
CONTRASTING FORMULATION IN TRANSLATING FRENCH LYRICS INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract

The following paper analyzes the contrast existing between well-known English songs and their French models both in their formulation and their meaning. Using as a point of departure the original French lyrics, we see, thanks to the translation of their English version back into French, how mood, form and content have been modified to give each song a life and a character of its own.

Very few people are aware that some well-known American songs are in fact (tentative) translations and / or adaptations of French lyrics.

This essay will deal with English lyrics that have been put in place of the French original texts to accompany musical scores of some of the most famous songs of 20th century French repertoire. The beauty of the English lyrics will not be discussed. The contrast between the meaning of the original texts and their pseudo-translations will be the main topics discussed in this article.

As will appear evidently in some of the following texts, the original lyrics have been either translated literally (rarely), their meaning has been preserved (often) or only the mood of the songs has simply been respected (always).

To support our point of view, we shall review French and English lyrics of ten songs, underline their differences and see to what extent they differ.

- We shall use the following process.
1. Original French lyrics
 2. English lyrics
 3. Translation of the English lyrics into French
 4. Comment

A very brief introduction of the impact of French songs in the American repertoire

A minuscule part of modern American repertoire originated outside the United States. This is of course not to mention a sizable proportion of composers cum lyricists of European origin at the beginning of the 20th century who contributed to what is now known as the Great American Songs (Gus Kahn, Emery Deutsch, Sigmund Romberg, Rudolph Friml, Frederick Loewe, Kurt Weill, Gus Edwards, Victor Herbert, Ray Noble and Irving Berlin to name just a few) but since the Second World War, there seems to be a vertiginous fall in the influence of European-stock songwriters. The fact is quite simply due to the tremendous increase of good quality creators in the United States proper since the early 1920s. On the other hand, what we record since that period is a notable influence of the American musical creations crossing the Atlantic and spreading like a wild-fire across the entire European continent thanks to new rhythms introduced through Charleston, Black Bottom, Blues, Jazz, Swing, Be-bop and finally, in the fifties, American pop music including Rock'n Roll and numerous musical genres that followed.

Before this irresistible wave arrived and ravaged – or delighted – the delicate ears of the European listeners, as we mentioned earlier, quite a lot of Europeans who immigrated to the United States at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries brought with them their musical talent. They were in large part Austrians, Germans and citizens from other Central-European kingdoms. The French among them were almost non-existent or at least have not seemed to make an everlasting impact that we can remember to this day.

We have to wait until the early thirties to discover traces of the passage in the United States of some representatives of France's best modern musical repertoire. Creators like Mireille, Jacques Pills and Charles Trenet were known in the US in the 30s and 40s but never had as much influence as singers such as Maurice Chevalier or Edith Piaf, just to name the most well-known. It is perhaps the cliché the French like to propagate abroad that everything they do, especially in the field of art is intellectual that created in reaction a sort of rejection from the American public and somehow hindered their acceptance of otherwise very good music and lyrics. Anyway, the best American lyricists and some of the most open-minded singers paid attention to the large production

of French-stock songs in the 30s and 40s. This trend has continued during the 50s and 60s but seems to have been over since due to the noticeable fall of quality in the French repertoire and the somewhat obvious navel-gazing of Americans in the field of music where they reign supreme.

So, only the best French – or francophone – creations have been considered for adaptation to the taste of the discerning American public. The names of Charles Trenet and Jacques Brel come into the spotlight as they are considered being amongst the most influential musical artists of the middle of the 20th century both side of the Atlantic. The songs we shall review are among the most famous ones both in Europe and the American continent and have also been translated in many other languages but that is another story.

Song 1 Mon homme (My Man)

Lyrics: Albert Willemetz, Jacques Charles

Music: Maurice Yvain

Sung by Mistinguett 1920

Sur cette terr', ma seul' joie, mon seul bonheur

C'est mon homme.

J'ai donné tout c'que j'ai, mon amour et tout mon cœur

À mon homme

Et même la nuit,

Quand je rêve, c'est de lui,

De mon homme.

Ce n'est pas qu'il est beau, qu'il est riche ni costaud

Mais je l'aime, c'est idiot,

l'm'fout des coups

l'm'prend mes sous,

Je suis à bout

Mais malgré tout

Que voulez-vous

Je l'ai tell'ment dans la peau

Qu'j'en d'viens marteau,

Dès qu'il s'approch' c'est fini

Je suis à lui

Quand ses yeux sur moi se posent

Ça me rend tout' chose

Je l'ai tell'ment dans la peau

Qu'au moindre mot

l'm'f'rait faire n'importe quoi

J'tuerais, ma foi

J'sens qu'il me rendrait infâme

Mais je n'suis qu'un' femme
Et, j'l'ai tell'ment dans la peau ...

Pour le quitter c'est fou ce que m'ont offert
D'autres hommes.
Entre nous, voyez-vous ils ne valent pas très cher
Tous les hommes
La femm' à vrai dir'
N'est faite que pour souffrir
Par les hommes.
Dans les bals, j'ai couru, afin d'l'oublier j'ai bu
Rien à faire, j'ai pas pu
Quand i'm'dit "Viens"
J'suis comme un chien
Y a pas moyen
C'est comme un lien
Qui me retient.

Je l'ai tell'ment dans la peau
Qu'j'en suis dingo.
Que cell' qui n'a pas aussi
Connu ceci
Ose venir la première
Me j'ter la pierre.
En avoir un dans la peau
C'est l'pir' des maux
Mais c'est connaître l'amour
Sous son vrai jour
Et j'dis qu'il faut qu'on pardonne
Quand un' femme se donne
À l'homm' qu'elle a dans la peau ...

English version

Lyrics C. Pollock

The song is notably interpreted by Barbra Streisand in the finale of the movie
"Funny Girl" 1968

My Man

Oh, my man, I love him so, he'll never know
All my life is just despair, but I don't care
When he takes me in his arms
The world is bright, all right...
What's the difference if I say I'll go away

When I know I'll come back on my knees someday
For whatever my man is, I am his forever more.

It cost me a lot,
But there's one thing that I've got, it's my man
Cold and wet tired, you bet,
But all that I soon forget with my man.
He's not much for looks
And no hero out of books, it's my man
Two or three girls has he
That he likes as well as me, but I love him.

Oh, my man, I love him so, he'll never know
All my life is just despair, but I don't care
When he takes me in his arms
The world is bright, all right.
What's the difference if I say I'll go away
When I know I'll come back on my knees someday
For whatever my man is, I am his forever more.

Translation

Mon homme

Oh, mon homme, je l'aime tant, il ne saura jamais
(Que) ma vie entière n'est que désespoir mais je m'en moque
Quand il me prend dans ses bras
Le monde est lumineux (et) parfait.
Qu'est-ce que ça peut bien faire si je dis que je m'en irai
Alors que je sais très bien que je reviendrai sur les genoux
Car quoi que puisse être mon homme, je lui appartiens pour toujours.

Cela me coûte cher
Mais il y a (au moins) une chose qui m'appartienne, c'est mon homme
J'ai froid, je suis crevée, vous pouvez en être sûr
Mais j'oublie vite tout ça avec mon homme
Il n'est vraiment pas beau
Et il n'est pas un héros sorti d'un livre, (mais) c'est mon homme
Il a deux ou trois poules
Qui lui plaisent autant que moi mais je l'aime.

Oh, mon homme, je l'aime tant, il ne saura jamais
(Que) ma vie entière n'est que désespoir mais je m'en moque
Quand il me prend dans ses bras
Le monde est lumineux (et) parfait.

Qu'est-ce que ça peut bien faire si je dis que je m'en irai
 Alors que je sais très bien que je reviendrai sur les genoux
 Car quoi que puisse être mon homme, je lui appartiens pour toujours.

The English translation, as we can see, respects the spirit of the original song in which an atmosphere of desperation is intertwined with love. The noticeable difference lies in the amplitude of despair that is extremely strong in the French version and only slightly underlined in the English one. The aspect of sordid realism that is obvious in the original song "He beats me He takes my money I can't stand it I'd do anything for him I think I'd kill I'd become despicable But I'm only a woman (and) I've got him under my skin" and later "Woman is only made to suffer by / at the hands of men, . . . When he says "Come!", I'm like a dog. " has been removed.

As we can see, this song that could indeed be considered as a counter-hymn to Feminism – has had its rough angles smoothed and though carefully retaining its original atmosphere of tragic unhappiness, emphasizes nevertheless love and hope: "The world is bright, all right..."

We can therefore summarize the attempt of the English lyricist as rather successful as he has succeeded to conserve the feeling of pitiful sadness in terms he has chosen to describe the very special kind of love this woman has toward the love of her life while at the same time introducing an impression of remote happiness lying half-hidden in expressions of love. Love in both songs is overwhelmingly stronger than affection and appears as a destructive process. We can only wonder how long this woman will survive. .

Song 2 La Mer (The Sea)

Music and lyrics Charles Trenet 1945

Lamer
 Qu'on voit danser le long des golfes clairs
 A des reflets d'argent
 Lamer
 Des reflets changeants
 Sous la pluie

Lamer
 Au ciel d'été confond
 Ses blancs moutons
 Avec les anges si purs
 La mer bergère d'azur
 Infinie

Voyez
 Près des étangs
 Ces grands roseaux mouillés
 Voyez
 Ces oiseaux blancs
 Et ces maisons rouillées

La mer
 Les a bercés
 Le long des golfes clairs
 Et d'une chanson d'amour
 La mer
 A bercé mon cœur pour la vie

English version:

Lyrics: Jack Lawrence
 Sung by Bobby Darrin 1958

Beyond the Sea

Somewhere beyond the sea
 Somewhere waitin' for me
 My lover stands on golden sands
 And watches the ships that go sailin'

Somewhere beyond the sea
 She's there watchin' for me
 If I could fly like birds on high
 Then straight to her arms I'd go sailin'

It's far beyond the stars
 It's near beyond the moon
 I know beyond a doubt
 My heart will lead me there soon.

We'll meet beyond the shore
 We'll kiss just as before
 Happy we'll be beyond the sea
 And never again I'll go sailin'

Translation

Au-delà de la mer

Quelque part au-delà de la mer
 Quelque part m'attendant
 Mon amour se tient debout sur le sable doré
 Et regarde les navires qui s'en vont naviguer

Quelque part au-delà de la mer
 Elle est là (et) me guette
 Si je pouvais voler aussi haut que les oiseaux
 Je cinglerais alors droit vers ses bras
 (Qu'elle soit) bien plus loin que l'étoile,
 (Qu'elle soit) bien plus près que la lune
 Je sais sans aucun doute
 (Que) mon cœur me mènera vite à destination

Nous nous rencontrerons au-delà du rivage
 Nous nous embrasserons comme auparavant
 Nous serons heureux au-delà de la mer
 Et plus jamais je n'irai naviguer.

The obvious differences between the original lyrics and their translation hold in the subject *per se* of the song and in the atmosphere the words chosen in English convey to the listener. The French song describes in lyrical terms the beauty of the sea. The poet expresses his everlasting love for a sea he idealizes: "The sea has sheens of silver that change under the rain In the summer sky, it merges Its whitecaps (literally, its white sheep) With angels that are so pure. " While the English version focuses on love someone feels toward the object of his affection that lies somewhere beyond the sea, wherever that may be. This could even be at a pinch considered a sailor song. The spirit of the song is therefore totally different. Unfortunately, the intense and quasi-hypnotic effect of the lyrics combined with the very special treatment of the music (orchestra and chorus taking the listener into a crescendo) is completely lost in the US interpretation that gives the song a very effective swing arrangement that makes it one of the liveliest songs ever sung. We can notice in the English version how an hymn to the sea has been transformed into a love song "My heart will lead me there soon We'll kiss just as before" The subject has been somewhat trivialized, put down to earth but in a most efficient way thanks to the well known process that consists of drowning the lyrics into a sea of musical accompaniment whose treatment only American arrangers seem capable of. The words become therefore mere syllables whose virtue helps the music to carry the listener away in a rhythmical farandole. Poetry yields to cadence.

Song 3 Les Feuilles mortes (Dead Leaves)

Lyrics Jacques Prévert
 Music Joseph Kosma 1946
 Sung by Yves Montand 1950

Oh! je voudrais tant que tu te souviennes
 Des jours heureux où nous étions amis
 En ce temps-là la vie était plus belle,
 Et le soleil plus brûlant qu'aujourd'hui
 Les feuilles mortes se ramassent à la pelle
 Tu vois, je n'ai pas oublié...
 Les feuilles mortes se ramassent à la pelle,
 Les souvenirs et les regrets aussi
 Et le vent du nord les emporte
 Dans la nuit froide de l'oubli.
 Tu vois, je n'ai pas oublié
 La chanson que tu me chanta.

C'est une chanson qui nous ressemble
 Toi, tu m'aimais et je t'aimais
 Et nous vivions tous deux ensemble
 Toi qui m'aimais, moi qui t'aimais
 Mais la vie sépare ceux qui s'aiment
 Tout doucement, sans faire de bruit
 Et la mer efface sur le sable
 Les pas des amants désunis.

(The 3rd verse, not sung in French has been omitted)

English version

Lyrics Johnny Mercer 1956
 Sung by Mel Tormé

Autumn Leaves

The falling leaves
 Drift by the window
 The autumn leaves
 Of red and gold

I see your lips
 The summer kisses
 The sunburned hands

I used to hold

Since you went away
The days grow long
And soon I'll hear
Old winter's song

But I miss you most of all
My darling
When autumn
Start to fall

Translation

Les feuilles d'automne

Les feuilles qui tombent
S'amoncellent devant la fenêtre
Les feuilles d'automne
Rouges et or

Je vois tes lèvres
Que l'été embrasse
(Et) les mains brûlées par le soleil
Que j'avais l'habitude de tenir

Depuis que
Les jours s'étirent
Et j'entendrai bientôt
La chanson du vieil hiver

Mais c'est toi qui me manques le plus
Ma chérie
Quand les feuilles d'automne
Commencent à tomber

The apparent simplicity of the English version, particularly rich in its evocative power thanks to the efficacious repetition of the leitmotiv of lost love, arrives to equal its model in which the number of images is more numerous. The purely poetic quality of both versions is practically equivalent.

The French text refers to a barely more varied stock of metaphors: "The winter wind carries the leaves away In the cold night of oblivion" and "The sea erases on the sand The footprints of lovers who parted".

Both versions refer to a love that was strong and deep, rich and unforgettable. The intensity with which it was felt contributes to make its end all the more regrettable. In the French version, it is clearly explained that leaves symbolize regrets and memories that pile up, slowly taken away by the wind of time as oblivion takes its toll. Regrets of lost love are exemplified in the expression “à la pelle” which literally translates as “with a shovel”, meaning there are so many leaves-regrets-memories that one could use a shovel to remove them. Only the northward wind – an image of time and death - succeeds into making us forget the shining warmth of love that is blown away in the cold night of oblivion (another image of death). It is hard to tell if the split up is due to death but it has been slow and peaceful as indicated in the French version “ Life separates those who love each other Very softly, without making a noise” The same feeling of regret is expressed in the English version by another powerful image: the lips and hands of the loved one are dearly missed. A difference between the two versions is to be found in the attitude of the person whose heart is so deeply hurt. The French version clearly looks at the past, of what happened before the break up. Verbs are definitely in the past tense while the English version delves more into the future, elaborating subtly on what will happen that will anyway not be in the least happier than in the original version. We are left with two beautifully crafted texts that let us no hope, the last sparkles of a dying love being carried away by winter or wind.

Song 4 Que reste-t-il de nos amours (What Remains of Our Loves ?)

Music and lyrics Charles Trenet
(Théo Chauliac contributed to the music) 1942

Ce soir le vent qui frappe à ma porte
Me parle des amours mortes
Devant le feu qui s'éteint
Ce soir c'est une chanson d'automne
Dans la maison qui frissonne
Et je pense aux jours lointains

[Que reste-t-il de nos amours
Que reste-t-il de ces beaux jours
Une photo, vieille photo
De ma jeunesse
Que reste-t-il des billets doux
Des mois d'avril, des rendez-vous
Un souvenir qui me poursuit
Sans cesse

Bonheur fané, cheveux au vent
 Baisers volés, rêves mouvants
 Que reste-t-il de tout cela
 Dites-le-moi

Un petit village, un vieux clocher
 Un paysage si bien caché
 Et dans un nuage le cher visage
 De mon passé] Refrain

Quelques mots les mots tendres qu'on murmure
 Les caresses les plus pures
 Les serments au fond des bois
 Les fleurs qu'on retrouve dans un livre
 Dont le parfum vous enivre
 Se sont envolés pourquoi?

Refrain

English version

Lyrics Lee Wilson

Sung by Frank Sinatra 1964

I Wish You Love

Goodbye, no use leading with our chins, this is where our story ends,
 Never lovers, ever friends.
 Goodbye, let our hearts call it a day, but before you walk away,
 I sincerely want to say.

I wish you bluebirds in the spring, to give your heart a song to sing,
 And then a kiss, but more than this, I wish you love.
 And if you like, lemonade to cool you in some lazy glade,
 I wish you health, and more than wealth, I wish you love.
 My breaking heart and I agree that you and I could never be,
 So with my best, my very best, I set you free.
 I wish you shelter from the storm, a cozy fire to keep you warm,
 (But) most of all, when snowflakes fall, I wish you love.

Translation

Je te souhaite (beaucoup) d'amour

Adieu, inutile de protester, c'est ici que s'achève nos relations,
 Plus amants, (mais) amis à jamais.
 Adieu, laissons nos cœurs abandonner mais avant que tu t'en ailles,
 Je veux te dire sincèrement (que)

Je te souhaite des oiseaux bleus au printemps pour donner à ton cœur
 une chanson à chanter
 Et puis un baiser, mais d'avantage que ceci, je te souhaite (beaucoup)
 d'amour.
 Et si tu le désires, de la limonade pour te rafraîchir dans quelque
 paresseuse clairière,
 Je te souhaite (une bonne) santé, et plus que de la richesse, je te souhaite
 (beaucoup)

d'amour.
 Mon cœur brisé et moi sommes d'accord que toi et moi, ça n'aurait
 jamais marché
 Alors, avec mes meilleurs (souhaits), je te rends la liberté.
 Je te souhaite un abri pour l'orage, un feu chaleureux pour te garder
 (bien) au chaud
 (Mais) surtout, lorsque tombent les flocons de neige, je te souhaite
 (beaucoup) d'amour.

One of Trenet most beautifully crafted songs, it makes a hit at every hearing thanks to the quality of the lyrics and the appeal of the music. The words chosen speak indeed to the heart. The themes concerned are universal. The song was fated to be a success. We encounter once more a very good English lyric that is unfortunately little related to the original theme, is nevertheless very powerful in its evocation of lost love. In the English text, two lovers separate without fighting and one of them wishes the other all the best. Lemonade, bluebirds, a shelter, the warmth of a fire, health, wealth and above all, love. The choice of words underlines the practical value of the wish. The story that is told is the failure of a relationship between two people. Love fails, only friendship remains. This is a sad song full of lost love and remote hope.

The original song differs very much from its counterpart. Its theme deals with the past, old age and death. It is not one love that is concerned here but all past love stories that are swept away by the wind of time. "This evening, the wind that knocks at my door Talks to me of dead loves. In front

of the fire that dies out (in the hearth)" Hope is no more. Nothing remains to look forward to. The present is eaten by death that comes fast. Happiness lies in the past and that is where we ought to look to find memories of long gone love "This evening there is an autumn song In the shivering house And I think of distant days / days gone by" The poet expresses in a few desperate words the passing of time, the oblivion of every remaining trace of our passage on earth and even the disappearance of our memories "What does remain of our love What remains of these beautiful days . . . What remains of these love letters Of these April months, of these rendezvous (love encounters) . The sweet words that are whispered The purest caresses The oaths deep in the woods The flowers we find again in a book . Are all gone, why?" This desperate question is first answered in a most tragic way (what remains is) "A picture, old picture Of my youth A memory that haunts me Ceaselessly Faded happiness, hair in the wind Stolen kisses, moving (fuzzy, vague) dreams" then in a less desperate but more idealistic way (what remains is) "A small village, an old clock tower A landscape hidden so well And in a cloud, the dear face Of my past" The face in the cloud draws an idealized representation of youth and happiness that are now lost forever. The village and its clock tower are both in some hidden landscape that can only exist in our fading memory. All soon disappear and nothing remains. We must not forget this song was written in the middle of the war when France was ravaged by hunger, fear and despair. The idealized period - "these beautiful days" - the song refers to are naturally the years preceding the war.

Memories of happiness, of careless youth, love and peace, time spent to pick flowers and flirts are universal themes. They are all present in this song whose impact is therefore understandably larger than its English version that deals uniquely with the end of a love affair.

Song 5 Non, je ne regrette rien (No, I Don't Regret Anything)

Lyrics . Michel Vaucaire

Music . Charles Dumont 1960

Non! Rien de rien ...
 Non ! Je ne regrette rien
 Ni le bien qu'on m'a fait
 Ni le mal tout ça m'est bien égal !

Non ! Rien de rien ...
 Non ! Je ne regrette rien...
 C'est payé, balayé, oublié
 Je me fous du passé!

Avec mes souvenirs
 J'ai allumé le feu
 Mes chagrins, mes plaisirs
 Je n'ai plus besoin d'eux !

Balayés les amours
 Et tous leurs trémolos
 Balayés pour toujours
 Je repars à zéro ...

Non ! Rien de rien ...
 Non ! Je ne regrette rien ...
 Ni le bien, qu'on m'a fait
 Ni le mal, tout ça m'est bien égal !

Non ! Rien de rien ...
 Non Je ne regrette rien ...
 Car ma vie, car mes joies
 Aujourd'hui, ça commence avec toi !

English Version

Lyrics Hai David
 Sung by Shirley Bassey 1965

No regrets
 No, no regrets
 No, we will have no regrets
 As you leave, I can say
 Love was king, but for only a day
 No, no regrets
 No, let there be no regrets
 Why explain
 Why delay
 Don't go away
 Simply call it a day
 Pleading moments we knew
 I will set them apart
 Ev'ry word, ev'ry sigh
 Will be burned in my heart
 But no tears will be shed
 There'll be no one to blame
 Let it always be said
 We attempted what came

No, no regrets
No, we will have no regrets
As you leave, I can say
Love was king, but for only a day
Life still goes on
Yes, even though love has gone
One last kiss
Shrug and sigh
No Regrets even though it's goodbye
Translation
Pas de regrets
Non, pas de regrets
Non, nous n'aurons pas de regrets
Comme tu pars
Je peux dire
(Que) l'amour a régné
Mais seulement un jour

Non, pas de regrets
Non, qu'il n'y ait pas de regrets
Pourquoi expliquer
Pourquoi retarder
Ne pars pas
Finissons-en simplement

Nous avons connu des moments où nous nous supplions
Je les mettrai de côté
Chaque mot, chaque soupir
Sera brûlé en mon cœur
Mais aucune larme ne sera versée
Personne ne sera à blâmer
Qu'il soit toujours dit
Que nous avons tout essayé

Non, pas de regrets
Non, nous n'aurons pas de regrets
Comme tu pars
Je peux dire
(Que) l'amour a régné
Mais seulement un jour

La vie continue quand même
Oui, même si l'amour a disparu
Un dernier baiser
Un haussement d'épaules et un soupir
Pas de regrets
Bien que ce soit adieu.

In the English version of the song, we see once again the theme of the peaceful end of a love affair. Reason is on an equal footing with love. Two lovers try their best at saving their relationship but fail to do so as they go each other their separate way. The harshest instants expressed in the song seem to be those "pleading moments" when each one tries to prolong the survival of the couple, a hopeless attempt as the relationship finally fails. Reason is repeatedly called for to mask the last remains of love. "Why explain. Why delay. Simply call it a day." The conclusion is clear: this love affair is over.

Likewise, the French original lyrics express the end of something but instead of the ending of a simple love affair, what is expressed is of a much grander scale. Wording chosen to formulate what is not regretted is rather trenchant: "I regret nothing. Neither all that was kind that befell me. Nor (all) that was painful. I don't give it a damn!... It is paid, swept, forgotten. I don't care for the past!" These words are a broad hint at the phenomenon that is dramatically taking place: a complete reversal of attitude towards life. First, the existence of the past is downright denied. "I started a fire. With my memories. My sorrows, my pleasures. I don't need them anymore!" Even love and its best memories are reduced to nothing: "Swept are (past) loves and all their attractiveness. Swept (are they) forever." This process of de-structuring prepares the ground for a clean-cut, brand-new way of life, expressed in the crudest words: (from now on) "I start again from scratch." And finally, contradictorily to what we expected, the song arrives to a contrapuntal conclusion expressed in the last two lines. "My life, my joys (starting from) Today, they begin with you!" So, a song that seems so desperate, where all appears to be dumped in the swamps of oblivion can by a surprise twist lead the way to a new dawn of hope. This is a perfect example of what could be called a *phoenix song*: life, hope and love are born again from the ashes of the past.

Song 6 Clopin-clopat (Hobbling)

Lyrics Pierre Dudan

Music Bruno Coquatrix 1947

Je suis né avec des yeux d'ange
 Et des fossettes au creux des joues
 J'ai perdu mes joues et mes langes
 Et j'ai cassé tous mes joujoux.
 Je m'suis regardé dans un' glace
 Et j'ai vu que j'avais rêvé
 Je m'suis dit faudra bien qu'j'm'y fasse...
 Tout finira par arriver...

[Et je m'en vais clopin-clopat
 Dans le soleil et dans le vent,
 De temps en temps le cœur chancelle...
 Y a des souvenirs qui s'amoncellent...
 Et je m'en vais clopin-clopat
 En promenant mon cœur d'enfant...
 Comme s'envole une hirondelle...
 La vie s'enfuit à tire-d'aile...
 Ça fait si mal au cœur d'enfant
 Qui s'en va seul, clopin-clopat...] Refrain

Tout l'amour que l'on a vu naître...
 Tes lèvres douces, parfum de miel...
 Nos deux fronts contre la fenêtre...
 Nos regards perdus dans le ciel...
 Le train noir hurlant dans la gare...
 Le monstrueux désert des rues...
 Tes mots d'adieu, tes mots bizarres...
 Depuis dix mois, tu n'écris plus...

[Refrain]

English version

Lyrics Alex Kramer, Joan Whitney
 Sung by Frank Sinatra

Comme Ci Comme Ca

I always say, comme ci comme ca,
 And go my way, comme ci comme ca,
 Since you are gone, nothing excites me.
 Since you are gone, no one delights me.
 And I go on, comme ci comme ca,
 Midnight till dawn, comme ci comme ca,
 But should we meet, that would excite me,
 And should you smile, that would delight me,
 I'd live again to love again,
 But until then, comme ci comme ca.

It seems my friends have been complaining
 They say that I've been acting rude.
 But I have never liked explaining,
 Which may explain my attitude.
 comme ci comme ca,
 comme ci comme ca,

Since you are gone, nothing excites me.
 Since you are gone, no one delights me.
 hmm, hmm,
 tira, rirum.
 But should we meet, that would excite me,
 And should you smile, that would delight me,
 I'd live again to love again,
 But until then, comme ci comme ça.

Translation

Comme ci comme ça

Je dis toujours, comme ci comme ça
 Et tu t'en vas, comme ci comme ça
 Depuis que tu es partie, plus rien ne m'enthousiasme
 Depuis que tu es partie, personne ne m'enchante
 Et je continue, comme ci comme ça
 De minuit jusqu'à l'aube, comme ci comme ça
 Mais si nous nous rencontrions, cela me ravirait
 Et si tu souriais, cela m'enchanterait
 Je revivrais pour aimer à nouveau
 Mais d'ici là, comme ci comme ça

Il semble que mes amis se sont plaints
 Ils disent que j'ai agi sans manières
 Mais je n'ai jamais aimé m'expliquer,
 Ce qui peut justifier mon attitude
 Comme ci comme ça
 Comme ci comme ça

Depuis que tu es partie, rien ne m'enthousiasme
 Depuis que tu es partie, personne ne m'enchante
 Mais si nous nous rencontrions, cela me ravirait
 Et si tu souriais, cela m'enchanterait
 Je revivrais pour aimer à nouveau
 Mais d'ici là, comme ci comme ça.

The French song deals with two themes : youth and love. The introductory verse is expressed in a somewhat symbolic way whose meaning is rather difficult to handle. The impressionist treatment of the first lines creates an atmosphere of fuzziness that is amplified by an ambiguous choice of wording
 "I was born with angel eyes And dimples in the middle of the cheeks I lost my cheeks and my nappies And I broke all my toys I looked at myself in a mirror And I saw I had dreamt I told myself I'll have to get used to it. Everything will happen (to me) at the end. "

Youth appears as nothing but a dream. Its unreal character is underlined by the physical description displayed in the first two lines. The baby looks like an angel but do angels exist? Are dimples in the middle of the cheeks an indication the baby is well-fed or starving? This is hard to tell. Why has the baby lost his cheeks, has the man he became grown thin-faced? Does the fact he puts himself in front of a mirror really help to understand he had a dream? All these terms are quite ambiguous. The conclusion holds in the last two lines come what may, he has to get used to reality. According to the general tone of the entire verse, we can imagine what he expects from life will not be all peaches, cream and honey. And indeed, the second verse, that serves as chorus, carries us to the main development of the song – the apparent cruelty of life. The first line of the second verse gives the song its title. *Clopin-clopant* means limping; an expression that describes the way a lame person walks. The alliteration of this adverbial locution creates in our mind the image of a vagrant hobbling along some dusty countryside road, his face ravaged by sun and wind. The Chaplin-esque nature of this scene sets the tone for the entire song. In rearranging the lines of the second verse, we can find the logical development of the central idea of the song – life doesn't make gifts. "I go away hobbling along Taking along my young heart (the heart of the child I was) As a swallow flies off Life flies away in a flurry of wings From time to time the heart staggers Memories accumulate (in my mind) That hurt so much the heart of the child Who wanders alone, hobbling along " We clearly picture a man still young who wanders aimlessly about on the roads, struck by hurtful memories that surface in his mind and who discerns still far away from him the approaching shadows of death.

Except for its creator, all subsequent interpreters of this song stop here. The third verse (followed by the chorus) introduces the second theme of the song – love – in a similarly dramatic mode. It can be divided in two; the first four lines being a romantic description of what could very well be young and innocent love " All the love whose birth we have witnessed. Your sweet lips, smell of honey . Our two brows against the window pane. Our looks lost in the sky " seem idealized memories of happy days gone by. The four lines that follow contrast violently with the somewhat rosy preceding description "The black train wailing in the station The monstrous desert of the streets Your last good bye (literally, your words of good bye), your odd words For ten months, you haven't written. ." All this seems to contribute to prevent the emergence of the slightest hint of hope. Interestingly, only the second verse has been chosen by the American lyricists who build upon the feelings of sadness a song that comes to contradict the pessimistic characteristics of the original one. The opening of the door of hope is realized thanks to the process that consists in trivializing the situation. As is clear in the English text,

a love affair has gone awry probably because one of the partners misbehaved. Both have gone their way. The culprit regrets – though a little late – being alone and craves for a chance to make up.

It is to be noted that the English title is not a translation. Another French title was given to this song for some obscure reason and we end up with an English song whose title is still in French although not identical to the original. The meaning of *Comme ci comme ça* (or *couci couça* in short) is *so, so* in English.

Song 7 Ne me quitte pas (Don't Leave Me)

Lyrics and music Jacques Brel 1959

Ne me quitte pas
 Il faut oublier
 Tout peut s'oublier
 Qui s'enfuit déjà
 Oublier le temps
 Des malentendus
 Et le temps perdu
 A savoir comment
 Oublier ces heures
 Qui tuaient parfois
 A coups de pourquoi
 Le cœur du bonheur
 Ne me quitte pas
 Ne me quitte pas
 Ne me quitte pas
 Ne me quitte pas

Moi je t'offrirai
 Des perles de pluie
 Venues de pays
 Où il ne pleut pas
 Je creuserai la terre
 Jusqu'après ma mort
 Pour couvrir ton corps
 D'or et de lumière
 Je ferai un domaine
 Où l'amour sera roi
 Où l'amour sera loi
 Où tu seras reine
 Ne me quitte pas
 Ne me quitte pas

Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas

Ne me quitte pas
Je t'inventerai
Des mots insensés
Que tu comprendras
Je te parlerai
De ces amants-là
Qui ont vu deux fois
Leurs cœurs s'embraser
Je te raconterai
L'histoire de ce roi
Mort de n'avoir pas
Pu te rencontrer
Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas

On a vu souvent
Rejaillir le feu
D'un ancien volcan
Qu'on croyait trop vieux
Il est paraît-il
Des terres brûlées
Donnant plus de blé
Qu'un meilleur avril
Et quand vient le soir
Pour qu'un ciel flamboie
Le rouge et le noir
Ne s'épousent-ils pas
Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas

Ne me quitte pas
Je ne vais plus pleurer
Je ne vais plus parler
Je me cacherai là
A te regarder
Danser et sourire
Et à t'écouter
Chanter et puis rire

Laisse-moi devenir
 L'ombre de ton ombre
 L'ombre de ta main
 L'ombre de ton chien
 Ne me quitte pas
 Ne me quitte pas
 Ne me quitte pas
 Ne me quitte pas.

English version

Lyrics : Rod McKuen

Sung by Shirley Bassey in 1967 and by Frank Sinatra in 1969

If You Go Away

If you go away on this summer day
 Then you might as well take the sun away
 All the birds that flew in the summer sky
 When our love was new and our hearts were high
 When the day was young and the night was long
 And the moon stood still for the night bird's song
 If you go away, if you go away
 If you go away, if you go away

But if you stay, I'll make you a day
 Like no day has been, or will be again
 We'll sail the sun, we'll ride on the rain
 We'll talk to the trees and worship the wind

Then if you go, I'll understand
 Leave me just enough love to fill up my hand
 If you go away, if you go away
 If you go away, if you go away

If you go away, as I know you must
 You must tell the world to stop turning
 Till you return again, if you ever do
 For what good is love without loving you
 Can I tell you now, as you turn to go
 I'll be dying slowly till the next hello
 If you go away, if you go away
 If you go away, if you go away

But if you stay, I'll make you a night
 Like no night has been, or will be again
 I'll sail on your smile, I'll ride on your touch
 I'll talk to your eyes that I love so much
 But if you go, I won't cry
 Though the good is gone from the word goodbye
 If you go away, if you go away
 If you go away, if you go away

If you go away, as I know you must
 There'll be nothing left in the world to trust
 Just an empty room, full of empty space
 Like the empty look I see on your face
 I'd have been the shadow of your dog
 If I thought it might have kept me by your side
 If you go away, if you go away
 If you go away, please don't go away

Translation

Si tu t'en vas

Si tu t'en vas en ce jour d'été
 Alors tu pourrais aussi bien enlever le soleil
 Tous les oiseaux qui volaient dans le ciel d'été
 Quand notre amour était neuf et nos cœurs planaient
 Quand le jour commençait et la nuit était longue
 Et (quand) la lune s'immobilisait pendant le chant de l'oiseau de nuit
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas

Mais si tu restes, je ferai pour toi un jour
 Comme il n'y en eût jamais, ou comme jamais plus il n'y aura
 Nous îéverons la voile sur le soleil, nous chevaucherons la pluie
 Nous parlerons aux arbres et vénérerons le vent
 Alors si tu pars, je comprendrai
 Laisse-moi juste assez d'amour que je puisse tenir dans la main
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas

Si tu pars, comme je sais que tu dois
 Tu dois dire au monde d'arrêter de tourner
 Jusqu'à ce que tu reviennes, si jamais ça t'arrive
 Car à quoi bon l'amour sans toi
 Puis-je te dire maintenant, comme tu te retournes pour partir

Que je vais mourir lentement jusqu'au prochain bonjour
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas

Mais si tu restes, je ferai pour toi une nuit
 Comme il n'y en eût jamais, ou comme jamais plus il n'y aura
 Je naviguerai sur ton sourire, je monterai sur le toucher (de tes doigts)
 Je parlerai à tes yeux que j'aime tant
 Mais si tu pars, je ne pleurerai pas
 Quoique tout le bien soit parti à cause du mot 'au revoir'
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas
 Si tu t'en vas, si tu t'en vas
 Si tu pars, comme je sais que tu dois
 Rien ne restera au monde que l'on puisse espérer
 Rien qu'une pièce vide remplie d'espace vide
 Pareille au regard vide que je vois sur ton visage
 Je serais l'ombre de ton chien
 Si je pensais que cela me permettrait de rester à tes côtés
 Si tu t'en allais, si tu t'en allais
 Si tu t'en allais, si tu t'en allais

The parallelism between the two versions is apparent as the general content expresses basically the same ideas. One image in Jacques Brel lyrics has even been simply translated in English. "Let me become The shadow of your dog" becomes. "I'd have been the shadow of your dog" Allusions to wind, rain, sky, death, evening/night, cry/tears are present in both songs. The titles are almost alike *Don't leave me* and *If you go away* The use of metaphors is as effective in both texts. Their poetic evocation is very powerful. "We'll sail the sun, we'll ride on the rain I'll sail on your smile, I'll ride on your touch" are lines that enrich poetry thanks to their evocative effect. In the original text "I'll offer you Pearls made of rain Coming from lands Where no rain falls I'll dig the ground Till after I die To cover your body With gold and light. I'll invent for you Meaningless words You'll understand" are expressions of a new standard set in songwriting. Both songs evolve around two facets of the same golden coin what will happen if "She" goes away and what will happen if "She" comes back.

In the English version, the future looks particularly grim in the first case " You must tell the world to stop turning I'll be dying slowly till the next hello There'll be nothing left in the world to trust" The world dies and so does the memory of the loved one " (There'll be nothing left.) Just an empty room, full of empty space, Like the empty look I see on your face" The situation seems hopeless unless as indicated in case two "She" comes back. In such case, love will sparkle again as in a gigantic firework in which

sun, rain, smile and touch will participate. The original lyrics on the other hand don't mention the failure of the hopeless prayers and this is where the two texts differ. The French song is already so desperate in its expression that one can only wonder - would "She" condescend to remain - if it would do him any good at all. The figure of this begging man ready to dig the ground till after his death, who is perhaps already "dead for not" having had the chance "to meet" her, who " . will not cry anymore Who will not speak anymore Who will hide there. ", who will go as low as to ask her "To let (him) become The shadow of (her) shadow The shadow of (her) hand The shadow of (her) dog" seems to condemn him to a perfectly miserable life. The image of the woman becomes here that of a cold-hearted she-monster, which is quite in line with many a song of Jacques Brel. While the English version presents in a balanced way the positive and negative consequences of what would result if "She" went away or not, the French text puts more emphasis on the negative side, displaying in the process an ambiguous impression in which a certain amount of masochism is perhaps not completely absent.

Song 8 Et maintenant (And Now)

Lyrics : Pierre Delanoë

Music Gilbert Bécaud 1961

Et maintenant que vais-je faire
De tout ce temps que sera ma vie
De tous ces gens qui m'indiffèrent
Maintenant que tu es partie

Toutes ces nuits, pourquoi pour qui
Et ce matin qui revient pour rien
Ce cœur qui bat, pour qui, pourquoi
Qui bat trop fort, trop fort

Et maintenant que vais-je faire
Vers quel néant glissera ma vie
Tu m'as laissé la terre entière
Mais la terre sans toi c'est petit

Vous, mes amis, soyez gentils
Vous savez bien que l'on n'y peut rien
Même Paris crève d'ennui
Toutes ses rues me tuent

Et maintenant que vais-je faire
 Je vais en rire pour ne plus pleurer
 Je vais brûler des nuits entières
 Au matin je te haïrai

Et puis un soir dans mon miroir
 Je verrai bien la fin du chemin
 Pas une fleur et pas de pleurs
 Au moment de l'adieu

Je n'ai vraiment plus rien à faire
 Je n'ai vraiment plus rien ...

English version

Lyrics Carl Sigman

Sung by Frank Sinatra and Barbra Streisand 1966

What Now My Love

What now my love, now that you've left me
 How can I live through another day
 Watching my dreams turn to ashes
 And my hopes turn to bits of clay

Once I could see, once I could feel
 Now I am numb, I've become unreal
 I walk the night, without a goal
 Stripped of my heart and my soul

What now my love, now that it's over
 I feel the world falling all around me
 Here come the stars, tumbling around me
 There's the sky, where the sea should be

What now my love, now that you're gone
 I'd be a fool to go on and on
 No one would care, no one would cry
 If I should live if I should live or die

What now my love, now there is nothing
 Only my last, my last good-bye

Translation

Et maintenant mon amour

Et maintenant mon amour, maintenant que tu m'as quitté
 Comment puis-je connaître un autre jour
 En voyant mes rêves se réduire en cendres
 Et mes espoirs se transformer en petits bouts d'argile

Autrefois, je pouvais voir, autrefois, je pouvais sentir
 Maintenant, je suis engourdi, je suis devenu irréel
 Je me promène sans but la nuit
 Privé de mon cœur et de mon âme

Et maintenant mon amour, maintenant que c'est fini
 Je sens le monde se rapprocher de moi
 Voici venir les étoiles qui chutent autour de moi
 Et voilà le ciel à la place de la mer

Et maintenant mon amour, maintenant que tu es parti
 Je serais folle de continuer encore
 Personne ne se soucierait, personne ne pleurerait
 Que je vive, que je vive ou que je meure

Et maintenant mon amour, maintenant il n'y a (plus) rien
 (Que) mon dernier, mon dernier adieu.

The English and French lyrics are this time so alike that it is difficult to find what could differentiate them. The same progression of an ever-increasingly heavy atmosphere of despair from first to last line takes the listener into a swirl of regrets and suffering in a shooting crescendo that will inevitably lead to a dramatic conclusion. Only the music brings a somewhat different depth to the otherwise very similar tone of each song. The French version is carried away in an irresistibly enthralling bolero while in the English version, splendidly helped by a very swinging rhythmic section, the singer takes upon himself to deliver the text in the most effective way. The words of both versions are so close to each other they could even be interchanged, that is, lines of the English text inserted in the French version – provided they are translated – or vice-versa. This time, the English lyrics express sadness metaphorically in a broader way – the images of fear come directly from archetypical expressions humans seem to present universally – “I feel the world falling around me Here come the stars, tumbling around me There's the sky, where the sea should be” while the French original text keeps at times a more personal turn: “And now, what shall I do I'll laugh (of it) in order not to cry I'll burn entire nights In the morning, I'll hate you ” The diversity in expressing despair is such that

this song could very well appear as the epitome of *chanson noire*. Hope is completely absent, as the following examples extracted from the English (E) and the French (F) versions will demonstrate (E) “ How can I live through another day Watching my dreams turn to ashes I walk the night, without a goal Stripped of my heart and my soul” and (F) “ .And now what shall I do Towards what nothingness will my life drift (literally slip) All these nights, for what, for whom And this morning that comes back for nothing This heart that beats for what, for whom That beats too much, too much (literally too strongly)” This downfall to hell of a soul so deeply hurt is exemplified in the following line (E) “Now I am numb, I’ve become unreal”, signifying it crosses the border of consciousness to loose itself in another world. Another milestone is then reached in this *descensus ad inferno* (E) “ I’d be a fool to go on and on No one would care, no one would cry If I should live or die” and (F) “And then an evening in my mirror I’ll see the end of the road Not one flower and no tears At the moment of (the last) goodbye” The crashing of the soul at the bottom of the abyss is delivered by the following lines (E) “ now there is nothing Only my last goodbye” and (F) “ There is really nothing more I can do (literally I have really nothing more to do) There is really nothing more ” The sentence in (F) ends abruptly; that helps bring about an additional indication death is both irremediable and imminent. Never has a song been better translated as well in form and content.

Song 9 Comme d’habitude (As Usual)

Lyrics and music Gilles Thibault, Jacques Revaux, Claude François 1968

Je me lève et je te bouscule
 Tu ne te réveilles pas comme d’habitude
 Sur toi je remonte le drap
 J’ai peur que tu aies froid comme d’habitude
 Ma main caresse tes cheveux
 Presque malgré moi comme d’habitude
 Mais toi tu me tournes le dos
 Comme d’habitude

Alors je m’habille très vite
 Je sors de la chambre comme d’habitude
 Tout seul je bois mon café
 Je suis en retard comme d’habitude
 Sans bruit je quitte la maison
 Tout est gris dehors comme d’habitude

J'ai froid, je relève mon col
Comme d'habitude

Comme d'habitude, toute la journée
Je vais jouer à faire semblant
Comme d'habitude je vais sourire
Comme d'habitude je vais même rire
Comme d'habitude, enfin je vais vivre
Comme d'habitude

Et puis le jour s'en ira
Moi je reviendrai comme d'habitude
Toi, tu seras sortie
Pas encore rentrée comme d'habitude
Tout seul j'irai me coucher
■ Dans ce grand lit froid comme d'habitude
Mes larmes, je les cacherais
Comme d'habitude

Comme d'habitude, même la nuit
Je vais jouer à faire semblant
Comme d'habitude tu rentreras
Comme d'habitude je t'attendrai
Comme d'habitude tu me souriras
Comme d'habitude

Comme d'habitude tu te déshabilleras
Comme d'habitude tu te coucheras
Comme d'habitude on s'embrassera
Comme d'habitude

Comme d'habitude on fera semblant
Comme d'habitude on fera l'amour
Comme d'habitude on fera semblant

English version

Lyrics · Paul Anka
 Sung by Frank Sinatra 1968

My Way

And now, the end is near
 And so I face the final curtain
 My friend, I'll say it clear
 I'll state my case, of which I'm certain

I've lived a life that's full
 I traveled each and ev'ry highway
 And more, much more than this,
 I did it my way

Regrets, I've had a few
 But then again, too few to mention
 I did what I had to do
 And saw it through without exemption
 I planned each charted course,
 Each careful step along the byway
 But more, much more than this,
 I did it my way

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew
 When I bit off more than I could chew
 But through it all, when there was doubt
 I ate it up and spit it out
 I faced it all and I stood tall
 And did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed and cried
 I've had my fill, my share of losing
 And now, as tears subside,
 I find it all so amusing

To think I did all that
 And may I say, not in a shy way,
 "Oh, no, oh, no, not me,
 I did it my way"

For what is a man, what has he got?
 If not himself, then he has naught
 To say the things he truly feels
 And not the words of one who kneels

The record shows I took the blows
And did it my way!

Translation

A ma manière

Et maintenant, la fin est proche
Et ainsi je fais face au dernier rideau
Mon ami, je le dirai clairement
J'exposerai mon cas, ce dont je suis certain

J'ai vécu une vie bien remplie
J'ai parcouru toutes les routes
Mais d'avantage, bien d'avantage que ça
Je l'ai fait à ma manière

Des regrets, j'en ai eu quelques-uns
Mais encore, trop peu pour les mentionner
J'ai fait ce que je devais faire
Et j'ai tout achevé sans exemption

J'ai fait le plan de chaque parcours sur la carte
(De) chaque pas prudent sur les chemins écartés
Mais d'avantage, bien d'avantage que ça
Je l'ai fait à ma manière

Oui, il y a eu des fois, je suis sûr que vous le saviez
Où j'ai eu les yeux plus grands que le ventre
Mais même dans ces moments-là, quand j'avais des doutes
J'ai mordu sur ma chique
J'ai fait face et j'ai tenu bon
Et je l'ai fait à ma manière

J'ai aimé, j'ai ri et pleuré
J'ai eu mon compte (et) ma part de pertes
Et maintenant que les larmes diminuent
Je trouve ça si amusant

Dire que j'ai fait tout ça
Et – puis-je me permettre de l'affirmer – sans avoir froid aux yeux
Non, oh ! non, pas moi
Je l'ai fait à ma manière

Car qu'est-ce qu'un homme, que possède-t-il ?
 Rien sinon lui-même
 Pour dire ce qu'il ressent véritablement
 Et non les mots de quelqu'un qui se met à genoux
 Le passé montre que j'ai encaissé les coups
 Et que je l'ai fait à ma manière !

Two very different topics are dealt with here. The French text could be considered as an hymn to everyday life – wake up, breakfast, work, coming home, going to bed, sex. The English version outstrips this unremarkable enumeration of daily routine and deals with a much more poignant content – the assessment of one's life.

In the original text, common life takes its toll after a certain period of time and habit seems all powerful. We see two people living in the same place but having little in common except the same bed to sleep in. Love lies rampant though, as can be found in the following lines : "I bring the sheets back up your body (literally – back up you) I'm afraid you'd be cold My hand caress you hair You'll smile at me We'll kiss " But habit stifles love in its pernicious embrace "I stand up and bump into you You don't wake up, as usual But you turn your back on me I drink my coffee all alone I'll come home You'll be out" The banality of existence is emphasized by the careful choice of wording "I get out of the bedroom I drink my coffee I'm late I leave home All is grey outside I'm cold " Love seems to be gone undercover "I'll go alone In this large cold bed I'll hide my tears" When the fire of love picks up again " You'll come home I'll wait for you You'll smile at me You'll take off your clothes We'll kiss We'll make love. " its warmth is immediately tempered by the unequivocal commentary "As usual, even during the night I'll pretend (literally I'm going to play to pretend/to fake) As usual, we'll pretend/fake" Love is likened to life as both are treated the same sad way " All day, I'll pretend As usual, I'll smile I'll even laugh Well, I'll live As usual" This pretense of love and normal appearance of common life is in fact a manifestation of what has caused it in the first place - habit - as is clearly stated in the song's original title *As usual*.

The contrast is all the more striking as the English version says quite the opposite of what the French song says. The rather passive and bowed-down attitude makes way for a dignified end-of-life assessment of one's courageous existence. There's no place for regret, self-pity or shame. Risks have been taken knowingly and their consequences accepted. We face here the description of someone who really deserves the title of Man "I've lived a life that's full I did what I had to do And saw it through without exemption I faced it all and I stood tall" Proud is one who faces death without fear, having laid a life

to the fullest and most of all, doing it just as it pleases him, that is, his way - as is evidently demonstrated in the last verse.

Song 10 Plein soleil (Right Under the Sun (Literally : Full Sun))

Lyrics Maurice Vidalin

Music Gilbert Bécaud 1964

Plein soleil
Plein soleil
Et la ville
Est toute
Engourdie
De sommeil
Au soleil
De midi

Je t'attends
Au soleil
Près de la fontaine
Attédie
Je t'attends
Au soleil
Mon amie

Dépêche-toi
Elle est jolie, ta robe
Je tends les bras
Vers cette fleur qui vole
J'ai mon vélo
Je t'emmène à la plage
C'est pas loin
Mais le joli voyage

Plein soleil
Plein soleil
Et le sable est chaud
Comme un lit
Un grand lit
Au soleil
Et youpi !
English version

Lyrics . Mark David
Sung by Frank Sinatra

Sand and Sea

Sand and sea, sea and sand
And the warm bright sun up there above
Summer days, happy days
With my love

Sand and sea, sea and sand
Hear the wings in flight of the lovely dove
Summer nights, happy nights
We're making love

The blinking stars are dancing on the whitecaps
Crazy stars, they've had too many nightcaps
I touch your hand, the hand that lies beside me
Paradise can't be far if you'll guide me

Sand and sea, sea and sand
And the angels sing from above
Happy days, happy nights
Making love

Translation

Sable et mer

Sable et mer, mer et sable
Et le soleil chaud (et) lumineux tout là-haut
Jours d'été, jours heureux
Avec mon amour

Sable et mer, mer et sable
Ecoute le vol des ailes de la jolie colombe
Nuits d'été, nuits heureuses
(Quand) nous faisons l'amour

Les étoiles qui clignotent dansent sur la crête des vagues
Folles étoiles, elles ont bu un verre de trop
Je touche ta main, ta main qui repose à côté de moi
Le paradis ne peut être loin si tu me guides

Sable et mer, mer et sable
 Et les anges chantent là-haut
 Jours heureux, nuits heureuses
 (A) faire l'amour

It seemed to us a good idea to erase the gloomy atmosphere of the previous songs by ending this article with a happy one. Both versions resemble each other in that they express almost the same theme using often similar terms so that their wording as well as their tone are very close. Sun, sand, sea/beach, day/noon, hand/arm. are words that convey an atmosphere of easy-going life emphasized by the specific use that is made of them the warm bright sun up above heats the bodies laying on the beach in the English text (E) as well as it makes the city drowse (literally it makes the city drowsy with sleep) in the French version (F); the sun heats the sand where lovers lay (E) and the beach looks like a large warm bed (F); the loved one is compared to a pretty dove that flies off (E) while she transforms herself into a fluttering flower (F); the lovers are reunited day and night (E) or right in the middle of the day (F); they hold out their arms (F) or touch their hands and make love (E). Even the "crazy stars" that shine on the crest of the waves (E) seem to allude to some reachable distance as they finally land on the beach in their satin-smooth shimmering while the lovers use a bicycle to go perhaps to the same nearby beach (F). Scenery and action are bathed in the same feeling of slow motion time-framed happiness that develops under the seemingly gentle care of the summer holidays' sun and of course, nowhere is there mention of any sunburn that will inevitably follow

Conclusion

As the examples above evidently demonstrate, it is not as easy as it looks to translate French lyrics into English - and the opposite way is not easier - as not only the words but also the tone of each song should be considered.

A reasonable proportion of the English songs respect both form and content of their French model. In these, both versions of the same songs present a relatively well balanced level of despair. *Pathos* is the key-word in "Mon homme" (song 1) where the illusory shadow of happiness appears in an undetermined distance. In "Les feuilles mortes" (song 3), the last traces of hope are lost in the wind of the past and are even repetitively erased by the ever-closing curtains of the sweeping sea. "Non, je ne regrette rien" (song 5) shows the annihilation of someone's past existence, life's good as bad episodes are all but rejected and forgotten, but by a surprise twist, it announces the emergence of new hope, and in "Ne me quitte pas" (song 7), despair is so

powerful it has been taken for granted; hope is indubitably unmentionable in this black-hole-of-a-song.

Other songs move away from the original content and go on describing another story. The English version of "Clopin-clopant" (song 6) diverges from its model in that it trivializes sadness as being due not to a desperate longing look at a once happy past but rather appearing only as a broken toy in the hands of someone else's taste for love.

Other songs still, using only the original music as a starting point for pure ear-enjoyment, respect the same general idea content wise, but change the lyrics to a point that the original story is not only unrecognizable but at times, completely different. "La mer" (song 2) is henceforth reduced from a grandiose hymn to the sea to a seven-o'clock-shower-swing-song; "Que reste-t-il de nos amours" (song 4) metamorphoses from a universal longing for happy childhood memories into an empty-bottle-of-Coca-Cola-on-the-beach love song and "Comme d'habitude" (song 9) very day-to-day description of mid-life existence becomes a powerful declaration of pride by someone having valiantly overcome all his life's ordeals. Few are the songs whose French and English texts are very closely related. "Et maintenant" (song 8) and its English version are such an example. Both songs show to perfection the progression of the fall of the human soul into an abyss of despair while "Plein soleil" (song 10), the only light-hearted song of the bunch expresses, as does its English counterpart, an everlasting feeling of love and lust.

It seems to us the main difference in the lyrics is often due firstly to the difficulty to translate exactly from one language to the other both the ideas and the precise terms in which they are expressed. This justifies what can sometimes appear as a simplification of the original text. And secondly, the contrast observed between two versions can result from a complete re-wording as lyricists want to express statements, emotions and feelings in their own terms and according to their own style.

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Charles TRENET 1993 Le Jardin extraordinaire, Les chansons de toute une vie, Le Livre de Poche, Paris.

All other French songs can be found on the following website www.paroles.net

All English lyrics except My Man and No Regrets can be found on the following website · www.thepeaches.com (Frank Sinatra).

For My Man, consult the following website <http://home.arcor.de> (Barbra Streisand)

For No Regrets, consult the following website · www.geocities.com (Sirley Bassey).

Explanation

The difference between Version 1 and Version 2.

Version presents the French songs then the English songs and their translation. There are no Notes and no Appendix.

Version 2 presents the English lyrics and their French translation next to them (sometimes in small script as place is consequently reduced, and for one song (N°4), they follow each other as there is not enough place to put them opposite one another).

There are 10 Notes and the French original lyrics are placed in an Appendix.