How Would a Hoosier Speak Norwegian?

Dialogue, colloquial speech, and, especially, dialect, present almost insurmountable problems for the translator. By looking at examples of dialect in English and American literature, from Shakespeare to John Steinbeck, we will imagine some of the problems these passages would present to someone called upon to translate them into another language. The topic arose for me when I took on the translation of a Hebrew novel written in the dialect of Moroccan immigrants. What must the translator do to deal with this sort of thing?

Jeffrey M. Green earned a BA in French from Princeton and a PhD in Comparative Literature from Harvard. Upon moving to Israel, mastering Hebrew, and giving up on an academic career, he became a translator from Hebrew (and occasionally French). He has translated more than a dozen novels by the late Aharon Appelfeld as well as works by other major Israeli writers. He has also translated many academic books, mainly in the field of Jewish history. His book, Thinking Through Translation, was published by the University of Georgia Press. He has published two books in Hebrew, a memoir about the jazz saxophonist Arnie Lawrence called Problematic Guru, as well as fiction poetry, book reviews, and articles of various kinds. He was the ghostwriter for the Holocaust memoir by Trudi Birger, published as A Daughter’s Gift of Love in English and in many other languages.

Thursday, February 8, 2018
4:00–5:30 p.m.
Slocum Room, Lilly Library

The Translation Seminar Series, coordinated by Professors Russell Valentino and Bill Johnston, is open to the IU community and general public. Coffee and tea will be served.

This event is cosponsored by the Borns Jewish Studies Program and the College of Arts and Sciences Office of International Affairs.

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