



## ‘Something There’s Been Lost’: Bob Dylan’s ‘Shelter from the Storm’ between Translation and Adaptation

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## 1. Introduction

Bob Dylan's song "Shelter from the Storm", recorded in New York on 17 September 1974, was released in 1975 on the album *Blood on the Tracks* (1975b). It is one of his most famous songs from that period, having been performed 377 times on stage ("Still On The Road – Song Index S 1956-2016," n.d.), most notably during his 1976 and 1978 tours (DYLAN, 1976; 1979). The song is characterized by a one-line chorus, repeated 10 times: "'Come in', she said, 'I'll give you shelter from the storm'".

In this article, I shall compare the only two French versions of the song that have been released to this day. The first, Francis Cabrel's "S'abriter de l'orage" [taking shelter from the storm<sup>1</sup>], released in 2004 on the album *Les beaux dégâts* (2004b), is a free adaptation, as defined by Antoine Guillemain ("LeTradapteur,"), which means that Cabrel has translated the chorus and rewritten the rest of the song. Francis Cabrel is a well-known artist in France, who started playing the guitar after he heard Bob Dylan play "Like a Rolling Stone" (1965b) when he was 13 and began his musical career in the mid-1970s. "S'abriter de l'orage" was his first attempt at covering Dylan in French. He has since released a whole album of French versions of Dylan's songs (CABREL, 2012). The second song of my corpus for this article is Sarclo's first recording of "Shelter from the Storm"<sup>2</sup>, released as a video on YouTube in 2017. He also released a live version on the album *Sarclo Sings Dylan (in French)*, recorded on the occasion of the Performing Arts Festival in Avignon in July 2018 (SARCLO, 2018a). Sarclo is a Swiss performer who was also heavily influenced by Dylan from the onset of his career. He began singing Dylan in English while he was studying in Lausanne and started performing professionally at the end of the 1970s. His history of translating Dylan's work began in 1979 when he translated the song "It's Alright, Ma" (1965a) for Hubert-Félix Thiéfaine, who simply wanted to understand the lyrics. Sarclo eventually sang this song in French in 2012 under the title "Tout va bien" (2012) and later decided to translate more of Dylan's works.

In his first article about covers of Bob Dylan in French, Nicolas Froeliger concludes his assessment with Cabrel's song "S'abriter de l'orage", stating that it is "a powerful and genuinely Dylanesque song. It is arguably the best Dylan cover in French, not because of its 'accuracy' of replication, but because of the faithfulness of its transmission of greater meaning" (2007, 189). He develops his analysis of this song in a second article about translations of Bob

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations of works in languages other than English are my own.

<sup>2</sup> He did not translate the title.

Dylan, declaring that “the adaptor breaks every pattern exhibited by the original” (FROELIGER, 2016, 52). These observations sparked my curiosity to look more closely at what Francis Cabrel’s version has in common with Bob Dylan’s original song, and how Cabrel’s approach differs from Sarclo’s. Within the scope of this article, I shall not comment on all the lyrics in details, but draw attention to the strategies used by the translators, which resulted in two completely different versions. This paper explores not only song translation in general, but also assesses how much of Dylan’s idiosyncratic style shows through in the two works under scrutiny and to provide song translators with methodological tools.

In the article “À la recherche d’une poétique ou comment lire une chanson populaire américaine” [Looking for poetics, or how to read an American popular song], Frédéric Sylvanise considers that a song is a hybrid form made of four elements: music, voice, text and production, that is work done in the studio, using modern technology (2015, 1). He also looks into the interactions between these elements, describing the voice as a link between musical and poetic language (SYLVANISE, 2015, 8). He concludes that there is neither order nor hierarchy between the four elements. Although Sylvanise does not deal with translation, I propose to apply his approach to the field of translation studies as it could be fruitful to consider how these four elements contribute to the construction of a song and how they are transferred when this song is performed in another language. I have established that these four elements do not circulate independently from one another when the song is adapted. What is expressed by musical elements finds its way into the target text while some aspects of the lyrics that are difficult to translate are expressed, for instance, by a touch of humour in the voice. The importance of the production in translating a song cannot be underestimated. One only has to listen to “La route m’entraîne” (2013a), Pascal Rinaldi’s version of “On the Road Again” (CANNED HEAT, 1968)<sup>3</sup>, to be convinced that the song would be instantly recognizable even without Rinaldi’s excellent translation work. This is also the case for the rest of *Traces*, his album of adaptations in French (RINALDI, 2013b). According to Lawrence Zbikowski, music does not have words but creates meaning using “sonic analogs” (2009, 364). Zbikowski explains that sonic analogs are metaphors used to create emotions and influence the way we perceive a given text. The production work plays an important role in framing those emotions, for example by creating an atmosphere of intimacy, as we shall see in part 5.

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<sup>3</sup> The song is already an adaptation of an older blues song (JONES, 1953).

## 2. The source song: Bob Dylan’s “Shelter from the Storm”

### 2.1. The music

From a musical point of view, I slightly differ from Nicolas Froeliger’s description (2016, 53). The harmonic structure of the verse is the following:

I V IV I  
I V IV IV  
I V IV IV  
I V IV I

Dylan plays it in the tonality of E:

E B A E  
E B A A  
E B A A  
E B A E

The only chord that changes is the last one of each line. To describe the structure simply, “Nothing changes save that lines two and three of each verse miss the final tonic.”<sup>4</sup> (ATTWOOD, n.d.). This chord progression creates a suspension until the fourth line, which brings resolution to the verse, ending on the tonic E.

The only instruments that accompany Dylan’s voice in this song are an acoustic guitar, which is strummed, and a bass guitar. There is also a harmonica solo at the end.

### 2.2. The text

The song is a series of ten verses with the same rhyming pattern: rhyming couplets AABB, with the third and fourth line of each verse rhyming with “storm”. The fourth line is repeated ten times with no variation: “‘Come in,’ she said, ‘I’ll give you shelter from the storm’”. Only “form” and “warm” are perfect rhymes, ending in /ɔ:m/. All the others are vowel rhymes, ending in /ɔ:n/ (“corn”, “morn”, “horn”, “forlorn”, “scorn”, “born”), with one ending in /ɔ:nz/ (“thorns”). The last line of each verse plays the role of a chorus, which is a distinctive feature

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<sup>4</sup> Tonic: the first note in a scale which, in conventional harmony, provides the keynote of a piece of music (STEVENSON, 2017).

of the song, or what Peter Low would call the “DNA of the song” (2017, chap. 7). This means that the translator would be well-advised to take this element into account so as to reproduce it. Two translations immediately come to mind in French for the word “storm”: either “tempête”, which means “violent weather”, or “orage”, which more specifically refers to a “thunderstorm”. The second one was chosen by Cabrel, while Sarclo chose the first one a few years later. The consequence of this specific feature of the song is that the translators either have to find 10 rhymes with “orage” / “tempête”, or that they have to turn the sentence around. Cabrel used rhymes with “orage” whereas Sarclo turned the sentence around, singing “Elle m’a dit ‘entre donc ici’, c’est la tempête et je t’offre un abri” [She told me, “come inside”, there is a storm and I’m offering you shelter].

Another characteristic of the original text is the rhythm of the chorus. When translating poetry, it is generally advised to keep the caesura in its place, but it is possible to move it if necessary. On the contrary, in a song, the text is already associated with a rhythm and a melody, which makes it impossible to move the caesura unless the melody and the rhythm are also modified. For that reason, the translator has to find a grammatical structure that allows the sentence to be cut in the middle, as in the original song, in which the four words of the title are isolated at the end of each verse: “shelter from the storm”.

### **3. Translating Music: reinforcing repetition or variation**

#### **3.1. The ghost of Dylan’s “Shelter from the Storm” in Cabrel’s version**

From a musical point of view, Cabrel’s version does not sound at all like Dylan’s. It is very likely that a listener who does not know it is an adaptation of “Shelter from the Storm” would not recognise it as such if it were not for the translation of the chorus. In his second article on translations of Bob Dylan, Froeliger focuses on what makes the two versions different in terms of melody and arrangements (2016). I shall focus on the few similarities. For the sake of comparison, here is what the harmonic structure of the two songs would look like if both played in the key of E (Cabrel plays in B $\flat$ ):

Shelter from the Storm	S'abriter de l'orage
E B A E	E A E
E B A A	E A
E B A A	C#m B A
E B A E	E B A E

Cabrel has kept the same chord progression as Dylan only on the last line of the verse, which constitutes the chorus. This is all the more striking as it is also the only part of the text that Cabrel translated. He seems to have picked this part of the music and lyrics and to have pulled them out of the song in order to write his own.

In addition, just as the harmonic structures of the first and last lines of the verse are identical in Dylan's version, the first and last lines of the verse in Cabrel's version also share a common trait, but the similarity is in the rhythm, as both include a change from a 4/4 to a 2/4 rhythm just for one bar, which *only* happens in the first and fourth line:

(CABREL, 2004a).

Thirdly, Cabrel's version, like Dylan's, ends with a solo, possibly to reinforce the isolation of the narrator at the end of the song. There are some significant differences between the two solos, however. Dylan's harmonica has been replaced with a saxophone, also a wind instrument, and while Dylan's solo only lasts 20 seconds (from 4:18 to 4:38), David Johnson's saxophone solo lasts 80 seconds (from 4:10 to 5:30), which represents approximately one fourth of the total length of the song. The saxophone solo brings the song to a conclusion, playing till the last note, whereas Dylan's solo ends more than 20 seconds before the end, leaving room for the guitar and bass guitar. More importantly, in the original version, Dylan begins his harmonica solo only three seconds after the end of the singing, as if the harmonica were an extension of his voice. Dylan is famous for using a harmonica holder and the harmonica is thus associated with

the singer. This is reinforced by the fact that the harmonica is the only wind instrument in the song apart from Dylan's voice. Cabrel's version is different in that the saxophone solo is not played by Cabrel himself and is heard in addition to another reed instrument (the clarinet) and a brass instrument (the bugle). All these elements give the saxophone solo a different place in the song.

### **3.2. Sarclo and the music of English**

Sarclo does not follow the harmonic structure of Dylan's version, instead repeating four times the chords of the first line: EBAE. The goal, as he told me, is to reinforce the repetitive, haunting atmosphere of the song. He plays it exactly at the same tempo: 75 beats per minute. As far as the arrangements are concerned, Sarclo's version is very close to the original. Dylan's choice of recording the song with only an acoustic guitar and a bass guitar makes the bass stand out and contributes to giving the song its distinctive sound. Margotin and Guesdon write that "the excellent bass player Tony Brown offers subtle and melodic playing" (2015, 426). The way Sarclo muffles the strings reinforces the low-pitched sounds, which is reminiscent of a bass guitar accompaniment, and also has the effect of the guitar being more in the background, leaving more room for the voice.

Sarclo's version does not end with a harmonica solo, but with the last verse repeated, this time entirely in English, with the chorus repeated three times. Although he does not play the harmonica on this particular song, when asked why he was singing the last verse in English after singing it in French, he answered:

L'harmonica...? il prend pas mal de place dans les chansons de Dylan et j'en joue beaucoup moins bien que lui. Je pense que ça crée une coupure dans les sons, une diversité, ça aère... Les phrases en anglais font le même boulot : interrompre l'écoute textuelle pour la remplacer par une écoute de son... et le son de l'anglais amène une touche exotique, comme l'harmonica.<sup>5</sup>

This statement questions the frontier between language and sound, which is particularly important in the context of song translation. Just as the instruments and the voice can produce meaning, if only metaphorically, language can sometimes be reduced to sound. By using the

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<sup>5</sup> [The Harmonica? It takes quite a lot of room in Dylan's songs and I don't play nearly as well as him. I think it creates a break in the sounds, a diversity, it gives some breathing room... The sentences in English do the same job: the audience stop listening to the text and start listening to sound... and the sound of English brings an exotic touch, like the harmonica.] (SARCLO, 2019a).

word “exotic”, Sarclo seems to be implicitly stating here that he is translating for an audience that does not understand English. In his approach, he considers that, for *his* audience, listening to English is like listening to exotic music. Using Dylan’s words in this way could be seen as one way to adopt a foreignising approach, as defined by Lawrence Venuti, **i.e. choosing to draw the target audience’s attention to the foreignness of the text** (1995, 20)

This strategy of highlighting the linguistic difference of the original text is reinforced by the fact that he juxtaposes it next to the French lyrics, which is often the case in his translations of Bob Dylan. In this particular song, in addition to this last verse sung entirely in English, he also sings the original chorus twice. Significantly, the first occurrence is at the end of verse 1, thus announcing this strategy from the beginning. Hearing the first verse could mislead the listener to think that he has abdicated because he felt that the chorus was untranslatable. This is what he did in his version of “You’re Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go”, because he did not find a satisfactory equivalent for the adjective “lonesome” (SARCLO, n.d.). The second time he sings the chorus in English, at the end of verse 6, is in the middle of the song. In this way, the listeners are reminded regularly that they are listening to Bob Dylan in translation and not to an original work in French. The word “translation” has two meanings in English: it can refer either to the process or to the resulting work. Sarclo’s adaptation choices seem to indicate that his desire is not only to sing the resulting text, but to constantly expose the *process* of translation. This approach is confirmed by a scenographic idea he had of staging a tour of his Dylan covers in French and setting up two screens on each side of the stage in order to display both texts at the same time for the audience. Unfortunately, it was too complicated technically and too costly, therefore it was abandoned.

Sarclo’s insistence on reminding the listener that the work is a translation raises the question of the goal of translating Bob Dylan to sing it in French. Is it only to make the works accessible to a wider audience, or is it to enrich the original text by producing a new interpretation? In the words of Clive Scott, “to treat translation as a service for those ignorant of the source language is to do the literature of translation no service” (2006, 10). Hearing the words of the original text haunting the French version as they do in Sarclo’s version amounts to highlighting the palimpsest effect of each new translation, described in “The Task of the Translator” (BENJAMIN et al., 1996). Each new interpretation sheds new light on the original text, which could be said of song covers as well. The fact that Sarclo considers the foreign text as music, like a harmonica solo, shows the permeability of the various channels that make up a song.

## 4. Voices: do you speak Dylan?

### 4.1. Placing the accent: from Aufray to Cabrel

Nicolas Froeliger explains that Cabrel's scansion, including in his own works, does not come from the French southwest but "is actually of American origin, via Hugues Aufray and Serge Kerval" (2007, 181). Hugues Aufray was the first to release an album of Dylan covers in French in 1965 (1965a), which was followed in 1971 by the album *Serge Kerval chante Bob Dylan* (KERVAL, 1970). As Froeliger explains, Aufray claims that he was the first to sing in French with the English tonic accent, which is evident in the song "Cauchemar psychomoteur", for instance (1965b). Another striking example is in "Le jour où le bateau viendra" (1965c), Aufray's cover of "When the Ship Comes In" (DYLAN, 1964):

Et vous **entendrez** l'océan chanter / Le jour où le **bateau** viendra [And you will hear the ocean sing / The day when the ship comes in]

Contrary to English, in French, the accent is systematically on the last syllable of the word, unless it contains a silent "e". In "S'abriter de l'orage", Cabrel sings the following chorus:

"Entrez", dit-elle, "et **venez** / vous abriter de l'orage" ["Come in", she said, "and take shelter from the storm"]

The word "venez" before the caesura is pronounced with a stress on the first syllable, which sounds odd in French, but makes it sound like the original song: it follows that "I'll **give** you" and "et **venez**" have the same stress pattern. Making the chorus sound closer to the original draws the attention of the French listener to the fact that it is a translated text, which means it could be seen as an element of foreignisation. Yet the French listener is unlikely to notice, precisely because this is the way Francis Cabrel *always* sings, even when he is not singing translated works. Here is one example drawn from "Les murs de poussière" [The Walls of Dust], the eponymous song from his first album (CABREL, 1977):

Il a **croisé** les rois de naguère [He met the kings of old<sup>6</sup>]

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<sup>6</sup> Although "naguère" means "recently", as its etymology indicates (il n'y a guère longtemps = not long ago), it is sometimes improperly used as meaning "jadis" (in the old days), as is obviously the case here when referring to kings.

A great number of examples could be listed, as this is one of the traits that characterise Cabrel's singing style. As a result, we cannot conclude that it is an element of foreignisation when translating this work in particular, because that would imply a translation strategy, i.e. a deliberate method on the part of the translator so that the listener can "register the [...] difference", in the words of Venuti (1995, 20).

The fact that Cabrel's scansion makes him sound as if he were singing in English does not necessarily mean that he reproduces Dylan's specific approach to singing. His singing style was not only influenced by Dylan but also by a host of other U.S. performers. He paid tribute to several of them *before* he attempted to translate Dylan's songs. For example, he included a translation of "Rosie" (BROWNE, 1977) on his album *Sarbacane* (CABREL, 1989) and a translation of "Millworker" (TAYLOR, 1979) on his 1984 live album (CABREL, 1984). Singing like an English-speaking singer and singing like Bob Dylan in particular are two different things. Dylan's singing is very expressive and often close to speaking, possibly under the influence of the talking blues, "a style of blues music in which the lyrics are more or less spoken rather than sung" (STEVENSON, 2010). This form takes its name from the song named "Talking Blues", recorded in 1926 (BOUCHILLON, 1987), and was made popular by Woody Guthrie in the 1930s. Dylan sang a few talking blues himself at the beginning of his career. He seems to have retained from this form the importance of keeping the text free from the rhythm of the music so as to preserve the possibility of putting emphasis on one word or another, as you would do in a conversation.

One of the things that differentiate Aufray and Cabrel's translated covers of Dylan from Sarclo's versions is the rhythmical regularity of the singing. The rhythm of delivery depends on the metric regularity of the writing in French, which means that the act of *performing* the song is directly linked with the act of *translating* it; this will be discussed in part 6.

## **4.2. Sarclo and deliberate rhythm disruption**

During the concert which was the closing event of the conference "Traduire la chanson" in Grenoble on 6 December 2019, Sarclo declared: "Je ne traduis pas de l'anglais, je traduis du Dylan." [I don't translate English, I translate Dylan] (n.d.). This is his own way of drawing attention to the specificity of translating and singing Dylan's works. Here is what he has to say about Dylan's conversational singing style:

Il y a quelque chose d'une liberté de rythme qui fait que tout d'un coup les mots prennent une liberté intérieure, prennent un poids, prennent une signification plus lourde, plus ample, plus à la hauteur de la dignité des mots, parce que, quand on parle, toi et moi, on crée l'emphase en faisant traîner sur une syllabe, en précipitant trois mots ici, en ralentissant deux là<sup>7</sup>.

One striking element of Dylan's singing is the irregularity from one line to another, which means that an artist who wants the French listeners to feel what it is like to listen to Bob Dylan should probably strive to reproduce the same effect, trying to write – and thus sing – as Dylan would sing if he were singing in French. The strong link between writing the French lyrics and performing them cannot be emphasised enough. This is an aspect of song translation which argues in favour of having the text translated by the performers themselves, or at least by translators who have a good command of music. Concerning the question of the number of syllables in particular, Sarclo gives the examples of the last verse of "Mister Tambourine Man" (DYLAN, 1965c) and "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" (DYLAN, 1963a) to illustrate it, adding:

Si tu as l'impression qu'une traduction est mauvaise à cause du nombre de pieds, c'est que c'est mal écrit ou mal chanté. On peut précipiter les syllabes quand ça sent pas le trucage mais l'urgence<sup>8</sup>.

In his French version of "Shelter from the Storm", this sense of emergency can be felt in the third line of the second verse. Dylan sings "In a world of steel-eyed death and men who are fighting to be warm", for a total of 16 syllables, in contrast with the third line of the *fourth* verse, where he sings "Hunted like a crocodile, ravaged in the corn" (only 12 syllables). When Sarclo sings the second verse, he does not even make a pause between the third and fourth lines, singing "Quand les gars se battent pour se mettre au chaud dans un monde de mort et de mépris / Elle m'a dit entre donc ici, c'est la tempête et je t'offre un abri" [When the guys fight to keep warm in a world of death and contempt / She said, "come in here, there's a storm and I'm offering you shelter"]. In his version, he has even added three extra syllables to the third line,

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<sup>7</sup> [There is something like a freedom in rhythm that makes the word suddenly take on an inner freedom, a weight, a deeper and wider meaning... a meaning that does more justice to the dignity of words, because when you and I speak, we create emphasis by lingering on a syllable, by accelerating three words here, by slowing down two others there.] (SARCLO, 2018b).

<sup>8</sup> [If you have the impression that a translation is bad because of the number of feet, it's either badly written or badly sung. You can hurry along the syllables if it does not feel like a manipulation but like an emergency.] (2019b).

for a total number of 19. Another example is in the last verse, also in the third line: Dylan sings “If I could only turn back the clock to when God and her were born”, again for a total of 16 syllables. The acceleration on this line is very obvious in Sarclo’s singing as well: he sings “Si je pouvais juste coincer la pendule à la naissance de Dieu et de cette fille” [If I could only jam the clock on the birth hour of God and this girl], for a total of 21 syllables. This way of performing has a retroactive influence on his way of translating the text to be sung. Instead of trying to have a fixed number of syllables on the same line in each verse, he deliberately adds a word here and there to make the text sound more natural, closer to a conversation, as shall be evident in part 6.

## **5. Space and intimacy: from the studio to the audience**

### **5.1. Dylan, Cabrel and Lanois: open tuning and open spaces**

In his analysis of “S’abriter de l’orage”, Nicolas Froeliger mentions two other songs by Bob Dylan in particular that could be inspirations behind Cabrel’s version (2016, 52). One of the two, “Most of the Time”, comes from the album *Oh Mercy*, released in 1989, which was produced by Daniel Lanois (DYLAN, 1989). Instead of comparing “S’abriter de l’orage” with one song in particular, we could extend that observation to state that the production of Cabrel’s version sounds as if it could have been produced by Lanois, with a lot of breathing space, reverberation and echo in order to create an atmospheric sound, as in the albums *Yellow Moon* (THE NEVILLE BROTHERS, 1989) and *So* (GABRIEL, 1986), for example. Cabrel may have attempted to reproduce the atmosphere of the original song, and more generally of the album “Blood on the Tracks” (DYLAN, 1975a), which also has a distinctive atmosphere, perhaps owing less to the production than to “the open tuning<sup>9</sup> used by Dylan, which “gives an impression of greater harmonic richness” (MARGOTIN and GUESDON, 2015, 426).

### **5.2. Sarclo, proximity and intimacy**

Sarclo’s first recording of “Shelter from the Storm” is a video which was put on YouTube and which creates an intimate space. What appears from the very simple arrangements, from the

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<sup>9</sup> open tuning: tuning the guitar so that the base chord (E, in this case) can be played without touching the neck of the guitar with the left hand.

sound production and from the way the video is filmed, with the singer appearing in dim light against a dark background, is a desire to provide no distractions and leave room for the text. The video begins with a medium shot, then the camera zooms in to a close-up on Sarclo’s face so that, during the first half of the song, the viewer can easily forget that there is a guitar at all. As I have mentioned in part 3.2, the guitar part is repetitive, allowing it to remain less conspicuous, and the voice is mixed in the foreground. Although it is shot in a studio with no audience present, releasing the song as a video creates a proximity with the audience on the other side of the screen, which is akin to the intimate atmosphere on Dylan’s whole album, and in particular on the part of the album which was recorded in New York. In the words of Margotin and Guesdon, “the New York tessituras are lower, giving more intimacy and emotion to his interpretation” (2015, 426).

## 6. The text: from tribute to translation

### 6.1. Comme un air de Dylan

Cabrel has not translated the lyrics at all. In his version, he has written five verses instead of ten, then he sings the initial verse again at the end, giving the song a circular structure. The only part that he has translated is the chorus, choosing the word “orage” for “storm”, hence a series of feminine rhymes: “garage” “tatouage” “naufage” “image” “surnage”. The rest of the lines are written with feminine rhymes as well, in stark contrast with the source text, in which all the rhymes were masculine. This choice gives Cabrel’s text a softer atmosphere that fits well with the atmospheric sound of his version. If we consider the words as sounds and not strictly as a signifier, we could draw a parallel between the use of feminine rhymes and the use of a sustain pedal, which lets the sound fade instead of dying abruptly.

Cabrel seems to have given a lot of attention to the translation of the chorus, in terms of rhythm and sounds. He not only managed to keep the caesura in its original place, but he also kept the exact rhythm of the original sentence in the first hemistich: 2/2/3.

“Come in”,	she said,	“I’ll give you		shelter from the storm”
“Entrez,	dit-elle,	et venez		vous abriter de l’orage”

2	2	3
Come in,	she said,	I'll give you
Entrez,	dit-elle,	et venez

Strictly speaking, “Venez vous abriter” [Come on and take shelter] does not translate “I’ll give you shelter”, but it works very well as a dynamic equivalence (NIDA, 1964, 159), i.e. it is also an invitation. I agree with Nicolas Froeliger that Cabrel probably started translating the text from this last line and drew from it the meter of his text and the rest of the rhymes (2016, 54). Approaching rhyme translation from the end of the verses is usually an effective strategy, as Peter Low writes in *Translating Songs*: “With rhyming, work backwards if you can [...]: it reduces the chance of the rhyme seeming forced” (2017, chap. 6). As Nicolas Froeliger writes, studying these phenomena “may be useful to investigate not only the adaptation process, but also the very creative process at work in writing songs” (2016, 54). We can draw a parallel between what Peter Low suggests as a viable strategy and what American performer Harry Chapin explained in a songwriting workshop released on in 2002. He explains:

The best songs sound effortless. If you’ve got two lines that do rhyme and you’re trying to look for the maximum impact out of them, you would take the less good of the two lines and put that first and then the zinger<sup>10</sup> – or the good line –, put that second. (CHAPIN, 2002)

Cabrel seems to have approached this adaptation as a complete creation, using the chorus of Dylan’s song as a seed and letting his song grow around it. Although the rest of the text is obviously not a translation, the approach used here was to study what the two texts have in common. First of all, Cabrel uses the same rhyming pattern: the whole song is written in rhyming couplets. In terms of rhythm, it is difficult to compare an English text with a French text by counting syllables, as the metrics of English is completely different. Although the number of *syllables* in Dylan’s song varies a lot, what is a constant is that Dylan uses a ballad meter, that is 4/3, on each line, always finishing the second hemistich with a masculine rhyme on the third beat of the guitar. Cabrel uses the same pattern, but adding regularity to it by systematically placing two syllables per beat, as if all the feet were iambic... As a result, Dylan’s 4/3 construction becomes 8/6, i.e. 14-syllable lines with the caesura after the eighth

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<sup>10</sup> Zinger: “something causing or meant to cause interest, surprise, or shock” (“Zinger,” n.d.).

syllable, while the last line of the verse is divided into 7-syllable hemistiches. The only exception, which I will call accidental, to use a musical metaphor, is in verse 2: Cabrel adds one syllable at the end of the line, causing an acceleration on the words “dégâts magnifiques” – which means “magnificent damage”, so it may not be accidental at all.

Although Cabrel changes the storyline completely, he is still writing a love story between the narrator and a woman. Dylan’s line in verse 8 (“Do I understand your question, man, is it hopeless and forlorn?”) may have inspired Cabrel to include two questions in verse 4 (“est-ce que plus tard tout redevient solide ? / Est-ce qu'on peut exister longtemps suspendu dans le vide ?” [Later on, does everything become solid again? / Can one exist long floating in emptiness?]). The structure of Cabrel’s first verse allows him to set the scene in a way that is also very close to Dylan’s. First they expose the circumstances: “’Twas in another lifetime, one of toil and blood” / “Une pâle lueur tombait d'une pâle fenêtre” [a pale light was coming down from a pale window]. Then they introduce the narrator, explaining what state he was in at that time: “I came in from the wilderness, a creature void of form” / “J’avais les yeux d'une couleur facile à reconnaître” [My eyes had a colour that was easy to recognise]. In addition, the line “Celle de ces wagons éteints sur les voies de garage” [(the colour) of those lifeless boxcars on the sidings] might be a reference to Dylan taking inspiration from Woody Guthrie’s life on the road riding boxcars. The word “nauffrage” in the third verse, which can mean “shipwreck” but also “ruin”, figuratively, follows this evocation of the life of the hobo.

The last verse in both versions is turned towards the future: Dylan sings “I’m **bound to** cross the line” and “**someday I’ll** make it mine”. Cabrel sings “Vous **aurez** d'autres aujourd'hui, d'autres heures de peine” [You **will** have other todays, other hours of sorrow]. Interestingly, while Cabrel is referring to the future in this last verse, the word “peine” is reminiscent of the only song in which Cabrel referred to Dylan in the past: “Pas trop de peine” [Not Too Much Sorrow] (1978). By ending the song in this way, Cabrel is referring both to the past and to the future, like the original version, which is suspended between “’Twas in another lifetime” (first verse) and “someday I’ll make it mine” (last verse). Judging from all these elements, we can consider that Cabrel writes a tribute rather than a translation. This may explain the tone of the musical composition, with the majestic presence of the wind instruments – the reed instruments (clarinet and saxophone) and especially the bugle – and the choice of a much slower tempo (75 bpm, against 105 bpm for the original version and Sarclo’s version).

## 6.2. No compromise: meaning, sound and register

If we consider that there is a spectrum between translation and adaptation, Sarclo's approach is at the other end. Concerning the chorus, he does not translate it at all in verse 1, singing it in English, as I have mentioned in part 3.2. When he *does* translate it, he uses the word “tempête”, perhaps because it allows him to keep the alliteration in /t/ (“shelter”, “storm”) and even reinforce it with other plosives: “Elle m’a dit entre **donc** ici, c’est la **tempête** et je **t**’offre un **abri**” [She said, “come in here, there’s a storm and I’m offering you shelter”]. From the point of view of sound, this completely departs from the softness of Cabrel’s feminine rhymes. Sarclo does not end the line with the word “tempête”. This choice frees him from the constraint of having to find rhymes in each verse, which could mean sacrificing the meaning. In this first version, Sarclo only translated 9 verses, then the last one is sung entirely in English. In the version recorded in Avignon, he sings all the verses in French (SARCLO, 2018a). For the sake of brevity, I will focus on a few lines only, but my analysis applies to the rest of the song.

As far as the rhythm is concerned, where Cabrel adds regularity, Sarclo deliberately creates irregularities, even when it is not the result of a constraint. In verse 4, “Hunted like a crocodile” could easily be translated “chassé comme un crocodile”, with exactly the same number of syllables. Instead, Sarclo sings “tiré à vu comme un crocodile” [shot on sight like a crocodile], adding two syllables, and keeping the plosive /t/, which reinforces the alliteration in /k/ (“crocodile”, “corn”). Similarly in verse 10, as I have mentioned in part 4.2, when Dylan sings “If I could only turn back the clock to when God and her were born” (16 syllables), Sarclo sings “Si je pouvais juste coincer la pendule à la naissance de Dieu et de cette fille” [If I could only jam the clock on the birth hour of God and this girl] (21 syllables). Not only could “la pendule” be replaced by “l’horloge”, with no change in meaning and one less syllable, but the word “juste”, which translates “only”, is not absolutely necessary to understand the sentence, and it would be considerably easier to sing with three syllables less. It seems that his main goal is to emphasise irregularities so as to reproduce the effect of Dylan’s singing style on the listener. An even more striking example is in the first verse, where Dylan sings “a creature void of form”. Sarclo sings “une créature **à peu près** sans forme” [a creature **more or less** void of form]. Without the addition of these three words, he would have exactly the same number of syllables as Dylan. We can then conclude that his adding the modifying three-syllable adverbial is not the result of a constraint, but on the contrary *allows* him to accelerate the singing. In

addition, since these words do not translate any element of meaning in the original text, we could see it as a metalinguistic comment on the act of translation, i.e. that it is precisely by singing *more or less* the same thing as Dylan that he can reproduce a similar impression on his audience. This is an approach that would certainly have appealed to Umberto Eco. His essay *Experiences in Translation* (ECO and MCEWEN, 2001) was originally titled *Dire quasi la stessa cosa, esperienze di traduzione* [Saying approximately the same thing]. Saying approximately the same thing amounts to doing intralingual translation, as defined by Jakobson, that is “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language” (1959, 233). It seems that Sarclo first does his own intralingual translation in English, rephrasing what *he* understands of Dylan’s words, and then expresses it in French, paying great attention to sound, in particular the rhythm created by alliterations.

In addition to Dylan’s words, music and singing style, Sarclo tries to convey the presence of Dylan’s persona: a touch of humour and constant self-derision, as well as a resonance with the Beat generation. This transpires in the register he uses, which is even more informal than Dylan’s, probably as a reaction to Aufray’s translations, especially those of 1965. Judging that they give a bland rendition of the bitterness contained in Dylan’s texts, he has retranslated some of them, for example “Don’t Think Twice, It’s Alright” (1963b; AUFRAY, 1965d; SARCLO, n.d.). He often uses compensation, that is adding informalities in a line because the other parameters (meaning, sound...) did not allow him to be informal where Dylan was. For instance, in line 2, he adds informality to create a conversational effect and texturise the lyrics. The expression “you can rest assured” is translated “là, vous vous faites aucun souci” [Here now, don’t you worry none]. He replaces the standard negation “ne” (“ne vous faites”) with the pronoun “vous”, and adds the word “là”, which does not translate anything present in the original song. Finally, in verse 7, Dylan sings “Well, the deputy walks on hard nails and the preacher rides a mount / But nothing really matters much, it’s doom alone that counts”. Sarclo’s translation is: “Le flic marche un peu sur les œufs, le pasteur fait un peu la pute / Mais tout ça c’est la fête à neuneu et le truc qui compte c’est la chute” [The cop is walking on eggs a bit, the preacher is whoring around / But all this is just mayhem and all that counts is the fall]. This passage is a condensation of all the effects mentioned earlier: the addition of the words “un peu” [a bit], the informal language and a very surprising expression that seems to translate a general sense of chaos, “c’est la fête à neuneu”. I have translated “it’s just mayhem” (in French, “c’est la foire”) because, although the word “neuneu”, taken on its own, means “an idiot”, “la fête à Neuneu” is a famous fair in Neuilly-sur-Seine, an interesting case of domestication, i.e. adaptation to the target culture (VENUTI, 1995, 20). We can suppose that this reference to the

chaos of a fair is motivated by an interpretation of Dylan's line as a reversal: the deputy should be on the mount and the preacher walking on hard nails.

## 7. Conclusion

As Lawrence Venuti writes, ideally the author and the translator should be “*simpatico*, [...] ‘possessing an underlying sympathy’” (1991, 3). The way artists translate and perform Dylan is probably a reflection of the perception they have of him as a cultural figure. For example, one aspect that seems to have drawn Sarclo's attention is Dylan's humour, something he often tends to highlight. As this comic aspect also characterizes his *own* career, it has led some of his listeners to remark that when they listen to his versions of Dylan, what they hear most of all is Sarclo. His answer to that objection is that what they hear of Sarclo in these songs was planted there by Dylan in the first place (2018c). Perhaps the same could be said of Cabrel, but perceiving Dylan from a different angle.

My intention has been to show not only that meaning comes from all four elements taken separately (music, voice, production and text), but also from the interaction between them, and that language and music are inseparable in a song, because music is a language and language *is* music. I believe these two examples illustrate that two very different approaches can produce two new works that are powerful, each in their own way. An adaptation should not be assessed on the basis of what it has lost from the original, but should be examined for the light it sheds on the original work and on its critical reception. Although translating Dylan's works is a specific challenge (broken rhythm, conversational tone, register, strong intertextuality), many of the observations and the strategies described here are transposable when adapting songs by other artists.