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TRANSLATING SCANDINAVIAN DRAMA — FOR WHOM?

"...what counts in the phenomenon of translation, of performance and of everything that happens in time, is the hierarchy of signs [...] whether translation or theatre *mise en scène*, it is all the same work, it is the art of making choices in the hierarchy of signs." (Antoine Vitez)¹

The process of moving between languages is never a simple word-to-word process since it always involves a cultural dimension. Nowhere is this more evident than in the translation of plays for the theatre since the transposition from page to stage inevitably magnifies the linguistic and cultural shifts.

As recently as 1980, André Lefevere could write:

Although many monographs of X as translator of Y exist in the field of drama translation, none, to my knowledge, go beyond treating drama as simply the text on the page. There is, therefore, practically no theoretical literature on the translation of drama as acted and produced.²

Although the situation has improved, thanks to, among others, Egil Törnqvist, we still find comparatively little written in this area, generally, and nothing specifically about how theory of translating for the stage addresses, affects, or reflects the realities of theatre publishing.

¹"The Duty to Translate," interview with Antoine Vitez by Georges Banu, *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 128.

²"Translating Literature/Translated Literature--The State of the Art," in *The Languages of Theatre*, ed. Ortrun Zuber (Oxford: Pergamon, 1980), 153-161, 171-177; this ref. p.177.

What we do find is, on one hand, an ongoing body of anecdotal evidence by practising translators, discussing problems they have encountered and their solutions, and comparing translations, demonstrating the superiority of one over the other.³ Such 'war stories,' though often illuminating and entertaining, do not necessarily advance the quest for an understanding of where these problems originate and reside and whether there is any way of resolving them on a theoretical basis.

On the other hand, in the last couple of decades, semioticians like Patrice Pavis have trained their highpowered searchlights on the process of translating for the stage, often as a sideline to a main inquiry — in Pavis' case, an inquiry into the nature of *mise en scène* as process and end product in the theatre. Pavis' discussion generally revolves around elaborating and perfecting theoretical models of image transmission from author's mind to theatre spectator/audience's mind, a transmission that may or may not include translation from language to language.⁴ In the last decade he and others, particularly in France and Germany, have also been paying much attention to 'translation' from culture to culture, some of it focused on theatre texts like Mnouchkine's *Les Atrides* and Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*. The work of Pavis *et al.* certainly bespeaks great breadth of knowledge and vibrant intellectual curiosity, but also enormous mental investment in a highly articulated theoretical structure that for a theatre practitioner seldom touches down on the plane of actual practise.

My remarks are, by contrast, limited; my vocabulary pedestrian; and whatever flights of theory I indulge in have their basis in a desire to sort out and clarify one particular area of play translation: the confusion resulting from an inadequate understanding of the divergent functions

³A treasure of such "war stories" have recently appeared in print in the United Kingdom, e.g., *Translation*, No. 1 in the series *Platform Papers* (London: Royal National Theatre, 1992), and *Stages of Translation: Essays and Interviews on Translating for the Stage*, ed. David Johnston (Bath: Absolute Press, 1996).

⁴Of Pavis' recent *oeuvre* especial mention should be made of *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis, and "Toward Specifying Theatre Translation," in *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, trans. Loren Kruger (London: Routledge, 1992), 136-59.

of dramatic text, with specific reference to some particular challenges in translating Scandinavian plays into English.

Also, my inquiry will begin and end with practical considerations. It is prompted by the actual situation of theatre translators in the United States, particularly translators of plays from minor languages like Swedish and Norwegian. Thus, I begin with the question suggested in my title "For whom is this play translation being done?" and my concluding remarks will be in the form of practical — though, with the current lack of support for the arts in the US, probably unfindable — recommendations.

Why has so little been written about theatre translation? Long neglected because relegated to second class status along with the not-quite-respectable art form it serves and helps constitute, theatre translation is also difficult to write about, partly for the same reasons that performance of any kind is difficult to capture in words. For translation for the theatre — more than any other translation — is a translation not of words, but of a cultural and performative dimension realized through verbal and gestural elements in an audiovisual 'evocation' (to use Pavis' term); based on words, to be sure, but going far beyond them. It is a translation not so much of what is as of what may be, not only of sound but of silence, not only of presence but of absence, not only of threads but of interstices.

Another reason why theatre translation is difficult to write about is the general lack of recognition of the divergent functions of written theatre text. Since the difference between these functions is almost invisible in the original — the same text usually supports all theatre text functions — it tends to be overlooked in translating that text. By the same token, distinctions like Erika Fisher Lichte's between 'literarische Text' and 'theatralische Text' or Egil Törnqvist's between 'drama text' and 'performance text' notwithstanding, the fact that in English the same word 'play' is used about all the different texts regardless of function semantically erases the boundaries between these functions.

'Function' is indeed the key word. If we look not at the text's linguistic, connotative or associative values, but at how and by whom its translation is going to be used, we will, I maintain, better understand

how to approach the task of that translation. (There is in fact a double consideration of function implied: if the original text is clearly skewed towards one particular function, the translator must be sensitive to that bias. A source text defined by one function may not support another function in translation.) "Translating — For Whom?" is indeed the question.

When you hold the text of a play in your hand, whether in the form of a handwritten MS, a typed dog-eared actor's script, a director's massive 'Regiebuch,' or a leather-bound 'Collected Works' volume, you are holding one of several different kinds of texts. Its distinctive function is sometimes but not necessarily reflected in its appearance. The kind of play text you are holding depends on your relationship to that text. Who are YOU? A reader, a scholar, a dramaturg, a director, an actor ready to begin rehearsals, an actor in a long running production of that play, a community theatre producer, an audience member?

Play texts and play translations serve six distinguishable consumer constituencies and functions at the present time; in the future there may be more. I identify these constituencies as Readers, Scholars, Directors/Dramaturgs, *Metteurs-en-Scène*, Actors, and 'Lazy Directors.' These groups, and the texts serving them, are identified in the following as R, S, D, M, A, and LD, respectively. The four main text groups are R, S, D, and LD; M and A being derived from D. (For a schematic illustration of how they relate to each other, see fig. 1.) Texts R, S, and sometimes LD are intended to be "consumed" on the printed page, D — refined into M and A — and sometimes LD are intended for eventual "consumption" by spectators/audience members.

fig. 1 The six scripts/functions

The 'petals' around S signify the scholarly apparatus surrounding the text

In the following I will address how the different groups are served by different kinds of scripts, what the scripts' distinctive functional features are, what happens in translation to so often confuse and conflate them, and why they cannot substitute for one another — in some cases absolutely not, in others preferably not. I will then offer some suggestions for clarifying the function of a play text and its translation so that theatre translators might better serve theatre, playwrights, and the theatregoing public.

As mentioned above, the original language play text usually serves/supports all six functions (and more). No matter what its form — leatherbound volume, handwritten or typed MS, paperback — the *Haupttext* and *Nebentext* are the same, with the possible exception of the scholarly edition that may emend, restore, or otherwise enrich the text by acknowledging contradictory authorial impulses.⁵

But when we are dealing with the translation of a play text, we find that the divergent functions put different stresses on the script and force it in different, even opposite directions, beyond the parameters of the original. For example, directors who feel that the author's stage directions limit the creativity of the production team often ignore and cut the *Nebentext*. Academics, on the other hand, may want to study precisely the *Nebentext*. One and the same translation can no longer contain/serve/support all the different functions. Consequently,

⁵The term *Nebentext* is here used in Egil Törnqvist's expanded sense of all the play text aside from the spoken dialogue (*Haupttext*), in other words, not only in Roman Ingarden's sense of stage directions and acting directions. (Törnqvist, *Transposing Drama* [London: Macmillan, 1991], 10; Ingarden, *Das Literarische Kunstwerk*, 2nd ed. [Tübingen: 1960], 120.)

translators had better know what function a particular play translation is supposed to serve before launching into a translation project.

What, then, are the six functions, the six types of texts? What characterizes them? What happens to theatre text in translation to make it unable to support the divergent functions that were perfectly supported in the source language text? And how does all this effect the work of theatre practitioners?

First, there are two polarities or spectra that all translators must confront and probably consciously align themselves with. One such polarity or spectrum is that from, at one end, Gogol's 'clear pane of glass' translation to, at the other end, the translation that advertises itself as a translation, sometimes to the point of exoticizing the material. The clear pane of glass is a translation that attempts to be totally invisible so that the text appears to have been written in the language, culture, and literary tradition of the target language. (Examples: translations of Shakespeare's iambic pentameter dramas into French alexandrines and Strindberg's substitution of Lamartine for Stagnelius in *Père*, his own translation of *Fadren*.)

The second polarity is between, at one end, a text that is a finished work of literary art, and, at the other, a text which — to use Susanne Langer's term — is 'commanding form' for performance, an incomplete work of art to be completed by other artists. A poem, a novel, or a play (that troublesome term again) can all be enjoyed by the reader as finished works of literature. But theatre is performance. Most play texts throughout history have been and are intended to be performed. (Some may have come down to us only as performance records, whether the impetus for that performance was a written 'commanding form,' now lost, or unscripted improvisation. The point is that very little has been written that was not intended for future performance.) The translator must decide where on this spectrum between literature and 'commanding form' a particular text falls. For whom is s/he translating, the reader or the theatre practitioner? Or maybe the scholar — the literary historian, the theatre historian, the sociologist, the anthropologist? Or is the placement on this spectrum itself perhaps to be called into question? Is it perhaps the translator's intent to have the

target language text oscillate between or be simultaneously present at both ends, just like the source language text is able to be?

In modern times, translators have usually come down on the side of the clear pane of glass (notable exceptions are, e.g., Bible translators). The translation should "read and sound as if it were an original work in English," to this day the editorial board policy of *Modern International Drama*.⁶ Recently, however, the clear pane of glass has increasingly been seen as colonizing or imperialistic, appropriating the foreign and not allowing it to exist on its own terms. Today many, like Jatinder Verma and Rustom Bharucha, argue for the value of preserving — even emphasizing — a sense of 'otherness.'

The decision about which approach to take — literature or 'commanding form,' clear pane of glass or exoticizing — is in part made by the function. If you translate R or S, you present a finished work to be read/enjoyed and studied/analyzed. If you translate D (M, A) or LD, you are producing variations of 'commanding form.' (LD, which is always a record of an already mounted production, can be intended as 'commanding form' for performance, or documentation of a particularly noteworthy production. Samuel French's 'acting editions' are the first kind, Ingmar Bergman's script of *Fröken Julie* published by the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Stockholm is an example of the second.) The decision where to aim on the spectrum from clear pane of glass to exoticizing should, in the case of LD, D, and the latter's two offshoots, M and A, not be made by the translator but by the dramaturg/director and theatre practitioners. In the case of R and S, the translator should make the choice (it usually veers toward 'clear pane' for R and 'foreign' for S).

The six texts/functions will be described, not in order of importance or creation, but in order of complexity of function.

The first, R, the Reader's script, is intended for the reading public, the 'armchair theatre of the world.' The translator produces a finished work of literary art. S/he makes all the choices that reach the text's 'consumer,' the reader. In the 19th century, playwrights with a 'message', e.g., Shaw and Ibsen, begin to write plays aimed at readers

⁶Ed. George Wellworth, printed on the inside cover of each issue.

as well as theatre practitioners. These are often characterized by a well developed argument and extensive *Nebentext*, directing the action and 'painting' the scene for the reader, and lend themselves beautifully to translation R. Many directorial choices have been made — the detailed arrangement of the set, psychological nuances, intended effects of lines and actions — and the script is comparatively closed. Other playwrights, like Strindberg, tend to leave choices more open.⁷ Barry Jacobs perceptively suggests that this kind of 'vacuum' is horrifying to translators and stimulate them to quickly step in and 'complete' the text.⁸ Strindberg's German translator Emil Schering goes one step further: he bows to the reader's anticipated response when he abbreviates and mercilessly edits Strindberg's texts because "en oavkortad publicering skulle förvirra läsaren genom en inte alltid motiverad långgrandighet."⁹

Translation R will often be a clear pane of glass. It strives to be smooth and readable; the text should not get between the reader and the images created by the text. It tends to be heavy on *Nebentext*, aimed at giving the reader a full experience of the play. R also aims to be a sort of short-circuited, condensed, abbreviated, telescoped version of the process D-M-A(-LD) that a script undergoes in the theatre. The translator, in a sense, mounts a 'production' in his/her head and records the choices in writing. S/he casts, rehearses, directs, and plays out the action, mediating between the source and the target culture. As

⁷An exception is *Kristina*, in which Strindberg uses numerous and detailed stage directions, probably, as pointed out by Amy van Marken, not out of consideration for a reader but to help Harriet Bosse in her study of the title role. ("Strindberg's *Kristina*. En ny teknik," *Studi Nordici* 22 [1979], 165-76.)

⁸"Bland amerikanska läsare och kritiker: Strindberg i översättning," *August Strindberg och hans översättare*, eds. Björn Meidal and Nils Åke Nilsson, *Konferenser* 33 (Stockholm: Royal Academy of Letters History and Antiquities and the Strindberg Society, 1995), 75-86; this ref. p.78.

⁹Helmut Müssener, "'Det är synd om...'" Strindberg och de tyska översättarna," *August Strindberg och hans översättare*, 25-34; this quote p. 29. (...publication of the unabbreviated text would confuse the reader with its not always justified longwindedness.) Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

the noted Ibsen translator Rolf Fjelde puts it, "Theatrical translation is a performing art, in which the multiple cast-of-one solitarily plays all the roles."¹⁰

R translations can do enormous service to playwrights by making them known. They can introduce a playwright to a particular culture. It is through his R translations that the British translator Michael Meyer has managed to introduce both Ibsen and Strindberg to the Anglo-Saxon world in such an effective way. But his translations can not be used as S, for scholarly research, nor do they serve well as D, a director's copy.

The scholar's script, S, is the text used for scholarly study. In the source language, this is the one text that most frequently is published in a distinctly different — annotated, commentated — form parallel with the author's original. A good example would be any one of Strindberg's dramas in the new national edition. Though it may be consulted by a director/dramaturg or actor, neither the text nor the physical volume is primarily intended for theatre use. (For one thing, no dramaturg/director or actor is interested in carrying around a volume containing several plays when only one is being prepared for production.)

The translated S strives — by means of extensive annotation and explication — to preserve, or provide access to, as many as possible of the original's reverberations, associations, and connotations, as evidenced in, among other things, the original text's punctuation, capitalization (if idiosyncratic), and variants. It strives to be an open text. If, e.g., a source language word or expression has two or three meanings and a number of connotations, these need to be somehow communicated, usually through a scholarly apparatus. The scholarly translation is therefore likely to be clumsy, cumbersome, and 'un-performable,' though still the best text to study for someone who does not speak the source language. (One would think that any international Strindberg or Ibsen scholar should be able to study the sources in the original, but there are studies done all the way up to the doctoral level

¹⁰"Lost in Translation," *Theatre Communication*, Vol.6, No.2 (Feb. 1984), 1-4, this quote p. 4.

relying on translations, especially of works from small language groups like Swedish and Norwegian.) A good example of a scholarly translation is the Oxford edition of Ibsen's dramas, edited by James McFarlane, which aims to make Ibsen's notes and drafts available to the non-Norwegian scholar.

The third kind of play text, D, is likewise wrought to be read and studied — but not by scholars, by theatre practitioners, primarily Directors/Dramaturgs.

Texts D, M, and A are actually all part of the same process, the 'evocation' on stage or *mise-en-scène*. D is the starting point, the first text encountered by the director and his team, while A represents the words that eventually reach the audience in performance. Between D and A there may be an intermediary stage reflected in the concrete text M (M for *Metteurs-en-scène*), representing the choices made by the director and team before rehearsals begin with the actors. D, then, is the complete, optimally open text that the dramaturg/director should have access to, M the script that is presented to the actors at the first rehearsal as a result of pre-production choices, and A the final script, arrived at through the rehearsal process with the actors and heard by the audience. Some directors use D as M, allowing no pre-production choices to shape the text, others make deep cuts between D and M. In some productions, the director insists that no changes be made between M and A, in others the actors are invited to completely rewrite M.

Like S, D should be as open as possible. D strives to preserve and present all options, all connotations, all reverberations of the original, since it is the raw material from which the dramaturg and director, informed by their vision, will shape first the working script M, the 'commanding form' for the producing theatre team, and, from M, the words heard by the audience, A. Therefore the translator's task with regard to D is to keep doors open, not to close them.

So why should directors not use translation S, the scholar's script? (They often do.) It is open, it is inclusive, it is informative.

But there is a crucial difference between S and D: D is a text for performance and must pay attention to the constraints of a performance text. The ambiguity of the translation as performed must ap-

proximate that of the source text, in other words, there can be no amplifying footnotes, no clarifying repetition in the *Haupttext*. The gestural implications of the punctuation and the sound/musical values of the *Haupttext* need to be observed and rendered. The musical values — duration, silences, meter, rhythm or stress patterns, long and short vowel sounds, repetitions, sound motifs with variations, even specific sounds — should all be as sensitive as possible to the original text, or, as Vitez puts it, "conform to the movement of the speech..." (128) An especially important value to preserve is duration, since most translation results in lengthening. (Duration is observed only in translations of libretti and song lyrics and, to some extent, dubbed film dialogue. Interestingly, Vitez credits his work as a translator to his early experience dubbing dialogue for the cinema.)¹¹

Thus D, the dramaturg/director's text, combining the detail of S with concern for performative values, is the richest possible text, from which the director and production team, including the actors, will, through their collaborative creative effort, distill, arrive at, and realize their own 'evocation'. In D, *Nebentext* and *Haupttext* must be fully glossed, elaborated, and articulated. But in the process from D to A the text does a kind of disappearing act. Not counting the linguistic translation, there are two 'interventions' on the way from D to A, the first between D and M, the second one between M and A. In both interventions the text is slimmed down by the choices made — choices informed by lexical values *and* musical values. M, the script handed the actor, often has little or no *Nebentext*. (The director does not want to confuse the actors by printing the playwright's stage directions; instead, new blocking and stage business are invented by the director and the actors.) The end result, A — the words spoken by the actors that reach the audience — obviously has no *Nebentext*, nor has it any of the didascalic features (punctuation, layout, typestyle, etc.) of the *Haupttext*. So A is the end result of that process, the gold you have

¹¹Future CD-ROM technology may allow interfoliation of original text, perhaps a facsimile of the original MS, with soundbytes in the original language to give a sense of the musical values inherent in the text.

sifted out, your text, specific to *your* audience, *your* theatre, *your* reception, *your* context.

The LD, the 'lazy director's' text, is a record after the fact of a production, consisting of A plus the reinstated, expanded *Nebentext* from D, but also incorporating expanded stage directions, a complete list of stage properties used, lighting effects, scenic arrangements, floorplan — all the solutions that were arrived at through the directorial concept and hard work of a specific production team. This text is the so called 'acting edition' — best known through the theatre publishing giant Samuel French. LD is quite closed, as it represents the final stage in a process of choices, and is there to be read and imitated. The director who uses LD mimics another production and shortcuts the whole creative process — which, judging from the popularity of LD scripts, is standard procedure in the US. It is also an 'invisible' practice: I have only found one critical discussion of the difference between using the original published script (R) and the acting edition (LD) of a play.¹²

LD has limited value as a production script in that it prescribes solutions and limits creativity. But as a record of a specific production it has potential value as a scholarly resource, a partial record ideally supplemented by other records (sound recordings, videos, films, photographs, etc.).

Now comes the problem: in the 'real world' these six texts — R and LD quite closed, S and D wide open, M and A closed — are all being used indiscriminately, replacing each other. Or, rather, only one of them tends to be published and is therefore made to serve all the functions. As publishers favor money and mass production, the text with the largest potential sales figures is published. This is not the painstaking S, certainly not the cumbersome D also geared to performance values, nor the dialogue-only script A customized for Theatre X. It might be LD, which can be pitched to lazy directors,

¹²Geoffrey Borny, "The Two Glass Menageries: An Examination of the Effects on Meaning that Result from Directing the Reading Edition as Opposed to the Acting Edition of the Play," *Page to Stage--Theatre as Translation*, ed. Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984), 117-136.

community theatre groups, and theatre students. But it certainly is R, with its potential readership in lecture halls and millions of armchairs which can be tapped through textbook presses and reading circles like the Fireside Theatre Book Club. Publishers, along with literary academies and general readers who are not theatre practitioners or scholars, prefer and reward R. Some translators deliberately shape their scripts as R to make them more publishable, even if the translation was commissioned by Theatre X as a D. So the printed R becomes the only translation easily available, and is then plugged into the other functions — with varying, sometimes disastrous, results.

Disastrous, because no translators specify what kind of translation they are actually providing. Disastrous, because the ‘consumer,’ who does not speak the original language, has no way of knowing what he is actually ‘buying.’ In Harry Carlson’s translation of *Miss Julie*, he reintroduces Miss Julie’s scar (given her by her fiancé before the play begins) which Strindberg had cut when readying the MS for publication. What kind of text is Carlson’s translation? If Carlson himself were using his text as a director’s script for production, it would, combined with his own extensive knowledge of the original, serve as a D, a director/dramaturg’s script. But when it is presented as a printed *fait accompli* to a director without Carlson’s background, it is closer to an R than a D. It is certainly not an S, nor an A. Michael Meyer’s translations are likewise R. So are Evert Sprinchorn’s: they elaborate, explain, and lengthen the text — Sprinchorn’s translations are almost 50% longer than Strindberg’s originals. (Note that elaboration is not the same as repetition, formally or psychologically. Translators often elaborate and fill out, yet leave out simple repetitions — even when the point is as much the repetition as what is being repeated.) These R translations are easy to understand. They may be illuminating to a director and enjoyable to read, but if they are used on stage the actors end up ‘chewing cud,’ for Sprinchorn pays little attention to duration and other musical values.

Are there any open D translations available in print? Could someone who does not speak Swedish or Norwegian and wanted to direct, e.g., *Miss Julie* or *Hedda Gabler*, find an open director/dramaturg’s translation anywhere? Every director of a classic, foreign play should have

access to this kind of open, rich text. But though a certain demand may exist for a D translation of, say, *Miss Julie*, that text would be too expensive to produce commercially, too specialized, too unwieldy, and of limited appeal to armchair audiences. The D translation has no existence independent of production. It is commissioned by a theatre or director as the need arises, created anew for each new production, ideally by a dramaturg/translator working together with the director. The open D translation exists only to be closed — gently, and on stage.

There is a certain advantage to a translator in making an impermanent D (and the subsequent M and A scripts) rather than an R, S, or LD. The appearance is not crucial, the quality of paper and layout unimportant.¹³ And the language dares to be exotic, irregular, and peculiar, while any script that is published is subject to editorial normalizing.

The question of longevity, intended permanence, is crucial. The more permanent, the more institutionalized, the more prestige-laden the form of the script, the less it is likely to support live theatre. The more ephemeral, the more transient the script, the closer it may be to the true nature of theatre. And as Vitez points out,

It is just this which characterizes translation: the fact that it must be perpetually redone. I feel it to be an image [...] of theatrical Art, which is the art of infinite variety. Everything must be played again and again, everything must be taken up and retranslated. (124)

The narrowing down of D and refining of it via M often results in an acting text A that dares be quite irregular on the page, quite exotic, not at all a clear pane of glass, and yet works well on stage. This

¹³Nobody wants to print an unwieldy, impermanent D used by a handful of people, or a slimmed down A, which exists in maybe 20-30 copies, is carried and marked up in rehearsal, set aside when it is memorized, and discarded when it has served. An occasional D maybe preserved. One or two A copies may be archived. But printed? No. Such is the fate of directors' promptbooks and actors' scripts.

seeming paradox is explained by the well-known fact that communication on stage is about 9/10 gestural, i.e., non verbal, with only 1/10 carried by the actual words spoken. As long as the actors, guided by the director, have accessed the full range of subtextual options, have explored all implications, ramifications, and reverberations and made their choices, those choices and that exploration will inform the way in which the characters speak the simplest, sparest words. We all know how bare a plain "yes" or "hello" or "come here" can look on the page, yet how rich and loaded it can be on the stage. Therefore, if the director and actors have had access to the context and subtext — the 9/10 of the iceberg — then the words themselves — the 1/10 above the surface — will be informed by the unseen 9/10s. You can afford to have words in your A dialogue that at first glance appear cryptic, laconic, abrupt, reduced, simple, peculiar, irregular, awkward, obscure, and yet be clear and rich. In the dialogue which would be considered strange and unacceptable by editors of printed text, you can capture and preserve values which work on stage because the subtext is true and the text is amplified by other sign systems. It is psychologically true, it is aesthetically true, it is metaphorically true, it is consistent with the vision of the whole that the director has arrived at. Therefore you can, on stage, 'get away with' having Kristin in *Miss Julie* addressing Jean with "he", using the third person address, even though you could not get it past an editor into print.

But, you object, that is not good English! You cannot do that! Yes, you can. In fact, you can do it on stage and nobody will even notice — if it is done with a full understanding of how it functions. You can utter a lot more peculiar, 'exotic,' spare things on stage than you can in print when you know the subtext and there is a larger context for what the characters say. Many Strindberg and Chekhov translations end up being extremely wordy because the translator is afraid that the reader — the director as reader — will not understand the text's ramifications, reverberations, and associations. And so the translator elaborates, clarifies, and makes sure that the reader gets 'the point.' The rich material from the 9/10 below the surface is loaded into the 1/10 tip of the iceberg, swelling it and making it top heavy. Meanwhile, the translator has missed the point of the repetition, the brevity of the

utterance, the nature of the exchange, and the musical values of the language.

What the director gets to work with is a long wordy line which over-clarifies and spells out the subtext instead of implying it. While the line may serve to inform the director (impressing on him the translator's vision), it does not serve the actors who must speak that "straw-in-the-mouth," as Sir Laurence Olivier used to call it.¹⁴ It is redundant spoken on stage, and ultimately does not serve the production. Instead the translator should capitalize on the deictic nature of theatre dialogue and load in some of the gesture of the scene from the verbal 1/10 (dialogue) to the gestural 9/10 (implied by dialogue and *Nebentext*).

Although the translator may lengthen the text in the process of trying to explain and fill it out, s/he does not necessarily allow choices to exist. S/He will first make choices for you, then elaborate on the ones made. (It's like closing all doors but one and then decorating that one instead of leaving all doors open and undecorated.) The director should have a full menu of choices out of which s/he can distill a text recapturing the original dialogue's musical values and speech acts (sparring, interrogation, attack, caress, etc.), i.e. Vitez' "movement of the speech." How may this be achieved?

An open script can become a closed script, but a closed one can never become an open one. The closed is closed, the choices have been made. The director makes his *mise-en-scène* choices on top of the ones made by the translator, while the choices inherent in the original are not available to him — the doors open in the original have been closed. Choices made by the translator are crucial, cuts irretrievable. As Kjell Amble puts it,

If the stage director [...] feels impelled to indulge in a little face lifting in order to enhance a foreign playwright's appearance in front of a domestic audience, we realize that no amount of plastic surgery can restore to truthful communication what the translator has

¹⁴Michael Meyer, 'Strindberg in England,' *Essays on Strindberg*, ed. Carl Reinhold Smedmark (Stockholm: J. Beckman, 1966), 71.

committed to extinction by amputation, and it is precisely for the reason that his cuts are so final and irrevocable and robs the director of information which, if he had it, might conceivably influence his interpretation, that the translator's concern ought to be to preserve the original in its entirety in order to give the director more to go on. [...] Let not the translator, however well intentioned, cut away parts of the original, for no amount of cosmetic surgery can restore what has been removed by amputation.¹⁵

Many features of Strindberg's language are vulnerable to obliteration in translation, e.g., his inventiveness, tautness, grammatical fluidity, concrete metaphors, and "ryckiga, ständigt spårväxlande Strindbergsrytm."¹⁶ One feature which is routinely irretrievably cut — and need not be so — is his idiosyncratic punctuation, particularly in R and LD, translations edited by literary editors who insist on correct grammar and syntax and normal punctuation. If the translator has not already normalized the punctuation, the editor will. So the director ends up losing the direct insight into Strindberg's directorial mind that the script could have provided. Part of Strindberg's text is how the characters speak, and part of how they speak is indicated by the punctuation. The fact that the punctuation is so idiosyncratic is a clear indication that it is meaningful. If it were fairly normal, occasional oddities might be dismissed as carelessness on Strindberg's part. But it is so consistently outrageous that it betrays a temperament and charts emotional states and thought processes. It is a map of the characters' (and Strindberg's) inner landscape, a map obliterated by the normalizing editor, who in turn is guided by a reading public that does not wish to be confused by questions ending in exclamation marks.¹⁷

¹⁵Kjell Amble, 'The Spirit of Ibsen: Problems of English Translation in Three of His Plays,' Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University 1964, 268.

¹⁶Nils Svanberg, *Svensk stilistik*, 2nd ed. (Stockholm: C.E.Fritzes Bokförlags AB, 1954), 119. (...the fitfull, continually track-changing rhythm of Strindberg's.)

¹⁷Kerstin Dahlbäck discusses Strindberg's punctuation though not as a directorial aid. (*Ändå tycks allt vara osagt* [Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1994], 190-93.)

A relevant observation about the directorial function of Strindberg's punctuation and at the same time evidence that a play translation is assumed to have multiple functions is offered by Barry Jacobs, who observes that "det är uppenbart att han [Strindberg] avsåg att antyda både tempo och tonfall genom valet av skiljetecken," yet continues,

Ett speciellt problem utgör de många utropstecknen hos Strindberg, eftersom de endast ibland tyder på ett upprört sinnestillstånd och därför oftast bör återges med punkt. De flesta här anförda översättningarna förstör tonen genom ett alltför rikligt [i.e., Strindbergian] bruk av utropstecken.¹⁸

The number of exclamation points can be seen only by a reader. But the director as reader or the actor as reader would presumably welcome Strindberg's exclamation points, and only the reader as reader would share Jacobs' annoyance. For whom does Barry Jacobs suppose the translation is intended, a director (actor) or a reader? Is the translation a D, an A, or an R? It clearly cannot satisfy the needs of a director and a reader at the same time. Some texts must be as open as possible, others should be closed and finished.

If a play's *mise-en-scène* — in the sense of realization on stage — is a narrowing process, it is clear that a later script cannot serve an earlier function: M cannot serve as D; A cannot serve as either M or D; and

In my unpublished paper "Strindberg's Punctuation: Code with Gestural Implications?" (presented at the X International Strindberg Conference, University of East Anglia, 1990) I argue for a reading of Strindberg's punctuation influenced by the approach of Neil Freeman to Shakespeare's First Folio. Also Ibsen occasionally uses irregular punctuation, e.g., to express Hedda's inner state in *Hedda Gabler*.

¹⁸"Bland amerikanska läsare och kritiker," 84-85. (...it is obvious that he intended to suggest tempo as well as tone of voice by his punctuation choices. [...] A special problem is Strindberg's many exclamation points since they only sometimes indicate an excited mental state and therefore most often should be rendered as a period. Most of the translations quoted here destroy the tone by too liberal an application of exclamation points.)

neither A, M, nor D can serve as R or S. LD cannot serve as A, M, or D for the production which it is documenting, nor can R or even S serve well as D. Texts should not substitute for each other: some must be as open as possible, others should be closed and finished. We know that the director/dramaturg needs a maximally open script. But translation itself is making choices, closing doors, narrowing options. What to do?

One solution is to study the transmission path of a play from author's 'vision' to recipient's mind to see how one can minimize gaps in the transmission and give the director maximum choices. (The assumption here, unspoken and unexamined also by Pavis, is that maximum access to the author's 'intention' is desirable.) The most complex path of transmission from author's vision to recipient's mind is the one via a director/dramaturg who reads the text with a team of theatre workers and creates a production script, which is communicated through a concrete *mise-en-scène* to a receiving body (the audience). (See fig. 2.) (This is the only path of transmission that concerns Pavis. This scheme is similar to Pavis' though he pays most attention to what happens between D and M, in his terms T1 and T2. He is not interested in the difference between R, S, and D, nor in the nature of LD.)¹⁹

fig. 2 Director's script

(O = the original script; dotted lines = intervention, break in communication, often displacement in time and space, message carried by script alone)

¹⁹'Toward Specifying Theatre Translation', esp. 138-42.

The same transmission but of a translated text looks like this:

fig. 3 Director's script, translation

O = the original script

D = translated script given to director/dramaturg

M = script given to *metteurs-en-scène* by director

A = final version of *Haupttext* reaching audience in performance

The 'clouds' above O and D represent what Pavis calls the *mises-en-jeu* of the original and the translated texts, their butting heads the locus of the act of translation. The translation is not lexical, not word to word. The translator maintains two cultural spheres in his head and transfers the *mise-en-jeu* from the original world to the target world, then downloads it into words of the target language.

How can this *mise-en-jeu* be made accessible to the director/dramaturg before it is downloaded into words, i.e., how can the director/dramaturg have any say in the shaping of the translation? And how can the translator be guided by the intended production constraints and concerns (including the director's vision)? How can one avoid the interventions? The answer is suggested by studying the two models (figs. 2 and 3): by conflating the two steps.

The picture will then look something like this:

fig. 4 Director's script, translator/dramaturg/director

The conflation is achieved by the translator working with the director/dramaturg.²⁰ The director receives and generates impulses as part of the translator's *mises-en-jeu*. The translator's choice-making is guided by the director's vision, and the director's vision is informed by the translator's presentation of the possibilities inherent in the *mises-en-jeu*. In practical terms, the process is laborious and time consuming and progresses in a "two steps forward — one step back" shuffle. It is expensive and requires the presence of a dedicated, skilled translator at each preparation of a director/dramaturg's script of a foreign language play.

But by conflating the two steps we have:

- eliminated one intervention/narrowing, namely the step before the text reaches the director;
- made the translator, dramaturg, and director work together, jointly making the choices resulting in the script;
- allowed the translator to close the script more than usual;
- reduced the 'foreign-ness' of the script to the director;
- informed and enriched the director's vision;
- customized choices for this particular production.

My recommendations, then, based on the scheme above, are:

- 1) Each play translation should be function-specific.

²⁰The translator can of course be a translator/dramaturg, and the director can be both dramaturg and director. Occasionally, one and the same person may serve all three functions. In these cases, the steps of the process are naturally conflated.

- A) No play translation should have to do double duty, though there are some that *can* serve more than one function. (S can serve as R and D/M/A, R can serve as D/M/A, LD can serve as R.)
- B) Each play translation should declare its nature (R, S, D, M, A, or LD) on the title page.
- C) Play translations R, S, and LD should all be published and available in print. There should be no market pressure to conflate or combine them or substitute one text for another. The director/dramaturg's translation D and the two resulting from it, M and A, will for economic reasons not be published (editions of 1-40 scripts!).
- 2) After having worked with the director/dramaturg on the basic play translation D for production, the translator (or translator/dramaturg) should ideally be present during rehearsals to help refine it in the successive steps of the *mise-en-scène* (M and A).
- 3) The increased need for translator/dramaturgs could be served by 'roving translator/dramaturgs,' specializing in a certain body of plays, e.g., Strindberg's plays.
- 4) Each D play translation should be production-specific.
- If it is not possible for a director to work with a translator/dramaturg in producing a new translation for a production, a translator/dramaturg's script should be available to the director. This script, which I shall call 'the unprintable X,' will be a new kind of script that is a) as inclusive in its apparatus and *Nebentext* as the most scholarly text; b) more open in the dialogue than any other previously printed text, showing alternate routes, keeping doors open, not closing them; c) clearly foregrounding the sound values (duration etc.) of the language; and d) retaining the subtle directing instructions encoded by the author in idiosyncratic syntax, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and didascalia.

X will, e.g., tell you how long the source language line is, how it is phrased, the number of stressed syllables, the position of key words for emphasis (rhythm), the kind of meter and its implications. It will aim

to give the prospective director options and choices, and share the translation's *mises-en-jeu* with the director. It will retain the original punctuation with notations about its uniqueness and significance. It will be an editor's and English teacher's nightmare. It will be a cumbersome text, perhaps best handled as text with hypertext on CD-ROM.

In conclusion, what I call for are:

- clear identification and labeling of script functions;
- less market-driven conflation of functions;
- less lazy director's editions and more true documentation of performances;
- less editing of play texts to make them 'read well' or conform to standards of correctness;
- more attention paid to those text values that are routinely discarded/ignored in translation but are central to performance (punctuation, sound values);
- a translator/dramaturg specializing in playwright Z for the director of each new production of a play by Z;
- a text X, a full, open production-sensitive translation, if no translator/dramaturg is available to work with the director.

With respect to translations of Strindberg's plays, to retain the 'commanding form' values of the original for a non-Swedish director, specific recommendations include:

- print — or somehow make available for human eyes — 'the unprintable X,' retaining Strindberg's idiosyncratic punctuation, verb tense shifts, mixed metaphors, and so on;
- score the original text like an opera, then shape the translation to fit that score, preserving the long-short vowel values, durations, rhythms, etc.;²¹

²¹One brief example: By scoring Indra's Daughter's famous insight "Det är synd om människorna" for sound values (for simplicity's sake, simply for long and

- use CD-ROM with hypertext to illuminate text: present choices, information, associations.²²
-

short vowel sounds, which translates into stressed and unstressed syllables), a sound "mold" is constructed to support and shape the translation, the way the music molds translations of libretti and song lyrics. Applying the mold to the various English versions below, one quickly identifies the ones which do not "fit":

Example: Det är synd om människorna

u u — u — u — u

Life is pain for human beings
There is pain in being human
It's not easy to be human
There's such pain in being human
Why must human beings suffer?
Oh, what pain it's to be human
It's so hard to be human
Oh how human beings suffer
Mankind is to be pitied
Pitiable human beings
What a shame that human beings have so suffer so much
How I pity human beings
Man deserves my love and pity
Now I pity human beings

I am not suggesting that all translated dialogue can or should fit the sound mold of the original exactly, but I am suggesting that sound values are important, that some dialogue (verse, elevated speech, rituals, incantations) should be more sound-molded than other, and that sound values in these cases should be considered on a par with lexical values and connotations. After all, theatre texts, like poetry, are meant to be spoken and heard.

²²If on CD-ROM, the "unprintable X" could be voluminous and highly unorthodox in appearance and format to provide that full, open field of choices for the director/dramaturg and team to work with. It could be bi-lingual. It could include a score, i.e., musical values could be indicated running along the text: durations, silences, rhythm, stress patterns, sounds, repetitions, etc. The information could be put in as sound bytes or offered as discussion at various points in the script.

What the future may hold we do not know: we can, however, be aware of the potential for diversity and interculturalism in the theatre that resides in combining an informed challenge of past practises with cutting-edge technology in order to create translations that truly serve playwrights, theatreartists, and theatregoers.