Translation and *Mise-en-Scène*:   The Example of French Translation of Shakespeare[1]

Leanore Lieblein

The 1982 meeting of the *Société Française Shakespeare* contained a round table discussion on translating Shakespeare's plays. In it Jean-Michel Déprats tried to suggest that, theoretically at least, there need not be a difference between the translation of a dramatic text destined to be read and one destined to be performed, since the potential for performance inscribed in Shakespeare's text must be preserved in the process of translation:

> *Traduit-on différemment selon que l'on destine une traduction à la lecture ou à la scène? En droit cette distinction n'a pas lieu d'être. Une traduction impraticable sur une scène, régie par une poétique de l'écrit, méconnaît une dimension essentielle du texte shakespearien, tout entier tendu vers la représentation.*[2]

But others took issue. According to Michel Grivelet: *"La traduction pour la lecture et la traduction pour la scène sont deux choses différentes. . . . La traduction pour le théâtre est immédiatement subordonnée à la conception de la mise en scène."* And Jean-Pierre Villequin agreed: *"Les traductions pour le théâtre vieillissent vite et mal. . . . Chaque nouvelle mise en scène demande une nouvelle traduction."* For theatre directors of Shakespeare, too, at least in the period beginning with Peter Brook's *Timon d'Athènes* in 1974, theatrical translations were felt to reflect the language and sensibility of a given moment of reception and thus to narrow the range of possibility implicit in the original: *"Pour Peter Brook le projet même de travailler sur Shakespeare supposait comme prémice la mise à jour du texte, selon une équation stricte: sans nouveau texte, pas de nouvelle mise en scène."*[3] Interviews with directors led

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Leanore Lieblein is Associate Professor of English at McGill University, Montreal. She has written widely on medieval and renaissance drama in performance.

to the conclusion: *"Toute mise en scène moderne d'une pièce de Shakespeare jouée en français nécessite une nouvelle traduction."*[4] Even in Germany, where the tyranny of Schlegel's important translations of Shakespeare has been greater than that in France of those by François-Victor Hugo, there has emerged a definite movement toward re-translating the plays for new production.[5]

However, if there is a difference between a translation for the page and a translation for the stage, then why did so respected a Québec director as Jean Asselin very recently return to the Hugo translations for his celebrated *Henriad*? And if a theatrical translation must be subordinated to the conception of the *mise-en-scène*, why are such translations subsequently published, sold, and performed in new productions? This paper explores the dynamic relationship between a dramatic translation and its production. I argue that when a translation of a play is done for a specific production, it becomes part of the *mise-en-scène*. That is to say that the choices that are an inevitable feature of any translation interact with and are altered by the interpretive strategies that are implicit in the staging process. Not only is the translation given voice and body in the production, but, reciprocally, the production becomes inscribed in the translation. The text becomes part of the historical record of a given production, and its publication and distribution are tied to the occasion of its performance. However successful productions, at least in France, create a demand for their own texts. Thus these translations, insofar as they have a life of their own as texts subsequent to their performance, become the vehicle for inscribing the production for which they were created in subsequent readings and productions. Contrary to those who insist that each new staging calls for a new translation, I suggest that this process does not necessarily inhibit a translation's production in subsequent stagings, precisely because recent translators of Shakespeare for the French stage share a philosophy of translation that emphasizes the literal at the expense of the literary.

To illustrate my argument I propose to draw upon some translations of Shakespeare that received performance in Paris in 1982-83. Though others could have been selected, I have chosen for my focus, because I have seen them and because in the forms and contexts of their production they complement each other, a tragedy and a comedy. The translation of *Coriolan* was commissioned by director Bernard Sobel for production at the community *Théâtre de Gennevilliers*, while *Le songe d'une nuit d'été* was translated by director Stuart Seide for his production at the *Théâtre National de Chaillot*. (Other French translations of Shakespeare for the stage from the same period I have either seen in performance or consulted include: *Timon d'Athènes* by Jean-Claude Carrière, *Peines d'amour perdues* by Jean-Michel Déprats, *Hamlet* by Raymond Lepoutre, *La nuit des rois* and *Richard II* by Ariane Mnouchkine, and *Périclès, Prince de Tyr* by Marika Prinçay and Jean-Michel Noiret.)

A production itself is a "reading"--some might argue a "translation"--of a dramatic text.[6] The words of any dramatic text are part of its rendering on the stage (though they may be subject to cuts and rearrangement), but they are transformed in performance by the intonation, the timing, the expression, and gesture with which they are spoken as well as by the scenic/material environment (including lights, sets and costumes), the auditory environment (including sound effects and music), and the spatial relationships between the speaker and the other performers and between the actors and the audience.[7] Performance clearly thus transforms a dramatic text, but it does so in chosen directions.

A *mise-en-scène* is of course of its own time and place; however, there are many possible productions in any given time and place. When a play is performed in its original language it will at any moment commit itself to one reading or interpretation over many possible others. A *mise-en-scène* of a play in translation will do the same. However, since there are more ways than one of rendering on the stage a given line or phrase in the source text, one may legitimately choose among not only a range of gestures and intonations to express a certain concept or set of words in the source language text, but indeed among a range of words or expressions in the receptor language.

That all dramatic translations are the result of a series of choices is emphasized by André-Michel Rousseau in his overview of the history of French translations of Shakespeare. What distinguishes one translation from another of the same play, he argues, are the reasons for the choices and the consistency with which they are deployed. "*Traduire étant un choix, le résultat dépendra de la lucidité et de la cohérence de ce choix.*" The *Hamlet* translations he finds successful are the Morand and Schwob (1900), characterized by a use of archaism and respect for word order, the Rosny (1909), Pagnol (1947) or Brousse (1964), committed to clarity and modernity, and even the Gide (1945), which employed artifice and grandiloquence. Of the remainder --and his article considers some thirty-seven translations of *Hamlet*--he says, "*Faute de doctrine, la plupart des autres versions errent au hasard.*"[8] Three out of the five versions Rousseau favors were created specifically to be performed.

Since no translation is neutral, a director opting to use an existing translation is buying into its special qualities. Jean Jacquot points out, for example, that in choosing to stage *Hamlet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in the translations of André Gide, Jean-Louis Barrault was striving for a reconciliation of Shakespearean language with classical French taste. Barrault similarly chose the Yves Bonnefoy translation of *Julius Caesar*, which tries to preserve the poetic quality of the original.[9] However even Jacquot, who is a fan of the "faithful" translation, recognizes that it must interact with the necessities of the *mise-en-scène*. Jacquot quotes with approval a description of how the Lascaris translation of *Twelfth Night* produced by Jacques Copeau at the Vieux Colombier evolved through productions between 1917 and 1920.[10]

The Déprats *Coriolanus*

To explore the relationship of a translation to its production, let me start with an example from the production of *Coriolanus* directed by Bernard Sobel in a translation by Jean-Michel Déprats.[11] Midway through a performance I was taken aback by the charge of the Tribune Sicinius:

> *Allez chercher le peuple, au nom duquel, moi,*
> *Je t'arrête comme traître révolutionnaire,*
> *Ennemi du bien public* (78).

"*Traître révolutionnaire*" was a bit much, I thought. Certainly it was not "Shakespeare." The *Théâtre de Gennevilliers* under the direction of Sobel has consistently striven to speak to the working class community in which it is located. Indeed this production of *Coriolanus* was remarkable for the way it took the plebeians in earnest.[12] But "*traître révolutionnaire*" seemed to be going too far. It brought into the world of the nascent Roman Republic the rhetoric of a more recent politics. So when I reached home that night I checked my Complete Works:

> Go call the people, in whose name myself
> Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,
> A foe to th' public weal (III.i.173-75).[13]

How after all does one translate "traitorous innovator"? I do not wish to make the case for or against "*traître révolutionnaire*." However, insofar as the case is there to be made, I would argue that it can only be done in the light of the translation as a whole and indeed of the production as a whole as well.

It should be said that this production did not set out to make a crude political point: "*Nous ne voulons rien faire dire à 'Coriolan' sinon la conscience de l'impossibilité de dire les choses.*"[14] Sobel's production of *Coriolanus* reflected a process of questioning. It explored, as any production must, the opposition between the plebeians and the patricians, but it also emphasized opposition within each of the groups. One side was not caricatured at the expense of the other. All of the actors spoke as though they were trying to find meaning in their lines and trying to make others understand them.

Sobel's production was thus dialectical and exploratory. Déprats's translation served this treatment of the play. His French version keeps very close to the Shakespeare folio text,[15] but colors it in a few important ways that serve to sharpen and clarify the antagonism between Coriolanus and the citizens of Rome. He tends, chiefly in the first half of the play, to make the language of the citizens more concrete. He also intensifies the contempt of the patricians, though by the second half of the play Shakespeare's own language is more highly politicized and confrontational. In other words

Déprats disperses a focus implicit in the Shakespearean text more evenly throughout his own version. His text, by sharpening contrasts, participates in Sobel's dialectical exploration of opposition and prepares for and helps to elucidate the antagonisms.

It is especially in the case of the citizens that the abstract language tends to be made more concrete. One extended example from the very beginning of the play can illustrate this:

> 2 Cit. One word, good citizens.
> 1 Cit. We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good. What authority surfeits [on] would relieve us. If they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they reliev'd us humanely; but they think we are too dear. The leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them (I.i.14-22).

> *Deuxieme Citoyen. Un mot, bons citoyens.*
> *Premier Citoyen. On nous appelle pauvres citoyens. Le bien, c'est pour les patriciens. Ce pouvoir se gorge de ripailles dont l'excédent suffirait à nous secourir. S'ils voulaient bien nous céder leurs restes avant qu'ils soient pourris, on pourrait dire qu'ils nous secourent par humanité; mais nous leur sommes déjà trop chers: la maigreur qui nous afflige, le spectacle de notre misère est l'inventaire détaillé de leur abondance; notre souffrance est pour eux un gain. (9)*

To begin with, the translation unerstandably forgoes the repetition of the adjectival good ("good citizens . . . patricians good") in order to preserve the pun implicit in the opposition between good and poor. It is the patricians who are good because they are possessed of goods or, in French, "*des biens*."

More revealing are the changes to the second sentence of the long speech. "What authority surfeits [on]would relieve us" is rendered as "*Ce pouvoir se gorge de ripailles dont l'excédent suffirait à nous secourir.*" Authority is no longer abstract but specifically pointed to by the demonstrative pronoun. The antecedent of "*ce*" is uncertain; possibly, since it is singular, it refers to Martius who has previously been alluded to as an enemy to the people, though it could refer to the patricians of the previous sentence. Furthermore, though both "power" and "authority" are abstract nouns, both the French and English forms of "power" tend to connote physical force, while those of "authority" tend to connote judicial or moral force. The undefined "what" that authority surfeits on in English has become "*de ripailles*," feasts which turn "*ce pouvoir*" into individuals eating and drinking, indeed "gorging" themselves. In the sentence that follows Déprats continues the metaphor of feasting he has

introduced. The concessive "but" is omitted and the abstract noun "superfluity" is replaced by "*leurs restes*," not even "the" leftovers but "their" leavings. Also, the affirmatively phrased "while it were wholesome" becomes the negatively stated "*avant qu'ils soient pourris*." Similarly, "but they think we are too dear" is rendered as "*mais nous leur sommes déjà trop chers*," with the translation of "they think" by "*nous leur sommes*" and the addition of the intensifier "*déjà*." In the same vein the indefinite article in "an inventory to particularize" is replaced by the definite article in *l'inventaire détaillé*."

The language given to the citizens reflects the production's sense of their just grievance. When Caius Martius insults them the First Citizen replies ironically in English, "We have ever your good word" (I.i.166), but asserts in French "*Nous avons toujours <u>droit</u> à un mot aimable*" (15, emphasis added). In the production the citizens had more than the two or three articulate spokesmen who are identified in the Folio text, even in II.iii. where a stage direction specifies the entrance of "seven or eight" citizens who are asked by Coriolanus to give their voices in assent to his becoming Consul. Whereas the Ribner/Kittredge edition (1971) follows the Folio in numbering the speakers from one to three and the *Complete Pelican Shakespeare* (1969) increases this number to five, Déprats, like *The Riverside Shakespeare*, identifies seven separate speakers, inscribing in his text the production's sense of them as a large and articulate group. In performance each request became a painful confrontation of ideologies and wills.[16]

The gap between plebeians and patricians was made more conspicuous by shifts in levels of diction to intensify contempt and abuse. This is especially apparent in the langauge of Coriolanus. Thus "Must these have their voices . . . ?" (III.i.34) becomes "*Sont-ils <u>dignes</u> de s'exprimer . . .?*" (73--my emphasis). Similarly,

> Cor: Have you inform'd them [the citizens] sithence?
> Bru: How? I inform them? (III.i.47.)

becomes

> *Coriolanus: Vous avez donc joué les mouchards?*
> *Brutus: Moi! Les mouchards!* (73)

Similarly, "Hence, rotten thing! or I shall shake thy bones/ Out of thy garments" (III.i.178-79) becomes "*Arrière carcasse pourrie! ou je te secoue les os/ Hors de tes <u>guenilles</u>*" (79--emphasis added).

For the scenes of dissension the translation employs terms associated with the politics of popular resistance. Thus "to chain up and restrain the poor" (I.i.84-85) becomes "*pour enchaîner et <u>opprimer</u> les pauvres*" (12-my emphasis), while "It is a purpos'd thing" (III.i.38) becomes "*C'est un coup monté*" (73). "Traitor" occurs frequently in the English but "*traître*" more

frequently in the French. "Commonwealth," which has no French equivalent, appears as *"la République"* (119), but also as *"le corps politique"* (68--"th' body of the weal: II.iii.181). *"Emeute"* is used a number of times to translate such terms as "riot," "broil," or "mutiny."

There is no doubt that such emphases work with rather than against the Shakespearean text. They put into the choice of target language words that a production in the source language might in any event communicate through intonation, facial expression, gesture and other non-verbal means. But this choice of words would not be particularly useful in a production that opted to approach the play through, say, the inner conflict of the protagonist.

It is not so much that the translator is advocating a particular interpretation of the play as making it possible. The translation keeps available to the director a potentiality the director had found implicit in the original text. As Déprats says in an article on translating Shakespeare for the stage:

> *Traduire pour la scène, ce n'est pas tordre le texte en vue de ce qu'on espère montrer. . . . Ce n'est pas devancer, prévoir ou proposer une mise en scène, c'est rendre celle-ci possible.*[17]

For this purpose interaction with the director is a constructive part of the task. Déprats sees this as *"une collaboration qui n'a pas pour but de plier le texte à la 'lecture' interprétative d'un metteur en scène, mais qui a pour souci d'élaborer avant tout un instrument de jeu."*[18]

Seide's *Dream*

Stuart Seide too is committed to creating through translation *"un instrument de jeu."* His translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* proceeds from his sense of the importance of the words of the play.[19] Its rhythmic and metrical richness--the rhyming couplets and blank verse of the lovers, the prose of the mechanicals, the octosyllabics of the fairies, the incantations of Puck and Oberon--are an important part of the action for a director who sees himself as a *"metteur en jeu."* Indeed there are moments when, given the ludic and frenetic qualities of the lovers' language, *"la parole devient l'action principale"* (4). Seide points out that a translator is constantly making choices, for example between the music and the sense of the words. His own choices were guided less by consistent principle than by the demands of the theatrical moment: *"C'était un choix dramaturgique qui faisait partie intégrante de mes options de metteur en scène"* (4). Thus the translated text changed considerably between the study and the stage. The rehearsal process focussed on the words. It began with *"un travail sur l'écoute du texte, l'écoute des mots que l'on a à dire et l'écoute des mots que l'on a à entendre. J'ai demandé aux comédiens de se laisser porter par les mots, leur résonances."*[20] But since the words were only the translator's, they were neither sacred nor final. The

translator/director, together with the actors, were constantly referring back to the English text, with the result that the French version evolved in the course of rehearsal. As Seide says in the same interview, *"le texte a beaucoup changé en fonction de jeu."* The publication of the text, which occurred in December, 1982 while rehearsals were in process for the production's revival in January, 1983, interrupted but did not put an end to this process. Thus Seide found it necessary to remind the reader in his prefatory remarks: *"Le texte édité ici n'est pas achevé. C'est la photo instantanée d'un travail évolutif"* (4). In other words the translation is not an object but part of a process of building the production.

Seide's translation is remarkably close to the Shakespearean text with, for a performance text, relatively few omissions.[21] It renders verse as verse and prose as prose, using for the verse a flexible line of varying length and meter that approximates the lineation of the Shakespearean verse. However as a translator Seide clearly chooses to privilege, where possible, rhyme, alliteration and word play.

Not that all of the English rhymes are preserved. The couplets of the lovers are largely abandoned, though they are often retained for exit lines. More important than fidelity to a specific rhyme is the preservation of such stylistic features as the tone and energy of the verse. Thus Puck's

> And the country proverb known,
> That every man should take his own,
> In your waking shall be shown.
>> Jack shall have Jill;
>> Nought shall go ill:
> The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.
>
> <div align="right">(III.ii.458-62.)</div>

becomes

> *Et le proverbe bien connu*
> *que chacun doit avoir son dû,*
> *a votre réveil s'accomplira.*
>
> *Jeannot aura sa Jeannette*
> *le monde sera en fête.*
> *Chacun retrouvera sa jument,*
> *Et tout sera bien mieux qu'avant* (75).

In some cases alliteration is present, even when it does not exist in Shakespeare. When Egeus says to Lysander

> [Thou hast] stol'n the impression of her fantasy
> With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
> Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats. (I.i.32-34.)

Seide translates:

> *Tu t'es emparé de son imagination*
> *avec des bracelets de cheveux, des bagues, des babioles, des bijoux*
>   *chétifs,*
> *des breloques, des bouquets, des bonbons* (10).

Puns too make their appearance, sometimes even more forcefully than in Shakespeare or at the expense of the literal meaning. Bottom's "I could play Ercles rarely" (I.ii.29.) becomes *"Je ferais un Mercule étonnant"* (21) and Demetrius' "wode [mad, insane] within this wood" (II.i.192.) becomes *"aux abois dans ce bois"* (32). Similarly Lysander's "For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie" (II.ii.52.), is rendered as *"avec ce lit, Hermia, on se lie"* (38). The sound takes precedence over the sense. So too with Puck's "I go, I go, look how I go" (III.ii.100.) translated as *"Je cours, je cours, je vole dare dare"* (57). In the absence of a French equivalent an alternative of similar playfulness may be invented. Thus Demetrius' comment on Snug the Joiner's lion--"The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw" (V.i.229-30.) turns into *"La pire âme, monseigneur, que j'aie jamais recontrée chez une Thisbête"* (98).

      Seide's commitment to the language of the play embraces not only its "meaning," but also its music. His translation attempts to render the material substance as well as the sense of the words in order to retain the dramatic energy of the text, its essential "play-ability."

The Lifetime of a Translation

      In these two examples and others like them, the life of a translation is intimately tied to its *mise-en-scène*. It is born of a director's need for an actable version of the Shakespearean text, and its existence is tied to the production that brings it to life. Its publisher is often the producing theatre company, its initial distribution takes place in the theatre lobby, and the text itself is a record of the translation's production.[22] The published versions of both *Coriolan* and *Le songe d'une nuit d'été* list names of director, designers, and cast. That of Mnouchkine's *Richard II* contains the text of the acted version, including the inversion and redistribution of some speeches. It makes no mention of numerous substitutions to simplify names of people and places or lines omitted here and there throughout the text, although asterisks and an appendix containing the suppressed Act V, scene ii enable the reader to reconstitute an "original" version of Act Five.[23] The text of Carrière's

translation of *Timon* nowhere acknowledges something like two hundred lines of cuts.[24]

The text of the translation thus becomes for the spectator part of the experience of seeing and recalling the play, along with programs, posters, and other "souvenir" documents. (For example, available for purchase at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes during the run of *Richard II* was a table illustrating the kings of England and an "orchestra" plot of the numerous exotic instruments that provided the musical background to the production.)[25]

Not surprisingly, such texts tend to go out of print once their productions have closed. Carrière's *Timon* is no longer available. Neither is Seide's *Dream* which, to my knowledge, has not received another production. On the other hand, the texts are still available in French libraries, if not in bookstores. And translations by Déprats, Mnouchkine, and others continue to be recommended, bought, and read. More important, translations by Déprats at least, even though they have been done in close collaboration with directors and tied to their *mises-en-scène*, have begun to receive second productions. There have been subsequent productions of the 1983 *Hamlet* and the 1984 *Othello*, and *Coriolan* has been produced by the *Théâtre National de Belgique*. In recent texts of his translations, Déprats has taken care to ensure the publication of complete texts in spite of the theatrical necessity for cuts in production.

I would suggest that the possibility of further productions arises from the philosophy of translation shared by the translators whose work we have been considering. All of these translators prefer to translate "without translating," to be literal rather than literary or idiomatic in order to preserve the otherness of the Shakespearean text.[26]

The choice is not a self-evident one. Given the theatre director's urgent need to communicate with an audience, the temptation to elaborate, clarify and interpret as one goes along is great, and the decision not to do so is deliberate: *"Pas d'interprétations ni de commentaires inclus, pour ainsi dire, dans la phrase traduite: le verbe Shakespearien est conçu comme un mystère qu'il ne convient pas d'éclaircir pour le lecteur ou le spectateur."*[27] Peter Brook commissioned a screenwriter to implement this strategy in the hope of producing a text that was *"direct et moderne,"* one that could, in its simplicity, unite the community of spectators as the cinema does.

In practical terms the problem has been stated succinctly by Brook's translator of *Timon of Athens* and *Measure for Measure*: to produce a French version of Shakespeare that would not, as usual, be longer than its English original.[28] Similarly Jean-Michel Déprats says, *"Serrer de près sa construction, tenter de conserver l'ordre des mots et (autant que faire se peut) le même nombre de mots qu'en anglais, ce n'est pas céder au mirage d'un impossible mimétisme, c'est tenter de préserver l'influx de jeu."*[29] Such translation is an attempt to overcome fundamental philosophical and structural differences between the two languages, since French is generally agreed to be more abstract and circumlocutious than English. Both Déprats and Seide are committed to

producing a version of Shakespeare that conveys the formal properties of the Shakespearean English as well as its content. They wish to preserve the body as well as the meaning of the language--*"l'influx de jeu."* They not only translate verse as verse and prose as prose, but where possible, line for line; sometimes--especially in the case of images or idioms that do not have French equivalents--word for word.

The result may sometimes be startling. Carrière has been told: *"Personnellement, l'impression que j'ai . . . , c'est que vous faites violence à l'organisation de la langue française qui paraît moins structurée, plus libre."*[30] Mnouchkine frankly claims that it is not necessary that the translated text be beautiful or even that it be literary--only that it be there (fully) to be mined, since the text is one of the raw materials of her work. She is willing if necessary to suspend the idiom of the French language in order to retain some of the quality of the English: *"Dans la traduction, il y a la volonté de suivre pas à pas les réseaux d'images sans les décortiquer."*[31] And Déprats reports that some actors of his *Coriolan* initially found his text *"difficile a mâcher,"* though in the long run they felt it worked well.[32]

Mnouchkine's translations are consistent with her method of working and the scenography in which this results: *"C'est ce que nous appelons tout au long des répétitions le 'pied de la lettre' . . . ; l'acteur accueille en lui le texte et invente les symptômes du corps, il incarne la poésie crée par Shakespeare."*[33] Her attempt to translate literally is an attempt to create a text that remains itself even while being physicalized by the actors. The culturally remote theatrical traditions on which Mnouchkine draws (Japanese for *Richard II*, Indian and Indonesian among others for *La nuit des rois*) allow her to isolate the text, which may be whispered, groaned, chanted, shouted, or hammered out by an actor whose gesture is expressive but frozen into immobility. As more than one critic has noted, for the *Théâtre du Soleil* *"le texte est roi et les acteurs sont ici pour le servir de tout leur corps."*[34]

Déprats rejects the widespread view that the literal is the enemy of the precise and that a translator must make explicit an implied subtext in order to make clear the meaning of a line: *"Parfois . . . le mot-à-mot permet un appréhension immédiate du texte, plus sensuelle qu'intellectuelle."* Indeed, he has proposed that translating Shakespeare into French may be less a question of manipulating existing forms and turns of phrase than attempting to bring new forms to birth.[35] Or looking at the matter another way, Antoine Vitez has suggested a propos of his own production of *Hamlet* (translated by Raymond Lepoutre) that the very purpose of a translation may be to reveal our distance from the original and to challenge a received conception of a play and the present experience of it. For Vitez, translation is one of the instruments of appropriating the text and of giving it new life.[36]

The attempt to translate literally is thus an attempt to create a text that remains tied to the *"mot-à-mot"* of its source even while it is being transformed by its *mise-en-espace*. The literal translation often seems strange--estranged,

alien to the traditional structure of the French language. Its very literalness serves to make it concrete, but also elliptical. Its "otherness" and the gaps in its meaning reproduce the incomplete nature of the dramatic text, the *"texte troué,"* as Anne Ubersfeld calls it.[37] Thus if at one end of the spectrum the tyranny of a *mise-en-scène* may overdetermine a dramatic translation, at the other end the fact that a dramatic translation has been done for the stage may give it precisely the quality that invites its staging not only by the director who commissioned it, but again and again.

It is clear that in the last fifteen years the conception of the Shakespearean text in French has evolved enormously for most directors and hence for most audiences. The instability of the dramatic text, which is continually being demonstrated by its reappropriation in successive performances, is made explicit when the process of translation from one language to another becomes part of the process of translating the play from the page to the stage.

Montreal, Canada

Notes

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2. "Résumé des interventions sur la traduction théâtrale," *Du texte à la scène: Langages du théâtre,* ed. M.T. Jones-Davies (Paris: Jean Touzot, 1983) 277. The quotations that follow are from 278, 281.

3. Georges Banu, "Naviguer au plus près: entretien avec Jean-Claude Carrière," *Théâtre/Public* 44 (mars-avril 1982): 41.

4. Jean-Michel Déprats, "Voyage en Shakespeare," *Théâtre/Public* 46-47 (juillet-octobre 1982): 7.

5. Jean-Michel Déprats, "Traduire Shakespeare pour le théâtre," *Théatre/Public* 44 (mars-avril 1982): 48. See also Christoph Müller, "Shakespeares Stücke sind komplexer als jede Aneignung—man braucht zu verschiedenen Zeiten verschiedene Übersetzungen," *Theater Heute* 7 (1975): 32-37. However the Hugo translations are still admired if not performed. For example, Helen Phelps Bailey describes Hugo's *Hamlet* as "the most faithful in the French language to the imagery, if not the music, of Shakespeare." *"Hamlet" in France From Voltaire to Lafargue* (Genève: Droz, 1964) 83. And when asked about her preferred translation, Ariane Mnouchkine, whose work is discussed below, replied, *"Toutes sont injouables, mais celle de François-Victor Hugo est la plus honnête."* Anne Pons, "Ariane Mnouchkine et le Théâtre du Soleil," *Phosphore* (March 1982), n.p. in the archival copy I consulted. The Hugo translation was recently used in a 1988 production of *Richard II, Henry IV* (a compression of both parts), and *Henry V* by the Theatre Omnibus in Montreal, Canada.

6. Anne Ubersfeld, *L'école du spectateur: Lire le théâtre 2* (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1981) 10-18.

7. Tadeusz Kowzon, "The Sign in the Theatre: An Introduction to the Semiology of the Art of Spectacle," *Diogenes* 61 (1968): 52-80.

8. André-Michel Rousseau, "Métamorphose ou anamorphose: les visages successifs de Shakespeare en français," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 7 (1980): 218.

9. Jean Jacquot, *Shakespeare en France: Mises en scène d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Le Temps, 1964) 96.

10. Jacquot 52, 57.

11. William Shakespeare, *La Tragédie de Coriolan*, trans. Jean-Michel Déprats (Gennevilliers: Editions Théâtre de Gennevilliers-Théâtre/Public, 1983). Quotations from this edition will be documented with page numbers in parentheses in the body of the text.

12. Cf. my review in *Cahiers élisabéthains* 24 (Oct. 1983): 96-97, in which I discuss how the staging supports the generalizations that follow. Déprats has since pointed out, in discussion following presentation of an earlier and abbreviated version of this paper to the Canadian Society for Translation Studies, Quebec, May 1989, that Sobel's production was at least in part motivated by his desire to reconsider Brecht's treatment of Shakespeare's play.

13. All quotations of Shakespeare's plays are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, text. ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

14. "La galaxie Shakespeare" 3.

15. It maintains the distinction between verse and prose, matching almost line for line and image for image and preserving, where possible, repetition, alliteration, etc.

16. This is consistent with a production in which the plebeians are seen by the audience to be more than they are perceived to be by the patricians. Thus when Menenius greets them, "What work's, my countrymen in hand? Where go you/ With bats and clubs" (I.i.55-56.) ["*Que faites-vous mes concitoyens? Où allez-vous avec/ Ces gourdins et ces massues?*" (11)], the bats and clubs are implements of work such as picks, axes, and rakes.

17. "Traduire . . . " 48.

18. "Traduire . . . " 48.

19. William Shakespeare, *Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*, trans. Stuart Seide (Paris: Éditions Théâtre National de Chaillot, 1982). "*En s'élaborant une mise en scène de n'importe quelle pièce élisabéthaine, mes réflexions sont déterminées en grande partie par les articulations de sens, les rhythmes et les 'appuis de jeu' que les mots doivent imposer à l'acteur*" (3). Quotations from this edition will be documented with page numbers in parentheses in the body of the text.

20. Jean-Michel Déprats, "La modestie du conteur: entretien avec François Marthouret et Stuart Seide," *Théâtre/Public* 46-47 (juillet-octobre 1982): 15.

21. Seide nowhere indicates his source text. For lines I cite I have checked the readings of Q1, Q2 and F1 for significant variation. Without making an exhaustive study, I noted some half dozen cuts of several lines each; however, since MND is shorter than many of the other plays, one would expect fewer cuts.

22. It is traditional in France to make the text of a production available at the time of its performance, and quite common for spectators to read the play before or even after seeing it. This is especially true of new plays and new translations. Thus most theatres have book stalls in their lobbies, and specialized theatre bookstores feature displays of texts currently in production.

23. William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, trans. Ariane Mnouchkine (Paris: Solin, 1981). Mnouchkine nowhere indicates her source text.

24. William Shakespeare, *Timon d'Athènes*, trans. Jean-Claude Carrière (Paris: Centre International de Créations Théâtrales, 1973). Richard Marienstras, "'Timon d'Athènes' de Shakespeare et sa mise en scène par Peter Brook," *Les Voies de la création théâtrale 5* (Paris: CNRS, 1977) 35, gives a complete list.

25. A parallel can be found in the series of "Swan plays" published by Methuen. These are performance texts of plays produced at the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

26. Jane Koustas, in "Traduire ou ne pas traduire le théâtre? L'approche sémiotique," *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction* 1:1 (1988): 127-38, summarizes the "translation versus assimilation" debate.

27. Marienstras 34.

28. Banu 41.

29. "Traduire . . . " 47.

30. Banu 42. Jean-Michel Déprats cites from his own work the example of the opening lines of *Peines d'amour perdues*, translated for the *Théâtre National de Strasbourg*, 1980. Interviewed in Paris, June 1988. I am grateful to M. Déprats for his generous assistance.

31. Jean-Michel Déprats, "Le besoin d'une forme: entretien avec Ariane Mnouchkine," *Théâtre/Public* 46-47 (mars-avril 1982): 11.

32. Interview, June 1988.

33. Sophie Moscoso, "Notes de répétitions," *Le Théâtre du Soleil: Shakespeare, 2ème partie* ed. Martine Franck and Raymonde Temkine, *Double Page* 32 (1984), n.p.

34. José Barthomeuf, "'Richard II' (Le texte est roi)," *Le Parisien Libéré*, 24 December 1981. See also Anne Coppermann, "Richard II," *Les Echos*, 16 December 1981.

35. "Traduire . . . " 47, 46.

36. "Réncontre sur 'Hamlet' avec Antoine Vitez, *Théâtre/Public* 49 (janvier-février 1983): 20. On translation as appropriation see the discussion of Michel Garneau's *Macbeth* "traduit en québecois" by Annie Brisset: "Ceci n'est pas une trahison," *Spirale* (June 1986): 12-13.

37. Ubersfeld 10.