

TREVOR GRIFFITHS IN TRANSLATION WITH SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF COMMITMENT

Introduction

For reasons that are exclusively pragmatic, the corpus for the analysis has been reduced to only one play. In spite of the author's assistance who was kind enough to indicate all possible translated versions of his plays and in spite of numerous phone calls and letters, it is only in the case of *Comedians* that I could have access to translated versions in more than one language: *Komiker*, by Peter Zadek and Karl Wesseler and circulated by Felix Bloch Erben in Berlin, the first act of the new version submitted by Peter Brasch, and the French version prepared by Luc André for the « Théâtre National de Belgique ». I could not have the Dutch version I had thought of using as my letter to Amsterdam was returned with the « unknown » mention and all phone calls to the Sater Theater C go dead. I gave up the idea of using the Italian version as I am not very familiar with the language.

But we all know how rich and powerful a play *Comedians* is, so that I could assume that the analysis of the original and the translated versions in only two languages would amply serve my purpose. Experience and practice easily proved this assumption.

This purpose was definitely not to offer an evaluation of these translations. Not only because I have no right to do so, but also because there is by far no consensus as to the method to be applied to assess the quality of translations. The idea was rather to build on this idea that examining translational problems can be a tool of unsuspected power for the analysis and comprehension of the text in the source language, whatever model is adopted among the various theories of translation available.

Moreover, the title of this paper announces that special attention will be paid to the semantic field of commitment. Which, to a large extent, is not reasonable, as there is obviously no natural way to determine what in Trevor Griffiths's plays actually belongs to this field and what does not. It would obviously be safer to assume that the playwright commits himself in each line and in each cue, differences being only a matter of degree. Looking up in various reference books for the connotations attached to the concept of « commitment », I found such notions as

(1) adhesion / adherence

pledge, promise, profession (of faith), assurance, contract, engagement, obligation, giving security

trust (entrusting), truth, troth (all three words related etymologically)

action

(cf. Roget's *Thesaurus*)

German does not have any proper word and, as the cognate « Verpflichtung » does not cover the same field, the language borrowed the French word Engagement.

So instead of venturing on unsafe ground, I eventually preferred to resort to analytical simplicity and claim that « everything » in the play can be considered as a

form of commitment, though in various degrees, on the assumption that a close analysis of the text in relation to the problems for translation might be helpful for an assessment of this degree.

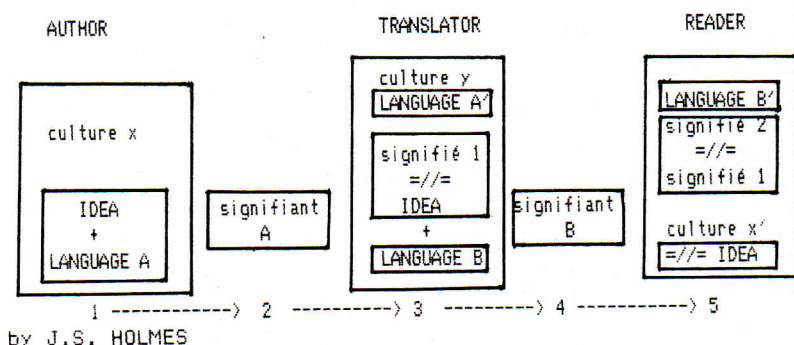
2. A theory of translation of drama

2.1. A theory of translation

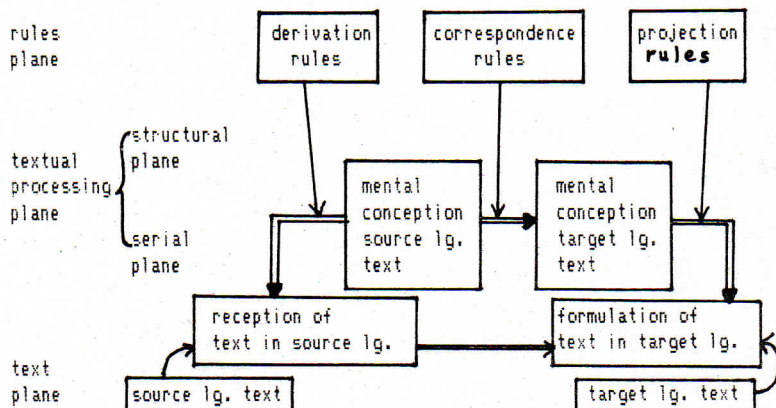
Numerous models have been offered to account for the translating process, with increasing emphasis on the sociolinguistic dimension of the operation and, in the past few years, new light shed by investigation in the area of artificial intelligence and machine translation. The description of what is actually taking place in the mind of the translator and the definition of what can be considered as universals is still very controversial. We just know for sure that the process is very complex and no computer, however powerful, is yet able to simulate it.

None of these analytical models can be imposed peremptorily; but we should at least make sure that it includes, not only linguistic signs, but also the socio-cultural environment of both source and target texts. For instance, the model proposed by L.G. Kelly.

(2) L.G. KELLY, *The True Interpreter*, Oxford, 1979

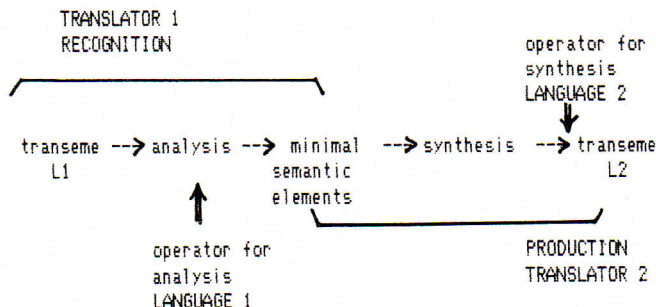


(3) J.S. HOLMES et al. *The Nature of translation - Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation*, The Hague, 1970



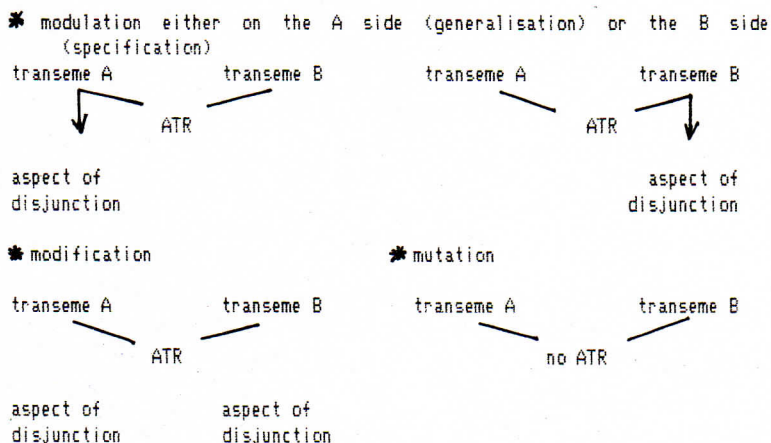
The process can be grossly summarized as follows

- (4) after SELESKOVITCH D. « Interpretation, a psychological approach to translation » in BRISLIN R.W. (Ed.) *Translation: Application and Research*, New-York, 1976



by which the author is considered as a translator. The model also introduces the concept of transeme or minimal translation unit is introduced. If the common denominator between transeme 1 and transeme 2 is called architranseme, we can then define 3 categories of shifts in the translating process, according to the amount of disjunction (morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, etc) and its location

- (5) Kitty M. Van LEUVEN-ZWART « The Methodology of Translation description and its Relevance for the Practice of Translation » in *Vertaalwetenschap*, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1985



2.2. The translation of drama

G. MOUNIN writes

(6) in *Teoria e storia della traduzione* - Traduzione di Stefania Morandi
Torino: Piccola biblioteca Einaudi, 1965

La traduction théâtrale, plus et mieux qu'une autre, illustre l'importance
/.../ de ces éléments complexes /.../ nommés les différents contextes
de l'énoncé.

Under « contextes de l'énoncé », this specialist of the problems involved in translation refers to the cultural framework of the country of creation, i.e. in approximate terms:

- the historical and geographical context
- the literary context, in this case the tradition of drama in the country where the play was written
- the social context
- the moral context

in a word the context of a civilisation that crops up at all times, both on stage and in the house.

This difficulty is definitely the reason why foreign drama was always last to penetrate national cultures, as compared to the rest of literature. Italian comedy was played in Italian in Paris until the end of Louis XIV's reign - and the Theatre received its name of « Théâtre des Italiens ». At a time when other values of the English culture and philosophy has invaded France and French thinking, with Montesquieu, Voltaire and the like, Shakespeare was still widely unknown. Goethe's, Schiller's or N. Gogol's drama is still practically absent from the culture of non-German or Russian speakers, as compared to the rest of their works ...

Georges MOUNIN concludes

(7) Le théâtre, riche de la vie des situations les plus immédiates et les plus totales d'un peuple, et qui présente ces situations sans le long commentaire (ethnographique en somme) dont elles bénéficient dans n'importe quel roman, reste /.../ la forme la plus rebelle à la circulation des idées. Si un théâtre devient international, c'est que la culture dont il est l'expression s'est elle-même internationalisée. /.../

Traduire une œuvre théâtrale /.../ c'est vaincre toutes ces résistances sourdes et inavouées qu'une culture offre à sa pénétration par une autre, dès qu'il ne s'agit plus des formes purement intellectuelles de la communication.

The translated text of a drama should be faithful not only to the lexicon, the grammar, the syntax, the style of each sentence, as with any other translation, but also to what made the play a theatrical success - or flop ! - in the country of creation. And rendering the theatrical value of the play in the translation should prevail on rendering whatever literary or poetical value it may have. The object of the translation is in this case not a written text, but an acted play. Contrary to the novel or the poem whose fortune is established on each successive reader and reading and the evaluation is the result of a long and diffuse instilling process, the translated play, just as the original play, must impose itself immediately, without any

appeal, to specific audiences. And immediate understanding can be tested by a similar comparable display of emotion among audiences in the target language.

The analysis of written discourse implies well known situation parameters

(8) Juliane HOUSE, *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment*, Tübingen, 1981

situational parameters

A. dimensions of language user

1. geographical origin

2. social class

3. time

B. dimensions of language use (pragmatic parameters)

1. medium simple
complex

2. participation simple
complex

3. social role relationship

4. social attitude

5. province (topic of discourse - « register »)

It is obviously in the case of drama that pragmatic parameters are most important, due to the medium used which is obviously complex (a form of writing to be spoken as if not written) and the participation which is supposed to take place at two levels (between characters and between character and spectator). Social role relationship (including modality markers such concepts as « agent avoiders, appealers, cajolers, expanders, disarmers, hedges, downtoners and highlighters, grounders, sweeteners », etc) social attitude, and province are likewise prominent parameters in the case of Trevor Griffiths's drama, to fulfill the 3 functions to be recognized in discourse:

- ideational (the way information is given)
- textual (the way this occurs)
- interpersonal (the way interconnection is created here between the spectator and the fictional world)

The discouraging conclusion to all this might be that a play, basically, cannot be translated; it can at the utmost be adapted with a more or less extensive use of modulation, transposition and equivalence.

3. Application to *Comedians*

3.1. *Translating a text*

3.1.1. discourse problems (linguistic)

Comedians, as a « text », thus raises the usual translational problems in relation to discourse:

- the innumerable slang words used in the text

a comparison with the translations available seems to prove that English is richer in this respect than other European languages. German and French are relatively poor to render the wide range of English slang terms used by the characters. This discrepancy is possibly not trivial, considering that these terms are part of the interrelational discourse and convey so much of the feelings that these

characters have for each other. Moreover, the status of slang and its sociolinguistic value is not similar in all languages

- (9) 7 fitlhy fuckers
- 8 bloody idiot
- 8 stupid mare
- 9 a moody bugger
- 10 you scum
- 13 the stuck-up bitch
- 25 a slippy fucker
- 25 pricks
- 27 a right cropper
- 28 a hard bastard of a thing
- 35 slippy sod
- 52 Seamus
- 59 scrubbers
- 13 parking one's float in ...
- 24 to arse the night away
- 25 fucking up the arse by beasties
- 25 my bleeding boot up your hole
- etc

- tone and « register »

do not raise any specific problem to the extent that translation are made into « Christian languages ». Swearing by Christ or parodying the Bible is then possible

- (10) 9 there is not many left of us can walk on water
- 53 here endeth lesson one
- 53 to crucify

- playing on words and puns can also be translated at the expense of some acrobatics

- (11) 14 creme de la creme - a little clotted
- 16 Sammy Circle - Sammyterwidyu - Sa me wanta see - Samykazi -
Sammy Professional
- 17 curry linctus
- 29 it runs in the family - like crabs
- 53 de cuntibus ... - a bit of a cunt

as well as the 17 limerick with the lady called Pratt, even if no other European civilisation has a similar tradition.

- an ending in the Elizabethan tradition

Is it by chance that one of the very last cues can be put in verse form with rhymes, reminding strongly of Elizabethan drama where this device announces the end of the play or an act?

- (12) 65 From what I have tasted of desire
- I hold with those who favour fire
- But if I had to perish twice
- I think I know enough of hate
- To say that for destruction ice
- Is also great and would suffice

- special attention should be devoted to translating some key concepts of the play

- (13) 0 Comedians
12 a feast of comedy talent
14 a comedian
14 a comic's is a comic
23 comics feed prejudice
25 comic to his toenails
28 a comedian
30 comic's wit
33 comics
37 new comics - favourite comic of yesteryear
63 you never said a single funny thing
67 it's funny, it's very, very funny
14 to tell you the truth --> ehrlich gesagt
35 a traitor distrusts / distorts / deskroys truth
der Verräter misstraut dem Vertreter / verzerrt / zerstört die Wahrheit
le traître trahit / trahit / trahit trahit
23 everything true

The difficulty is altogether the distribution of comic (both as adjective and noun) and comedian - it is probably not random - the absence or existence of a corresponding pair in the other languages - German has just « Komiker » and « Komisch » for both funny and comic, French confesses the ambiguity in a double title « l'Ecole des Comiques ou Comédiens » - and the ability of other languages to give full credit to the 3 forms of the tongue twister - the answer being negative, as we can see.

3.1.2. Culture (metalinguistic)

The precision of indications about the setting forces the translator to make a crucial decision right at the beginning. Will it be a so-called « translation » or rather an « adaptation? » Unless there is a middle way between the two on the basis of a translation of what may be considered as belonging to universal culture or universal knowledge of British culture, and an adaptation of what is too specific of a given culture or environment to be understood by « foreign » audiences.

Basically, no foreign version could be anything else than a combination of the two, with varying proportions of the two ingredients. The problem is surprisingly made more complex in the case of translation into European languages as a certain amount of shared culture may be assumed by the translator. The difficulty lies in evaluating this amount.

A. Translation rather than adaptation

The German versions are supposed to be basically translations. In fact they have tried this middle way. Reference to the specific environment such as

- (14) 7 Manchester, Ashton-under-Lyne, East Lancashire
7 two-storey style
10 Wimpey - Woolworth's
11 Edge Lane

12 the Telly Savalas of Comedy - the Golda Meir of Gagland
26 Ardwick - Oldham
30 Lancashire Lad
31 C.A.M.F.
32 West of Royton - South of Birmingham - Hulme Hippodrome
49 Salford dogtrack
65 Bolton

or even more universal references such as

(15) 12 the Church - the Pope

are transferred or translated as such whereas

(16) 10 Kennomeat Kid
14 Comedy Artists and Managers Federation
15 Mr Woodentop
15 watching Crossroads
23 Open University - BBC
24 Palladium
33 trip to Bermondsey
37 bingo - an odd fortnight in Brighton
51 National Unity
58 at the Midland

are adapted or - simply - omitted

Adaptation sometimes implies additional information, as in

(17) 49 --> Macari der Fussballspieler

or even some form of correction

(18) 64 someone in Hamburg (Cyankali) --> irgendeine Dortmunder Firma

64 this camp --> Buchenwald

B. Adaptation rather than translation

The French version is declaredly an adaptation. Manchester has become «la banlieue bruxelloise ». Jews are still Jews but Georges McBrain is not a beefy docker, but a brawny meat porter from depressed Borinage and the Pakistani becomes a « Nord-Africain », the transfer being all the easier as both are Moslems. The objet of all ambitions is not the 24 Palladium, but the Paris Olympia and the stars Sandy Powell, Albert Modley, Jimmy James, etc can be exchanged for Fernand Reynaud, Françoise Dorin and Raymond Devos. What is 59 perfect Ulster may become perfect Bruxellois or Québécois and though political situations and problems are never exactly similar, transposition seems to be legal, except when, again, it becomes too specific as when mentioning the Reverend Ian Paisley and the Maze prison. What belong to universal culture may even be overtranslated, as in a bout of overcommitment,

(19) 8 the Lenin-like cloth and denim hat

becomes « une casquette semblable à celle de Vladimir Oulianov, dit Lénine »

and the Belgian Chalenor has been touring, not only France and Belgium, but also such places as Switzerland, North Africa in the war time, Beirut and Quebec.

I noticed that many of these passages with very allusions to specifically British problems, particularly in Act II - are just absent from the videotaped version. Whose initiative are these cuts? the author's? was it to make the play more accessible to foreign audiences not familiar with the problems discussed, or was it just an abridgement operated for technical reasons?

Yet this French version does not adapt when it is not necessary. Basically when the topic belongs indeed to universal or at least European culture. Thus there is no basic problems when translating jokes about the Jews or about sex and women and the working class as the stereotypes are very much the same, at least in all European cultures and the corresponding languages have all a specific phraseology to put them in words. Thus both German and Belgian versions offer very accurate and close translations when they are concerned.

(20) 19 They have this greasy quality, do Jews. Stick to their own; Grafters. Fixers. Money ... Say Jew, say gold. Moneylenders, pawnbrokers, usurers. They have the nose for it you might say ... The effluent of society. Scarcely human. Grubs.

Les Juifs. Ils ont quelque chose de gras. Avides. Rapaces. L'argent, toujours l'argent. Vous dites « Juif » et vous pensez à la galette. Ils sont prêteurs, usuriers. Ils ont le nez pour ça, bien sûr ... Les déchets de l'Histoire. Ils sont à peine humains. De la vermine.

Die haben sowas Schleimiges, diese Juden. Halten immer zusammen. Schieber. Gauner. Geld. Immer Geld. Sagte Juden, sagte Geld, Wucherer, Pfandleiher, Hochstapler. Die haben die Nase dafür, könnte man sagen ... Der Abschaum der Geschichte. Fast Keine Menschen. Maden.

19 Workers. Dirty. Unschooled. Shifty. Grabbing all they can get. Putting coal in the bath. Chips with everything. Chips and beer. Trade Unions dedicated to maximizing wages and minimizing work. Strikes for the idle. Their greed. And their bottomless stupidity ...

Les ouvriers. Sales. Sans éducation. Sournois. Chapardant tout ce qu'ils peuvent. Ils mettent leur charbon dans la baignoire, c'est connu. Comme nourriture, des frites et de la bière. Leurs syndicats ne poursuivent qu'un but : le plus de pognon possible, en n'en fichant pas une secousse. Une grève de temps en temps, pour en foutre encore moins. Et s'en foutre encore plus dans les poches. Et leur inépuisable crétinisme !

Arbeiter. Dreckig. Ungebildet. Unzuverlässig. Grabschen alles, was ihnen zwischen die Finger kommt. Schütten Kohle ins Bad. Essen zu allem Chips. Chips und Bier. Gewerkschaften wollen ja nur die Löhne rauffahren und die Arbeit runter. Steiks sind für die Faulen. Ihre Gier. Und ihre abgrundtiefe Blödsinn ...

Only chips would appear as misplaced in the German text as they do not really belong to the German worker's standard diet.

When it comes to the Irish, the German version consistently maintains them even though we can imagine that a German audience would hardly respond to it. The

Turks would definitely serve the German purpose in a much better way. The Belgian version introduces North African Arabs and obtains the sought-after effect, all the more easily as so many of these clichés are interchangeable.

- (21) 19 ... The Irish, big, thick, stupid heads, large cabbage ears, hairy nostrils, daft eyes, flat flappy hands, stinking of soil and Guinness. ... Huge uncontrollable wangers, spawning their degenerate kind wherever they are allowed to settle ...
... les bicots, les bougnoules ... Ils sont sales. Ils ont tous des maladies. Surtout la vérole. Ils battent leurs femmes. Ils leur font des floppées de gosses. Jusqu'à les faire crever ... et répandant leur engeance partout ...

Likewise the Irish parody in Act II is transformed into an Italian parody for the scene of Northern Europe and seems to be much more effective than the corresponding pseudo-Irish German scene. This seems to be cases when the translator has definitely to show that he is also a creator.

C. A decision to be made

There is surely no recipe as to the procedure. But there is obviously no need to adapt whatever can be considered as belonging to universals. Whatever is philosophy, demonstration, commitment precisely belongs to this category. And thus close parallelism should be evidenced, for instance, in the statements at the end of Act III as there is indeed no reason to deviate from it.

- (22) 63 (Price) The truth ... What do you know about the *truth*, Mr Waters? You think the truth is *beautiful*? You've forgotten what it is *like*. You knew it when you started off, Oldham empire, People's Music Hall, Colne Hippodrome, Bolton Grand, New Brighton Palace ... the Lancashire Lad - you knew it then all right. Nobody hit harder than Eddie Waters, that's what they say. Because you were still in touch with what made you ... hunger, diphteria, filth, unemployment, penny clubs, means test, bed bugs, head lice ... Was all *that* truth beautiful? ... Truth was a fist you hit with ... Nothing's changed ... Just like you fifty years ago. We are still caged, exploited, prodded and pulled at, milked, fattened, slaughtered, cup up, fed out ...
(Waters) Before you were born, I was touring with E.N.S.A., the war had just ended, a year, maybe more. We were in Germany, B.A.O.R., fooling about till we got our blighty bonds ... Down the road, four miles maybe, we pulled up at this camp ... They'd cleaned it up, it was like a museum, each room with its separate, special collection. And then this extraordinary thing ... In this hell-place, a special block, 'Der Straf-bloc', 'Punishment block' It took a minute to register, I almost laughed, it seemed so ludicrous. Then I saw it. It was a world like any other. It was the logic of our world ... extended ...

(Price) Die Wahrheit ... Was verstehen Sie von Wahrheit, Mr Waters ? Finden Sie, dass die Wahrheit *schön* ist ? Sie haben vergessen, wie sie ist. Als Sie angefangen haben, da wussten Sie's: People's Music Hall, Cole Hippodrome, Brighton Place Theatre ...der Junge aus

Lancashire, damals wusste er's. Damals hat niemand schärfer geschossen als Eddie Waters, sagt man. Weil Sie noch Kontakt hatten zu dem Leben, das Sie gemacht hat ... Hunger, Diphtherie, Dreck, Arbeitslosigkeit, Wanzen, Flöhe ... War *die* Wahrheit auch schön ? Die Wahrheit war eine Faust, mit der Sie zugeschlagen haben ... Nichts hat sich geändert ... genau wie Sie vor vierzig Jahren. Wir sind immernoch im Käfig, ausgebeutet, hin und her geschubst, gemolken, gemästet, geschlachtet, zerhackt, als Frass verteilt ...

(Waters) Bevor Sie geboren wurde. Ich war bei der Truppenbetreuung. Der Krieg war gerade vorbei., ein Jahr, vielleicht länger. Wir waren in Deutschland, in der Rhein-Armee, haben da solange rumgemacht, bvis wir die Entlassungspapieren kriegten ... 'N Stück weiter haben wir bei diesem Lager angehalten ... Sie hatten es schön sauber geputzt, wie,s Museum, jeder Raum hatte seine eigene, besondere Sammlung ... Ja, und dann diese ... wahnsinnige Sache ... in dieser Hölle gabs einen Sonderblock, den 'Strafblock'. es hat 'ne Minute gedauert, bis ich's kapiert hatte, und dann hätt ich fast laut gelacht ... Es war nicht zu fassen und dann war's mir klar. Dar war 'ne Welt, wie jede andere. Es hatte dieselbe logik won unserer Welt ... nur erweitert ...

(Price) La vérité ... Qu'est-ce que vous savez de la vérité, Mr Walter ? Vous pensez que la vérité est *belle* ? Vous avez oublié ce qu'elle est. Vous le saviez quand vous avez commencé votre numéro à la « rose Rouge » ...;/.../Oui, en ce temps-là, vous le saviez. Personne ne tape plus fort, plus dur qu'Edmond Walter, voilà ce qu'on disait. Parce qu'alors vous aviez encore la foi. Malgré la faim, la maladie, la crasse, le chômage, les asiles de nuit, les cafards, les poux ... La vérité, c'est le poing fermé avec lequel vous frappiez ... Rien n'a changé, Mr Walter ... Comme vous il y a trente ans. Nous continuons à être engagés, exploités, tirés à hue et a dia, sucés comme des vaches à lait, engraisés pour l'abattoir et la boucherie, complètement bouffés ...

(Walter) Avant que vous soyez né, j'ai fait une tournée pour les troupes anglaises en Allemagne /.../. Un peu plus loin, nous sommes arrivés à ... ce camp ... Tout avait été nettoyé. C'était comme un musée. Dans chaque baraquement, on nous montrait quelque chose de nouveau ... Et encore ceci ... cette chose stupéfiante ... dans cet enfer, un bloc spécial, « der Staf Bloc », le « Bloc punitif ». Il m'a fallu une minute pour réaliser l'absurdité d'une pareille inscription : j'ai failli éclater de rire ; c'était tellement grotesque ... Puis je me suis rendu compte. C'est un monde comme le nôtre. Ils sont allés plus loin, c'est tout ...

There is no real distorsion apart from 50 years in the English text, 40 in the German one and 30 in the French one. And the number of places Eddie Waters make himself famous at, which is relatively trivial. The means test and the blighty bonds in the English text are also lost in the target language versions. The French text version omits the « logic » of the concentration camp and only this seems to be

a major omission. Another distortion may exist, but it cannot be assessed in any way. To what extent does using German to depict a sense that is so fraught with ambiguity in the history of Germany have an impact differing from that produced on English and French spectators listening to the same text in their own tongue and distantiating themselves in another way from the events conjured up by this text?

In other words, the core of the play does not seem to suffer in the so-called adaptation. It may even at times have more impact and a greater charge of emotion than the so-called translation. This is not in relation to the translation or adaptation proper, but indeed to the decisions made as to the distribution of the two devices.

3.2. Translating drama

The reader of the written text of the play is impressed by the precision of stage directions. In fact these go far beyond the usual stage directions and the wealth of details and nuances, when it comes to creating the atmosphere or trying to underline the feelings that actors have to express is just baffling. Translators have a tendency to pay less attention to the accurate rendering of these precious indications, probably relying on the stage director to make good for the information left out.

- (23) 7 the school ... doing its *sullen best*
7 *starkish* lights - lighting *flintily*
7 *haphazard* heights
7 notices *drooping their way to limbo*
8 Price (sour, his dominant note)
8 he leaves it hanging, *minatory*
10 studiously contemptuous
11 a regression to childhood responses
11 the hair metallic on the skull
15 unaware of the interruption of *process* he represents
16 snorts, sustaining the speedy rhythms of the exercise
18 impassive - close and tense - sense of discomfiture
18 struggle for facility - levelly, measuredly
20 laconic, *drawn out*
30 mannerism - *lithe* charm
33 smiling thinly, undazzled - *scanning* for concern or alarm
34 splenetic
35 the venom *muscles* his throat - a dancer in a minefield
36 gingerly - cringing - face crinkling with disgust
48 bagging half-mast trousers - face whitened to *deaden* and mask the face
48 eerie - sinking into *process*
48 teeth set on edge - winces mutely
49 praying mantis footsweeps - *unselfconscious* arrogance
51 barks of laughter
52 *glum* - drained
54 a *freak of anger* at the vent - harsh, half-self-punishing gesture
59 he leaves, kiln-fired, hard inside the compromise
60 *he treks* the lonely walk to the door
66 perhaps pondering a handshake

Underlined are what appears to me as special difficulties. It will be noted that most

of these difficulties are attached to the description of Gethin Price, Eddie Waters and their interrelation - which is not surprising.

Viewing the video taped play confirms the impression that extreme care was given to selecting and directing actors, and to preparing the setting of the play. Some data even seem superfluous in the sense that it seems impossible to convey them to the spectator. For instance how can it be made clear that the « evening centre » where the would-be comedians meet is also meant for

(24) 7 yoga, cordon bleu cookery, 'O' level English, secreterial prelims, do-it-yourself, small investments and antique furniture

This video tape also suggests another question. Considering the minute care taken for the production of the play, under the guidance of the author and on the basis of this profusion of directions, would the author accept any foreign versions but those for which he would have full guarantee that extreme care has likewise been taken. In absolute terms, respecting the scenery, the acting, the rhythm implies that only accurate dubbing of a production under the baton of the author can possibly achieve this utopian goal. The spectators would then be so carried away by this play in the play that the Englishness of the original work would be completely obliterated. Or would this Englishness still be an obstacle to full appreciation of the play by foreign audiences? Unless, as suggested above, the solution is to be sought in some amount of adaptation, this amount being left to the appreciation of the « clever » translator.

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