Università di Firenze Dipartimento di Formazione, Lingue, Intercultura, Letterature e Psicologia

Corso di Traduzione in Lingua inglese John Gilbert

“Il principio della rana bollita”\* (“The Principle of the Boiled Frog/Boiled Frog Principle”)

(free translation from *Media e potere (Media and Power)*, 2014, by Noam Chomsky, linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist and political activist)

Imagine a big pot full of cold water, in which a frog is calmly/tranquilly/serenely swimming.

filled with where swims peacefully.

burning . The water warms up little by little. The water soon

The fire is lit/(turned) on under the pot and the water is slowly heating up. Soon the water

lukewarm. continues to swim.

becomes/gets warm/tepid. The frog finds it quite/rather pleasant/agreeable and continues swimming.

feels it is keeps (on) swimming.

The temperature rises/goes up. Now the water is hot, a little/bit more than the frog appreciates.

is increasing. The water is now hot, more than what the f. would like/likes.

The frog gets/is becoming a little/bit tired, but/however (it) doesn’t get/become scared/frightened /afraid//panic.

Now the water is really/truly/much/way too hot. The frog finds it very unpleasant, but it has

(become) weakened//gotten/got/grown weak. It doesn’t have the strength to react. So it bears (with)

/endures /tolerates/stands/puts up with/withstands it and does nothing to save itself. Meanwhile the

not do anything In the meantime

temperature rises/goes up some more/again,//continues to rise/still rises, (up) until/till/up to the

moment when/in which the frog simply ends up (being/to be) boiled to death. If the same frog had

been immersed/put directly in (the) boiling water, it would have given a powerful kick of/strong push

with its leg(s) to save itself and (it would have) immediately jumped (right) out of the pot (right away).

This experience shows that, when a change takes place/happens/occurs//is made/undertaken

/carried out in a sufficiently slow and gradual way/manner, it escapes/eludes (our/people’s/one’s)

slowly and gradually enough,

consciousness and (it) does not elicit/cause/bring about/excite, (for) most of the time/for the most part,

elicits/provokes, (…) no reaction, (no) opposition, (no) revolt.

any reaction, (any) opposition, (any) revolt/rebellion.

If we look at what has been happening in our society for some/over the last/past few decades,

one looks taking place a few/several

we/one (can) realize/become aware/conscious that we are slowly going adrift//undergoing/witnessing

/experiencing a slow drift/drifting (that/which) we are getting/get used/accustomed to. A lot of things,

and we are getting used to it. Lots of

which would have horrified us 20, 30 or 40 years ago, have little by little/gradually/a little at a time

become banal/commonplace/ordinary/routine, sweetened/softened/watered-down/(rare: edulcorated), and,

today, they disturb/upset/trouble us only slightly or leave most people/the majority (of people)

decidedly indifferent. In the name of progress and science, the worst attacks on individual freedoms,

on the dignity of the person/individual,//on people’s/one’s dignity/ on the integrity of nature, on the

beauty and happiness of living,//on beauty and the happiness of living, are carried

out/undertaken/realized slowly and inexorably/unrelentingly/relentlessly with the constant

complicity/(rare: accomplicity) of the victims, unaware/uninformed?/ignorant? or unprepared/clueless

/naïve/naïve/(inexperienced?).

\* *In verità il fenomeno della rana bollita risale ad una ricerca condotta dalla Johns Hopkins University nel lontano 1882. Durante un esperimento, alcuni ricercatori statunitensi notarono che lanciando una rana in una pentola di acqua bollente, questa inevitabilmente saltava fuori per trarsi in salvo. Al contrario, mettendo la rana in una pentola di acqua fredda e riscaldando la pentola lentamente ma in modo costante, la rana finiva inevitabilmente bollita. (https://www.tragicomico.it/il-principio-della-rana-bollita-noam-chomsky/)*