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**TRANSLATING DOCUDRAMA  
PER OLOV ENQUIST'S *TRIBADERNAS NATT*  
IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH**

Documentary drama or, for short, docudrama differs from 'ordinary' drama in its heavy reliance on authentic material. As in the case of historical drama, this means that the recipients — readers and spectators — fall into two categories: those who know the facts underlying the drama and those who do not. The difference between the source text and the target text recipients is merely gradual. The difference between recipients *within* both groups may, in fact, be greater than the difference *between* them. In extreme cases, recipients may not even realize that they are confronted with a docudrama.

For the *readers*, ignorance about the underlying authentic reality can easily be resolved by means of an illuminating introduction and/or informative notes. Since this kind of material appears more often in target texts than in source texts, the readers of translations are surprisingly enough frequently in a more favorable position than the readers of the source text. For the *spectators* the situation is the opposite. Here the source text recipients are definitely in a better position to separate facts from fiction. This means that in the theatre, the authenticity of a docudrama can only be grasped by those spectators who have the necessary pre-knowledge, a pre-knowledge that is usually secured via the theatre program. As in the case of historical drama, this pre-knowledge is especially important when it comes to productions abroad.

Scandinavian drama — except for Holberg, Ibsen, Strindberg and, lately, Lars Norén — has rarely been successful outside the Nordic area. An exception is the Swede Per Olov Enquist's play *Tribadernas natt* (*The Night of the Tribades*), which opened at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm on September 27, 1975, and was published the same year. Within one year it had been translated into "more than

seventeen languages” and performed in various parts of the world (Shideler in Enquist 1977, xiii-xiv). It is doubtful whether even Ibsen and Strindberg could break this record.

In *Tribadernas natt* four people have gathered at the Dagmar Theatre in Copenhagen on an evening in March 1889 to rehearse Strindberg’s new play *Den starkare* (*The Stronger*).<sup>1</sup> Apart from the author, they are the Dane Viggo Schiwe, who is to direct the *quart d’heure*, Strindberg’s wife Siri von Essen, who is to do Mrs. X, the speaking part, and her Danish friend Marie Caroline David, who is to do Miss Y, the silent part.

It is true that *Den starkare* was rehearsed in March 1889, presumably at the Dagmar Theatre. But there is no evidence that Schiwe directed it. Nor do we know that Strindberg attended any rehearsal. What we do know is that a certain Anna Pio did the silent part. Marie David had often been to see the Strindbergs in Grez-sur-Loing a few years earlier but according to their daughter Karin, Marie and Siri “never met between 1886 and 1891” (Smirnoff, 15). Why then does Enquist substitute Marie David for Mrs. Pio? To answer this question we have to look at the genesis of *Tribadernas natt*.

It was when he was teaching a Strindberg course at the UCLA that Enquist came to read *Den starkare* in the light of Strindberg’s *En dâres försvarstal* (*A Madman’s Defence*), composed shortly before the little one-acter. Strindberg’s jealous description in the novel of Siri’s and Marie’s, to his mind, lesbian relationship convinced Enquist that *Den starkare* is a highly autobiographical play, where the absent husband (Bob) represents Strindberg; Mrs. X, his wife, Siri; and Miss Y, who is or has been Bob’s mistress, Marie David. In *Den starkare*, Enquist believed, Strindberg has both described a real situation (the communion between the women) and a wished-for situation (their rivalry vis-à-vis the man).

The premiere of *Tribadernas natt* caused the cultural editor of Sweden’s largest morning paper, Olof Lagercrantz, author of a well-known biography on Strindberg, to protest against Enquist’s portrait of the Swedish national writer (Törnqvist, 1977, *passim*). Enquist’s

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<sup>1</sup>For an analysis of this one-acter, see Törnqvist (1970).

answer to this was that he never intended to give an authentic portrait of Strindberg as a social being, the Strindberg we recognize from descriptions of those who knew him. For, Enquist objected,

we also know that this shy citizen, this little clerk [-] was a completely different Strindberg when he wrote his plays. And when he is writing his letters he is yet another Strindberg. My picture of Strindberg is simply a synthesis of my reading of Strindberg and I don't care a damn what he was like privately. I don't think that is interesting. (Törnqvist, 1977, 203)

Enquist's Strindberg is allowed to react in a manner which the shy, real Strindberg would hardly have done in the presence of others — but might well have done in writing. He is a man who reveals himself the way the real Strindberg would not have done in company — but constantly does in his writings. In short, the Strindberg Enquist puts on stage is not so much Strindberg-the-man as Strindberg-the-writer. The reason for this is, of course, that it is above all as a writer that Strindberg is in rapport with us today. In Enquist's words:

Part of the secret about Strindberg is that he is such a living myth.

If you present this Strindberg myth as a mirror for our time, a very strange emotional interplay arises between the historical Strindberg myth and our time and experiences. [-] Somewhere in between there is a field of tension. That's why it seems to me rather pointless to say: let's remove the myth. If you do, there will be no field of tension. (Törnqvist, 1977, 207)

What Enquist has in mind when he speaks of Strindberg as a myth is a Strindberg who is our contemporary in emotions and reactions, but who differs from us in his extreme sincerity. Strindberg as an X-ray image of ourselves. As Enquist puts it:

This totally undisguised, completely open and unguarded man is extremely interesting as we see around us a great many polished, guarded men who has learnt all the right answers but who have

the same emotions [as he had] beneath their polish. [-] This is certainly a contemporary man, although he is very much coarser than us cultured people of today. (Törnqvist, 1977, 208)

If Strindberg functions primarily as a metaphor in *Tribadernas natt*, so does the relationship between Siri and Marie indicated in the title of the play. It may seem as though Enquist here adopts Strindberg's conviction, or at least suspicion, that the two ladies had a lesbian relationship. But lesbianism is not the point. The point is that Strindberg, being a representative man, fears their close relationship, since it excludes him as a man. He consequently writes a play about two women fighting for a man, showing *him* as "the stronger" of the three. Enquist, by contrast, writes a 'factual' counter-play about two women forming a bond excluding and isolating the man.

It is true that at the end the women adjust to the male photographer's wish that "the gentleman should stand in the middle," but *they* know, and *we* know, that this is wishful thinking rather than reality. The men on the stage may nourish the idea that the middle position signifies centrality and prominence; moreover, it keeps the women separated. But the action of the play has demonstrated that this grouping is fictitious, a visualization of the wishful thinking underlying the plot of *Den starkare*. It merely represents the desires of a male society. In reality the middle position is an uncomfortable, squeezed position. The final grouping in this way effectively highlights the metaphoric significance of the gender relations between the two men and the two women in the play, the final photograph serving as a documented falsification of reality to be passed on to posterity.

August Strindberg is usually considered Sweden's most important writer. Already at school Swedes get acquainted with his work. This explains why Enquist's deviating portrait could cause a debate in Sweden that could hardly be expected in other countries. This does not mean, of course, that Swedish recipients would be familiar with all the biographical material presented in the play. On the contrary, it is obvious that a documentary drama like *Tribadernas natt* presents special problems of reception already on source text level. Firstly, while some Swedish recipients will be familiar with *Den starkare*, others will

not. The former will not only have a frame of reference differing from that of the latter. They will also find it easier to distinguish between Strindberg's text and Enquist's. Secondly, both the allusions in *Tribadernas natt* to factual, biographical circumstances and the deviations from them would be wasted on all but a small group of recipients thoroughly familiar with Strindberg's life and letters, the latter word here taken also in its literal sense.

The theatre program at the opening production helped to provide the spectator with the needed background information (*Dramaten*, 8-11). But the reader of the source text is left without any such assistance. Here the readers of the translations, often provided with informative introductions and/or commentaries, are in fact in a better position.<sup>2</sup> We may also note that the title of the play is enigmatic also to Swedes, "tribad" (tribade) being an archaic word — meaning 'lesbian' — unknown to most people. When I discussed the play with Enquist in 1976, he pointed out that he had in fact only come across the word in texts by Strindberg.

A French version, *La Nuit des tribades*, was staged in 1976 and again, more professionally, in 1978. The translation, the result of a collaboration between the Swede Jan Ivarsson and the Frenchman Jacques Robnard, appeared in the journal *l'Avant-Scène* on July 1, 1978. This version, which quite faithfully follows the source text, will in the following be compared with two closely related American versions.

In 1977, two years after the Swedish publication, an American translation, entitled *The Night of the Tribades*, was brought out. In his introduction the translator, Ross Shideler, writes:

P.O. Enquist has cooperated fully in this translation of his play, and variations from the original Swedish have been approved by him. The first production of the play in the United States took place in

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<sup>2</sup>A rather extreme example is Angelika Gundlach's translation of Lars Norén's *Endagsvarelser* (1988), *Eintagswesens* (1989) in German, containing seventeen pages of "Anmerkungen." As a result, the German reader of the target text in a sense understands Norén's play better than the Swedish reader of the source text.

December 1976, under the direction of Michael Kahn at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey. The fine cast of that production helped me to smooth out the play's unique mixture of Enquist's own modern language and Strindberg's colloquial and associative style. Naturally, final responsibility for the translation is my own.

(Enquist, 1977, xiv)

It would seem that a rendering which is based not only on a collaboration between the playwright and his translator but which, in addition, has been tested on the stage before being published would guarantee an optimal result. This is here hardly the case.<sup>3</sup>

In 1978 a revised edition of *The Night of the Tribades*, oriented toward production, was published by Dramatists Play Service Inc. This version differs from the earlier one in several respects: (1) some words have been changed, (2) the projected images described in the opening of Act I have been scrapped,<sup>4</sup> (3) stage directions referring to the blocking of the characters have been added throughout the play,

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<sup>3</sup>Unlike the French version, the American ones are marred by a number of mistranslations. For example, in the opening directions for the projections Enquist speaks of men who "*spänner vaderna*" (9), in French well rendered as "*le jarret tendu*" (29); in the first American edition we get an unintelligible "*stretch out nets*" (Enquist, 1977, 3). At one point Strindberg is said to speak "*med viss rörelse*" (13), in French "*un peu ému*" (30), in the American version he; "*gestures convincingly*" (ib., 7). Siri's "*andäktig*" (14), in the French version rendered as "fervent" (30), is in the American version "spiritual" (ib., 8), etc. Shideler is also too dependent on the idiom of the source text. Thus Swedish "*fördomsfri*" (68) is rendered as "prejudice-free" (ib., 61) rather than 'unprejudiced.' Swedish "fly" (67) becomes "fly" (ib., 60) rather than 'escape.' "Så tänker han" (76) is rendered as "So he thinks" (ib., 70) rather than 'That's the way he thinks.' And "Tänk, herr Strindberg" (66) becomes "Think, Mr. Strindberg" (ib., 59) rather than 'Just imagine, Mr. Strindberg.'

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Blackwell (197): "Although [-] most directors dispense with these projections as 'unnecessary' [-], they are [-] integral to the entire issue of specularity that pervades this work." She then convincingly demonstrates the universalizing function of the projections.

and (4) a stage design, a property plot and a costume plot have been appended. Discrepancies in the dialogue between the first and second edition usually amount to improvements, as one would expect. When Strindberg, for example, tells Siri that she and her family were "för *finna*" (14) — in French "trop *snobs*" (30) — to learn Finnish, the first American version renders this as "too *good*" (9); in the revised version this is more accurately turned into "too high class" (8). At least the last three categories mentioned above are clearly a result of the McCarter Theatre production, a photo of which faces the title page. Since neither the omissions nor the additions have been accounted for, this version fails to distinguish between the author's original text, as presented in the first American edition, and the adaptation offered in the revised edition. As a consequence, this version is a strange hybrid between Enquist's initial text and a presumed production of it. The idea behind it seems to be the well-meaning one of helping amateur groups to successful productions. It is doubtful, however, whether the additions do not defeat their purpose and hamper rather than assist a director of the play. After all, what is the point of creating a replica of the McCarter Theatre production?

Let us now look more closely at some of the problems the translators of this docudrama have been faced with and how they have solved them.

The first relates to the *dramatis personae*. In the source text they are listed as follows:

Viggo Schiwe  
 Marie Caroline David  
 Siri von Essen-Strindberg  
 August Strindberg

The sequence seems puzzling. It is neither based on social prominence nor on prominence in the drama text or order of appearance. The first American translation has another, equally enigmatic sequence: Siri, Schiwe, David, Strindberg and, in addition, Photographer. In the second edition the sequence, apparently based on "order of appearance," is: Siri, Strindberg, Schiwe, David, Photographer. The

French translators have chosen a sequence which seems based on decreasing role significance: Strindberg, Siri, David, Schiwe. They, too, add the Photographer appearing at the end of the play.

While the French version retains the speaker-labels or cue designations of the original, the American versions substitute "Marie" for "David," presumably in an attempt to preclude any mistaking the latter name for a Christian name. Yet, since a recipient of the source text is faced with the same problem — it is in fact no real problem — there is hardly any justification for this change. Especially since the male-sounding "David" seems quite a meaningful name for the sexual role attributed to this woman in the play.

A few times Enquist resorts to other languages than his native Swedish. Thus Strindberg once admonishes Siri that when she is stripped naked in his works she must console herself by telling herself: "*Hier liege Ich und mache Literaturgeschichte!*" (50). The phrase, which is a quotation from Strindberg's letter to Siri on March 6, 1889 (Jacobsen, 139), is retained in the French translation (48) — although Siri's ego is here diminished to "*ich*" — but, since Americans are less familiar with German than Swedes and Frenchmen, it is preceded in the first American edition by a translation: "here I lie and make literary history!" (42). In the revised edition only the translation is retained (28). As a result, the capitalization of the first person pronoun — noticeable only to readers of the play — is missed.

More interesting is the linguistic problem appearing in the first speech of the play. In the French version it reads:

SIRI (*jure d'une voix cultivée, en finnois, elle essaie à nouveau, abandonne et regarde le lit*). Alla minna vossiha rata... satanas ruppido allat minnä... terve sakussat... umekassat... (*immobile et haletante*)... perkele usti nakasat... (29)

To recipients of the source text — including the character of Strindberg — this "*sounds like Finnish*," as the American translator more accurately puts it (Enquist, 1977, 4). Two Finnish swearwords, well-known to Swedes, seem to indicate that it is. For the rest, the meaning of the speech is as enigmatic to a Swede as to a Frenchman or

an American. The privileged recipients are here the bilingual Swedish-speaking Finns. Only they will understand that except for the two swearwords and the word "terve," meaning 'hallo,' the speech is, in fact, *not* Finnish, it only "*sounds like Finnish*." In his Translator's Notes to the first American edition, Shideler provides valuable information in which he hints at the nature of Siri's 'Finnish':

Siri's swearing in Finnish reflects her Finnish-Swedish background.

Members of the Swedish upper class, such as Siri, who lived in Finland did not learn Finnish. The implication of the scene is that Siri learned to swear in Finnish but probably knows nothing more of the language. (Finnish differs completely from the other Scandinavian languages and is not understood by other Scandinavians.) (Enquist, 1977, 79)

This is welcome information for the reader. But it does not help the spectator of the play. In Scandinavia, by contrast, both readers and spectators, provided they are familiar with the Finnish language situation and Siri's being a Swedish-speaking Finn, will get the socio-linguistic point without any explanation. Shideler helps the spectator a bit on the way by rendering Strindberg's "svär på finska" (11) — French: "jure en finnois" (29) — freely as "swears like a Finnish peasant" (5).

Many words in the speeches of the source text are italicized for emphasis. They function as paralinguistic acting directions. Although we may not like this practice (since it restrains the interpretative freedom both of reader and actor), it should nevertheless be retained in a translation.<sup>5</sup> This is also the case in the French and the first American rendering. In the revised edition the italics are, however, consistently replaced by romans.

A problem in drama translation, not least with regard to documentary plays, is how to deal with cultural signifiers. The following

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<sup>5</sup>This holds true even for unpublished translations distributed by theatre agents. Director and actors - whether in collaboration with the translator or not - are of course free to make whatever changes they find desirable.

passage from the French translation is a rather faithful rendering of the original. Says Siri to Strindberg:

Vous avez ici [-] le porc mythique de la littérature suédoise! Voilà! Sans cesse mangé, englouti dans une dizaine d'oeuvres parmi les plus appréciées et les plus remarquées du maître. Et toujours réincarné!  
(48)

Although Siri uses the French word "Voilà" in the source text, the translators have, wisely I think, chosen to retain this word rather than select a corresponding German or English word at the risk of making Siri sound artificial. Since the word in an American translation will be recognized as French, it is surprising that it is here omitted.

The translators leave out the name of the hog, Särinnner, which they apparently find more confusing than illuminating for a non-Scandinavian audience. While the French translators indicate the sex of the pig by speaking of "le porc," Shideler refers simply to "the pig" (Enquist, 1977, 41), presumably because he finds Siri's comparing herself to a hog bewildering. This is, however, a dubious 'improvement.' Enquist could easily have used the genderless 'gris' (pig) instead of "galt" (hog). It seems likely that he preferred the latter word because it creates an ironical distance between the mythological male animal (Särinnner) that is daily being eaten and the female person (Siri) who claims to be sacrificed in the same way. The mere sex of the animal seems to indicate her irrational, 'female' logic.

In this case the loss of information is of limited significance. But when Siri refers to "poor Victoria who tried to commit suicide" (Enquist, 1977, 42), meaning the contemporary Swedish author Victoria Benedictsson, it is an allusion to authentic reality that is wasted even on many Swedish recipients. And when Marie David describes her mother as "oäkta unge från Dybengade 185" (66) — by Ivarsson/Robnard literally rendered as "une batarde du 185, rue Dyben" — a Swede or a Frenchman, unlike a Dane, will at best suspect that "the reference is to the prostitution quarter of Copenhagen" (Translator's Notes, Enquist, 1977, 80). To assist also the

spectator, who has less time to ponder, Shideler prefers "the red-light district" to the implicit "Dyben Street 185" (Enquist, 1977, 59).

The most cryptic allusion in *Tribadernas natt* is the extensive use of a letter by Strindberg. In Act II Strindberg tells Schiwe that, when Siri began to ridicule his manhood, he caught the train to Geneva and, in Shideler's version,

took a doctor with me to a bordello. Strictly scientific. Controlled experiment. There I performed the feat of strength, for that matter not for the first time [-]. Had my sperm tested. Was found to be fertile. Then it was measured, in erect [Enquist, 1978, has, more literally: aroused] condition. *Six inches by one and a half*, Mr. Schiwe! Six by one and a half! Scientifically controlled! (Enquist, 1977, 50-51)

This passage, which illustrates Strindberg's fear of not being considered a real man, is an almost literal quotation from his letter to Pehr Staaff on August 21, 1887. By letting Schiwe too reveal an interest in penis sizes, Enquist demonstrates that Strindberg's sexual inferiority complex was by no means unique a hundred years ago. But the main reason why the playwright makes such extensive use of this passage is that he had discovered that Strindberg's complex is shared by most men today. Enquist:

Swedish literary historians have always said that Strindberg had a sexual inferiority complex because his organ was too small. Then I looked at this 16 x 4 [centimeters]. And I thought: the only existing proof of how big or small it was is Strindberg's own letter: 16 x 4. A figure I had in my head is the frequently cited one from the gigantic American investigation made by Masters & Johnson five-six years ago, when they measured the [penis] format of ten or twenty thousand men. Translated into Swedish measurement, the average size was 15 x 3.7. That means that Strindberg's organ in fact was somewhat larger than the average. Another result of that same investigation was that 80% of all the men appeared to believe that they had a smaller size than the

average. The funny thing is then that Strindberg shared the view of these 80%, who were caught in a sex role that is a plague to us all. And that, in other words, he was exactly the way we are. (Törnqvist, 1977, 210)

This parallel certainly makes Strindberg a highly representative male figure, our contemporary. But how many recipients realize that Strindberg's speech at this point is authentic? And how many know about the investigation by Masters & Johnson? How many can perceive the parallel?

A special problem concerns the quotations from Strindberg's *Den starkare*. For Enquist it was natural to quote this play from what in 1975 was regarded as the standard Swedish edition: August Strindberg, *Samlade skrifter*, 25 (1914), edited by John Landquist.<sup>6</sup>

A translator of *Tribadernas natt*, on the other hand, is in principle free either to use an existing rendering of *Den starkare* or make his/her own translation of it. As far as I can see, Shideler has opted for the latter. His translation of *Den starkare* differs from those of Arvid Paulson (1960), Elizabeth Sprigge (1963) and Walter Johnson (1970).

In the revised version the quotation marks indicating that the text is Strindberg's often do not include the acting directions. Compare:

SIRI [-] "[-] Oh, oh, here is Maja's cork pistol. (*Loads it and fires at Y*)"

MARIE *giggles, amused.* (Enquist, 1977, 46)

SIRI. [-] "[-] Oh, oh, here is Maja's popgun." (*Loads it and fires at Y. Marie giggles amused.*) (Enquist, 1978, 31)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Today it is more natural to make use of the new standard edition, *August Strindbergs Samlade Verk*, 33 (1984), edited by Gunnar Ollén. Actually, there is little difference between the two editions in the passages quoted by Enquist.

<sup>7</sup>The girl "Maja" in *Samlade skrifter* more logically becomes the boy "Moje" in *Samlade Verk*.

In the first version it is made quite clear that the shooting is Strindberg's, the author's, invention. In the second version it seems, on the contrary, to be an invention by the actress, Siri. The difference is fundamental, since Strindberg wishes to see the two women as rivals, while Siri has the opposite need. In short, the second version contradicts Enquist's purpose and makes no sense.<sup>8</sup>

Enquist on the whole renders Strindberg's text faithfully. He also tries to motivate why passages are skipped. But at one point there is a significant and puzzling departure from the Strindbergian version. In *Den starkare* Mrs. X says: "Jag ville fly dig men kunde inte" (I wanted to escape from you but couldn't). Enquist's Siri (1977, 79) says: "Jag ville fly med dig men kunde inte" (I wanted to escape with you but couldn't), which carries the opposite meaning. Both in the French and the American versions the passage is rendered as in Strindberg's play: "Je voulais te fuir" (56), "I wanted to fly from you" (Enquist, 1977, 72), "I wanted to escape from you" (Enquist, 1978, 47). The translators, finding Siri's version completely illogical, have assumed that Enquist has carelessly misquoted Strindberg. This is apparently also the case since in the second Swedish edition of the play (Enquist, 1981) the passage reads: "Jag ville fly dig [-]" (92). However, since in Enquist's version Mrs. X's verbal monologue of hatred is gesturally turned into a declaration of love by Siri — she caresses David as she is uttering it — it would have been quite meaningful if Siri had contradicted her husband's text by having her make what in Enquist's original edition seems like a Freudian slip.

Occasionally the American Strindberg is coarser than his Swedish or French equivalent:

[-] dessa angrepp på mannen, hannen i mig, gör så ont. (60-61)

[-] ces attaques contre l'homme, le mâle qui se trouve en moi, me causent une telle douleur (51)

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<sup>8</sup>Ironically, Enquist makes himself guilty of the same fault when he writes "*David* (*skrattar högt*)" (55) without indicating by means of quotation marks that the acting direction is Strindberg's, not David's (or Schiwe's).

[-] these attacks on the man, the *cock* in me, are so painful (Enquist, 1977, 53)

[-] dessa nya kvinnliga könsorgan kan [-] inte tillfredsställas av bara membrum [-] (62)

[-] les nouveaux organes sexuels féminins [-] ne peuvent plus être satisfaits uniquement par le membre (51)

[-] these new female sex organs [-] cannot be satisfied by just a cock (Enquist, 1977, 54)

Shideler may defend his word choice by referring to the fact that Strindberg at other times makes use of sexual vulgarisms. Yet since this variation in sexual vocabulary reflects a variation in attitude to the addressee(s) on the stage, it is not insignificant.

To give a better idea of the differences between the source text and the three target texts under consideration, let me end by quoting a somewhat longer passage from Act I. The rehearsal has just begun when Strindberg grossly abuses Marie David in order to make her drop her role as Miss Y. The passage continues, in the source text:

*Siri (släpper hopplöst rollhäftet i golvet)*

Jaha, nu är det klippt. Jag väntade bara på det. Så oerhört typiskt av honom. Och just nu, när jag för första gången på alla dessa år skulle få chansen att utöva mitt yrke. Då slår han sönder det. Lugnt och stilla.

*Strindberg*

Vaddå?? Vaddå?? Vad har *jag* gjort?

*David*

Siri, du ska väl inte vara överraskad.

*Siri*

Egentligen inte. Fast jag blir ledsen varje gång.

*Strindberg (något orolig och skuldmedveten, vandrar runt Schiwe)*  
Det är svårt att arbeta med damer. De håller sig inte till sak. De blir så oerhört personliga, för minsta lilla. Kan inte se principiellt på saker. Ni är man. Ni förstår vad jag menar. *(ryter)* Ni förstår vad jag menar!

*Schiwe (skärrad)*  
Jaaaa jag förstår vad...*(söker en räddningsplanka)* Kanske en något mer innerlig spelstil just här vore på sin plats... med mer bevakande åtbörder... (31)

The corresponding French passage reads as follows:

SIRI *(désespérée, laisse tomber son manuscrit par terre).*  
Eh bien ça y est, c'est foutu. Je m'y attendais. C'est tellement typique de sa part. Et juste maintenant, quand pour la première fois depuis tant d'années, j'avais la chance de refaire mon métier. Alors il détruit. Calmement et méthodiquement.

STRINDBERG.  
Quoi? Quoi? Qu'est-ce que j'ai fait moi?

DAVID.  
Cela ne devrait pas te surprendre.

SIRI.  
En fait, non. Mais cela me fait autant de peine chaque fois.

STRINDBERG *(un peu inquiet et se sentant coupable, tourne autour de Schiwe).*  
C'est difficile de travailler avec des femmes. Elle ne s'en tiennent pas strictement au sujet: elle personnalisent la moindre petite chose, elles ne peuvent pas voir l'essentiel. Vous, vous êtes un homme,

vous comprenez ce que je veux dire. (*Rugit.*) Vous comprenez ce que je veux dire!

SCHIWE (*agité*).

Euh...oui...je comprends...(*cherche une planche de salut.*) Peut-être qu'un style de jeu un peu plus intérieur serait plus approprié ici.-  
.accompagné de gestes plus convaincants... (43-44)

The translation, as usual, follows the source text more closely than the American versions, the first of which reads:

SIRI

(*Slaps the script hopelessly on the floor*) Well, that's it. I was waiting for it. So unbelievably typical of him. And just now, now when I'm getting my first chance in years to work professionally, he destroys it. Calmly and quietly.

STRINDBERG

What? What? What have I done?

MARIE

Siri, surely you aren't going to be surprised?

SIRI

Not really. But every time I am just as disappointed.

STRINDBERG

(*A little restless and guilty, wanders over to SCHIWE*). It's hard to work with women. They don't stick to the subject. They get so damned *personal*, for the least little thing. They cannot see the principle of things. You are a man. You understand what I mean. (*Roaring*) *You understand what I mean!*

SCHIWE

(*Unnerved*) Yesss, I understand what...(*Seeking some way to save himself*) Perhaps a more impassioned acting style would be proper here...with more expressive gestures. (Enquist, 1977, 26)

The corresponding passage in the revised version reads:

SIRI. (*Slaps the script hopelessly on the floor.*) Well, that's it. I was waiting for it. So incredibly typical of him. And just now, now when I'm getting my first chance in years to work again, he destroys it coolly [sic] and calmly. (*She crosses D.R., removes coat and hat.*)

STRINDBERG. What? What? What have I done?

MARIE. Siri, surely you aren't going to be surprised?

SIRI. Not really. But every time it makes me just as mad.

STRINDBERG. (*A little restless and guilty, wanders over to Schiwe.*)  
It's difficult to work with women. They don't stick to the subject. They get so damned personal, about the least little thing. They cannot see the principle of things. You are a man. You understand what I mean. (*Roaring.*) You understand what I mean!

SCHIWE. (*Unnerved.*) Yesss, I understand what...(*Seeking some way to save himself.*) Perhaps a more sincere acting style would be proper here...with more imploring gestures. (*Crosses to Marie.*) (Enquist, 1978, 19)

A comparison between the four versions will indicate some of the problems involved — especially to a reader who is familiar with all three languages — and how they have been tackled. When Enquist puts Strindberg's "jag" in italics, it is tantamount to an acting direction indicating either his own feeling that he is innocent or his pretending to be so. The French version retains this by its double pronoun: je [-] moi.

But the American actor playing the part of Strindberg may find it difficult to select the original's "What have *I* done?" rather than, say, "What have I done?", "What *have* I done?", "What have I *done*?" Strindberg's frequent reference in the play to "damerna" (the ladies) has a suggestive polite-contemptuous connotation, reflecting his ambivalent attitude to them, connotations missing in the neutral "the women." Siri feels "sad" rather than "disappointed" or "mad." And Schiwe's artificial circumstantiality is very different from the directness of the other three characters. This should come out also in translation. A word like "sincere" seems a misplaced rendering of Swedish "innerlig," a cliché word in contemporary theatre reviews, where Enquist found inspiration for Schiwe's flowery manner of speaking.<sup>9</sup>

When translating documentary drama the translator-cum-recreator is, for the most part, confronted with the same problems as the translator of purely fictitious drama: how to combine faithfulness to the source text with an awareness of the idiomatic characteristics of the target text, sensitivity to the paralinguistic aspect of the speeches as well as to their subtextual density. Above all: irrespective of whether he is dealing with fictitious drama or documentary drama, the translator must constantly bear in mind that s/he must produce a text that is to be spoken on the stage, a text that is both oral and aural.

The translations of *Tribadernas natt* that I have dealt with have all been published after the play had been tested on the stage. They were also undertaken by two comparable teams, each consisting of a representative of the source language (Ivarsson, Enquist) in collaboration with a representative of the target language (Robnard, Shideler). And yet the result is rather different.

The New York production, at the Helen Hayes Theatre, opening on October 13, 1977, directed by Michael Kahn and starring Max von Sydow as Strindberg, Bibi Andersson as Siri von Essen and Eileen Atkins as Marie David, was a flop. The Paris production, at the Théâtre moderne, opening on April 25, 1978, directed by Raymond

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<sup>9</sup>In the 1976 interview Enquist revealed that Schiwe's speech habits are based very much on the way in which the Stockholm critics reviewed the actress Siri von Essen.

Rouleau and starring Michel Bouquet as Strindberg, Gaby Sylvia as Siri von Essen and Tanya Lopert as Marie David, was a success. Presumably the quality of the two translations had something to do with this difference.

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