation, Cavander offers a brand new rhymed couplet of equivalent power, using the words "crooks" and "cooks."

> TIMON: One more time, let in the flood of **crooks**;
> My chef and I together will be **cooks**. [Cavander]

Without a doubt, there will be much more debate in the future about whether "translating Shakespeare" into modern, understandable English is necessary or worthwhile. Is it an outrage or a blessing? An abomination or an enhancement? I've presented the evidence—you be the judge.

It might be interesting to note, however, that at a talkback following the February 9, 2012 reading of Cavander's translation, many members of the small group of listeners expressed their astonishment at the power and relevance of the story of *Timon of Athens*. And most felt that the sound of the translation, as created by a first class dramatic poet, was neither pedestrian nor mundane. Rather, the consensus held that the Cavander version of *Timon*, spoken and embodied by highly experienced classical actors, could accurately be called poetry—dramatic poetry.

How might Cavander's translation of *Timon* play in performance at a world class Shakespearean theatre like OSF? We don't know yet. OSF hasn't presented a fully mounted production of a Shakespearean translation on one of our stages—yet. But the idea continues to be explored through *The Shakespeare Translation/Adaptation Project*, and more translations, supported by the Hitz Foundation grant, are in the commission pipeline. So stay tuned….

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