of impressionism.

REFERENCES

JACKSON, Kenneth
1935   Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry. Cambridge,
        Cambridge University Press
JESPERSEN, Otto
1949   A Modern English Grammar. Vol. 7. Copenhagen,
        Munksgaard
MACALISTER, R.A.S.
1938-56 (ed. & transl.) Lebor Gabála Érenn, The Book of the
        Taking of Ireland. 5 vols. Dublin, Irish Texts Society
MEYER, Kuno
1911   (transl.) Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry.
        New York, Dutton
NIDA, Eugene
1964   Toward a Science of Translating. Leiden, Brill
THURNEYSEN, Rudolf
1946   A Grammar of Old Irish. Reprint 1961. Dublin, Dublin
        Institute for Advanced Studies

Theo Ermus (ed.),
THE MANIPULATION
OF LITERATURE

WAYS THROUGH THE LABYRINTH

Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts

Susan Bassnett-McGuire

The translator of theatre texts faces a problem unlike that involved in any other type of translation process. The principal difficulty resides in the nature of the text itself, for whilst interlingual translation involves the transfer of a given written text from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL), all kinds of factors other than the linguistic are involved in the case of theatre texts. Leaving aside for the moment those texts written as plays but designated as strictly literary (e.g the plays of Byron and Shelley, where performance is expressly discounted by the authors), a theatre text exists in a dialectical relationship with the performance of that text. The two texts — written and performed — are coexistent and inseparable, and it is in this relationship that the paradox for the translator lies. The translator is effectively being asked to accomplish the impossible — to treat a written text that is part of a larger complex of sign systems, involving paralinguistic and kinesic features, as if it were a literary text, created solely for the page, to be read off that page.

Discussing the problem of reading a theatre text, Anne Ubersfeld points out:

Le texte du théâtre est le seul texte littéraire qui ne puisse absolument pas se lire dans la suite diachronique d'une lecture, et qui ne se livre que dans une épaisseur de signes synchroniques, c'est-à-dire étagés dans l'espace, spatialisés. (Ubersfeld 1978:153)

(A theatre text is the only kind of literary text that quite categorically cannot be read in the diachronic sequence of ordinary reading, and that only yields itself up to a density of synchronic signs which are arranged hierarchically in space, spatialized.)

A major obstacle in the development of theatre studies has been the continued emphasis on the verbal text to the exclusion of the other sign systems involved in the creation of theatre. This has result-ed in an imbalance, where the verbal text is priori-tised and becomes the high status text to the detri-ment of all the other systems. As a result, certain texts, such as the plays of Shakespeare, for example, are perceived as absolutes and performance is expect-ed to adhere to a notion of 'fidelity' to that writ-ten text. The fact that the written text may have been set down following a performance or series of performances becomes irrelevant. Once it is written, the play acquires a solidity and prominence and, in the case of Shakespeare, is then treated as a liter-ary text and read as such. It has now become almost impossible for the English-language director to be freed from the tyranny of the written Shakespearean text which becomes a straight-jacket preventing mo-bility. There is an apocryphal tale of an East Euro-pean director who, on leaving a British production of a Shakespeare play, remarked: "That's wonderful. Everything remains to be done. All they played was the text." A fitting comment on Anglo-Saxon textual imperialism.

Tadeusz Kowzan defines five categories of ex-pression in the making of a performance which corres-pond to five semiological systems:

(1) The spoken text (for which there may or may not be a written script)
(2) Bodily expression
(3) The actor's external appearance (gestures, physical features, etc.)
(4) The playing space (involving size of venue, props, lighting effects, etc.)
(5) Non-spoken sound. (Kowzan 1975:52-80)

Kowzan goes on to divide these five categories into thirteen distinct sub-sections, but constantly stres-ses the non-hierarchical nature of the different sign systems. The written text in his opinion is merely one component among several, and a performance may involve as few or as many of the different systems as are thought necessary.

Kowzan's early structuralist redefinition of the position of the verbal text in the creation of theatre heralded the start of a series of attempts to explain the relationship between the written and the performed and to establish a grammar of perform-ance. Fundamental to all these attempts was the idea that the written text contained a series of clues

for performance that could be isolated and defined. So some favoured a model following the notion of deep structure, where the performance text could be ex-tracted from the written by analysing the implicit in the utterances of the characters in the play (e.g. Pagnini 1970), whilst another line of approach at-tempted to unravel patterns of gestural structures in the language. Paola Gulli Pugliatti devised the notion of the *latent sign*, arguing that the units of articulation of a dramatic text "should not be seen as units of the linguistic text *translatable* into stage practice" but rather as "a linguistic transcription of a stage potentiality which is the motive force of the written text" (Pugliatti 1976:146). A slightly different approach was favoured by Franco Ruffini, who argued that the written text was not *actual* per-formance but *positive* performance, by which he means that the staging of a written text results in the merging of the two texts, with the performance text being "submerged" into the script of the play (Ruffini 1978:85).

All the debates on the nature of the relation-ship between the written and the performance text were characterised by one interesting feature - the dimension of interlingual translation is completely absent from the discussions. Yet the problem facing the translator of a theatre text must be fundamental to the debate: whether a performance text is latent or embedded or positively existent in the written text, the translator carries the responsibility of transferring not only the linguistic but a series of other codes as well.

The strategies of translators have obviously varied widely at different points in time, but it is possible to distinguish some basic categories. One issue on which there seems to be general consensus of agreement is the fact that the theatre text is *time-bound* in a way that distinguishes it from prose or poetry. Because of its nature, since the theatre text is composed of *dialogue* and *stage directions* (songs can be read as part of the dialogue), the problem of form merges with the question of speech rhythms. In the case of a verse drama, for example, the transla-tor may take care to foreground metrical features, but in the case of naturalist dialogue, the transla-tor will opt for naturalistic speech rhythms in the TL which will inevitably belong to a particular time. There is therefore a special need for the continued retranslation or updating of theatre texts, where patterns of speech are in a continuous process of change. The dialogue of plays from the 1950s can ˙

out too much difficulty (at least in the opinion of the translator). Features of 'performability' include substituting regional accents in the SL with regional accents in the TL, trying to create equivalent registers in the TL and omitting passages that are deemed to be too closely bound to the SL cultural and linguistic context.

(4) Creating SL verse drama in alternative forms. In this type of translation the principal criterion is the verse form. Racine's alexandrines have been variously rendered in English in blank verse, heroic couplets and free verse in attempts to foreground metrical patterns in the SL text whilst declining to use a verse form that does not transfer happily into English. Likewise, translators of Greek tragedy have used a wide range of verse forms. The danger of foregrounding form are all too obvious - frequently attempts to create translated verse drama result in texts that are obscure, if not downright meaningless, where the dynamics of the SL text no longer come across.

(5) Co-operative translation. Of all the strategies listed here, the cooperative produces probably the best results. It involves the collaboration of at least two people on the making of the TL text - either an SL and a TL native speaker, or someone with knowledge of the SL who works together with the director and/or actors who are to present the work. This method parallels the way in which theatre spectacle is created collaboratively, and the translator becomes someone who produces a basic *scenario* that is then worked on by the company. This type of translation avoids the notion of 'performability' as a quality that can be added to the written text and involves the translator simultaneously in the written and oral versions of the text. This type of translation strategy lies at the opposite pole from strategy 1 above.

The advantage of stategy 5 is that it involves the translation process with a set of problems related to the performance of a theatre text: the problem posed by differing theatre conventions of SL and TL cultures and the problems of different styles of performance. So, for example, the tradition of the actor's use of space and time in England, Italy and Germany (both East and West) is quite different. A performance of a Shakespeare play, to take a random example, in a major theatre in those three languages, is vastly different: the English version would almost certainly be played in a shorter time than either of the others and the German one would almost certainly be the longest. The reason for this distinction lies

---

seem as archaic as that of plays from the 1890s today. This problem of speech rhythm, syntax and colloquialisms is particular to texts with dialogue and the translator needs to be aware of minute changes of register, tone, and style, all of which are bound to an explicit context in both SL and TL systems.

Translation strategies

(1) Treating the theatre text as a literary work. This is probably the most common form of theatre translation. The text is treated as if it were a literary work, and the translator pays attention to distinctive features of dialogue on the page. No allowances are made for patterns of intonation and other paralinguistic features and often implicit in this type of translation is the notion of 'fidelity to the original'. This kind of translation is particularly common where complete works of a given playwright are undertaken, and where the commission is for publication rather than for stage production.

(2) Using the SL cultural context as frame text. This type of translation has become increasingly popular in the past decade, particularly in the English-speaking world. It involves the utilization of TL stereotypical images of the SL culture to disguise a comic frame. So in the case of British productions of De Filippo or Dario Fo's plays in English, the frame text is provided by a comic set of signs denoting Italianicity. Hence in the National Theatre production of *Filomena Marturano*, the text was played with mock-Italian accents and much of the text was rendered in 'Anglo-Italian' jargon. The result of this type of translation is to create a massive ideological shift: the frame tells British audiences that the play is primarily 'about' comic foreigners, and so when Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* was performed in English, it had become a farce about the absurdities of Italians and their forces of authority, rather than being a savage satire on the corruption of the police and systems of power.

(3) Translating 'performability'. This very vexed term is frequently used by translators of theatre texts who claim to have taken into account the performance dimension by reproducing linguistically the 'performability' of the text. Claims for 'performability' are widely made, although the concept is never defined. What it seems to imply is an attempt in the TL to create fluent speech rhythms and so produce a text that TL actors can speak with-

X RIVEDERE STORIA!

not in the language but in the acting styles. British classical acting requires the actor to physicalise the text, to reinforce possible textual obscurities with kinesic signs, to push forward through the language of the text, even at times *against* the text. The German tradition, which is more intensely intellectual, tends to the opposite extreme – the text acquires a weightiness that the spatial context reinforces and it is the text that carries the actor forward rather than the reverse. The Italian tradition of virtuosity on the part of the individual actor creates yet another type of performance style: the text of the play becomes the actor's instrument and the performance of that play is an orchestration of many different instruments playing together.

Acting conventions and audience expectations are components in the making of performance that are as significant as conventions of the written text. The theatre of a given society will inevitably comprise a set of culturally determined codes that are performance conventions but are also present in the written text – the use of hyperbole in Renaissance English theatre, of irony in French and English eighteenth-century comedy, of stychomythia in the Greek theatre, of 'purple passages' in Ibsen and alienation devices in Brecht. The problem for the translator arises when these codes cease to have functional significance in the TL theatre. Again and again we see contemporary productions of Greek tragedy in which the role of the chorus is minimalised by cutting the number of lines and/or by reducing the chorus to a single individual to conform to contemporary criteria of stage naturalism, Or the ironic counterpoint of stychomythia is heightened and transformed into a naturalistic exchange, since western audiences today are unused to the tonal shifts of Greek theatre and directors/translators are motivated by the need to clarify a convention that has ceased to have meaning.

In his article 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers' André Lefevere discusses English translations of Brecht and notes the extent of the ideological shift that has taken place with the transfer of Marxist texts into an anti-Marxist TL system (Lefevere 1982). He might also have noted that Brecht's plays were written with the idea of a state-subsidised theatre in a society where arts education was a plank in the rebuilding of a country devastated by years of Nazi rule and then by further years of war. The transfer of those plays into a theatre context governed by a market economy adds yet another dimension to the

ideological shifts that take place in translation.

Because of the multiplicity of factors involved in theatre translation, it has become a commonplace to suggest that it is an impossible task. Translators have frequently tried to fudge issues further, by declaring that they have produced a 'version' or 'adaptation' of a text, or even, as Charles Marovitz described his *Hedda Gabler*, a 'collage'. None of these terms goes any way towards dealing with the issues, since all imply some kind of ideal SL text towards which translators have the responsibility of being 'faithful'. The distinction between a 'version' of an SL text and an 'adaptation' of that text seems to me to be a complete red herring. It is time the misleading use of these terms were set aside.

In an essay entitled 'Illustrators, Actors and Translators' published in 1908, Luigi Pirandello, arch-believer in the pre-eminent role of the writer in the creation of theatre, argued that illustrators of books, actors and translators share a common difficulty inherent in their work. All three, in his view, falsify the original text, they reinterpret and in so doing rewrite it, recreate it. He condemns this as a distortion, but accepts that there is no alternative to this paradox. The illustration reflects the creative process of the illustrator at work on the text of the novel, the actor brings his interpretation to the character created by the playwright and the translator brings his own style and interpretation to the work of the SL author. Faithfulness is therefore an impossible concept and can only exist if the interpretative processes are not undertaken at all.

Pirandello starts by attacking what he perceives as deformations of an original, but ends up by suggesting that creative interpretation must have *carte blanche* in order to develop. Looking at the way in which two directors approached *King Lear*, the value of interpretative freedom is all too plain. The Italian director Giorgio Strehler approaches the play through images from his own cultural context – a key literary referent is Dante's *Divina commedia*, in which the protagonist descends through Hell and returns out again, thanks to God and his faithful guide, to begin the ascent of Mount Purgatory. Strehler's key contextual referent is the liberation of Italy from Fascist rule and the ravages of war. In contrast, the film-director Grigori Kosintsev reads Shakespeare through Dostoyevsky, with the torments of Raskolnikov, the agony over the meaningfulness of life and death, and refers back to images of the

(NESSUNO SEMBRA AVERE MESSO IN LUCE IL FATTO CHE L'IDEALE
X TRAD. SAREBBE VEDERE LO SPETTACOLO ORIGINALE).

destruction of Stalingrad and the prison camps for
his inspiration. Reading *King Lear* through such images
serves as a starting-point for the creation of an
authentic TL text that is both a translation of an
original written by a Renaissance Englishman but is
also a uniquely Italian or Russian work in its own
right.

Discussing the staging of a written text, Patrice
Pavis (1976) plays on words: *mis en scène – mis en signe.*
The performance text involves a range of sign systems
that harmonize with the written, extending that writ-
ten text into space. Petr Bogatyrev stresses that
the linguistic code is merely one of many and notes
that

...le discours théâtral qui doit être le signe de la
situation sociale d'un personnage, est accompagné par
les gestes de l'acteur, complété par son costume, le
décor, etc.; qui sont également les signes d'une
situation sociale. (Bogatyrev 1971 (1938):523)

(...theatrical speech, which should be the sign of a
character's social position is accompanied by the actor's
gestures, completed by his costume, the setting, etc.,
all of which are equally signs of a given social position.)

So the written text is one code, one system in a com-
plex set of codes that interact together in perfor-
mance. The translator therefore has to work on a text
that is, as Anne Übersfeld defines it, *troué*, not com-
plete in itself. And in creating a text for perfor-
mance in the TL, the translator necessarily encoun-
ters an entirely different set of constraints in
terms of TL conventions of stage production.

In addition to the fundamental problem of trans-
lating a text that is part of a dialectical relation-
ship with other systems, the translator of theatre
texts has further difficulties to tackle. Dramatic
dialogue is conventionalised and is based, as Keir
Elam succinctly puts it, on "an I addressing a *you
here and now*." (Elam 1980:139). In other words, what
ties at the origin of dramatic discourse is the
deixis," and Alessandro Serpieri goes so far as to
argue, "it is the verbal index that is the foun-
ding semiotic unit of dramatic representation:

In the theatre (...) meaning is entrusted *in primis* to
the deixis, which regulates the articulation of the
speech acts. Even rhetoric, like syntax, grammar, etc.
are dependent, in the theatre, on the deixis, which
subsumes and unites the meaning borne by the images,
by the various genres of language (prose, poetry), by
the various linguistic modes of the characters, by

intonation, by rhythm, by proxemic relations, by the
kinesics of the movements, etc. (Serpieri 1978; cf.
Elam 1980:140)

Serpieri's theory, discussed in monolingual terms
only so far, may yet help in the locating of a key
for the translator searching for the magic doorway
that will lead through the labyrinth of multiple
codes. For a radical alteration of the deictic system
of the SL text is bound to alter the dynamics of the
text in all kinds of unexpected ways. Let us consider
an episode from Strehler's *Lear*, translated by Angelo
Dallagiacoma and Luigi Lunari. In Act I, scene 1,
Lear has rejected Cordelia who, he feels, has not
adequately expressed in words her love for him. Her
two suitors, Burgundy and France, are now being asked
if they will take her, and this extract begins with
Burgundy's refusal.

BURGUNDY:
Pardon *me*, Royal Sir;
Election makes not up in such conditions.
LEAR:
Then leave *her*, sir; for by the power that made *me*,
I tell *you* all *her* wealth. (To France). For *you*, great King,
I would not from *your* love make such a stray
To match *you* where *I* hate; therefore beseech *you*
T'avert *your* liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom Nature is asham'd
Almost t'acknowledge *hers*.
FRANCE: This is most strange,
That *she*, whom even but now was *your* best object,
The argument of *your* praise, balm of *your* age,
The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour. Sure, *her* offence
Must be of such unnatural degree
That monsters it, or *your* fore-vouched affection
Fall into taint; which to believe of *her*
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Should never plan in *me*.
CORDELIA:
                        I yet beseech *your* Majesty
(If for *I* want that glib and oily art
To speak and purpose not, since what *I* well intend,
I'll do't before *I* speak), that *you* make known
It is no vicious blot, myrther or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath depriv'd *me* of *your* grace and favour,
But even for want of that for which *I* am richer,

A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost *me* in your liking.
LEAR:
                    Better *thou*
Hadst not been born than not t'have pleased *me* better.

In this passage the units of deixis are italicized to show the way in which they are foregrounded in the speeches of the various characters. Lear refers to Cordelia as *her*, thus marking her new status as hated object rather than as a loved and named individual (previously in the scene he has referred to her both by name and by epithets of love, "our joy"). When he addresses her directly, it is with the distancing pronoun *thou*. In contrast, France's speech puts the onus of responsibility onto Lear, emphasizing through the use of the pronoun *your* the bond that has pre-viously existed between father and daughter and im-plying that Lear is somehow to blame for its break-down. His speech ends with the emphatic, independent *me*. Cordelia takes up the first-person pronoun. Her speech is full of statements, reinforcing her posi-tion and insisting on her principles. These deictic units are all perfectly in keeping with the charac-ters that use them, and conform also to the context of the scene. If there is such a thing as 'gestural language', then it must surely lie in the interweav-ing of these units.
    In the Italian version, the units are changed:

BORGOGNA:
Perdonatemi sire. Ma a queste   Forgive me sire, but there
condizioni la scelta non si pone.   can be no choice in such
                                      conditions.

LEAR:
Allora è no.   Then it's no.
Poichè per l'onnipotenza che *mi*   Because through the Almighty
ha creato   who created me,
vi ho detto tutto ciò che *essa*   I have told you all she has.
possiede.
(Borgogna esce; Lear si rivolge a   (Exit B; Lear turns to F.)
Francia)
Quanto a *voi*, nobile re,   As for *you*, noble sir,
non vorrei demeritarmi tanto il   I would not wish to lose
vostro affetto   your great affection
da unirvi all'oggetto del *mio*   By joining you to the object
odio.   of my hate.
Vi esorto dunque a volgere la   I therefore urge you to turn
vostra attenzione   your attention
a scelte più degne di questo   to more worthy choices than
miserabile niente,   this wretched nothing

che la natura stessa si vergogna   whom nature herself is
di riconoscere.   ashamed to acknowledge.
FRANCIA:
È molto strano che la vostra   It is very strange that your
figlia prediletta   favourite daughter
fino a ieri argomento di ogni   who until yesterday was the
vostra lode   subject of all your praises
balsamo della *vostra* vecchiaia   balm of your old age
la migliore   the best
la più cara   the dearest
abbia potuto in questo batter   should in a wink have
d'occhio commettere non so   committed an act of such
cosa di tanto orribile   horror
da perdere l'amplissimo manto del   that she has lost the wide
vostro favore.   mantle of your favour.
Certo deve trattarsi di un delitto   It must indeed be a crime so
tanto fuor di misura   far beyond measure
da parere mostruoso.   as to appear monstruous.
O si deve dubitare del *vostro*   Or is your ancient, much
antico a decantato affetto?   vaunted love to be doubted?
CORDELIA:
Vi supplico maestà   I beseech your Majesty
- se di tutto ciò che accade   - if of all that occurs
è causa solo il *mio* non saper   the sole cause is my not
dire   knowing how to say
quel che non sento -   that which I do not feel -
rendete noto almeno che   at least make it known that
non fu nè una infamia nè un   it was no infamy nor crime,
delitto,
nè che fu azione turpe o   nor foul nor dishonourable
disonorevole   deed
a privarmi del *vostro* favore;   that lost me your favour;
ma solo quel che *mi* manca: but merely that which I do
                                  not have:
uno sguardo da mendico   a beggar's glance
e una lingua che sono lieta di   and a tongue I am thankful
non possedere.   not to possess.
LEAR:
Meglio per *te* non essere nata   Better that you had never
                                  been born
che avermi tanto poco compiaciuto.   than to have pleased me so
                                  little
                        (Strehler 1973)

In this Italian translation the deictic units are different. This is partially due to the system of Italian verbs which contain the personal pronoun in the endings of the stem, but it is not the only cause. The impersonal construction has been used more frequently by France and Cordelia, and these two characters are consequently changed. Whereas Lear in Italian uses the *you* and *she* pronoun systems

of the English, all the affirmative pronouns are absent from France's speech, which concludes on a direct question to Lear instead of on a statement of intent. France's only pronoun is *vostro/a*, and as a result his speech is transformed into an attack on Lear, a confrontation that is not only out of keeping with the character but is also out of keeping with the protocol of the context.

In much the same way, Cordelia's speech is a plea to her father for the restoration of her good name rather than an affirmation of her unchanging position. Where the English text begins with *I yet beseech your Majesty*, the Italian has *Vi supplico maestà*. The gestus is totally different, and the effect is produced through changes in the linguistic code that involve non-translation of the deictic units in the line.

Some years ago, in an early article on problems of theatre translation (Bassnett-McGuire 1978), I suggested that there might be a gestural language distinguishable within the written text. This theory was based on work in theatre practice, where directors and actors distinguish physical signs to follow from off the printed page. I raised the question as to how this gestural language might be discernible, suggesting that it might exist in a manner similar to the Stanislavskian sub-text that is decoded by the actor and encoded into gestural form. Now, with hindsight, the idea of gestural patterning in a text appears to be a loose and woolly concept: it may be all very well for monolingual actors to speculate on the gestus of a text, but where interlingual translation is involved other solutions must be sought. It now seems to me that if indeed there is a gestural language in a text, then there is a way of deciphering it and therefore of translating it, and so far one of the most hopeful lines of enquiry seems to be that of the deictic units. Since these units determine the interaction between the characters on stage, they also determine characterization and, ultimately, they feed into the other codes of performance. By analysing the way in which the deixis operates in the SL text, it will become apparent whether those units can be viable in the TL, what they signify by their presence and equally by their absence, what happens to the dynamics of the scene when they are altered.

The strategy of collaborative translation may suggest ways of tackling this problem. The native SL speaker and the native TL speaker may have an instinctive sense of deixis in a given scene. In the case of the Barker-Rheinfrank translation of Brecht's *Die Tage*

der Commune (*The Days of the Commune*) deictic shifts mark a series of transformations of register as illustrated in the following passage:

Babette: Wenn die Commune weniger zahlt als das Kaiserreich, brauchen *wir* sie nicht. Und Jean hat gekämpft, um gerade diese Ausbeutung nich mehr ertragen zu müssen, sagt er.

Philippe: An seiner Hose bescheisst ihr seine eigene Mutter und seine Freundin. *Ihr* müsst sofort...

Geneviève: *Wir? Was ist mit euch?*

Philippe: Gut. *Wir* müssen...

Geneviève: Das ist besser.

Philippe: Also, was müssen *wir?*

Langevin: (nach einer Pause zu Babette und Philippe): Wenn sie zusperren, oder wenn sie den festgelegten Lohn nich zahlen, werden *wir* ihre Betriebe konfiszieren und *selber* weiterführen. Ueberhaupt müssen *wir* in den Fabriken und Werkstätten die kollektive Arbeit organisieren.

Babette: Woher soll man das wissen?

Geneviève: *Ich* versuche, Schulen zu organisieren, in denen die Kinder es lernen. Da muss man anfangen. Aber wie soll man anfangen, wenn sie Türen und Schränke verschlossen haben?

Philippe: (belehrend): Zumindest die können *wir* aufbrechen, denke *ich*. (Er geht an eine Tür, holt sein Taschenmesser heraus und macht sich am Schloss zu schaffen). Was, *du* bist ein Bäcker und doch bereit, auch Schlosserarbeit zu tun. Kinder, *ich* sehe Lichter für die Commune. Das nächste wird vielleicht sein, dass der daneben auch noch das Regieren lernt.

(Philippe hat die Tür geöffnet. Alle lachen.) Erwartet nicht mehr von der Commune als von *euch* selber.

(Brecht s.d.)

The significance of the pronoun system in this passage is the juxtaposition of *wir*, which symbolizes collective action, with *sie*, the enemy, the other side. Philippe begins with the formal pronoun *Ihr*, but is corrected by the women and learns to use *wir*. At the end of the scene, Langevin addresses Philippe with the comradely, personal *du* form, thus signifying that he has become part of the group and has been accepted. The Barker-Rheinfrank translation follows the German text closely, but makes some significant alterations:

Babette: If *we're* going to get less pay under the Commune than *we* did under the Empire, then *we* don't want it. And Jean says that he fought for the Commune so that he could be free from being exploited.

Philippe: How his mother and his girlfriend are being cheated
   over his army trousers. *You've got to...*
Geneviève: *Us? And what about you?*
Philippe: All right *we've got to...*
Geneviève: That's better.
Philippe: Right then, what have we got to do?
Langevin: (After a pause to Philippe and Babette): If they
   shut up shop or don't pay fixed wage rates we'll
   confiscate and run the shops ourselves. The factories
   and workshops are being organised as labour collect-
   ives in any case.
Babette: How are we going to understand all this?
Geneviève: *I'm* trying to organize the schools so that the chil-
   dren can start to learn it there. That's where *we*
   have to start. But how can we begin when we can't
   open the doors and cupboards?
Phillipe: (teaching her): Well at least we can break those
   open, *I* think. (He takes a pocket knife out of his
   pocket and gets to work on the lock).
Langevin: What's this, a baker turning his hand to the lock-
   smith's trade. Children, things are looking up for
   the Commune. Next thing we know he'll be learning
   the job of governing.

   (Philippe has opened the door. All laugh.)
   Never expect more of the Commune than *you expect of
   yourselves.* (Brecht 1978)

The impersonal construction in English is used formal-
ly and has strong upper-class connotations, quite out
of keeping with the discourse of this play. The trans-
lators have therefore substituted a *we* form in seve-
ral places where the German impersonal is used and,
although this does not in any way diminish the grow-
ing sense of solidarity which is the keynote of this
scene, it does reduce the levels of complexity present
in the SL text. The deictic shifts mark changes of
position, changes of class allegiance in the SL,
whereas in the TL text that solidarity is established
from the beginning. The translators have omitted the
du address in Langevin's speech, replacing it with an
impersonal construction so that Philippe is no longer
addressed directly. In spite of the closeness of tone
between the SL and TL, these shifts in the deixis do
mark a significant change in language value. It is
perhaps not too far-fetched to see implicit in this
simplification of the discourse a reflection of the
greater sophistication of German political language
and of Brecht's own position. The Barker-Rheinfrank
translation does not attempt to alter the political
position of the SL author, unlike many English trans-
lations (cf. Lefevere 1982), but nevertheless an

analysis of the text as a whole shows that signifi-
cant changes do occur. Their version instinctively
picks up on the register of working-class socialist
discourse in English which is characterised by a
uniformity of tone rather than by a variety of tones
and levels. It is perhaps worth speculating on the
relative lack of success of English versions of Brecht
by considering the way in which complex concepts ex-
pressed through a variety of forms, of which the
deictic units are only one example, become thinned
out and simplified in English, diminishing the im-
pact of the play.

In the limited space of this paper I have chosen
to emphasize the significance of deictic units, but
it would be far too simplistic to suggest that 'faith-
ful' adherence to the deictic units of the SL text
in translation could solve the problems of the trans-
lation of written theatre language. As can be seen
from the two examples offered, what is crucial about
the deictic units is not their presence per se but
their function in the text. The changes in the Ital-
ian version of Cordelia's speech do actually alter
the characterization and create a very different
gestural understructure which, I feel, also implies
an ideological shift. In this case I feel unhappy
about the changes, because the Italian Cordelia is
made into a supplicant, a victim from the outset,
rather than a warrior queen on a par with her sisters
in all but cruelty as the English text depicts her.
In the case of the shifts in the Brecht passage, what
appears to be reflected is the different level of
political sophistication in the German and English
working classes, an extra-contextual factor which
nevertheless impinges on the translators' text.

Translating for the theatre is an activity that
involves an awareness of multiple codes, both in and
around the written text. At times, the way forward
may be through close, almost literal adherence to
the SL text, whilst at other times there may have to
be a process of intersemiotic translation, wherein
a function of the SL text or a system working within
it is substituted in the TL text - as in the case of
jokes, puns, obscenities, topical satire, etc. Be-
cause of this multiplicity, any notion of there being
a 'right' way to translate becomes a nonsense, as
does the whole question of defining translation' as
distinct from 'version' or 'adaptation'. What is
more problematic is the notion of 'performability',
the implicit, undefined and undefinable quality of a
theatre text that so many translators latch on to as
a justification for their various linguistic strate-

gies. It seems to me that the time has come to set aside 'performability' as a criterion for translating too, and to focus more closely on the linguistic structures of the text itself. For, after all, it is only within the written that the performable can be encoded and there are infinite performance decodings possible in any playtext. The written text, *troué* though it may be, is the raw material on which the translator has to work and it is with the written text, rather than with a hypothetical performance, that the translator must begin.

REFERENCES

BASSNETT-McGUIRE, Susan
1978   'Translating Spatial Poetry: an Examination of Theatre Texts in Performance', in J.S.Holmes et al. (eds.), *Literature and Translation* (Leuven, Acco):161-176

BOGATYREV, Petr
1971   'Les signes du théâtre', *Poétique*, 8:517-30 (originally in *Slovo a Slovesnost*, 1938)

BRECHT, Bertolt
s.d.   *Die Tage der Commune.* Berliner Ensemble acting script, unpublished
1978   *The Days of the Commune.* Transl. Clive Barker & Arno Reinfrank. London, Methuen

ELAM, Keir
1980   *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama.* London, Methuen

KOWZAN, Tadeusz
1975   *Littérature et spectacle.* The Hague, Mouton

LEFEVERE, André
1982   'Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature', *Modern Language Studies*, Fall 1982:3-20

PAGNINI, Marcello
1970   'Per una semiologia del teatro classico', *Strumenti critici*, 12:122-140

PAVIS, Patrice
1976   *Problèmes de sémiologie théâtrale.* Montreal, Les presses de l'Université de Québec

PUGLIATTI, Paola Gulli
1976   *I segni latenti: Scrittura come virtualità in King Lear.* Messina/Florence, D'Anna

RUFFINI, Franco
1978   *Semiotica del testo.* Rome, Bulzoni

SERPIERI, Alessandro
1977   'Ipotesi teorica de segmentazione del testo teatrale', *Strumenti critici*, 32-33:90-137

STREHLER, Giorgio
1973   *Il Re Lear di Shakespeare.* Verona, Bertani

UBERSFELD, Anne
1978   *Lire le théâtre.* Paris, Editions sociales

IMAGES OF TRANSLATION

Metaphor and Imagery in the Renaissance Discourse

on Translation

Theo Hermans

In the Renaissance conception of literature, translation and imitation stand in a paradoxical relation to each other. They are often discussed together and regarded as closely related or complementary activities, but on other occasions they are felt to be miles apart. Especially in the seventeenth century we may find them described in similar terms, sometimes by means of the same images, analogies and metaphors, but even at the level of their respective metalanguages they may touch at one point, perhaps partly overlap, but they rarely if ever merge completely.

Broadly speaking, the view among Renaissance writers, translators and critics alike seems to be that, in so far as translation and imitation are considered in conjunction, translation is, at best, a particular and restricted form of imitation - whereby both forms still contrast unfavourably with 'invention' - and, at worst, a mechanical and merely utilitarian exercise of no literary merit whatsoever. Even when translation and imitation are associated with each other, translation almost invariably emerges as the less deserving of the two. The main reasons for this appear to be, first, that the ultimate goal of 'total' translation, which would reproduce the source text faithfully and completely in all its aspects across the language barrier, is unattainable; secondly, that the translator's freedom of movement is severely restricted, so that he finds himself in a subordinate and even subservient position with regard to his model; and thirdly, that, whatever its relative value, the translated text necessarily remains a copy of an original work and is thus by definition inferior to that original, the more so since translation denies itself the emulative impulse which could act as a challenge, pitting the